

MANUAL

FOR PARISH

PASTORAL COUNCILS

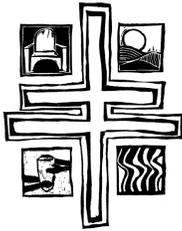
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Approved: August 10, 2009
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Revised: March 15, 2015
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August 2009

Dear Friends in Christ,

From the earliest days of the Church, all members of the Christian community were called to spread the Good News. After accepting faith in Jesus Christ and being baptized, Christians assumed responsibility for the Church and took an active part in the life of the community. Unfortunately, at different times over the centuries, this vision grew dim. It was in the early 1960s that the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) called us to a renewed interest in the structure of the early Church.

The vision of the early Church is found especially in *The Acts of the Apostles*, the book of the Bible immediately after the Gospels. There we witness the apostles consulting the members about the direction for the future and the decisions that needed to be made. We have been striving to realize that vision in the Archdiocese of Dubuque.

Official Church documents reflect this same vision. The 1983 revision of the *Code of Canon Law* encouraged the lay members of the Church to express “their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church” (canon 212). Canon Law envisions a pastoral council in each parish in which the faithful help the pastor and staff in planning for the future. Parish pastoral councils and the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council are ways in which the lay faithful exercise their responsibility for the Church.

With this letter, I am pleased to introduce a new Manual for Parish Pastoral Councils. Nearly twenty-five years have passed since Archbishop Kucera promulgated the Parish Council Guidelines. The 1985 guidelines stated: “. . . the spiritual growth and mission of the parish community are the primary concern of the parish council.”

As we use these revised guidelines, it is important to note that this primary purpose hasn’t changed. In fact, the revised guidelines are intended to enable pastoral councils to realize more fully this fundamental purpose. This Manual provides a framework for councils as they work to shape a faith-filled, life-giving community that becomes the instrument of salvation for the members.

Be assured of my prayers for all who hold leadership roles in parishes. May the grace of the Holy Spirit and the teaching of the Church guide them.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Jerome Hanus, O.S.B.
Archbishop of Dubuque

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I: GENERAL	1
I. The History of Parish Pastoral Councils: A Summary	3
II. The Pastoral Council as Spiritual Leaders	5
III. The Seven Elements of Parish Life	6
PART II: PASTORAL COUNCILS	9
I. Norms for Parish/Cluster Pastoral Councils	11
II. Model Constitution for Parish Pastoral Councils.....	13
III. Model Bylaws for Parish Pastoral Councils	15
IV. Model Constitution for Cluster Pastoral Councils	21
V. Model Bylaws for Cluster Pastoral Councils	23
VI. Standing Committees of the Pastoral Councils	29
A. Liturgy Committee	31
B. Faith Formation Commission.....	33
(Catholic School Board of Education).....	34
C. Stewardship Committee	36
D. Social Justice Committee	38
E. Parish Life Committee.....	40
F. Finance Council	42
PART III: RESOURCES	45
I. Consensus Decision-Making.....	47
II. Suggestions for Prayer at Council Meetings.....	51
III. Selecting Parish Pastoral Council Members	53
IV. The Mission Statement: A Guide to Its Development	57
V. Relationship of Pastoral Councils to Civil Corporation.....	61
VI. Primary Tasks of Catechesis (Faith Formation)	63
VII. Areas of Catechesis (Faith Formation)	65
PART IV: ENDNOTES	67

PART I

GENERAL

I. The History of Parish Pastoral Councils: A Summary

The Early Church

From its earliest days in apostolic times, the Catholic Church was communal in nature. We find a description of the ideal Christian community in the Acts of the Apostles:

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.¹

The Acts of the Apostles and letters of St. Paul describe the unfolding of the life and structure of the Christian community. Paul called for unity (Ephesians 4:1-6) and the distribution of a wide range of gifts within the community (I Corinthians 12:1-31). There was the identification of leaders from within the communities (1 Timothy 3:1-13). As time evolved there was continued development and definition of the Church's organization and leadership structure, giving rise to a formal distinction between clergy and laity.

Vatican II

The Second Vatican Council (Vatican II), which began in 1962, was the beginning of a major shift involving a renewed interest in the structure of the early Church as a model for responding to the needs of the Church in a modern age. The bishops at the Council stressed the reality of the early Church as a community of faith where all the baptized bear responsibility for placing their individual gifts at the service of all. To provide a structure for lay people to participate, the Council stated:

In dioceses, as far as possible, councils should be set up to assist the Church's apostolic work, whether in the field of evangelization and sanctification, or in fields of charity, social relations and the rest . . .

Such councils should be found too, if possible, at the parochial, inter-parochial, and inter-diocesan level.²

The creation of diocesan councils by Vatican II provided a way in which lay people could serve the local church. In 1983, *The Code of Canon Law* stated: "In every diocese . . . a pastoral council is to be constituted which under the authority of the bishop investigates, considers, and proposes practical conclusions about those things which pertain to pastoral works in the diocese."³

Additionally, the code provided that a pastoral council could be established in each parish if the bishop, having heard the presbyteral council, judged it “opportune,” defining its role as that of assisting “in fostering pastoral activity.”⁴

The update of canon law in 1983 also emphasized the collegial nature of the Church. The role of the laity is defined as one in which they are “to exercise the mission that God has entrusted to the Church . . . in accord with the condition proper to each.”⁵

The emergence of parish councils within the Archdiocese nearly forty years ago was a significant advancement in lay involvement in decisions about parish life.

While the vision for pastoral councils was one of assisting in fostering pastoral activity, in many cases parish pastoral councils evolved as being practical, advising the pastor/parish life coordinator on temporal matters and planning various parish events.

Today

As we move forward in our contemporary and ever-changing world, we are mindful of the challenge set forth in the Old Testament: “Without a vision the people perish.” (Proverbs 29:18). Within the parish, the pastoral council is called to assist in helping create the vision for the local community of faith, just as the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council assists the Archbishop in articulating a vision for the diocesan church.

It is within this context that parishes are challenged to more fully implement the pastoral model envisioned by the Code. This shift emphasizes researching, considering, and proposing pastoral goals for the parish community in light of Church teaching and the mission of both the local and the larger universal Church.⁶

Viewed as a *pastoral* council, it functions much more as a mission-focused group than solely a programmatic or finance-driven council.⁷ Councils are also urged by the Code to initiate ideas which “foster the pastoral activity of the parish,” to research the feasibility of these ideas and to consider seriously whether they might be advantageous for this particular parish.⁸ They also are to consider what ramifications the ideas might hold and, finally, propose practical suggestions for their implementation if deemed justifiable after the appropriate research has been completed.⁹

In short, pastoral councils consist of laity who, together with the pastor/parish life coordinator and “those who share in pastoral care by virtue of their office in the parish,” are called to envision and plan for the future of the parish as it meets the pastoral needs of the people of God.¹⁰

In *Vision 2000*, a planning document developed for the Archdiocese of Dubuque, the planning role of a parish pastoral council is described as follows:

Planning is critical to the growth and vitality of a parish or cluster of parishes. Having a plan sets a forward direction for a parish. It focuses the energies of staff, committees, and volunteers toward common goals, and provides a means of

accountability. The parish council has, as one of its major functions, the responsibility for planning in the parish.¹¹

As parishes adapt to meet new realities and face new challenges, their structures must adjust. Parish councils are challenged to become more visionary in promoting the pastoral activity of the Church. As noted above, the concept of a pastoral council is not new; it was called for by Vatican II.

Clearly the administrative tasks in a parish will always remain, but the lead for assisting the pastor/parish life coordinator with these belongs more properly to the parish staff. In parishes where there is limited or no staff, these duties could be carried out through the stewardship of time and talent by parishioners who volunteer.

Staff or volunteers serve as delegates of the pastor/parish life coordinator in the day-to-day ministries that they perform, and thus they are accountable to the pastor/parish life coordinator. While staff members may or may not attend pastoral council meetings, each staff person serves as a resource and support person for the pastoral council. Staff members are available to provide input and guidance as needed, thus assisting it in furthering the overall mission of the parish. This arrangement provides the council with the time to fulfill its more desired role of planning for the future rather than being concerned with the details of the regular administration of the parish. In this model, the pastoral council for either a parish or a cluster is not so much a “hands-on” group of “doers.” Rather, its purpose is to envision the future according to its local mission within the context of the universal Church.

The council should find itself spending less time reviewing reports, planning monthly activities, and being primarily program or finance-driven and spending more time articulating the mission of the Church for the local community, engaging in long-range pastoral planning, and being more mission-centered through prayer and discernment.

II. The Pastoral Council as Spiritual Leaders

The primary goal in life for every Christian should be to experience personal conversion and growth in faith. As stated in the *General Directory for Catechesis*:

The Christian faith is, above all, conversion to Jesus Christ, full and sincere adherence to his person and the decision to walk in his footsteps. Faith is a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, making of oneself a disciple to him. This demands a permanent commitment to think like him, to judge like him and to live as he lived. In this way the believer unites himself to the community of disciples and appropriates the faith of the Church.¹²

“Following Jesus is the work of a lifetime. At every step forward, one is challenged to go further in accepting and loving God’s will. Being a disciple is not just something else to do alongside many other things suitable for Christians, it is a total way of life and requires continuing conversion.”¹³

The parish is the framework in which conversion and growth in faith should be fostered. Each parish must have as part of its mission a commitment to support and foster this growth.

As the leaders of the parish, it is essential that a pastoral council be a prayerful group. The responsibility of assisting the pastor/parish life coordinator to guide the parish and to fulfill the mission of the parish/cluster requires a council composed of faith-filled women and men who realize that the work they do is not their own. Therefore, the recommendations of the council must flow from a prayerful discernment of the will of God for the parish/cluster community.

Prayer is at the heart of the council's work. It sets the tone for the meeting, and it offers people a proper frame of mind for the nature of the work ahead. Many people come to the meeting after a long day at work. These same people are then asked to make a major adjustment from that "work mode" to the "servant leader" attitude. Effective pastoral councils facilitate this adjustment by taking quality time for prayer, allowing it to guide the meeting rather than to "bookend" the agenda.¹⁴

One result of such prayer is openness to discernment. The use of prior information and the recommendations that flow from it result in true discernment in that a council actively seeks and listens for the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Pastoral councils grow in their effectiveness when, in addition to prayer at regular meetings, they set aside retreat days or evenings of reflection to provide members with concentrated quiet time and the opportunity to come to know one another, explore their roles and responsibilities as a pastoral council, clarify their relationships with one another and with committees and staff, and share their spiritual insights.

As parish/cluster leaders, pastoral council members have a particular responsibility to offer recommendations that are truly guided by the Holy Spirit. This presupposes a personal prayer life by which each member is already in relationship with God. Further, the work of the council requires that the members pray together, in part to ask for the wisdom of the Spirit and in part to set an example of prayerfulness for the entire parish.

III. The Seven Elements of Parish Life

In *Revisioning the Parish Pastoral Council*, the authors outline seven elements which form the heart of the pastoral life of a parish/cluster.¹⁵ These elements are not isolated; rather, they clearly interrelate, "each nurturing and supporting the other."¹⁶ They become integrated in the communal celebration of Sunday Eucharist. The elements are:

1. Evangelization
2. Worship
3. Word
4. Community
5. Service
6. Stewardship
7. Leadership

It is the work of a pastoral council both to determine how its own parish/cluster brings each of these seven elements to life and also to move the parish/cluster in an ever-deepening expression of each element. Canon 511 of the *Code of Canon Law* describes the work of the council as considering and proposing for action those matters that are truly “pastoral,” that is, those aspects of parish/cluster life which are contained within and flow from these elements.

The parish/cluster asks itself: How do we uniquely express these elements? The response to this question forms the basis for a statement that describes the mission proper to this particular parish/cluster. “In a sense there are as many answers to that question as there are individual members with individual vocations. But the overarching answer for all is this: through personal participation in and support of the Church’s mission of proclaiming and teaching, serving and sanctifying.”¹⁷

Each parish/cluster reflects on its own unique gifts and its background of history and culture, and from this information determines how it will live the mission of Jesus. When the parish/cluster has discovered through prayer and discussion its own mission, it then plans how it will implement the mission. For ease of implementation and also to keep the mission ever before the members, it is essential that each parish/cluster formulate its specific mission in writing.

A mission statement is a short, clear expression of the core values that direct the life and ministry of the parish/cluster. A mission statement captures the essence of two questions: Why does this parish exist? How will this parish/cluster fulfill the mission of Christ? Thus a mission statement is a localized expression of the universal Church’s mission. It is written in such a way that it is understandable to all and can truly be actualized.

If a parish/cluster does not yet have a mission statement, the council first leads the parish/cluster in discerning and expressing its mission.¹⁸

When the mission has been formulated and written, the pastoral council begins the long-range planning which will implement the mission and facilitate the plan at its various stages. What follows will help the parish/cluster begin and carry through its primary purpose.

In subsequent years, the council facilitates the periodic review and affirmation or revision of the mission statement in order to “consider and propose practical conclusions about those things which pertain to pastoral works.”¹⁹ This refers to those works that will appropriately accomplish the mission of both the parish/cluster and the larger Church. Every issue or decision the council discusses is considered first and foremost in light of its mission statement.

Finally, the pastoral council is charged with directing the resources and gifts of the local community toward the fulfillment of the mission. This requires an annual planning process.

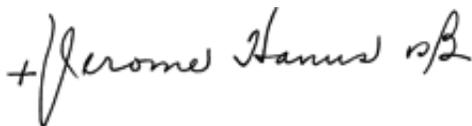
PART II

PASTORAL COUNCILS

I. Norms for Parish/Cluster Pastoral Councils

1. In the Archdiocese of Dubuque, every parish will have a pastoral council.
2. Every cluster will also have a pastoral council composed of members from the respective parish pastoral councils.
3. Each council will write a constitution with accompanying bylaws for its governance.
4. These documents are to be modeled on the constitutions and bylaws for pastoral councils presented in these guidelines.
5. Upon completion, acknowledgment of acceptance by a two-thirds vote of the relevant pastoral council(s), and ratification by the pastor/parish life coordinator, the constitution and bylaws are to be submitted to the Archdiocesan Office of Leadership Development and Pastoral Planning for review and recommendations.
6. The Office of Leadership Development and Pastoral Planning will submit the documents, together with its recommendations, to the Archbishop for his final approval and signature.
7. Any changes to the constitutions or bylaws made subsequent to this initial approval require a two-thirds vote of the pastoral council and ratification by the pastor/parish life coordinator. The changes are then submitted to the Archdiocesan Office of Leadership Development and Pastoral Planning for review and recommendations.
8. The Office of Leadership Development and Pastoral Planning will forward the requested changes and its own recommendations to the Archbishop for his final approval as necessary.

Approved, promulgated, and effective on this 10th day of August, 2009.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerome Hanus" followed by a small monogram "rB".

Most Rev. Jerome Hanus, O.S.B.
Archbishop of Dubuque

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betty Schueller".

Chancellor

II. Model Constitution for Parish Pastoral Councils

Preamble

We, the pastor/parish life coordinator and members of (Name) Parish, (City), Iowa, recognize that we are called to union with God not merely as individuals but as a holy community, the People of God. The Spirit has given a variety of ministries and gifts to this community, which enables all to work for the good of the whole.

Formed by the Word of God, we recognize our unity of faith and love, and we accept our common responsibility for the mission of Christ. To proclaim our unity of mind and purpose and to more effectively perform our responsibilities to God and neighbor, we unite to form a parish pastoral council.

We affirm and accept communion with the Archbishop of Dubuque and with our pastor/parish life coordinator. We declare ourselves willing to accept their authority and to share their pastoral concerns so that together we may carry out the saving mission of the Church.

Article I. Name

The name of this body is: The Pastoral Council of (Name) Parish.

Article II. Nature and Purpose

Section A. Nature

The pastoral council offers counsel to and collaborates with the pastor/parish life coordinator to provide the long-range planning which will guide the parish toward its future.

Section B. Purpose

1. To facilitate a process by which the mission of the parish is determined and to serve as stewards of that mission.
2. To implement the mission by engaging in pastoral planning, which includes assessing parish needs, identifying resources, determining priorities.
3. To collaborate with the finance council to maintain appropriate stewardship in implementing the mission of the parish.

Article III. Membership

Membership consists of those who are ex officio and of registered parishioners who are elected or appointed as delineated in the bylaws.

Article IV. Officers

The officers of the pastoral council are: the pastor/parish life coordinator, the chair, the vice chair, and the secretary.

Article V. Executive Committee

The officers of the pastoral council constitute the executive committee.

Article VI. Meetings

Meetings are held regularly as specified in the bylaws.

Article VII. Committees

The required standing committees are defined in the bylaws. The chair appoints ad hoc committees as needed.

Article VIII. Amendments

Because a constitution is a foundational document, any amendments to this constitution require a vote as delineated in the bylaws and approval as specified in the norms for pastoral councils.

III. Model Bylaws for Parish Pastoral Councils

Article I. Membership

Section A. Ex Officio Members

The pastor/parish life coordinator is an ex officio non-voting member of the pastoral council. The chair of the finance council and a member each of the faith formation commission, the stewardship committee, and the Catholic school board (applicable when an individual parish school exists) are ex officio voting members of the pastoral council.

Section B. Appointed Members

The pastor/parish life coordinator may appoint to the council registered parishioners who are baptized, confirmed, and practicing Catholics. Appointed members, who are voting members, shall constitute no more than one-third of the total membership of the council.

Section C. Elected Members

Registered parishioners who are baptized, confirmed, and practicing Catholics are eligible for election to the council, as well as for voting in the elections, unless they are impeded by Church law from holding office.

Section D. Resource Persons

Permanent deacons and pastoral staff serve as resource persons to the council.

Section E. Election Procedure

1. Elections are held annually on or before the third Sunday of May.
2. Nominations are sought publicly from all registered parishioners.
3. The executive committee of the pastoral council determines and promulgates election procedures.

Section F. Terms of Members

1. Terms of members begin with the meeting following the election or appointment of the member and run for a period of three years.
2. Members serve no more than two consecutive terms to which they have been elected or appointed.
3. Youth representatives to the pastoral council may be elected for a term of less than three years. *Note: It is recommended that a youth representative be selected each year for a term of two years to provide for optimum continuity of youth representation on the council. If a vote must be taken, there is one vote allotted to the youth representation.*
4. If the representative's term on the deanery council extends beyond his or her term on the pastoral council, the representative continues as a voting member of the pastoral council until the term on the deanery council is completed (see Article XI, Deanery Council Representative).

Section G. Vacancy

1. A vacancy may occur by death, resignation, termination of membership in the parish, or by incurrance of an ecclesiastical penalty (as defined in canon law) rendering a person ineligible for office.
2. Membership on the council may be terminated for cause by a vote of at least three-fourths of all the members of the pastoral council present and voting at any regular or special meeting of the council.
3. A member who is absent from three meetings, developing a pattern of frequent absences, may be asked to reconsider membership on the council. The chair or a delegate will approach this member to mutually assess continued membership.
4. Before the next regular meeting of the council, the pastor/parish life coordinator will appoint someone to complete the vacated term of an appointed member.
5. The council itself will at its next regular meeting elect a person to complete the vacated term of an elected member. *Note: Consideration might be given to the person receiving the next highest number of votes in the previous election.*

Article II. Officers

Section A. Officers

1. The pastor/parish life coordinator presides over the council.
2. Other officers are: the chair, the vice chair, and the secretary. *Note: A recorder may be appointed from outside the membership of the council to take minutes, but s/he is neither an officer nor a voting member.*

Section B. Selection and Terms of Officers

The chair, the vice chair, and the secretary are elected to one-year terms by a majority vote of the members present and voting at the June meeting of the council.

Section C. Vacancy

The council itself elects a member to complete the term of a vacated elected office or appoints a nonmember to fill the vacancy of a recorder.

Article III. Executive Committee

Section A. Duties

The executive committee prepares the agenda for council meetings and performs such other duties as the council shall assign.

Section B. Powers

The executive committee may act in the name of the pastoral council when recourse to the entire council is not possible.

Article IV. Responsibilities of Officers

Section A. The Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator

1. Presides at meetings of the pastoral council.

2. Calls special meetings of the pastoral council.
3. Places matters of concern on the agenda.
4. Approves or vetoes recommendations of the council.
5. Promulgates approved recommendations.
6. Serves as the secretary-treasurer of the parish civil corporation

Section B. The Chair

1. Chairs the meetings of the council.
2. Convoles the executive committee as needed.
3. Organizes and coordinates the activities and processes of the council.
4. Appoints ad hoc committees or task forces.
5. Motivates the various members/groups of the council to fulfill their specific responsibilities.
6. Serves as a lay director of the parish civil corporation.

Section C. The Vice Chair

1. Assumes the duties and responsibilities of the chair when the latter is absent or incapacitated.
2. Performs such other duties as may be assigned by the chair or the council.

Section D. The Secretary

1. Records and publishes the proceedings of all council meetings.
2. Notifies the members of all meetings.
3. Handles correspondence relevant to council activities.
4. Files all records, reports, communications, etc.
5. Forwards the name of the parish pastoral council chair to the Archdiocesan Office of Leadership Development and Pastoral Planning immediately after the election.
6. Performs such other duties as the council or the chair shall assign. *Note: If the council has appointed a recorder, some of the duties listed above might be shared with the recorder.*

Article V. Responsibilities of the Council

1. To listen to and represent the wisdom of parishioners and parish staff as part of the planning process.
2. To determine priorities and develop a plan for both implementing and evaluating them.
3. To develop goals and objectives which further the mission of the parish.
4. To evaluate regularly the goals and objectives of the council and of its subgroups.
5. To recommend policies which are supportive of the mission of the parish.
6. To call forth the gifts of individuals and groups/committees in the parish to carry out its mission.
7. To cooperate with neighboring parishes in regional planning for the future of the Church in the local area.
8. To collaborate with the stewardship committee to conduct a parish census periodically.

Article VI. Decision-Making

Section A. Procedure

The desired procedure for decision-making is consensus to draw forth the support of all.

Section B. Quorum

A simple majority of the total membership of the council shall constitute a quorum for either reaching consensus or conducting a vote if needed.

Section C. Outcome

Except when otherwise specified, a decision is reached by consensus of the quorum or, if necessary, a simple majority vote of the membership present.

Section D. Principles

In either consensus or voting, members solicit the wisdom of the group—inviting all to speak, listening to each other with respect, being open to the Holy Spirit, thus reaching the best decision for the good of the parish.

Article VII. Approval of Council Recommendations

Section A. Effective Date

*In accordance with Canon 536, recommendations adopted by the council become effective when approved by the pastor/parish life coordinator.

Section B. Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator's Role

The pastor/parish life coordinator responds to a recommendation within two weeks of its presentation to him/her by the council.

*Canon 536

Paragraph 1: If the diocesan bishop judges it opportune after he has heard the presbyteral council, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish, over which the pastor presides and in which the Christian faithful, together with those who share in pastoral care by virtue of their office in the parish, assist in fostering pastoral activity.

Paragraph 2: A pastoral council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by the norms established by the diocesan bishop.

Article VIII. Committees

Section A. Standing Committees

1. Liturgy
2. Faith Formation Commission
3. Stewardship
4. Social Justice
5. Parish Life
6. Finance Council

Section B. Committee Procedures

1. Each committee selects its chairperson.
2. The pastor/parish life coordinator, in collaboration with the pastoral council, implements the process for selection of members as outlined herein.
3. Terms for committee membership normally do not exceed two consecutive three-year terms.
4. The chair of the council forms ad hoc committees as needed.

Section C. Pastoral Council Membership

1. The chair of the finance council, a member of the faith formation commission, a member of the stewardship committee, and a member of the Catholic school board (applicable when an individual parish school exists) are ex officio voting members of the pastoral council.
2. The remaining standing committees identify a liaison who reports to the pastoral council when necessary. (As an alternative, the pastoral council may appoint one of its members as a liaison to these committees.)

Article IX. Meetings

Procedures

1. Regular meetings of the pastoral council are normally held on a monthly basis.* Special meetings may be called by the pastor/parish life coordinator or the chair or by a consensus of a majority of the council.
**Exceptions to this might be situations where parish pastoral council meetings alternate with cluster pastoral council meetings. It is also common that a council decides not to meet during July. To be a visionary planning body, however, at least six meetings per year should be held.*
2. The meetings of the council are open to all members of the parish. However, by consensus or a majority decision, the council may go into executive session.
3. The minutes of all regular meetings are made available to all parishioners. The council should identify the method(s) for communication that permit easy access, e.g., published in the parish bulletin, Web site, e-mail, newsletter, posting.
4. If the executive committee decides not to place on the agenda an item submitted for that purpose, the secretary reports that decision to the members at the next regular meeting. That report includes the nature of the requested item, the person, persons, or organization requesting its inclusion, and the reason for excluding it. At the council meeting, any member may move for inclusion of said item on the agenda, and the council may by consensus or a simple majority vote add the item to the agenda.
5. Nonmembers of the council may address the council by a prior request to the chair and placement on the agenda.

Article X. Amendments

Procedures

1. Proposed amendments are presented to the members of the council at the meeting prior to the meeting at which the vote is to be taken.
2. A vote on a proposed amendment requires a quorum (a simple majority of council members present and voting).
3. Proposed amendments become recommended amendments by the vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting.

4. All recommended amendments require ratification by the pastor/parish life coordinator.
5. Upon ratification by the pastor/parish life coordinator, all recommended amendments are forwarded to the Archdiocesan Office of Leadership Development and Pastoral Planning for review. This office will forward its recommendation and the proposed amendments to the Archbishop for final approval.

Article XI. Deanery Council Representative

Section A. Selection

Prior to July 1 of every third year, the council selects one of its members to represent it on the deanery council. The council also selects an alternate.

Section B. Term

1. The representative to the deanery council serves a term of three years.
2. If the representative's term on the deanery council extends beyond his or her term on the pastoral council, the representative continues as a voting member of the pastoral council until the term on the deanery council is completed.

Section C. Vacancy

In case of a vacancy of the parish deanery council representative or alternate, the pastoral council selects one of its members to serve out the unexpired term.

IV. Model Constitution for Cluster Pastoral Councils

Preamble

We, the pastor/parish life coordinator and members of (Name) Cluster, (Cities), Iowa, recognize that we are called to union with God, not merely as individuals but as a holy community, the People of God. The Spirit has given a variety of ministries and gifts to this cluster, which enable all to work for the good of the whole.

Formed by the Word of God, we recognize our unity of faith and love, and we accept our common responsibility for the mission of Christ. To proclaim our unity of mind and purpose and to more effectively perform our responsibilities to God and neighbor, we unite to form a cluster pastoral council.

We affirm and accept communion with the Archbishop of Dubuque and with our pastor/parish life coordinator. We declare ourselves willing to accept their authority and to share their pastoral concerns so that together we may carry out the saving mission of the Church.

Article I. Name

The name of this body is: The Pastoral Council of (Name) Cluster.

Article II. Nature and Purpose

Section A. Nature

1. The cluster pastoral council offers counsel to and collaborates with the pastor/parish life coordinator to provide the long-range planning which will guide the cluster toward its future.
2. Its scope is those things given to the cluster pastoral council by the participating parish pastoral councils and the pastor/parish life coordinator as specified in its bylaws.

Section B. Purpose

1. To facilitate a process by which the mission of the cluster is determined and to serve as stewards of that mission.
2. To build an identity as a cluster, creating an atmosphere among the member parishes which values the *common* good.
3. To facilitate among the member parishes the development of a unified community of faith.

Article III. Membership

Membership consists of those who are ex officio and of members of the pastoral council from each member parish as established in the bylaws.

Article IV. Officers

The officers of the cluster pastoral council are: the pastor/parish life coordinator, the chair, the vice chair, and the secretary.

Article V. Executive Committee

The officers of the cluster pastoral council form the executive committee of the council.

Article VI. Meetings

Meetings are held regularly as specified in the bylaws.

Article VII. Committees

The chair appoints ad hoc committees as needed. Member parishes may delegate the cluster pastoral council to establish some of the required standing committees at the cluster level instead of the parish level. *Note: Each parish must have a Finance Council.*

Article VIII. Amendments

Because a constitution is a foundation document, any amendments to this constitution require a vote as delineated in the bylaws and approval as specified in the norms for pastoral councils.

V. Model Bylaws for Cluster Pastoral Councils

Article I. Membership

Section A. Types of Membership

1. Ex officio nonvoting member.
 - a. The pastor/parish life coordinator of the cluster.
2. Ex officio voting members.
 - a. If applicable, one member from the cluster faith formation commission, one member of the cluster catholic school board and one member from the cluster finance council.
3. Other members.
 - a. At least two members from each parish pastoral council.
 - b. In determining the size of membership, justice requires an equitable representation for each cluster parish. Local cluster decisions about membership are to consider the common benefit of the entire cluster faith community.

Section B. Resource Persons

Permanent deacons and pastoral staff serve as resource persons for the cluster pastoral council.

Section C. Method of Selection

Each representative is selected from and by her/his respective parish pastoral council by a process specified in its own bylaws.

Section D. Terms of Members

1. The term of each elected member is three (3) years.
2. A member may serve no more than two (2) successive terms.
3. Terms are spread so that no more than one-third of the total membership is selected in any one year.
4. The first cluster pastoral council will configure the alternation of terms, determining the length of term for each initial member by a method of the council's choice, thus establishing the regular pattern for staggered terms.
5. Terms begin with the fiscal year following the selection.
6. The term of each ex officio member is concurrent with the office held.

Section E. Vacancy

1. A vacancy may occur by death, resignation, termination of membership in the parish, or by incurrance of an ecclesiastical penalty (as defined in canon law), rendering a person ineligible for office.
2. A member, who is absent from three meetings, developing a pattern of frequent absences, may be asked to reconsider membership on the council. The chair or a delegate will approach this member to mutually assess continued membership.
3. In case of a vacancy, the relevant parish pastoral council will select a replacement from its membership to complete the term.

Article II. Officers

Section A. Officers

1. The pastor/parish life coordinator presides over the council.
2. Other officers are: the chair, the vice chair, and the secretary. *Note: A recorder may be appointed from outside the membership of the council to take minutes, but s/he is neither an officer nor a voting member.*

Section B. Selection and Terms of Officers

The chair, the vice chair, and the secretary are elected to one-year terms by a majority of the members present and voting at the June meeting of the council.

Section C. Vacancy

Should a vacancy occur, the parish pastoral council experiencing the vacancy will determine its method of replacing the member who represents that parish.

Article III. Executive Committee

Section A. Duties

The executive committee prepares the agenda for council meetings and perform such other duties as the council shall assign.

Section B. Powers

The executive committee may act in the name of the council when recourse to the entire council is not possible.

Article IV. Responsibilities of Officers

Section A. The President (Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator)

1. Presides at meetings of the council.
2. Calls special meetings of the council.
3. Places matters of concern on the agenda.
4. Approves or vetoes recommendations of the council.
5. Promulgates approved recommendations of the council.

Section B. The Chair

1. Chairs the meetings of the cluster pastoral council.
2. Convoles the executive committee as needed.
3. Organizes and coordinates the activities and processes of the cluster pastoral council.
4. Motivates the various members/groups in the council to fulfill their specific responsibilities.
5. Appoints ad hoc committees and task forces.

Section C. The Vice Chair

1. Assumes the duties and responsibilities of the chair when the chair is absent or incapacitated.
2. Performs such other duties as may be assigned by the chair or the council.

Section D. The Secretary

1. Records and publishes the proceedings of all cluster pastoral council meetings.
2. Notifies the members of all meetings.
3. Handles correspondence relevant to council activities.
4. Files all records, reports, communications.
5. Forwards the name of the cluster pastoral council chair to the Archdiocesan Office of Leadership Development and Pastoral Planning immediately after the election.
6. Performs such other duties as the council or the chair shall assign.

Note: If the council has appointed a recorder, some of the duties listed above might be shared with the recorder.

Article V. Responsibilities of the Council

1. To create a common spirit of welcome and hospitality for all cluster members and visitors.
2. To engage in pastoral planning by assessing cluster needs, identifying resources, and setting long-range goals which further the mission.
3. To implement and regularly evaluate goals and objectives.
4. To determine priorities and develop a plan for both implementing and evaluating them.
5. To listen to and represent the wisdom of all cluster members and staff as part of the planning process.
6. To assess regularly the spiritual and temporal needs of the cluster.
7. To make recommendations regarding those areas delegated to it by the member parishes, particularly the sharing of staff, programs, liturgical services, and facilities.
8. To create an atmosphere which welcomes such sharing of resources.
9. To determine the budget and establish an equitable financial support formula for member parishes.
10. To develop plans for the growth and development of the cluster in such areas as evangelization, spiritual growth, long-term financial stability, administrative work, etc.
11. To recommend policies which are consonant with the mission of the cluster.
12. To motivate member parishes to maintain a vision of the larger Church.
13. To engage in regional planning for the future of the Church in the broader local area.

Article VI. Decision-Making

Section A. Authority

It is within the authority of the cluster pastoral council to make recommendations regarding any area of cluster life that has been delegated to it by the member parishes.

Section B. Procedure

The desired procedure for decision-making is consensus to draw forth the support of all.

Section C. Quorum

A simple majority of the total membership of the cluster pastoral council shall constitute a quorum for either reaching consensus or conducting a vote if needed.

Section D. Outcome

Except when otherwise specified, a decision is reached by consensus of the quorum or if necessary, a simple majority vote of the membership present. If ballots are cast, the procedure may be **either**:

- One parish/one vote **or**
- One member/one vote as established in the bylaws of the cluster pastoral council.

Section E. Principles

In either consensus or voting, members solicit the wisdom of the group, inviting all to speak, listening to each other with respect, and being open to the Holy Spirit, thus reaching the best decision for the good of the parish.

Article VII. Approval of Council Recommendations

Section A. Effective Date

*In accordance with Canon 536, recommendations adopted by the council become effective when approved by the pastor/parish life coordinator.

Section B. Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator's Role

The pastor/parish life coordinator responds to a recommendation within two weeks of its presentation to him/her by the council.

*Canon 536

Paragraph 1: If the diocesan bishop judges it opportune after he has heard the presbyteral council, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish, over which the pastor presides and in which the Christian faithful, together with those who share in pastoral care by virtue of their office in the parish, assist in fostering pastoral activity.

Paragraph 2: A pastoral council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by the norms established by the diocesan bishop.

Article VIII. Meetings

Procedures

1. Regular meetings of the cluster pastoral council are recommended to be held at least five times each year.
2. Special meetings may be called by the pastor/parish life coordinator or the chair or by a consensus of a majority of the council.
3. Parishes might wish to alternate parish pastoral council meetings with cluster pastoral council meetings; it is common that a council decides not to meet during July. To be a visionary planning body, regular meetings are important.

4. The meetings of the council are open to all registered members of the cluster parishes. However, by consensus or a majority decision, the council may go into executive session.
5. The minutes of all regular meetings are made available to all parishioners in all cluster parishes. The council should identify the method(s) for communication that permits easy access, e.g., published in the parish bulletin, Web site, e-mail, newsletter, posting.
6. If the executive committee decides not to place on the agenda an item submitted for that purpose, the secretary reports that decision to the members at the next regular meeting. That report includes the nature of the requested item, the person, persons, or organization requesting its inclusion, and the reason for excluding it. At the council meeting, any member may move for inclusion of said item on the agenda, and the council may by consensus or a simple majority vote add the item to the agenda.
7. Nonmembers of the council may address the council by a prior request of the chair and placement on the agenda.

Article IX. Amendments

Procedures

1. Proposed amendments to the constitution or bylaws are presented to the members of the council at the meeting prior to the meeting at which the vote is to be taken.
2. Proposed amendments require a quorum (a simple majority of total cluster pastoral council membership).
3. Proposed amendments become recommended amendments by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting.
4. Amendments passed by the council require ratification by the pastor/parish life coordinator.
5. The initial constitution and bylaws and all subsequent changes thereof are forwarded to the Archdiocesan Office of Leadership Development and Pastoral Planning for review. This office will forward its recommendation and the proposed amendments to the Archbishop for final approval.

VI. Standing Committees of the Pastoral Councils

Correlating *Vision 2000* Goals with Functions of the Standing Committees

In February, 1999 Archbishop Jerome Hanus promulgated *Vision 2000*. *Vision 2000* is the guiding planning document for the Archdiocese in the 21st Century. The standing committees prescribed in this manual are intended to assist parishes in realizing the goals of *Vision 2000*. The goals appear on the following page. In the descriptions of the standing committees, these goals are referenced in parentheses behind each listed function of the committee.

Vision 2000 Goals

Community

- 1.1 Quality worship, especially Eucharistic liturgy, as the center of parish life.
- 1.2 Vital communities of faith in all parishes, including those without resident priests.
- 1.3 Parishes with strong Catholic identity.
- 1.4 Parishes as welcoming and inclusive communities.
- 1.5 Stewardship of time, talent and treasure among all parishioners.
- 1.6 Youth and young adults involved in parish life and leadership.
- 1.7 Inter-parish cooperation and sharing of resources.
- 1.8 Social justice both within and beyond our parishes.

Word of God

- 2.1 Communities of evangelization, fulfilling our mission to bring the gospel to the world and to promote Christian values in our society.
- 2.2 Quality formation in faith and spirituality for people of all age groups.
- 2.3 Local, regional and archdiocesan support for Catholic education.
- 2.4 Clear presentation of the teachings of the Church.
- 2.5 Clear procedures for sacramental practices and strong liturgical preparation.

Leadership

- 3.1 Lay leaders to serve the parish.
- 3.2 Pastoral assignments which balance parish needs, individual gifts and diminishing numbers of clergy.
- 3.3 Vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life.
- 3.4 Affirmation of the role of women in the Church which calls forth their leadership and service.
- 3.5 Education about Catholic doctrine and policies regarding ordained ministry.
- 3.6 Education for the changing roles of lay and ordained leaders.
- 3.7 Education of priests and laity regarding the essential role and responsibilities of priestly ministry.
- 3.8 Expanded pastoral formation programs.

Families

- 4.1 A family life characterized by Catholic values, morals and daily prayer.
- 4.2 A parish life inclusive of single, divorced, separated and widowed persons as well as all families.
- 4.3 Support and education for parents in their efforts to communicate faith, morality and spiritual values to their children.

A. Liturgy Committee

Note: At times, parishes within a cluster may wish to delegate various standing committees to the cluster pastoral council. This is encouraged in order to maximize the gifts and talents of individuals within the cluster and to enhance opportunities within the cluster. The only exception would be the finance council that is required of every parish.

Section A. Purpose

1. To assist the pastor or the sacramental priest and the parish life coordinator in facilitating the liturgical prayer of the community.
2. To nourish and give direction to the liturgical worship of the parish, including the elements of spirituality, music, environment, liturgical ministers, and attention to liturgical norms.

Section B. Membership

1. Pastor/sacramental priest who, in the name of the bishop, is the principal liturgist.
2. Parish life coordinator and staff persons associated with liturgy (liturgist, music director, musicians, RCIA coordinator).
3. Coordinators of various liturgical ministries (readers, extraordinary ministers of Communion, musicians, ushers/greeters, altar servers, sacristans, those who prepare the environment).
4. Representation may be solicited as needed from other parishioners whose contributions would be helpful to the committee.
5. The size of the committee is regulated in each parish to accommodate efficiency and effectiveness.

Section C. Functions

1. To engage in its own ongoing formation in order to develop an understanding of liturgical theology and liturgical spirituality. (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5)
2. To implement the liturgical guidelines issued by the universal Church and the Archdiocese. (1.1, 1.2, 1.2, 1.5, 1.7, 1.8, 2.1, 2.4, 3.6, 3.5, 4.1, 4.3)
3. To collaborate with the pastor or with the sacramental priest and the pastoral administrator in order to prepare liturgical celebrations consistent with the theology and practice of the universal Church. (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 1.7, 2.1, 2.4, 2.5, 3.2, 3.6, 3.7)
4. To assess liturgical celebrations with a view toward their strengths, weaknesses, and needed improvements. (1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 2.1, 2.5)
5. To promote awareness of the liturgical year through various celebrations and prayer services and through aesthetic environment. (1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.7, 2.2, 3.1, 4.1)
6. To identify people qualified for various liturgical ministries of the parish, e.g., extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, all musicians, ministers of hospitality, readers, sacristans, servers, those who prepare the environment, etc. (1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.2, 3.4, 4.2)

7. To provide training and scheduling for the various liturgical ministers and to assess their performance. (1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 3.1, 2.2, 2.5, 3.2, 3.4, 3.6, 4.2)
8. To prepare guidelines for baptisms, weddings, and funerals in collaboration with the pastor, or with the sacramental priest and the parish life coordinator, music coordinators, and those who coordinate their preparation. (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 3.5, 3.7, 4.3)
9. To communicate the work of the committee to the pastoral council via written report or liaison.

B1. Faith Formation Commission

Section A. Purpose

To develop and oversee a comprehensive catechetical plan for the parish/cluster to provide for the lifelong faith formation and catechesis of all its members as described in the *General Directory for Catechesis* and the *National Directory for Catechesis*. The Commission is a consultative body concerning the faith formation and education programs subject to the policies and regulations that proceed from the Archbishop. The faith formation commission serves as a committee of the pastoral council according to the Manual for Parish Pastoral Council of the Archdiocese of Dubuque. All decisions/recommendations of the parish commission need the approval of the Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator (PLC).

- Parish/Cluster Faith Formation Commission can continue to work from their existing constitution provided that the governance issue stating “All decisions/recommendations of the parish commission need the approval of the pastor/PLC” is followed.
- A revised model faith formation constitution is available for parishes/clusters to use if so desired.
- System Faith Formation Commissions continue to operate according to their approved constitution and working agreement.

Section B. Membership

Elected and appointed according to the policies of the Archdiocesan Faith Formation Commission, with the total number being an uneven number of members. The appointed members should constitute less than fifty percent of the total commission membership. The pastor/parish life coordinator is an ex-officio member of the commission.

Section C. Functions:

- a. To develop and assist in the implementation of a comprehensive catechetical plan that supports the six tasks of catechesis
 - a. Promotion of knowledge of the faith. (2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.5)
 - b. Liturgical education. (1.1, 2.5)
 - c. Moral formation. (4.1, 4.3)
 - d. Teaching to pray. (1.1, 4.1)
 - e. Education for community life. (1.3, 1.4)
 - f. Missionary initiation. (1.5, 1.8)
- b. To implement the directives of the General Directory for Catechesis, the National Directory for Catechesis, and applicable archdiocesan policies in regard to the defined areas of catechesis: adults, elderly, young adults, adolescents, children of catechetical age, early childhood, family, persons with disabilities, and the marginalized. (1.2, 1.6, 2.2, 2.4, 3.3, 4.2) Responsibility for Catholic schools resides with the parish or interparish Catholic school board.
- c. To develop ongoing goals and objectives based upon the needs of the parishioners that are supportive of the teaching mission of the church and directives of the Archbishop. (2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.5, 3.8)

- d. To work collaboratively with all operative committees of the parish/cluster in planning faith formation programs and initiatives. Where applicable, joint planning should take place with the parish and/or interparish Catholic school to coordinate faith formation initiatives and program calendars. (1.7, 2.2, 2.3)
- e. To propose procedures/policies in conjunction with archdiocesan directives and in collaboration with the Faith Formation Leader(s) (DRE, youth ministry director, adult faith formation director, etc.) for their respective programs. (2.1, 2.4, 3.1)
- f. To develop and review the faith formation budget and annual financial reports according to archdiocesan directives. (1.5)
- g. To collaborate with the Parish(es) Finance Council(s), presenting its proposed budget, for review and approval. (1.5, 2.3)
- h. To assist the pastor/PLC in the recruitment and employment of personnel. (3.1, 3.4, 3.6, 3.7)
- i. To receive regular reports from those responsible for each area of catechesis.
- j. To recommend a member of the commission to be an ex-officio voting member of the pastoral council.
- k. To invite, support, and recognize the gifts of trained volunteers within catechetical programs. (1.5, 3.1)
- l. To recommend stewardship of resources, by collaborating with neighboring parishes, clusters, deaneries, etc. when appropriate. (1.7, 2.3)

B2. Parish Catholic School Board

Section A. Purpose*

To fulfill the responsibilities of governing the Catholic school according the provisions of Iowa Code (281-12.1(2)(256) and the policies of the Archdiocesan Catholic School Board (ACSB) **as approved by the Archbishop.**

1. Parish Catholic School Boards follow ACSB Policy 8620.1 (Constitution)
2. Interparish Catholic School Boards follow ACSB Policy 8620.21(Constitution)

Section B. Membership*

Elected and appointed according to the policies of the Archdiocesan Catholic School Board, with the total number being an uneven number of members. The appointed members should constitute less than fifty percent of the total board membership. The pastor/parish life coordinator is an ex-officio member of the board.

Section C. Functions*

- a. To ensure the Catholic identity of the Catholic school, whose central purpose is supporting role to the catechetical plan of the support parish, the educational apostolate of the Archdiocese, and the teaching mission of the Church. (1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.8, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.3, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)

- b. To oversee and evaluate the program for consistency with that mission. (1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.8, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.3, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)
- c. To work with the parish pastoral council and the committees of the parish pastoral council in maintaining open communication and awareness of school activities as part of the total parish catechetical plan. (1.2, 1.3)
- d. To work directly with the faith formation commission to coordinate faith formation initiatives and program calendars. (2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4)
- e. To employ personnel according to state and Archdiocesan policy. (2.4, 3.1, 3.4, 3.6, 3.7)
- f. To collaborate with the finance council of the parish, presenting its proposed gross budget for review and endorsement. After the gross budget for the school has been approved by the pastor, the program operates within that budget. (1.5, 1.7, 2.3)
- g. To ensure that appropriate instructional materials are available for the school. (2.4)
- h. To relate to local public school(s) and Area Education Agency (AEA) as needed.
- i. To establish a school improvement advisory committee (SIAC) and other state mandated advisory committees. (4.3)
- j. To review and utilize all individual programs and state mandated needs assessment results for planning.
- k. To develop required discipline policies, in compliance with state law and Archdiocesan policy.
- l. To deal with complaints according to policy.
- m. To promote efforts in public relations, recruiting, and development.
- n. To make physical plant improvements in cooperation with the parish pastoral council and in compliance with Archdiocesan policy.
- o. To be accountable to the Archdiocesan Catholic School Board and implement its policies and those of the Archdiocesan Office of Faith Formation and Education. (2.3)

* For details see:

- ACSB Policy 8620.1 (Constitution) for Parish Catholic School Boards
- ACSB Policy 8620.21(Constitution) for Interparish Catholic School Boards

C. Stewardship Committee

Note: At times, parishes within a cluster may wish to delegate various standing committees to the cluster pastoral council. This is encouraged in order to maximize the gifts and talents of individuals within the cluster and to enhance opportunities within the cluster. The only exception would be the finance council that is required of every parish.

Section A. Purpose

To encourage parishioners to exercise stewardship as an expression of gratitude to God and as a way of life for disciples of Christ.

Section B. Membership

1. Appointed and/or volunteer according to the bylaws of the local pastoral council constitution.
2. Persons with the following traits:
 - a. Stewardship is already a way of life at some level.
 - b. Personal stewardship is exercised and is motivated by gratitude for God's gifts.
 - c. Have the ability to make the goals of stewardship viable for parishioners.
 - d. Possess belief in accountability exercised by reporting back to parishioners on all aspects of the parish stewardship efforts.

Section C. Functions

1. To foster a sense of belonging to and "ownership" of the parish. (1.4)
2. To view evangelization as essential to stewardship and to assist with evangelization efforts in the parish. (2.1)
3. To encourage all committees, groups, families, and individuals to center themselves in prayer, especially prayer of gratitude. (4.1)
4. To provide education about stewardship to parish leadership/committees and to all parishioners. (2.2)
5. To call parishioners to the practice of stewardship as a way of life. (1.5)
6. To call the parish itself to the practice of stewardship of its resources. (1.5)
7. To collaborate with all other standing committees and ministries in assessing the ministry needs of the parish. (1.7)
8. To draw forth the stewardship of treasure of all parishioners by: (1.5)
 - a. Working with the parish finance council to identify and share the financial needs of the parish.
 - b. Promoting planned giving, the "stewardship of assets" within the parish community.
 - c. Establishing an electronic giving option for weekly giving.
9. To draw forth the stewardship of time and talent of all parishioners. Some avenues are: (1.5)
 - a. Encouraging the parish to use people resource management skills as time/talent commitment cards are received.
 - b. Providing a gifts discernment process for individuals and the community.
 - c. Using the results of this discernment to guide volunteers toward the best placement for their time and talent.

- d. Establishing accountability for committees to contact those who volunteered on their time/talent commitment cards.
 - e. Providing an annual appreciation event for all people who offer their time, talent, and treasure.
 - f. Encouraging coordinators of all ministries to offer their own form of appreciation to those who assist in the ministries.
10. To facilitate parish publicity and communications by:
 - a. Maintaining up-to-date data on all parishioners.
 - b. Establishing a parish area or block system devised to encourage parish communications and interrelations.
 - c. Assessing regularly the need for a parish census.
 11. To collaborate with the parish life committee in providing organized hospitality and orientation for new parishioners. (1.4)
 12. To evaluate stewardship on a regular basis to ensure its viability.
 13. To select a member of the committee to be an ex-officio voting member of the pastoral council.

D. Social Justice Committee

Note: At times, parishes within a cluster may wish to delegate various standing committees to the cluster pastoral council. This is encouraged in order to maximize the gifts and talents of individuals within the cluster and to enhance opportunities within the cluster. The only exception would be the finance council that is required of every parish.

Section A. Purpose

1. To continue the ministry of Jesus by service to marginalized persons and persons with special needs.
2. To promote and coordinate programs which will promote justice and charity in full measure to all of God's children.
3. To provide opportunities for parishioners to respond to the social needs of today.

Section B. Membership

1. Appointed and/or volunteer according to the bylaws of the local pastoral council constitution.
2. Demonstrated interest in justice, in serving the needy, and in promoting respect for all persons.

Section C. Functions

1. To study the papal encyclicals and statements of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and of the Iowa Catholic Conference which: (1.8)
 - a. Describe our Catholic social teachings.
 - b. Assist us in advocating for just public policies by discerning the questions and the viable options.
2. To educate toward the realization that baptism calls each person to care for the needs of the universal Church and the world. (1.8, 4.1)
3. To educate and motivate parishioners about issues relating to justice, peace, hunger, the marginalized. (1.8)
4. To organize avenues for parishioners to respond directly to local needs. (1.8)
5. To coordinate and advocate for parish service programs and mission projects, e.g., parish twinning or partnership programs which promote solidarity, Thanksgiving clothing drive, local food collections for the poor, special collections for the poor and for emergency disaster relief, the semiannual Our Call to Share collections for national and international organizations sponsored by the USCCB, etc. (1.8, 4.1)
6. To be apprised of programs and resources available through Catholic Charities, the Archdiocesan Office of Hispanic Ministry, the Rural Life Conference, as well as Internet connections which can assist in education and networking, and also of the efforts for legislative advocacy coordinated by the Iowa Catholic Conference and the offices of the USCCB. (1.8)
7. To promote systemic change by informing and empowering parishioners to use principles of community organizing. These principles promote awareness of poverty, social analysis, and grassroots organizing so that the dignity and rights of each person may be preserved by social and religious institutions. (1.8)

8. To practice social justice through direct service, through policy formation, advocacy, and any other means which promote justice and peace. (1.8)
9. To communicate the work of the committee to the pastoral council via written report or liaison.

E. Parish Life Committee

Note: At times, parishes within a cluster may wish to delegate various standing committees to the cluster pastoral council. This is encouraged in order to maximize the gifts and talents of individuals within the cluster and to enhance opportunities within the cluster. The only exception would be the finance council that is required of every parish.

Section A. Purpose

1. To offer welcome to new parishioners and to foster a sense of belonging for all parishioners.
2. To provide activities which both build and strengthen community within the parish and in its outreach efforts.
3. To assist the pastor or parish life coordinator, pastoral associate and/or parish nurse in the pastoral care of the parish community.

Section B. Membership

1. Parishioners who are genuinely convinced that the hospitality of the parish is an essential form of stewardship and evangelization.
2. Parishioners who are able to engage others for the “nuts and bolts” work of this committee.

Section C. Functions

1. To research and utilize various events (picnics, dances, potlucks, coffee and donuts after liturgies) and forms of communication (parish newsletters and Web pages) for building and maintaining community. (1.4, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2)
2. To collaborate with all committees by providing the hospitality which makes gatherings welcoming and community-building. (1.2, 1.4, 1.7)
3. To establish small Christian communities (e.g., parish area or block system) to encourage deeper parish interrelations. (1.3, 2.1)
4. To strengthen and support couples in their marriages by providing enrichment activities, events, and resources. (2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5)
5. To help strengthen family life within the parish community by encouraging church activities and events which are family-centered at all stages of the family life cycle. (1.3, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 3.4, 4.1, 4.3)
 - a. Young adults before marriage.
 - b. Newly married.
 - c. Families with small children.
 - d. Families with adolescents.
 - e. Launching children and moving on.
 - f. Couples later in life—senior adults.
6. To provide outreach and resources to nontraditional families. (1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)
 - a. Singles.
 - b. Separated and divorced.
 - c. Widows and widowers.
7. To collaborate with the pastor or parish life coordinator, pastoral associate and/or parish nurse to offer pastoral care to various members who are hurting by:
 - a. Planning and supporting a parish visitation program to elderly, homebound, sick and dying. (1.4, 2.1, 4.2)

- b. Planning and supporting a parish bereavement ministry—funeral dinners, grief support, etc. (1.4, 2.1, 4.2)
- 8. To be inclusive and supportive of minority groups, multicultural diverse, and marginalized members. (1.8, 2.1)
- 9. To communicate the work of the committee to the pastoral council via written report or liaison.

F. Finance Council

Norms for Finance Councils

(Promulgated by Archbishop Hanus on March 14, 2008)

Preamble

In the spirit of canon 537 mandating that every parish have a finance council, the Parish of _____ establishes this finance council to work in collaboration with the standing committees of the pastoral council, with the following distinct purposes and responsibilities. This finance council is a body appointed by the pastor/parish life coordinator. The finance council presents its recommendations to the pastoral council for consideration and final approval.

Section A. Purpose

The finance council has as its primary purpose to support the parish participation in the fourfold mission of Jesus Christ to celebrate faith, proclaim the Gospel, build community, and serve the needy.

The finance council serves as an advisory body to the pastor/parish life coordinator and the pastoral council regarding the administration and stewardship of human resources, parish facilities, and parish finances, including the annual budget and long-range financial development. The finance council is a consultative body that enables the parish to live its mission by prudent and lawful stewardship of all resources.

The finance council has as its responsibility the obligation of planning, providing for, and supervising the financial affairs and the physical properties of the parish. It is concerned with the budget, stewardship, church support, and the effective utilization and maintenance of the parish plant. This council provides the necessary administrative and financial skills needed to sustain the mission and ongoing development of the parish community.

The members of the finance council work in communion with the pastor/parish life coordinator and the pastoral council of the parish to accomplish the mission of the Church as articulated in the parish mission statement. The finance council assists the pastor/parish life coordinator in the appropriate administration and stewardship of parish facilities, finances, and personnel for the purpose of supporting the parish and of furthering its mission.

Section B. Membership

1. Parishioners who are knowledgeable of and interested in the field of administration and finance are ideal candidates for membership on the council, such as successful business persons and farmers, lawyers, accountants, bookkeepers, and individuals knowledgeable in fund-raising, financial planning, building maintenance, human resources, stewardship, and construction.
2. Three to seven members appointed by the pastor/parish life coordinator constitute the membership of the finance council.

3. The term of appointed members is three years. Members serve at the discretion of the pastor/parish life coordinator, but no member shall serve more than two terms consecutively. Appointments should be staggered to provide for continuity on the finance council.
4. The officers of the finance council are the chair, the vice-chair, and the secretary. Officers are elected annually. The chair is an *ex officio* voting member of the pastoral council.
5. The finance council may establish task forces or committees to assist with the business of the finance council (e.g., budget, buildings and grounds, human resources, project committees). Given the nature of the matters handled by the finance council, it may often be desirable to have long-term continuity of involvement by certain individuals who possess the skills and intimate understanding of the business and/or financial affairs of the parish. Accordingly, former finance council members are eligible to serve on task forces and committees established by the finance council.

Section C. Functions

1. To develop policies and procedural recommendations which exercise financial stewardship and ensure that the financial policies and procedures of the parish are in accord with civil and canon law, Archdiocesan policies, and the Internal Control Guidelines of the Archdiocese. (1.5)
2. To research, prepare, and submit to the pastoral council an annual budget, ensuring that financial resources and goals are compatible, based on stewardship and the parish mission. (1.5)
3. To collaborate with local and/or regional boards of education and formation in the development of the education budget in accord with the Archdiocesan Catholic School Board and Archdiocesan Faith Formation Commission policies and procedures. (1.5, 2.3)
4. To provide to the pastoral council monthly or quarterly reports on the financial condition of the parish, including the results of operations in comparison to the budget, and to make recommendations as needed. (1.5)
5. To verify that required financial reports are prepared and submitted to the Archdiocese.
6. To provide to the parish a printed financial report at least annually and highlight salient points of this report by an oral summary to the congregation as needed. (1.5)
7. To develop and recommend parish personnel policies including employment agreements and salary/benefits packages. (1.5, 3.1)
8. To assist in establishing effective means of raising the funds needed to attain the goals of the parish. (1.5)
9. To develop local procedures for handling and coordinating all fund-raising not part of the regular parish budget. (1.5)
10. To make recommendations, jointly with the stewardship committee, regarding the increase of revenues and the stewardship of resources. (1.5)
11. To propose a long-range plan for capital expenditures which is aligned with the parish mission. (1.5)
12. To propose a long-range plan for risk management and preventive maintenance of all parish properties. (1.5)
13. To periodically inspect all parish properties in order to ensure that more immediate necessary repairs and improvements are included and completed. (1.5)
14. To maintain and present to the pastoral council a priority checklist and timetable for major repairs, renovations, and construction. (1.5)

Section D. Qualities/Expectations of Appointed Members

1. Be registered Catholic parishioners.
2. Possess integrity and maintain confidentiality.
3. View membership as a ministry of service without any vested or reciprocal interest.
4. Possess a working knowledge of at least one of the following: financial affairs, building maintenance, construction, law, insurance, human resources, fund-raising, marketing, stewardship.
5. Have a clear understanding of the parish mission.
6. Have the ability to be collaborative.
7. Attend meetings regularly and complete tasks as assigned.

Section E. Procedures

1. The finance council holds regular meetings and convenes for work sessions as needed. A simple majority of the finance council shall constitute a quorum. The presence of the pastor/parish life coordinator is required at regular meetings to hear the discussion and understand the recommendations of the finance council.
2. Minutes of all meetings are to be properly recorded and duly maintained in the parish archives.
3. Recommendations will normally be determined by consensus, except when a formal vote is necessary.

Following the recommendations for approval made by the Priests' Council, the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, the Archdiocesan Board of Education, and the Archdiocesan Finance Council, these norms are approved and promulgated this 14th day of March, 2008, with an effective date of July 1, 2008. Pastors should use their discretion in making the transition from present membership and terms to the new arrangements. The transition should be completed by June 30, 2010.

PART III

RESOURCES

I. Consensus Decision-Making

A. Rationale

Parliamentary procedure and *Robert's Rules of Order* have been used for decades when making decisions. When the issue at hand involves routine and/or less important matters, a vote is a clear, decisive, and noncontentious approach to decision-making. When the issue at hand is something that is major, something that will have serious consequences for the entire parish, voting is often not quite so clear and decisive. Rather, voting can in such cases draw clear lines between “winners” and “losers.” And these lines may continue beyond the meeting room and become quite widespread in a parish community for many months, even years. Using consensus decision-making helps prevent such division.

Consensus decision-making allows all aspects of an issue and possible solutions to be heard and considered. The decision that results is a group choice that all members feel is the most operable under the circumstances. It may be no one's first choice, but it might well be many people's second or third choice. And even if it is a “new choice,” reached through the discussion and consensus process, it is the choice that will work best at the time, because it will have the strongest ownership by the decision makers. Given the human condition, we cannot expect to arrive at the “perfect choice” every time.

In consensus decision-making there is no actual vote. Consensus is achieved when everyone can live with the decision and support it. This requires that each member offer input, listen closely to the discussion, become aware of and focus on areas of agreement, ask clarifying questions, and treat seriously any offerings by members. The chair is careful to elicit comments from each participant.

The advantage to consensus is that a person who has not agreed with a proposal as stated may begin to consciously change his/her position, not just in order to comply or get it over with but because there has been every opportunity to hear the suggestions of others and to consider options. The process of reaching consensus may affect the modification of a proposal so that it now may seem closer to the original position of a person who initially disagreed with it! True consensus, then, furthers unity within the parish because everyone can claim some ownership of a proposal.

A decision by vote, on the other hand, might leave some people frustrated, angry, and possibly even uncooperative in implementing the conclusion. In consensus, these same people, after weighing all options, come to consciously support the conclusion because they have listened and been listened to and can now claim ownership of the final statement.

The goal of consensus decision-making, however, is broader than merely arriving at a decision. Its goal is to bring as many people as possible on board with the decision. No decision is workable when a large minority of people who oppose it remain opposed or have only reluctantly agreed. It is far more desirable and productive to have a modified decision that has been arrived at through consensus.

B. What Makes Consensus Decision-Making Work?

It is good policy to insist that people never be asked to reach a decision on an important issue at the same meeting at which it is first presented to them. Rather, each major proposal is submitted in writing to the council members *at least* a week prior to the meeting at which it will be discussed. Background reading material and other information are made available at the same time.

Members come to the meeting prepared. They have read the material, formed an initial opinion, and perhaps have even created an alternate proposal. During the meeting, members state their opinions and their reasons. They listen carefully to one another, ask clarifying questions, and keep in mind areas of agreement and of difference.

In the event that consensus is not attained after all opinions are initially offered, alternate proposals are posted to determine whether a trend can be observed. When a majority trend has developed, it is essential that those sharing the majority opinion give careful consideration to the proposed alternatives since the support of the entire council is the ultimate goal.

The chair of the council is responsible for leading the council members to a consensus. This is achieved by:

- Summarizing what was heard.
- Highlighting the commonalities and the areas of difference.
- Asking questions such as:
 - Who can offer a suggestion to move away from one or two of the differences and toward a consensus?
 - Given what is heard, is it possible to move in a different direction?

Open and honest communication is necessary in developing consensus. It is not helpful for members to simply “agree” with major proposals just in order to avoid conflict. It is expected that council members will disagree on occasion, but consensus can prevent them from becoming disagreeable or argumentative.

Consensus holds the hope that after people have had a fair opportunity to express opinions and options, the council will opt for supporting a common conclusion. This enables the minority to now own the decision, making the resolution all the more effective.

However, the concerns of the minority should never be lost. Respect for minority concerns will help make for a smooth implementation of a consensus decision that does not include the concerns themselves but which are not just forgotten or discarded forever. Respect for minority concerns makes room for them to resurface in a new form at some future point.

C. FAQ: The Consensus Process²⁰

1. What is consensus?

- Consensus is a group process for decision-making in which all come to a common understanding and agree to support the decision of the whole.

2. What are the *non-negotiables* of consensus?
 - Prayer.
 - Seeking the will of God, not “my” will.
 - Mutual trust among persons making the decision.
 - Honoring the teachings of the Scriptures and the Church.
3. What is *not* involved in consensus?
 - Majority rule (no votes are taken).
 - Compromise (people don’t give in to keep the peace).
 - Competition (there are no winners or losers).
 - Quick decisions (working through to consensus takes time).
 - Dependence on the leader (all engage in the discussion and come to a decision).
4. What are the four steps of the consensus process?
 - a. Input.
 - The issue is clearly stated.
 - The background information is presented.
 - An opportunity is given for clarifications to be made.
 - b. Discussion.
 - The facilitator introduces the issue; others respond. The facilitator keeps the discussion on the issue.
 - When most viewpoints have been expressed, the facilitator tests for consensus.
 - c. Reflection.
 - Is the proposal supported by the Gospel?
 - In light of the parish mission statement, will this be good for the entire parish?
 - Can each of us live with this and support this?
 - d. Review.
 - Summarize the issues, basic background, areas of agreement and disagreement, statement of consensus reached.
 - If there is no consensus, continue to discuss the problem areas.
5. What can be done when consensus is difficult to reach?
 - If the discussion is “going around in circles,” drop the matter and continue the meeting. Return to the issue later.
 - If any information seems to be missing, do further research and gather more data before trying to complete the consensus process. Postpone further discussion until all have had the opportunity for prayer and reflection.
6. What if I’m the only person who is outside the circle of agreement?
 - Are you considering what is best for all?
 - Do you understand all the data presented?
 - Have you carefully justified your reasons for disagreeing?
 - Can you say, “Well, I don’t agree completely, but I see the validity of your position, and I can live with that”?
7. When should our council use a formal consensus process?
 - Use when discerning major decisions that are intended to establish goals and objectives for the future.
 - Don’t use with regard to operational issues or day-to-day decisions.

8. What attitudes are helpful and harmful to the process?
 - Helpful attitudes are openness, honesty, respect for the truth in everyone, patience, enthusiastic support for outcome—often a brand new idea.
 - Harmful attitudes are rigidity of opinions, hostile or suspicious attitude, determination to win, sabotaging the process. “Why do we have to do it this way?”

II. Suggestions for Prayer at Council Meetings

1. Sometimes it may be helpful to light a candle and position the Mission Statement beside it and/or to include a religious symbol (a crucifix, a small statue, a picture) that creates an atmosphere for and an invitation to prayer.
2. It is helpful to begin with the Sign of the Cross and then to ask members to quiet themselves, setting aside the concerns of the day and becoming attentive to the Spirit within them. After a pause, pray aloud for the guidance of the Spirit.
3. Faith-sharing is an important element of any group prayer, particularly for a pastoral council. The Stewardship Office prepares a monthly faith-sharing guide which can be found on the Archdiocesan Web site.
4. Occasionally the council might pray from the Liturgy of Hours. Take time after the reading to share reflections on the Scripture.
5. Scriptural faith-sharing can be based on the readings of the following Sunday or on any appropriate Scriptural text.
 - Have someone read a pre-chosen text.
 - After a pause for silent reflection, ask members to share what challenge this reading offers them, what action it will cause them to take, etc.
 - Move to shared prayer, which can include petitions for the various needs of the parish and prayers of thanksgiving for the gifts God gives us.
 - Conclude with an Our Father or with a hymn.
6. Excellent resources for Scriptural faith-sharing on the Sunday readings can be found at the following Web sites:
 - www.liturgy.slu.edu
 - www.Creighton.edu/collaborativeministry/daily.html

III. Selecting Parish Pastoral Council Members²¹

The pastoral council makes recommendations for the good of the entire parish community. Therefore its membership must include a broad cross section of the parish community relative to age, gender, skills, and talents.

A. Criteria for Selection of Council Members

- Baptized, confirmed, and participating in Sunday liturgies.
- Registered in the parish.

B. Desirable Personal Characteristics

- Enthusiastic vision about the future direction of the parish.
- A desire for personal spiritual growth and for the spiritual growth of the parish community.
- The ability to inspire, empower, and delegate to others.
- Flexibility, openness, and tolerance for people and ideas.
- The willingness to listen and speak openly.
- The ability to work toward consensus.
- The ability to maintain confidentiality when necessary.

C. Responsibilities of a Council Member

- Make a three-year commitment to membership.
- Work with the pastor/parish life coordinator and with other council members to set goals and objectives for the future direction of the parish.
- Be actively involved as a leader in parish life and development.
- Offer active and prepared participation in the meetings of the council.

Pastoral Council Identification Form

Our parish needs faith-filled leadership to help make decisions about our pastoral life and to envision our future. Please identify persons in this parish community who could help us to develop these key elements of parish life:

- Evangelization
- Worship
- Word
- Service
- Community
- Stewardship
- Leadership

Persons whom you identify below will receive a call to inform them that they have been suggested, and they will be asked to participate in an information session. They will have the option of remaining in the selection process or of declining.

Note: You are welcome to identify yourself as a person who fulfills the needed qualities.

Identification Form for Leadership Ministry

I suggest the following individual(s) to be considered for service on our pastoral council.
I will pray to the Holy Spirit during the selection process.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

IV. The Mission Statement: A Guide to Its Development

A. Introduction

Since the process of developing or affirming a mission statement takes time, it is strongly recommended that this be the focus of a leadership day/evening, to which other interested parishioners are also invited. Planners for this session will find it helpful to have available the projected demographics for the geographic area in which the parish exists, as well as other relevant data.

It would be helpful to have participants prepare for this session by finding in the Gospels some things that Jesus said and did which indicate what a parish is to be and do (Matthew 5:2-10; Luke 4:16-19; Acts 2:42-47).

It is also recommended that the opening prayer set a tone of openness to the Spirit and to one another. Some of the suggested Scripture passages above might be used.

B. Reviewing a Current Mission Statement

If a current mission statement is to be reviewed and affirmed, questions such as the following may be asked:

1. When was the mission statement created?
2. To what degree was the parish community involved in shaping this statement?
3. How much does the mission statement influence current parish life?
4. Is the mission statement in keeping with the diocesan mission and the seven essential elements of parish life?²²
5. Are present strengths and needs of the parish reflected in the mission statement?
6. Does the mission statement still serve as the foundation for the pastoral plan of the parish?

The responses to the above questions provide the basis for a decision about whether the mission statement can be affirmed as is or whether it first needs some revision.

C. Guide to Writing a New Mission Statement

1. Gathering Preliminary Information - Materials Needed
 - a. Each person: Several pieces of smaller white paper (2a below).
 - b. For each person: Several pieces of two colors of paper, each color a half-page (2b and 2c below).
 - c. Tape or other means of affixing the papers to a wall.
 - d. Several sheets of paper, normal size (2f and 2g below).
2. Procedure
 - a. Ask each person to respond to the question: What are my core values as a Catholic person?
 - Write each core value on a separate piece of paper.
 - Note: The response can be a single word, or at the most a simple phrase, but definitely not sentences or paragraphs.

- b. Using a colored sheet of paper, each person responds to the question: What would be core values for a Catholic parish?
 - Write each core value on a separate piece of paper.
 - Again, use single words or simple phrases.
- c. Using a sheet of paper of another color, each person responds to the question: What is this parish called to be and to do? Consider:
 - The values to which parishes are called by the Gospel.
 - The needs of the neighborhood in which the parish exists.
 - My core values.
- d. Write each idea on a separate piece of paper.
- e. Be as succinct as possible, using only words or phrases.
- f. Now place all the responses on the wall, grouped according to the colors of paper.
 - View each of the three groups separately and remove duplicates.
 - Then place similar and related responses next to each other.
- g. Now, as a large group, develop some summary statements for each group of colored papers.

Note: Doing Steps f and g in the large group may seem cumbersome, but it enables persons to hear each other's ideas and reasons, and thus helps everyone to learn from the whole process and to have ownership for the final statement.

D. Formulating the Mission Statement

1. Materials needed: The summary statements from each of the above three groupings.
2. Procedure
 - a. Using the summary statements, select the key phrases or the verbs of each statement and formulate a single, cohesive statement that expresses these ideas. If this cannot be done, then the statement will be too complicated to be understood and too impractical for implementation.
 - b. Examples:
 - Satisfactory mission statement: The mission of (Name) Parish is to invite, empower, and support faithful followers of Jesus Christ who will worship God and share Christ's love and truth from (City) to the ends of the earth.
 - Unsatisfactory mission statement: The mission of (Name) Parish is to make disciples of Jesus Christ among multiple target groups by developing networks of ministry teams committed to seeker-sensitive large group celebration, small group nurture, and individual mentoring. Together we will model authentic Christianity through God, honoring worship, Biblical integrity, prayer, grace-filled relationships, and total life stewardship.

Note: This statement is too complex and too long. However, it does, in fact, offer good suggestions for the work of committees or groups within the parish.
 - c. When the mission statement is complete, share it with the entire parish by all available means.

E. Actualizing the Mission

The next step is to say: How will we accomplish this mission?

1. Goals - The mission statement comes to life when a group establishes clear goals to actualize the mission in an orderly fashion. Goals are well defined and attainable. An annual evaluation of goals determines whether or not a goal has been completed, because goals have measurable outcomes and clear time lines. "Goals deal with strengthening existing programs or charting new programs, not merely with continuing existing activities. Goals are statements of what the parish wants to achieve in the coming three to five years."²³ It is the responsibility of the council to set goals and to share these goals with the parish.
2. Objectives
 - a. Objectives are short, simple statements of how a goal is to be carried out. They specify exactly what is to be done, who is responsible, and when it is to be completed. Normally, objectives can be accomplished within a year, allowing another phase of the goal to be addressed each year of its existence.
 - b. Objectives are developed by each committee according to its designated area of responsibility. The council reviews and confirms the objectives of the committees according to whether or not they move the goals forward.
3. Implementation and Evaluation. Plans for implementation incorporate target dates, and a date for evaluation is determined accordingly.

F. The Future

The mission statement and the ways in which it can be actualized will remain effective only if they are regularly updated.

G. Suggested Avenues of Communication

1. Parish assemblies
2. Flyers
3. Bulletin announcements
4. Announcements at Mass
5. Joint meetings with individual parish committees
6. Renewal of stewardship commitments
7. Parish celebrations
8. Parish Web site(s)

H. Resources for Gathering Data

The following types of information form a basis for the pastoral planning process. Much of this information is already part of the annual report to the Archdiocese. It is helpful to review records of the past five or ten years to obtain a picture of whether the parish is growing, declining, or changing in any way, and whether it is maintaining itself throughout the years. Additionally, since the parish exists in a larger neighborhood, information gathered on the community in which the parish is located is especially helpful.

1. Parish Statistics²⁴ - A few examples of the kinds of information to gather are:
 - Mass attendance and Mass schedule.
 - Sacramental statistics: baptisms, funerals, confirmations, marriages.

- Parish census figures: numbers of families, age distribution, widowed persons, primary language spoken, etc.
 - Attendance in Catholic and public schools.
 - Religious education participation.
 - A count of children who are not in either religious education or the Catholic school.
 - Pastoral responsibilities for hospitals, nursing homes, or other facilities.
 - Parish staffing.
 - Liturgical, educational, and service ministries.
 - Active parish organizations.
 - Activities and traditions.
 - Fund-raising efforts.
 - Parish financial statements.
 - Analysis of average giving in the parish.
 - Budget, savings, and indebtedness.
 - Condition and maintenance costs of buildings.
2. Assessment of the present situation of the parish can be accomplished through:
 - A broad survey of parishioners with questions such as:
 - What do you like about our parish?
 - What would you like to see happen in our parish?
 - An assessment of the seven elements of parish life (Evangelization, Worship, Word, Community, Service, Stewardship, Leadership)
 3. Review of the larger community can include the following types of information:
 - Total current population of the local area.
 - Population projections.
 - Income and employment statistics.
 - Types and numbers of housing units.
 - Ethnic information.
 - Total school-age population.
 - Names of civic and service organizations.

I. Other information

It is also important to identify any ecumenical involvement, interparochial collaboration, sharing of resources, or cooperative agreements involving other parishes.

V. Relationship of Pastoral Councils to Civil Corporation

Section A: Civil Incorporation

Each Roman Catholic parish in the Archdiocese of Dubuque is incorporated as a separate corporation pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 504, Code of Iowa, as amended.

Section B: Board of Directors of the Corporation

1. Each corporation has five directors. The Archbishop, the Vicar General, the pastor/parish life coordinator, and two lay members appointed by the Archbishop. These lay directors are the chair of the pastoral council and the chair of the finance council.
2. Three directors of the board of directors are ex-officio: the Archbishop, President; the Vicar General, Vice-President; the pastor/parish life coordinator, Secretary-Treasurer.

Section C: Responsibilities of the Corporation

1. Take charge of, hold, and manage all of the temporal affairs of the Catholic Church in the parish.
2. Promote the spiritual, educational, and other interests of said Catholic Church therein, including all the charitable and benevolent work of said Church therein.
3. Take charge of, hold, and manage all the property, personal and real, that may at any time or in any manner come to or vest in this corporation for any purpose whatever, whether by purchase, gift, grant, devise, or otherwise.
4. Sell the same, mortgage, or otherwise dispose of it as the necessities of said corporation may require, all under the patronage, control, direction, and supervision of the Roman Catholic Church.
5. Have such other powers as are conferred by Chapter 504A, Code of Iowa, of the Iowa Non-Profit Corporation Act, as amended from time to time (or the corresponding provisions of any future Non-Profit Corporation Act).

Section D: Corporation Board Actions

1. Transactions for which the Restated Articles of Incorporation specifically require action by the board of directors include the contraction of debts and the disposition of real estate. Debts are understood here to include expenditures for capital improvements, equipment, or renovation.
2. The Articles also specify that a majority of the members of the board of directors may approve and authorize debts of the corporation in amounts not to exceed the amount specified by the Archdiocesan Finance Council, an advisory group to the Archbishop. Debts of the corporation in excess of that amount may be authorized only with the unanimous approval of the directors.
3. No real estate belonging to the corporation shall be sold, mortgaged, encumbered, or otherwise disposed of in any manner without the unanimous approval of all members of the board of directors.
4. Matters which under the civil or church law require the approval of or action by the board of directors of the parish corporation are submitted to the same. Such actions are not valid or binding without proper approval or action by the board of directors of the parish corporation.

VI. Primary Tasks of Catechesis (Faith Formation)²⁵

Promotion of Knowledge of the Faith. The first task is to “promote knowledge of the faith,” when one chooses to have a relationship with another person, there is an overwhelming desire to be with the person in order to know more about the person. An aspect of knowledge is the opportunity to have God’s good news proclaimed in order to hear and know of Christ’s life, teachings, mission, and ministry. With the hearing often comes a conversion and desire for becoming a disciple of Christ. Catechesis responds to the desire of discipleship and the desire to “know more” by giving children and adults the content of God’s self revelation in a special way through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition and through the basic beliefs expressed in the Creed as outlined in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC). This “Knowledge of Faith” for the K-12 programs in the Archdiocese is defined in the *Basic Elements of Catholic Faith Formation* for the religious education programs and the *Religion Standards* for Catholic schools.

Liturgical Education. A primary task of authentic catechesis is to promote meaningful participation in liturgical worship and the sacramental life of the Church. The seven sacraments recognized by the Catholic Church were instituted and have their foundation in the life of Jesus Christ (CCC, 1114-15). The sacraments are signs and celebrations of significant times in which God’s grace and love are most prominently made visible in a ritualized and public manner with and in the Christian community. The Church celebrates in the liturgy, particularly the Eucharist, the sacrament of all sacraments (CCC, 1211), the Paschal mystery (passion, death, resurrection) by which Christ accomplished the work of salvation. Good catechesis can provide learners with an understanding of how the sacraments touch all the stages and important moments of Christian life and are means for encountering the living Christ. The whole liturgical year and all its parts with its rich text, symbols and rituals provide opportunities for children and adults to more fully experience the richness of God’s grace.

Moral Formation. A third component necessary for authentic and complete catechesis is the promotion of moral formation in Jesus Christ. Catechesis needs to be rich in the content of Christ’s moral teachings and delivered in ways that have practical implications and applications for daily living. Part Three of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches about the dignity of the human person whose vocation is one of “holiness” and of being in “right relationship” with God and others. When questioned about the greatest commandment, Jesus said: “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. . . . The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39). Jesus gave further “attitudes” to his followers to live by in His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5). The Beatitudes serve as benchmarks for all faith-filled persons as to how they should live. The CCC presents the Church’s social teachings as an essential part of the moral teaching of the Church. These teachings are founded in the life and words of Jesus Christ, who came “. . . to bring glad tidings to the poor . . . liberty to the captives . . . recovery of the sight to the blind” (Luke 4:18-19). Are the elements of moral formation delivered in everyday examples and expectations part of each program?

Teaching to Pray. A fourth component of authentic and complete catechesis is to teach individuals how to pray with Christ. As stated in the *National Directory for Catechesis* (NDC n. 34), “Prayer is the basis and expression of the vital and personal relationship of a human

person with the living and true God.” Just as food is needed for one’s physical well-being, so is prayer necessary for one’s spiritual nourishment and well-being. The Catechism states that “God tirelessly calls each person to that mysterious encounter known as prayer.” The invitation comes from God. By grace a person responds by surrendering to this incomprehensible gift of revelation where the Holy Spirit reveals the identity of the Triune God and the identity of human persons to themselves. Catechesis for prayer includes liturgical and personal prayer and leading persons and communities to a deeper faith life. The NDC further states that “catechesis for prayer emphasizes the major purposes for prayer—adoration, thanksgiving, petition, and contrition and includes various prayer forms: communal prayer, private prayer, traditional prayer, spontaneous prayer, gesture, song, meditation, and contemplation. Catechesis for prayer accompanies a person’s continual growth in faith. It is most effective when the catechist is a prayerful person who is comfortable leading others to prayer and to participation in liturgical worship.”

Education for Community Life. A fifth task of catechesis is preparation of the Christian to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church. From the very beginning of time, humans were created to be in relationship with God and one another. Christ established the importance to community when he invited the twelve to come follow Him with the command to “love one another.” It is through this love and the sacrament of initiation, Baptism, that one gains an identity as a disciple of Christ. Baptism is a sacrament of belonging—to God and to the parish community. Just as it takes a whole village to raise a child, it takes the whole Catholic community/parish to form its baptized members in a life of prayer, social and sacramental celebrations, and beliefs. It is the responsibility of the parish to share with its members the faith and the teachings of Christ about community life: simplicity, humility, solidarity with and concern for the poor, common prayer, mutual forgiveness, and fraternal love (NDC, n. 20, #5).

Missionary Initiation. The sixth task of catechesis is the promotion of a missionary spirit that prepares the faithful to be present as Christians in society; simply put, to live according to what is believed. This “missionary spirit” is seen as an outcome of the other tasks of catechesis, all leading toward discipleship with Jesus. Christians are to be actively engaged in daily life with a burning missionary spirit. Christians are to be harbingers, or messengers, of hope in a world that is often disheartened because of isolation, poverty, disease, abuse, addictions, and violence. Promoting a missionary spirit involves evangelization including reaching out to others in one’s own family and beyond. The good news of salvation needs to be echoed in all “spaces of life” including office cubicles, factories, hospitals, prisons, universities, gated communities, inner-city streets, homeless shelters, a teenager’s room, and any place people work, play, or live (see NDC, n.17D). The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy (CCC, 2447) provide a means for addressing the needs of our sisters and brothers in Christ and for fulfilling the mission of the Church.

VII. Areas of Catechesis (Faith Formation)²⁶

Infants and Children—Persons from infancy through 5th grade, approximately age 11. Parents are the most effective catechists of prayer for their young children. Children of school age should receive formal and systematic catechesis in a parish-based catechetical program, a Catholic school, or a program of home-based catechesis in which the content of the faith and the experience of Christian life is presented authentically and completely.

Adolescent—Persons from middle school (6th grade) through high school; in general, ages 12-17. The most effective catechetical programs of pastoral ministry for adolescents are integrated into a comprehensive program of pastoral ministry for youth that includes catechesis, community life, evangelization, justice and service, leadership development, pastoral care, and prayer and worship.

Young Adult—Persons in their late teens, twenties, and early thirties who represent diverse cultural, racial, ethnic, educational, vocational, social, political, and spiritual backgrounds. The most effective catechesis for young adults is integrated into a comprehensive program of pastoral care that understands the concerns of young adults and candidly addresses the questions they ask and the problems they face. The goals of a catechetical program for young adults are to connect them to Jesus Christ, the Church and its mission, and to their peer community.

Adult—Persons in their late thirties through late sixties. The catechesis of adults is the principal form of catechesis because it is addressed to persons who have the greatest responsibilities and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form. It is essential for the Church to carry out the commission given the apostles by Christ. Adult catechesis should be the organizing principle around which all other catechetical programs revolve. The goals are to enable adults to acquire an attitude of conversion to the Lord, to help them to make a conscious and firm decision to live the gift and choice of faith, and to help them become more willing and able to be a Christian disciple in the world.

Elderly—Persons in their seventies and older. The catechesis of older people takes into account the significant contributions they make to the entire community through their wisdom and witness. It pays particular attention to the maturity of their faith. Catechesis for older people should help develop an attitude of thanksgiving and hopeful expectation. It should also offer a new opportunity to see the light of the Gospel for those who have not practiced their faith as well as they might have.

Persons with Disabilities—Persons with cognitive disabilities, the emotionally disturbed, persons with physical disabilities, the hard of hearing, the deaf, the visually impaired, the blind, and others. Persons with disabilities should be integrated into ordinary catechetical programs as much as possible. Catechesis for persons with disabilities is most effective when it is carried out within the general pastoral care of the community. Catechesis for some persons with disabilities requires more personalization and must be adapted in content and method to their particular situations. Specialized catechists should help them interpret the meaning of their lives and give witness to Christ's presence in the local community in ways they can understand and appreciate.

Marginalized—Persons who are neglected or rejected by society due to race, ethnicity, economic status, mental or physical capability, personal conduct, etc. Catechetical programs for the marginalized can be adapted to the specific needs of those being catechized in language that can be easily understood. The most effective catechesis for persons in special situations is integrated into a comprehensive pastoral ministry for and with them. This catechesis should be developed in consultation with those for whom it is intended. It aims to help them respond to God’s uniquely personal love for them within the context of their special situation.

Source: *National Directory for Catechesis*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005.

PART IV

ENDNOTES

PART I - General

I. The History of Parish Pastoral Councils: A Summary

¹Acts of the Apostles 2:42-47.

²Flannery, Austin, O.P., General Editor, Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, “Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity” (New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1975), Chapter V, §26.

³Canon Law Society of America (hereafter, CLSA), Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Edition (Washington, DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1999), canon 511.

⁴CLSA, canon 536.

⁵CLSA, canon 204.

⁶CLSA, cf. canon 511.

⁷Gubish, Mary Ann, and Susan Jenny, SC, *Revisioning the Parish Pastoral Council* (New York: Paulist Press, 2001), 4-6.

⁸CLSA, canon 536.

⁹CLSA, cf. canon 511.

¹⁰CLSA, canon 536.

¹¹Archdiocese of Dubuque, *Vision 2000* (1999), 8.2.

II. The Pastoral Council as Spiritual Leaders

¹²General Directory for Catechesis, Congregation for the Clergy, USCCB, Washington, D.C. 1998, #53.

¹³Stewardship: A Disciples Response, 10th Anniversary Edition, USCCB, Washington, DC 2002, pg. 14.

¹⁴Gubish, 17.

III. The Seven Elements of Parish Life

¹⁵Gubish, 63.

¹⁶Gubish, 63.

¹⁷Stewardship: A Disciples Response, 10th Anniversary Edition, USCCB, Washington, DC 2002, pg. 31

¹⁸Cf. “The Mission Statement: A Guide to Its Development,” Resources, 107-109.

¹⁹Canon 511.

PART II - Pastoral Councils

No endnotes.

PART III – Resources

I. Consensus Decision-Making

²⁰Gubish, 57-58.

II. Suggestions for Prayer at Council Meetings

No endnotes.

III. Selecting Parish Pastoral Council Members

²¹Gubish, 192.

IV. The Mission Statement: A Guide to Its Development

²²Gubish, 63.

²³Gubish, 95.

²⁴Gubish, 105.

V. Relationship of Pastoral Councils to Civil Corporation

No endnotes.

VI. Primary Tasks of Catechesis (Faith Formation)

²⁵National Directory for Catechesis, USCCB, Washington, DC 2005, 59-63, 187-210.

VII. Areas of Catechesis (Faith Formation)

²⁶National Directory for Catechesis, USCCB, Washington, DC 2005

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New American Bible. Acts of the Apostles, 2:42-47.

Stewardship: A Disciples Response. 10th Anniversary Edition. Washington, DC: USCCB, 2002.

Vision 2000. Archdiocese of Dubuque, 1999.