

ARTICLE I - Introduction

Section 1 - Name and Location

The name of this organization is the Pastoral Council of Good Shepherd Parish, Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee (Pastoral Council).

Section 2 – Authority

The Pastoral Council is a consultative body that derives the authority for its establishment from Canon 536, Code of Canon Law, 1983, as authorized and implemented by the Bishop of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee.

Section 3 – Purpose

The purpose of the Pastoral Council is “to examine and consider all that relates to pastoral work and to offer practical conclusions on these matters, so that the life and activity of the People of God may be brought into greater conformity with the Gospel.” (Pope Paul VI, *Ecclesiae Sancta* I)

The Council also works in support of our Parish Vision: “To invite everyone to a life-changing encounter with Jesus, the Way and the Truth and the Life, the Road to the New Jerusalem.”

Section 4– Functions

The Pastoral Council shares responsibility with the Good Shepherd Pastoral Staff and the other Leadership Communities (see Appendix 2) in providing leadership and guidance to the parish. A member of Pastoral Staff will serve as liaison to each of the Leadership Communities. All Leadership Communities are under the authority of the Pastor of Good Shepherd Parish, who has ultimate responsibility and authority within the parish, and is accountable to the Bishop.

The Pastoral Council shall assist in fostering pastoral activities by:

- Consulting with and advising the Pastor;
- Examining pastoral needs;
- Prioritizing needs;
- Developing and proposing strategies to address those needs, including the identification of parish resources to implement those strategies; and
- Providing a model of a small Christian community.

ARTICLE II - Membership

Section 1 - General Qualifications

Membership of the Pastoral Council will be open to all of Christ’s faithful who are registered members of Good Shepherd Parish. Candidates for membership on the Pastoral Council should prayerfully consider the following questions:

- Are they willing to listen and respond to the call of the Holy Spirit?
- Are they willing and open to work for the benefit of the parish community?
- Are they fully supportive of a decision-making process that relies on the Holy Spirit and reaches decisions through discernment and consensus building?
- Are they in good standing with the Parish and eligible to participate in the full sacramental life of the church?
- Do their lives express an ever-increasing devotion to prayer and desire to become closer to God?
- Are they willing to be an active participant in the Pastoral Council as a small Christian Community?

Section 2 – Size and Composition

The Pastoral Council shall consist of 12 to 17 members. No further composition criteria shall be required. Pastoral Council members represent the entire Good Shepherd Parish community.

Section 3 - Selection of Pastoral Council Members

The selection of members of the Pastoral Council shall be based on the principles of discernment, self-nomination, and confirmation. The selection process shall follow these steps:

- A. Information - Information is disseminated regarding the Pastoral Council, its duties and responsibilities. A call for Pastoral Council members is made.
- B. Discernment - Meetings are conducted to educate interested parishioners about what service on the Pastoral Council entails. Parishioners are encouraged to match their own gifts and talents with the needs of the Pastoral Council.
- C. Self-nomination and affirmation - Individual parishioners who feel called and ready for the Pastoral Council ministry are asked to consult with Good Shepherd Clergy, Pastoral Staff or other spiritual advisor to affirm their decision.
- D. Selection - The Pastor, in cooperation with the Selection Committee (see Article V, Section 2), when needed, shall make the final selection of new Pastoral Council members.

Section 4 – Officers

There shall be four officers on the Pastoral Council: a Pastoral Coordinator, an Assistant Pastoral Coordinator, a Communications Coordinator, and an Assistant Communications Coordinator. These officers and the Pastor constitute the Executive Committee (see Article V, Section 1). Selection of those individuals who will be officers will occur through a Pastoral Council discernment process (see Appendix 1), which will occur annually at the first Pastoral Council meeting or as soon thereafter as is possible. Officers will serve for a term of one year from the date of discernment. Officers may serve an additional term of one year if they continue to feel called to this role, contingent upon the affirmation by the Pastoral Council. After two years of service, an officer may enter into discernment for any other officer position.

Section 5 - Duties of Officers

- A. A Pastoral Coordinator shall chair all regular and special meetings of the Pastoral Council and Executive Committee. The Pastoral Coordinator shall facilitate all Pastoral Council meetings; prepare and distribute the agenda for the meetings; assist the Pastor in ministering to Pastoral needs of Pastoral Council members through listening, challenging, prayer, forgiveness and humility. The Pastoral Coordinator shall also appoint members of the Pastoral Council to subcommittees as needed and create special committees when deemed necessary.
- B. The Assistant Pastoral Coordinator, in the absence of the Pastoral Coordinator, shall fulfill all of those responsibilities listed above for the Pastoral Coordinator. The Assistant Pastoral Coordinator shall serve as a member of the Executive Committee, act as an apprentice to the Pastoral Coordinator, and shall perform other duties as assigned by the Pastoral Coordinator.
- C. The Communications Coordinator shall be responsible for the general area of communicating the business and activities of the Pastoral Council to the greater Good Shepherd community and the Pastoral Council members. These responsibilities shall include taking minutes for each Pastoral Council meeting and making them available to the Good Shepherd Parish community. The Communications Coordinator shall serve as a member of the Executive Committee and shall perform other duties as assigned by the Pastoral Coordinator.
- D. The Assistant Communications Coordinator shall assist the Communications Coordinator and assume responsibilities as mutually agreed upon. The Assistant Communications Coordinator shall serve as a member of the Executive Committee and shall act as an apprentice for the position of Communications Coordinator. The Assistant Communications Coordinator shall serve in the absence of the Communications Coordinator and carry out the appropriate duties thereof.

Section 6 - Terms of Office

The term for all members of the Pastoral Council shall be three years; provided, however, that terms for Pastoral Council members shall be staggered such that approximately one-third of the Pastoral Council members will be replaced or re-discerned each Pastoral Council year. A member may serve up to two consecutive terms on the Pastoral Council.

Section 7 – Goal Teams

The Pastoral Council and its Goal Teams operate in a complementary relationship. Goal teams are created and function after the prayerful discernment of the Pastoral Council. The Pastoral Council annually affirms each goal team and its goals and objectives based upon Parish needs and vision. The work of the Pastoral Council is performed through the initiatives of its goal teams. Because

the work of the Pastoral Council is performed through its goal teams, it is necessary that every Pastoral Council member be a member of one or more goal teams also.

Each goal team shall submit monthly written progress report to the Pastor and the Pastoral Council. The monthly reports shall follow Pastoral Council prescribed formats. The

Pastoral Council shall provide guidance and support to help goal teams accomplish their assigned goals and objectives.

Section 8 - Appointment of Goal Team Facilitator

The Pastoral Council's Executive Committee shall discern and propose the name of a pastoral council member to present to the Pastoral Council for discernment and affirmation to fill the position of Goal Team Facilitator. The responsibilities of the Goal Team Facilitator shall be to initially represent the Pastoral Council in assisting the goal team members in their efforts to get organized and discern and affirm persons to fill their leadership positions. The position of Goal Team Facilitator shall remain active until such time as the goal team is organized and all the leadership positions are discerned and affirmed. Once the goal team is organized and the leadership positions established, the Goal Team Facilitator shall report back to the Pastoral Council that the goal team is functional, and the position of Goal Team Facilitator should be dissolved.

Section 9 – Affirmation of Goal Team Leaders

Each Pastoral Council goal team shall annually affirm by September individuals for the following leadership positions: 1) Goal Team Leader, and 2) Goal Team Communications Leader. The goal team may affirm additional leadership positions when a majority of its members present consider it appropriate to do so. The tenure for individuals in each affirmed leadership position shall be one year.

Goal Teams shall report the names of their leaders to the Pastor and to the Pastoral Council's Executive Committee. Goal team leaders may continue to serve in their positions as long as they are annually discerned and affirmed by a majority of their goal team members at a scheduled goal team meeting.

Section 10 - Resignations, Removal and Vacancies

A Pastoral Council member may resign from his/her position on the Pastoral Council by notifying the Pastoral Coordinator. In addition, the Pastor may, at his discretion remove a Pastoral Council member. Vacancies on the Pastoral Council by termination of office, resignation or removal, may be filled by appointment by the Pastor, if desired, in consultation with the Pastoral Council Coordinator for the remaining term.

ARTICLE III– Parish Organization

The parish shall be organized into ministry areas. Pastoral Staff or the Pastoral Council to the specific area shall assign ministries operating within the Good Shepherd Parish for the purposes

of organization, communication and coordination (see Appendix 2). While each ministry shall follow the guidelines of the sponsoring organization (e.g., Marriage Encounter, Just Faith, etc.), all ministries should be conducted in a manner that furthers the goals articulated in the parish vision and parish plan.

To facilitate this cooperative functioning, ministries operating within Good Shepherd Parish shall provide the Pastoral staff liaison the name and phone number of a person through whom the ministry can be contacted and an annual update of members and activities.

ARTICLE IV – Pastoral Council Meetings Section

1 - Regular Meetings

The Pastoral Council shall meet monthly. The Executive Committee shall determine the date and time of the meetings.

Section 2 - Executive Committee Meetings

The Executive Committee may meet to act on any emergency matters requiring consideration prior to the next scheduled meeting of the Pastoral Council or to work on special projects of the Pastoral Council.

Section 3 - Special Meetings

The Executive Committee may call for a special meeting of the Pastoral Council provided that at least reasonable notice is given to all Council members.

Section 4 - Quorum

No quorum shall be necessary in order to conduct a regular meeting unless a change in officers or amendment to the Pastoral Council Charter is being considered. Election of officers and amendments to this charter shall require the presence of at least a majority of the Pastoral Council. For the purpose of determining a majority, the Pastor, Pastoral staff liaisons and any other liaisons shall not be considered as voting members. The presence of the Pastor, or his designee, shall also be required to conduct a meeting, unless he gives specific approval to proceed without him.

Section 5 - Agenda of Meetings

The Pastoral Coordinator shall compose the agenda for the upcoming meeting in consultation with the Executive Committee. The Communications Coordinator shall communicate the minutes from the previous meeting to each Pastoral Council member at least seven days prior to the next scheduled meeting. Each meeting shall have the following parts:

Part 1. Faith Sharing. Each meeting shall open with prayer, scripture reflection, and faith sharing. In this way, the Pastoral Council is encouraged to make its faith life foundational in its role as Pastoral Council as it models a small Christian community.

Part 2. Minutes. The Council shall review and approve the minutes of the previous meeting of the Pastoral Council.

Part 3. Pastoral planning, sharing wisdom and decision-making. In this part, the Pastoral Council will consider the status of its pastoral planning efforts and address items requiring special deliberation. Included in this part of the meeting will be discernment of new officers, deciding on the major actions brought before the Pastoral Council.

The Pastoral Coordinator or designee shall preside over the process of decision-making in Pastoral Council meetings. An integral part of this process is the collaboration of all the Pastoral Council members, including the Pastor. The decisions of the Pastoral Council are recommendations to the Pastor, which must be approved by him before they can be implemented.

A Sharing Wisdom Process (see Appendix 3) of community discernment will guide decisions of the Pastoral Council. All members of the Pastoral Council will pray for wisdom over each decision and share their “piece of the wisdom” with other members. As part of this wisdom sharing, it would be appropriate to review monthly goal team reports.

Part 4. Closing Procedures. The closing procedures shall include discussion of preliminary agenda for the following Pastoral Council meeting, assigning prayer and scripture sharing to a specific Pastoral Council member, and Pastor’s comments. The Pastoral Council meeting shall close with prayer for the Good Shepherd Parish community.

ARTICLE V – Pastoral Council Committees

Section 1 - Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the Pastoral Council shall consist of the Pastor, officers of the Pastoral Council and the Pastoral Staff liaison. The Executive Committee shall report at the next Pastoral Council meeting on any actions they have taken or decisions that were made between Pastoral Council meetings.

Section 2 - Selection Committee

The Selection Committee, if needed, shall be comprised of members of the Pastoral Council. The Pastor shall designate members of the Selection Committee.

Section 3 - Special Committees

The Pastor or the Executive Committee (with the Pastor’s approval) shall have discretionary authority to constitute and to appoint special committees on an ad hoc basis as needs arise.

ARTICLE VI - The Pastoral Council Year and Pastoral Planning

Section 1 - The Pastoral Council Year

The Pastoral Council Year shall run from June through May.

Section 2 - Sequence of the Pastoral Council Year

The following is the general sequence of the Pastoral Council Year:

1. June: Retreat and Planning Session – Upon the discernment and selection of Pastoral Council members, a retreat shall be held in June to begin the Pastoral Council year. The Pastor, or his designee, shall facilitate the retreat. At a minimum, the retreat shall include information and training on the Pastoral Council mission and responsibilities; the pastoral planning process; and the sharing wisdom and decision-making process. During the retreat, the Pastoral Council shall also review the current status of the goals and objectives and evaluate whether new goals and objectives are needed.
2. July – August: Goal Teams evaluate and update goals and objectives as necessary.
3. September: Discern and affirm Goal Team goals and objectives.
4. October – April: Conduct general pastoral planning work of the Pastoral Council.
5. March: Begin invitations for new Pastoral Council membership.
6. April: Continue invitations. Interested parishioners are invited to information meetings as deemed necessary.
7. May-June: Begin the discernment and selection of Pastoral Council members (see Article II – Section 3). Begin new Pastoral Council year.

Section 3 - Pastoral Planning - Introduction

As stated in Article I of this Charter, it is the purpose of the Pastoral Council of Good Shepherd Parish “to examine and consider all that relates to pastoral work and to offer practical conclusions on these matters, so that the life and activity of the People of God may be brought into greater conformity with the Gospel.” (Pope Paul VI, *Ecclesiae Sanctae* I)

The Pastoral Council will utilize the Sharing Wisdom Process for parish planning and goal setting to identify goals and objectives for the Pastoral Plan. The following sections present a general outline for the pastoral planning process:

Section 4 - Definitions:

- A. *Goal* – A brief, clear statement of an outcome to be reached within 3-5 years. It is a broad, general description that sets forth not how something is to be done, but rather what the results will look like. In pastoral planning, a goal is directly related to one of the

essential elements. A goal includes an active verb, a description of what you plan to do and some indication of quantity or quality.

B. *Objective* – A brief, clear statement of an outcome to be reached within one year as a step toward one goal in the parish pastoral plan. An objective is specific about what will

be done and who will be affected. An objective includes an action verb, a specific task to be completed, a target group, and a completion date.

C. *Strategy* – A specific action or set of actions formulated to address a need as expressed in an objective. Strategies are developed within the Goal Team formed and include more detailed plans and activities.

D. Summary statement of goals, objectives, and strategies:

- *Goals tell us where we want to be or what we want to do.*
- *Objectives tell us what we are going to do, for whom, and when it will be done.*
- *Strategies tell us the concrete steps we are going to take to accomplish the objectives.*

Section 5 - Features of the Pastoral Planning Process

- A. The Pastoral Plan, at a minimum, will address the top three major goals identified through the sharing wisdom process. Each goal will consist of three or more objectives.
- B. Goal Implementation Teams will be used to develop strategies for each major goal and assist in their implementation. Membership on these teams will be open to all members of the parish. Pastoral Council members will be required to be a member of at least one Goal Implementation Team.
- C. Updates of goals and objectives may be provided at Pastoral Council meetings according to the agenda set by the Pastoral Coordinator. The role of the Pastoral Council will be to provide guidance and assistance to Goal Implementation Teams as needed.

The Pastoral Council may implement additional goals identified through the sharing wisdom process as discerned by the full Pastoral Council.

ARTICLE VII - General

Section 1 - Amendments to the Pastoral Council Charter and Appendices

This Charter may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the Pastoral Council by a vote of a majority of the Pastoral Council, provided not less than a 15 day notice is given to each member of the Pastoral Council of such proposed action.

Section 2 – Periodic Review of the Pastoral Council Charter and Appendices

It is the intent of the Charter and the Appendices to provide more detailed understanding and

guidance for the Pastoral Council to effectively carry out their duties and responsibilities. The Charter and Appendices will be reviewed periodically, but at least every six years. A Charter Revision Task Force shall be appointed by the Pastor and shall include the Pastor, current Pastoral Council Coordinator, a former Pastoral Council Coordinator, another member of the clergy (priest or deacon), a current Pastoral Council member, at least two additional parishioners and any other members the Pastor shall appoint.

Section 3 - Approval

This revised Charter of the Pastoral Council of the Good Shepherd Parish, Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, was amended and approved by the Pastoral Council on 04/17/2021.

Section 4 – Appendices

The following appendices are referenced in this document:

Appendix 1: Description of Selection Process for Pastoral Council Officers

Appendix 2: Parish Organization and Ministries

Appendix 3: Sharing Wisdom Process

Appendix 4: Background History of the Development and Amending of the Good Shepherd Parish Council Charter

Appendix 5: Resources

Appendix 1

Description of Selection Process for Pastoral Council Officers

The selection process for Pastoral Council Officers takes place at the June Pastoral Council Retreat. Prior to the meeting, Pastoral Council members should review Article II, Section 5 of the Pastoral Council Charter and prayerfully consider whether they are called to fulfill the role of an officer.

At the Pastoral Council meeting, the selection process will follow these steps:

1. Facilitator leads opening prayer, song and scripture.
2. Facilitator reviews the duties of officers and responds to any questions.
3. Members reflect in silent prayer – reflective music may be playing if desired – 5 to 10 minutes.
4. Facilitator announces officer position that is being discerned. Each person writes his or her name and “yes” or “no” reflecting his or her discernment on this position on a slip of paper
5. If no one discerns “yes” for the position, all repeat the process one more time. If no one so responds during the second round, facilitator opens discussion on perceived obstacles, addressing any questions and clarifying any misunderstandings. All repeat the process a third time. If no one discerns “yes” on this round, the process is tabled until the next meeting. The current officer in this position will continue until a new officer is discerned.
6. If one person responds “yes,” facilitator calls for three to four affirmations of that person’s discernment from other council members. Affirmations should be brief, 1-2 minutes, highlighting the gifts they see in that person and how those gifts will enable them to serve. Facilitator concludes with consensus affirmation by going around the group so that each person can indicate his or her agreement with the discernment.
7. If two or more respond “yes,” facilitator asks each person to describe his or her discernment process and why he or she feels called to this position. Council members affirm responses – one or two affirmations per candidate.
8. There will be a period of silent prayer followed by each member writing down the name of the person that they affirm as the best candidate for the position. The person with the greatest number of affirmations will serve in the position.
9. All continue the process, repeating steps 4-8 until all officers are discerned.
10. The Pastor commissions newly discerned officers while all Pastoral Council members gather around them in prayer.

Appendix 2

Parish Organization and Ministries

The Vision of Good Shepherd is the formation of a “community of small communities” centered in the Eucharist and committed to ministry. This vision emphasizes a prayerful focus on living the mission of Jesus. Prayer, faith sharing, mutual support, learning, and mission are all part of this commitment to ministry.

The Good Shepherd Pastoral Council ensures that the life of the parish reflects the mission of Jesus and that all parishioners are encouraged and provided an opportunity to participate in this mission through various ministries. The ministries of the parish have been divided into several categories for organizational purposes.

Leadership Communities

The mission of Leadership Communities is to plan and coordinate the pastoral direction of the parish. This involves forming a vision for the parish, planning for the future and evaluating the success of parish efforts. This is done under the direction of the Pastor and in coordination with the Pastoral Staff.

Prayer & Liturgy

The mission of Prayer and Liturgy ministries is to support all aspects of communal worship; to ensure adequate preparation for each Mass and each Liturgical season of the year; to encourage parishioners to actively participate in worship activities and to foster individual spiritual growth and prayer life.

Faith Formation

The mission of Faith Formation ministries is to guide, oversee, and enable the faith formation of adults, youth, and children by providing them the knowledge, experiences, skills, and community to form their hearts and minds to be faithful and fruitful disciples of Christ. Their purpose is to foster a living, conscious, and active faith through understanding correctly the teachings of the Catholic faith, and, in keeping with their age, to help each assume responsibility as a vital member of the parish.

Fellowship & Evangelization

The mission of Fellowship and Evangelization ministries is to support activities which promote a faith-based connection and fellowship within the parish and the broader community.

Mercy & Justice

The mission of Mercy and Justice ministries is to support parish social ministry activities related to corporal and spiritual works of mercy, companionship to those in need, education (Catholic social teaching and social justice programs), community and global solidarity, and social justice advocacy.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF MINISTRIES

A chart of the ministries and areas is maintained by the Parish Office and is available on the parish web site: www.goodshepherdparish.org.

Appendix 3 Sharing Wisdom Process

1. Sharing Wisdom as a Decision Making Model

A model of church built on the philosophy of sharing wisdom has strong scriptural support. The basic concept upon which the model rests is the presence of the Spirit in the very lives of the people involved and therefore in the functioning of the group. In Matthew 18:20 Jesus tells us, “For where two or three come together in my name, I am there with them!”

If we believe the words of Jesus that He will be with us when we gather in His name, and if we understand that presence as being the very presence of the Spirit in each one of us, we can draw some conclusions that will clarify what goes on in a sharing wisdom model of church.

As we come together as a Council, the Spirit, in order to share with us the very wisdom of God, promises to each of us a piece of the wisdom. Repeat: a piece! No one can contain all the wisdom of God, for that would be to be God. However, the Spirit desires to share as much of the wisdom as the group can handle at any given time. To do this, different pieces of wisdom are given to different people.

To say that we each have a piece of the wisdom is to say the following:

1. No one has all the wisdom. No one knows everything there is to know, regardless of how educated or uneducated, involved or uninvolved, experienced or inexperienced, responsible or irresponsible that person happens to be.
2. Everyone has a different piece. Everyone will not agree. In fact, there will be a wide variety of differences and insights.
3. Everyone has some of the wisdom. No matter how strange or even “off the wall” a speaker’s wisdom may seem, in the midst of it there is something the Spirit is calling the group to consider and, therefore, to listen to, respect, and even treasure.

The bottom line of the philosophy of sharing wisdom is a deep and operational faith that the Spirit lives in the group through the membership and speaks through the lived experience of each one.

The challenge of this model is the ability to “let go” of our own wisdom and seek the will of the Spirit in the gathered wisdom, rather than the wisdom of any one individual. The call to participate in a shared decision model is a call to spirituality which challenges us to develop a relationship with God that results in a deepening intimacy with the Lord and enables us to recognize the presence of the Spirit in our lives.

Council decisions are guided by the philosophy of sharing wisdom, that is, listening, praying and reflecting. However, not every decision requires a formal process. For example, a decision for the Council to participate in the Lenten suppers is a simple decision and a vote is all that is needed.

A decision requiring a more formal approach might be: whether to restructure our youth programs or to begin a program like the Stevens ministry.

If a quick decision is needed, the process can be shortened by sharing wisdom within the Executive Committee and then returning to the Council for follow up evaluation.

The steps of the process for sharing wisdom are followed whether in a full council process or a process within the Executive Committee. The steps are listed below:

1. Gather data - can involve reading, formal presentations by knowledgeable people, listening to parishioners
2. Reflect prayerfully on the data. Spend time in prayer and thinking about the issue. Jot down notes, ideas or scriptures which seem to apply to the issue. Ask for guidance from the Holy Spirit.
3. Share wisdom -- may be an iterative process.
4. Make the decision by consensus.

2. Process in the Pastoral Council

STEP 1: An issue of interest is presented by one of the Council members.

Executive committee decides whether to delegate to a committee for further data gathering or to add to the agenda for the full Council for the next meeting. If delegated, the committee begins gathering data and sharing wisdom in their group.

STEP 2: Issue presented to full Council along with any feedback from the committee.

Council members begin the process of further data gathering, prayer and reflection. Council communicates issue to parish and individual members get input from as many parishioners as possible. Council reflects on issue in light of individual experience, insights and promptings of Holy Spirit.

STEP 3: Sharing wisdom.

Pastoral Council Coordinator facilitates the sharing of wisdom -- each member of the group shares his/her reflections and the responses are recorded on a flip chart.

Each person around the table shares as others listen.

After everyone has shared, facilitator tries to identify trends and commonalities as well as differences; synthesizes and summarizes data and restates what seems to be the majority thought on the issue.

Facilitator asks if the group sees it this way. He or she explores any difference by questioning the group and recording answers again.

When consensus seems to emerge, the facilitator asks, “If a vote were taken now, how many would vote “yes” to the decision?”

If no consensus, the facilitator asks those who disagree their reasons. All share and reflect again.

The facilitator tests for consensus again. If there is a clear majority, he or she asks if those who disagree can “let go” and live gracefully with the decision. If things are not going well, and members cannot strike a balance between sharing wisdom and letting go, the Council will stop for prayer.

Final result should be a spirit of peace and contentment in the group. Some members may disagree, but they should be willing to accept majority decision as from the Holy Spirit. They should put aside emotions, personal attachments, or individual preferences when they appear to be a stumbling block and do not take into account the data and needs presented by other members.

This process can be time consuming and hard work. It calls for a great amount of humility and simplicity of heart, a willingness to struggle with oneself and with one another, and, perhaps, most importantly, a willingness to grow on the part of everyone involved. But it will result in decisions based on spiritual discernment rather than the secular model based on power and influence.

Appendix 4 Background History of the Development and Amending of the Good Shepherd Pastoral Council Charter

It is the intent of this appendix to provide a description of the development of the Charter of the Good Shepherd Pastoral Council (formerly known as the Parish Council Constitution).

1. 1993-1995: Revision of the Good Shepherd Parish Council Constitution

The Constitution of the Parish Council of Good Shepherd Parish was ratified in 1987. Between 1987 and 1993 the parish experienced dramatic growth; we began a commitment to parish spiritual renewal beginning with the initiation of the “Christ Renews His Parish” process in 1988. This in turn inspired a renewed interest in defining a spiritual vision and pastoral direction for our parish community.

The Parish Council first began working on the spiritual vision in 1990. In the summer and fall of 1992 the entire parish was invited to participate in a series of retreats to begin clarifying the pastoral direction. Stated succinctly, this pastoral direction calls for the parish to be transformed into a “community of small communities, centered in the Eucharist, and dedicated to involving all parishioners in ministry.” This is no more than the realization of the decrees of the 2nd Vatican Council and the commission of Jesus to the early church.

A further outgrowth of these parish vision retreats was the mandate to transform the leadership groups of the parish (especially the Parish Council) into pastoral communities. This process began with the discernment and commissioning of a “Coordinating Community.”

The Coordinating Community is comprised of a small group of parishioners along with the Pastor. In the early part of 1993, the Coordinating Community began meeting regularly as a small Christian community. Soon after the Parish Council unanimously agreed to adopt a pastoral model, incorporating the elements of a small Christian community into its regular meetings and adopting a “sharing wisdom” model of decision-making and spiritual discernment. By the end of 1993 the Pastoral Staff also began meeting regularly in community.

These changes in the parish were not reflected in the 1987 Charter of the Parish Council. The 1987 Charter had a pastoral intent but relied more on a business model of membership, meeting procedures and decision-making processes which are not conducive to building Christian community.

The 1995 changes sought to maintain the pastoral tone of the 1987 Constitution along with the general structure of the parish’s organization, while at the same time offering a direction more in keeping with the spiritual vision, and pastoral direction of the parish community. Specifically, the three areas of membership selection, meeting procedures, and decision-making processes were revised, along with Article 1 – Introduction. Included among the revisions was a change in the name of the Parish Council to Pastoral Council to better reflect the purpose and functions envisioned by the parish.

2. 1999-2000 - Revision of the Good Shepherd Pastoral Council Constitution

As Good Shepherd Parish approached the new millennium, it became increasingly clear that there was a need to review the Pastoral Council Constitution and revise the Constitution so that it might reflect the manner in which the Council was conducting its activities. Organized along the model of the parish as a series of ministry commissions, the 1993 - 1995 Constitution presented the major function of the Pastoral Council as coordinator of these ministries and ministry commissions. However, because of the manner in which these ministries were operating, their ministry authorization, and other features, this coordinating function for the Pastoral Council was difficult at best for the Council to fulfill. This was true not just for Good Shepherd, but for Parish Councils across the United States that had instituted a similar model for parish organization. Parish Councils appeared to be shifting their role from parish coordination to pastoral planning. In this emerging model, the Pastoral Council, as the pastoral planning body for the parish, works closely with the Pastor to accomplish the parish vision. The Pastoral Council is subordinate to the Pastor who has ultimate authority in the parish. While the Pastoral Council was increasingly led to see its role as the pastoral planning body for the parish, this was not well reflected in the Parish Constitution. It was clear that the 1995 Constitution needed to be revised.

As part of its long-range vision and parish direction, the Good Shepherd Parish embarked upon a long-term commitment to organize itself as a community comprised of small Christian communities. This pastoral direction calls for the parish to be transformed into a “community of small communities, centered in the Eucharist, and dedicated to involving all parishioners in ministry” (as stated in the parish vision). These parish-wide small Christian community activities are led and coordinated by the Coordinating Community, appointed by the Pastor of Good Shepherd. Any revision of the 1995 Constitution needed to continue to support and promote this vision, and perhaps, improve upon or more clearly articulate how that vision was to be put into place at Good Shepherd.

In 1999, the Pastor of Good Shepherd appointed a Task Force to examine the Pastoral Constitution and develop recommendations for revision of the Good Shepherd Pastoral Council Constitution. The 1999-2000 Revision Task Force Members included: Fr. Michael Foley, Pat Beckett, Maggie Dellenbach, Deacon Marcus Hepburn, Sue Pugh and Tim Warfel.

The recommendations from the Task Force were forwarded to the Good Shepherd Pastoral Council in December 2000 and adopted in March 2001. The Pastoral Council remained in place from 2001 to 2006 without revision.

3. 2006 - Review and revision of Pastoral Council Charter following the Sharing the Vision process

In February and March 2006, the Pastoral Council coordinated the Sharing the Vision process which included a survey of the parish and two Parish Assembly Days. The process was initiated by the diocese. As a result of the Sharing the Vision process, new terminology and processes for pastoral planning were used. In 2006, Pastoral Council adopted the goals set by parishioners who attended the Sharing the Vision Parish Assembly Days.

In September 2006, The Pastoral Council decided that it was time to review the Pastoral Council Charter to incorporate the terminology used in the Sharing the Vision process, as well as provide a better description of the way the Council was actually operating. A Task Force was appointed by the Pastor and included Pastoral Council members, Dee Lopez, Charlie Bohan and Debbie Calabro, former Pastoral Council Coordinator, Ed Hill, Deacon Marcus Hepburn and Pat Beckett, Pastoral Associate. Review of the Charter included a review of the Parish Organization. Since the Commission structure was not operating as described, parish ministries were reorganized by the Task Force into new categories that were meant to be more easily understood by parishioners and more reflective of the current operating structure. The Charter was simplified so that redundant information was removed or placed in the newly developed appendices.

The revised Charter and Appendices were forwarded to Pastoral Council for review in November 2006 and approved in December 2006.

4. 2012 – Review and Revision of Pastoral Council Charter

Recognizing that 5 years had passed since the last Pastoral Council Charter Review had taken place, the Pastoral Council chose as one of its 2011/2012 goals; To review the Parish ministerial structure, including the Pastoral Council Charter and ministry categories. Pastoral Council members believed that it was important to review the Charter to determine if there were areas that needed change.

A Goal Team was formed that consisted of the Pastor, Fr. Michael Foley, Pastoral Council Coordinator, Kathleen Wright, Pastoral Associate, Pat Beckett, a deacon, Deacon Jerry Haynes, a former Pastoral Council Coordinator, Sharon Zahner, a current Pastoral Council member, Ginger Obst and three parishioners, Margaret Haynes, Michael Barrett and Laura Murray.

The Goal Team met and reviewed the Pastoral Council Charter and Appendices as well as the Parish Ministry Organization Chart. Changes were made to clarify and simplify the Charter and Appendices. Final recommendations were presented to Pastoral Council on December 13, 2012 and approved.

5. 2020 – Review and Revision of the Pastoral Council Charter

In February 2020, The Pastoral Council undertook the task of a periodic review of the Pastoral Council Charter. A Goal Team was established consisting of Pastor Fr. Michael Foley, Deacon Tom McBrearty, Pastoral Council Coordinator Phil Bonadonna, former Pastoral Council Coordinator Elyse Tweedie, Council Member Michael Bell, and Parishioners Ginger Obst and Tim Shank.

In February 2020, the previous Pastoral Council Charter was reviewed by the Team members. All recommendations were submitted and compiled. On March 12, 2020, a meeting was convened, and all recommendations considered. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown of the Church, all work on the Council was suspended until February 2021. Those recommendations approved by the Team in March 2020 were incorporated in a draft presented to the Pastoral Council for review on 02/13/2021. The final draft was approved on 04/17/2021.

Appendix 5 Resources

This appendix lists resources utilized by the Pastoral Council for pastoral planning.

1) Revisioning the Parish Pastoral Council, Mary Ann Gubish and Susan Jenny, S.C., Paulist Press, New York, New York, 2001.

2) Sharing Wisdom: A Process for Group Decision Making by Mary Benet McKinney, O.S.B., Tabor Publishing, 1987.

3) Sharing the Vision Training Materials, Diocese of Pensacola- Tallahassee, September 2005.