



Archdiocese of Dubuque

Leadership Development and Pastoral Planning

1229 Mt. Loretta PO Box 479 Dubuque, Iowa 52004-0479

Phone: 563.556.2580 Fax: 563.556.5464

May 15, 2012

Rev. Nils Hernandez
Holy Family Cluster
608 Second Ave. N.E.
Clarion, IA 50525-1628

Dear Fr. Hernandez,

Enclosed you will find the approved Constitution and Bylaws for the Holy Family Cluster Pastoral Council. As we discussed, this document supersedes and makes obsolete the following constitutions and bylaws:

Document	Date Approved
Holy Family Cluster	May 25, 2011
St. Francis Xavier, Belmond	May 25, 2011
St. John, Clarion	May 25, 2011
Sacred Heart, Eagle Grove	May 25, 2011

Please mark these documents as obsolete and file for future reference.

Congratulations on taking this step! I am confident your new structure will benefit and strengthen the Holy Family Cluster.

Best regards,

Dan Rohner, Director

D.Rohner@arch.pvt.k12.ia.us



Constitution for the Pastoral Council of Holy Family Cluster

Preamble

We, the pastor and members of Holy Family Cluster, Eagle Grove, Iowa, Clarion, Iowa, and Belmond, 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. 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 Holy Family Cluster, Eagle Grove, Iowa, Clarion, Iowa, and Belmond, Iowa.

Article II. Nature and Purpose

Section A. Nature

1. The Cluster Pastoral Council offers counsel to and collaborates with the pastor to provide the long-range planning which will guide the cluster toward its future.
2. Its scope is all things entrusted to the Cluster Pastoral Council by the participating parish representatives and the pastor.

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 representatives of each parish.

Article IV. Officers

The officers of the Cluster Pastoral Council are: the pastor, 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 Parish Pastoral Councils.

Bylaws for Holy Family Cluster Pastoral Council

Article I. Membership

Section A. Types of Membership

1. *Ex officio* nonvoting member.
 - a. The pastor of the cluster.
2. *Ex officio* voting members (6).
 - a. The chair of each Parish Finance Councils. (Note: This member is a lay director of the Parish Civil Corporation as required by the State of Iowa).
 - b. One member from the Cluster Faith Formation Commission (CFFC). (Note: CFFC reports on activities every quarter to ensure communication between the cluster and CFFC or have a liaison).
 - c. One member from the Cluster Stewardship Committee.
 - d. One member from the Cluster Haiti Committee.
3. Elected members (9).
 - a. Three members from each parish. One of those three members will be the lay director of the Parish Civil Corporation as designated by the group, self selected by the parish members. (Note: This member is a lay director of the Parish Civil Corporation as required by the State of Iowa).

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 by her/his respective parish.

1. Elections are held annually on or before the third Sunday of May.
2. Nominations are sought publicly from all registered parishioners.
3. The Finance Council Chair and the three elected Parish Representatives determine and promulgates election procedures.

Section E. 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. Terms begin with the fiscal year following the selection.
5. The term of each *ex officio* member is concurrent with the office held.
6. If the representative's term on the deanery council extends beyond his or her term on the Cluster Pastoral Council, the representative continues as a voting member of the Cluster Pastoral Council until the term on the Deanery Council is completed (see Article XI, Deanery Council Representative).

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 Cluster Pastoral Council. The chair or a delegate will approach this member to mutually assess continued membership.
3. In case of a vacancy, the relevant parish will select a replacement from its membership to complete the term.

Article II. Officers

Section A. Officers

1. The pastor presides over the Cluster Pastoral 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. There shall be one office from each of the parishes

Section C. Vacancy

Should a vacancy occur, the parish 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 performs such other duties as the council shall assign.

Section B. Powers

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

Article IV. Responsibilities of Officers

Section A. The President (Pastor)

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 Cluster Pastoral Council to fulfill their specific responsibilities.
5. Appoints *ad hoc* committees and task forces.
6. While consensus is the preferred and desired procedure for decision-making, if and when a vote is necessary, the chair abstains from voting except in the event of a tie vote.

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 is 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 Holy Family Cluster.

Article VII. Approval of Council Recommendations

Section A. Effective Date

Recommendations adopted by the Cluster Pastoral Council become effective when approved by the pastor.

Section B. Pastor's Role

The pastor approves or vetoes a recommendation within two weeks of its presentation to him by the council.

Section C. Veto Procedures

1. The pastor presents to the Cluster Pastoral Council in writing the reason for a veto, which becomes part of the minutes.
2. Recommendations vetoed by the pastor may by a two-thirds vote of the Cluster Pastoral Council be referred to the dean of the respective deanery for resolution.
3. Subsequently, if necessary, a vetoed recommendation may be presented to the Episcopal Vicar of that region, who will make the final decision regarding the approval or veto of the proposed recommendation.

Article VIII. Committees

Section A. Standing Committees

1. Cluster Liturgy
2. Cluster Faith Formation Commission (CFFC reports on activities every quarter to ensure communication between the cluster and CFFC or have a liaison).
3. Cluster Haiti Committee
4. Cluster Stewardship
5. Parish Social Justice
6. Parish Life
7. Parish Finance Council (*Note: There will not be a cluster pastoral council finance council in existence when this constitution is approved, although the cluster pastoral council, representing the member parishes of the Holy Family Cluster, may choose to establish such a council at a later date.*)

Section B. Committee Procedures

1. Each committee selects its chairperson.
2. The pastor, in collaboration with the Cluster Pastoral Council, determines the process for selection of committee members.
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. Cluster Pastoral Council Membership

1. The chairs of the Parish Finance Council, a member of the Cluster Faith Formation Commission, a member of the Cluster Stewardship Committee and a member of the Cluster Haiti Committee are *ex officio* voting members of the Cluster Pastoral Council. (*Note: If the Cluster Pastoral Council establishes a cluster finance council at a later date, the chair of the cluster finance council will be an ex officio voting member of the Cluster Pastoral Council, and the chairs of the Parish Finance Councils will no longer be ex officio voting members of the Cluster 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 Cluster Pastoral Council are held monthly.
2. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the chair or by a consensus of a majority of the council.
3. To be a visionary planning body, regular meetings are important.
4. The meetings of the cluster pastoral 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 Cluster Pastoral Council may address the council by a prior request of the chair and placement on the agenda.

Article X. Amendments

Procedures

1. Proposed amendments to the constitution or bylaws are presented to the members of the Cluster Pastoral 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.
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.

Article XI. Deanery Council Representative

Section A. Selection

Prior to July 1 of every third year, the Cluster Pastoral 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 Cluster Pastoral Council, the representative continues as a voting member of the Cluster Pastoral Council until the term on the deanery council is completed.

Section C. Vacancy

In case of a vacancy of the Cluster Pastoral Council Deanery Council representative or alternate, the Cluster Pastoral Council selects one of its members to serve out the unexpired term.

Approved by the Holy Family Cluster Pastoral Council on Sunday, April 22, 2012

Official Signatures

Rev. Nil, de Jesús Hernández 4/23/12
Pastor Date

[Signature] 4/23/12
Chairperson of Cluster Pastoral Council Date

[Signature] 4/23/12
Secretary of Cluster Pastoral Council Date

[Signature] 4/23/12
Chairperson of Sacred Heart Parish Pastoral Council Date

[Signature] 4/23/12
Chairperson of St. John Parish Pastoral Council Date

Regina Lamoureux 4/23/12
Chairperson of St. Francis Xavier Parish Pastoral Council Date

Approval

† Jerome Hanus OSB 5/15/12
Most Rev. Jerome Hanus, OSB Date