



Immaculate Conception
Parish
Pastoral Council Constitution

Amended January 24, 2017

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Mission Statement
Immaculate Conception Parish

Rooted in the Gospel of Christ and in the Tradition of Catholicism and under the patronage of Mary Immaculate, we commit ourselves to be a welcoming community of faith, worshiping with generations of believers and serving God in all People.

Promulgated: September 23, 2008
Reviewed: January 24, 2017

ARTICLE I-NAME

The name of this group shall be Immaculate Conception Parish Pastoral Council, referred to hereafter in this Constitution as "the Council."

ARTICLE II-PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL

SECTION 1. PURPOSE OF THE COUNCIL

As a community of worship and service, the members of Immaculate Conception Parish come together to pray, work, and play, sharing their time, talents, and treasure with others. Whenever people come together, there is a need for cooperation, organization, and support if they are to be effective. The role of the Council is to enhance the effectiveness of the parish community by:

- A) Discerning the needs, temporal and religious, of the parish, its people, and the wider community of which the parish is a part, and finding resources to meet those needs.
- B) Providing structure and support that will enable parishioners to engage in their apostolic activity, either as individuals or together as members of groups and organizations.
- C) Providing an open and honest forum of communication and dialogue regarding parish affairs among the Pastor, Parochial Vicar, other religious, pastoral staff, and laity of the parish.
- D) Encouraging a vigorous and effective lay apostolate.

The Council shall review and recommend policy to the Pastor for spiritual, social, educational, and financial matters of the parish in accordance with church law, diocesan policy, and civil law. The authority of the Council is not one of governance, but one of leadership and service.

SECTION 2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL

The Council shall perform the following functions in coordination with the Finance Council and Pastoral Staff

- A) Advise and assist the Pastor with matters pertaining to the activities of the parish, both spiritual and temporal.
- B) Review the needs and goals of the parish with respect to the allotment of personnel, physical, and financial resources.
- C) Assist the parish Director of Liturgy and the Worship Committee in providing dignified and reverent celebration of the sacred liturgy.
- D) Assist in the provision of ongoing religious formation of the parish community.
- E) Facilitate a ministry of service to people in need, and thereby work to establish a more just society.

- F) Provide a consultative overview of the annual parish budget as recommended by the Parish Business Manager and Finance Council.
- G) Monitor the maintenance and upkeep of parish property. Evaluate the need for improvements or enlargements to the property as needed. Obtain diocesan approval as necessary.

Many of these functions will normally be carried out by the various committees or organizations as outlined in Article IV of this constitution. Each of these committees or organizations should have the freedom to discharge its duties fully and in communication with the Pastor/Pastoral Council.

SECTION 3. RELATIONSHIP OF THE COUNCIL AND PASTOR

The relationship between the Pastor and the Council must be one of mutual respect and accord within the gospel command of leadership and love. The Pastor shall seek the advice and recommendations of the Council in matters pertaining to the parish. He shall give due consideration to the advice and recommendations of the Council.

In the event of an irreconcilable conflict between Pastor and Council, arbitrations shall be sought by both. Due process and arbitration processes within the Diocese of Belleville and the Office of the Bishop must be followed. Should one party elect not to seek arbitration, the other may proceed alone.

The Council may be dissolved by the direct action of the Bishop or the Pastor, or by the agreement of both the Pastor and the Council members, or by the decision of the arbitration process of the Diocese of Belleville.

ARTICLE III-REPRESENTATION ON THE COUNCIL

SECTION 1. MEMBERSHIP

- A) Membership
 - 1) Ten members discerned from the parish
 - 2) Two (2) parish lay trustees.
 - 3) The Pastor
 - 4) Pastoral Staff including the Business Manager, Director of Faith Formation, Director of Liturgy, and Director of Music. The PSR Coordinator may attend meetings as needed, and shall be included in the distribution of monthly meeting minutes.
 - 5) Deacons serving the parish
 - 6) School Principal
 - 7) Routine attendees at regular Council meetings include a representative from the School Board.
- B) Voting members of the Council are those members discerned from the parish, and the lay trustees.

- C) All registered Catholic members of the parish who are fully initiated shall be eligible to serve on the Council.
- D) The tenure of office for discerned Council members will be three (3) years.
- E) Discerned members shall not serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms.
- F) The term of office for all newly discerned Council members shall begin just prior to election of officers at the June Council meeting.
- G) The terms of outgoing discerned members will conclude just prior to election of officers at the June Council meeting.
- H) The last item of business at the June Council meeting shall be election of officers by the newly constituted Council. Transfer of records, documents, etc. shall take place following the election of officers.
- I) Shortly after the June Council meeting, the members of the Council will be acknowledged and blessed during one of the regularly scheduled weekend Masses.

SECTION 2. DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE

In January of each year, the Chairperson of the Council shall appoint a Discernment Committee consisting of three (3) voting members of the Council. This committee will be responsible for conducting the annual discernment processes for the Council. One of the three will be designated as the chairperson.

SECTION 3. DISCERNMENT PROCESS (May be performed in conjunction with discernment of new ICS School Board members.)

- A) By the beginning of March, the Council, Pastor, Pastoral Staff, and Discernment Committee will begin the search for new Council members to replace outgoing members. This process will include the solicitation of names for parish leadership from parish organizations, small faith communities, and the parish at large. Individuals will be encouraged to nominate themselves. Each Sunday's Mass will include a prayer for the success of the discernment process and a reminder announcement about the collection of nominations on or before the Second Sunday of April.
- B) During April, the Discernment Committee will contact each person nominated and determine their willingness to serve. If they are willing to serve, they will be given information describing a Councilor's role, responsibilities, and relationships.
- C) The discernment process concludes in May. Unlike a popular election, the new Councilors will be chosen in lottery fashion from a basket containing the names of willing, discerned candidates in the presence of the parish congregation at Mass.

- D) Following the discernment process, newly selected members shall be notified and provided a copy of the Pastoral Council Constitution to review before the June meeting.
- E) The individuals discerned but not chosen will be notified and retained as alternates in the event a Council member(s) cannot complete their term.
- F) Names of all persons chosen and any alternates shall be included in the Minutes of the next Council meeting and in the parish bulletin.

SECTION 4. VACANCIES

- A) Vacancies among the discerned members of the Council may occur due to resignation, death, and removal. Such vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term by a discerned alternate or, if an alternate is not available, may be selected by the Pastor.
- B) A member of the Council may resign by submission of a written resignation to the Secretary of the Council.
- C) Any elected member of the Council may be subject to removal from the Council if said member misses two (2) consecutive meetings without an excuse to the Chairperson, Secretary, or Pastor, or for any other just cause. Removal procedures may be initiated by any Council member at any Council meeting. Prior to the next Council meeting, the Chairperson of the Council will notify the member that removal procedures have been initiated. At the next meeting:
 - 1) The member will be given an opportunity to appear and be heard by the council.
 - 2) A decision to remove shall require a majority vote of all voting Council members.

ARTICLE IV- COMMITTEES AND ORGANIZATIONS

SECTION 1. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the officers of the Council and the Pastor, having such duties and responsibilities as may be delegated to it by the full Council.

It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Committee to coordinate and prepare the agenda for all regular meetings of the Council and to make such agenda available to all Council members prior to the meeting.

SECTION 2. AD-HOC COMMITTEES

The Chairperson and/or Pastor, in consultation with the Council, shall have the responsibility and authority to create any special or temporary committee which may from time to time be deemed necessary.

SECTION 3. SELF-FORMED GROUPS

To be officially recognized as a parish organization, newly self-formed groups are required to obtain approval of the Pastor/Pastoral Council.

ARTICLE V-OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL

SECTION 1. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- A) Election of officers will take place annually at the June meeting. Officers will be elected in the following order:
 - 1) Chairperson
 - 2) Vice Chairperson
 - 3) Secretary

- B) Officers will be chosen from among the Council members who were discerned by the parish. Any Council member can make a nomination. Voting will be by secret ballot. In the event of a tie, balloting will continue until a candidate receives a majority of votes.

- C) The term of offices shall be one (1) year following their election to office. An officer shall not serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office.

- D) In the event of a vacancy in any office except that of Chairperson, the Council shall elect someone from among its membership to fill the office until the next regularly scheduled election. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson shall automatically succeed and complete the unexpired portion of the term.

- E) When their term of office ends, officers will turn over to their successors all papers, correspondence, and other records they have accumulated in their official capacity.

SECTION 2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF OFFICERS

- A) The Chairperson of the Council shall perform the following duties:
 - 1) Work with the Executive Committee of the Council to prepare the agenda for each meeting.
 - 2) Preside at all meetings of the Council.
 - 3) Appoint members of the Discernment Committee.
 - 4) Appoint members of ad-hoc committees as required.
 - 5) Perform all other duties that customarily fall upon the office of Chairperson, not specifically mentioned here.

- B) The Vice Chairperson shall have all the responsibilities and shall perform all the duties of the Chairperson when the Chairperson is absent or unable to act. The Vice Chairperson shall have such additional responsibilities as may be assigned by the Council.

- C) The Secretary of the Council shall perform the following duties:
 - 1) Take minutes of all regular and special meetings, reduce such minutes to writing, and preserve them in a permanent record.

- 2) Send copies of the minutes from the prior meeting, the agenda for the next meeting, and individual Pastoral Staff reports to all Council members at least one week prior to the next meeting.
- 3) Make copies of the minutes of all open Council meetings available to parishioners.
- 4) Keep separate minutes of closed meetings since these involve matters that are confidential. These minutes will be read and approved at the next Council meeting also in a closed session. No copies will be distributed. Said minutes should be kept securely stored in the Parish Office as soon as reasonably possible after approval.
- 5) Keep a permanent record of all official Council correspondence.
- 6) Perform other such duties as may be assigned by the Council.

ARTICLE VI-MEETINGS

SECTION 1. REGULAR MEETINGS

- A) The Council regularly meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month except during December and July.
- B) Advanced notice of the time and place of regular meetings shall be published in the parish bulletin, and all members of the parish shall be entitled and welcome to attend as observers. The Council may open any meeting to discussion by parish members on such subjects and under such rules as the Council may announce. However, the Council reserves the right to go into a closed session by majority vote of members present or by the request of the Pastor if such is deemed necessary.
- C) A majority of the voting members of the Council shall constitute a quorum.
- D) While working toward consensus shall always take priority, Robert's Rules of Order shall be used as a guideline in conducting the meetings. The decision-making process of the Council shall emphasize consensus over a mere majority of votes. (See Appendix A)
- E) Prayer will be an integral part of regular meetings and will not be excluded to save time.
- F) A suggested agenda for regular meetings is included in Appendix B.

SECTION 2. SPECIAL MEETINGS

- A) Special meetings of the Council may be called by the Chairperson, the Pastor, or by written request to the Chairperson or pastor by at least two (2) members of the Council. No meeting may be conducted without all members of the Council being notified of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting. Notification of special meetings shall be the responsibility of the member or members requesting the meeting. In the absence of any emergency, such notification should be made at least three (3) days before the meeting.
- B) The Pastor has the privilege of calling a closed meeting of the Council.
- C) A suggested agenda for special meetings is included as Appendix B.

ARTICLE VII-AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Any Council member may propose amendments to the Constitution. The proposal for amendment will not be acted upon at the time of initial discussion. It must be tabled and voted on at the subsequent meeting. A written copy of the proposed amendment will be included with the agenda when it is sent to all Council members prior to that subsequent meeting.

Approval of a proposed amendment will require a two-thirds vote of voting Council members.

APPENDIX A: CONSENSUS MODEL

CONSENSUS is a decision-making model in which all members commit themselves to the following elements:

- A) To study information regarding a required decision
- B) To share ideas, values and opinions about the topic needing a decision
- C) To propose or recommend appropriate measures or action on the topic
- D) To listen to the ideas and recommendations of others
- E) To reflect on all the suggested actions or measures, weighing the advantages and disadvantages of each
- F) To express to the group some indication of the direction the group could take and when necessary to state reasons "why"
- G) To take time for the committee to reflect on what has been said
- H) To allow each person on the committee to verbally indicate their preferred direction from the proposed options
- I) A committee leader needs to sum up discussion pros and cons and feel out those not leaning in the same direction if the proposed option with the strongest support could be equally acceptable to those who have indicated another direction
- J) If a "yes" is indicated, then a decision has been reached. If some persons say "no", then reservations will be stated. This may entail a search for adjustment of the proposed option to make the proposed option more acceptable
- K) When the adjustment is made, the committee leader needs to poll all members to see if they can agree with the revised option
- L) The decisions arrived at shall be in accordance with the direction of the Church

APPENDIX B: SUGGESTED AGENDAS

A) REGULAR MEETINGS

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Introduction of Guests
- 3) Opening Prayer and Reflection
- 4) Roll Call (may be done silently by Secretary)
- 5) Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting(s)
- 6) Report of School Board Representative & School Principal
- 7) Discussion (Old & New Business)
- 8) Staff Reports
- 9) Issues from the Floor
- 10) Adjournment with Prayer

B) SPECIAL MEETINGS

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Opening Prayer
- 3) Roll Call (may be done silently by Secretary)
- 4) Reading of Purpose of Meeting
- 5) Transaction of the Business for Which Meeting was Called
- 6) Adjournment with Prayer

APPENDIX C: SUGGESTED CALENDAR OF SELECTED EVENTS

- A) January
 - 1) Regular Parish Council Meeting on 4th Tuesday
 - 2) Parish Council Chairperson selects Discernment Committee
- B) February
 - 1) Regular Parish Council Meeting on 4th Tuesday
- C) March
 - 1) Regular Parish Council Meeting on 4th Tuesday
 - 2) Identify parishioners to fill upcoming Parish Council and School Board openings
- D) April
 - 1) Regular Parish Council Meeting on 4th Tuesday
 - 2) Determine willingness to serve of parishioners identified as potential Councilors and/or School Board members
 - 3) Provide parishioners willing to serve with information describing Councilor's role, responsibilities, and relationships.
 - 4) Pray during Mass for success of the discernment process
- E) May
 - 1) Regular Parish Council Meeting on 4th Tuesday
 - 2) Selection of new Councilors
- F) June
 - 1) Regular Parish Council Meeting on 4th Tuesday
 - 2) Install new Councilors
 - 3) Election of Parish Council officers
- G) July
 - 1) No regular Parish Council meeting
- H) August
 - 1) Regular Parish Council Meeting on 4th Tuesday
- I) September
 - 1) Regular Parish Council Meeting on 4th Tuesday
- J) October
 - 1) Regular Parish Council Meeting on 4th Tuesday
- K) November
 - 1) Regular Parish Council Meeting on 4th Tuesday
- L) December
 - 1) No regular Parish Council meeting