

Statutes of the Pastoral Council

St. Joseph Catholic Church, Bryan, TX

March 19, 2025

Article I: Name

The name of this body shall be the **Pastoral Council** ("Council") of **St. Joseph Catholic Church, Bryan, TX**.

Article II: Purpose and Function

1. The Council **fosters pastoral activity** by advising and assisting the pastor in matters concerning the spiritual and pastoral welfare of the parish community.
2. The Council is a **consultative** body that offers insight, guidance, and discernment while respecting the pastor's leadership and the Church's teachings.
3. The Council reflects on the **parish's mission, assesses the community's pastoral needs,** and collaborates with ministries and commissions to promote the parish's pastoral plan.

Article III: Membership

1. **Composition:** The Council shall have **12** lay members, ensuring diversity and broad parish representation.
2. **Eligibility:** To be eligible to serve on the Parish Pastoral Council, a person must be a **baptized Catholic**, at least **18 years old**, and have received **baptism, confirmation, and first communion**. Each member must also have a good reputation, be outstanding in **faith and virtue**, and be an active member of St. Joseph Catholic Church.
3. **Selection:** Members shall be **discerned** through a process that may include parish-wide nominations, pastoral council nominations, and listening to the parish. The process will include consultation with the pastor and, where necessary, appointments to ensure balanced representation.
4. **Term of Service:**

- o Members serve a **four-year term**, which is considered the norm.
 - o Membership terms are staggered to ensure continuity (e.g., each year, three members roll-off and three new members begin service).
 - o In **extraordinary circumstances**, as judged by the pastor and pastoral council, a member may be asked to complete a **second consecutive four-year term or extend their initial four-year term** for a period (e.g., a fifth year to optimize the staggering of the council).
 - o Such a decision will include a process to reconsider the member's second term (or extension) as if they were being nominated anew.
 - o If a member serves two consecutive terms, a **minimum one-year break** in service is required before they are eligible to serve again.
 - o Additional terms served closely together should only occur under **extraordinary circumstances**.
5. **Vacancies:** The pastor may appoint members to fill vacancies, prioritizing discernment and consultation with the Council.
6. **Removal:**
- o The Pastor is to promptly remove a member who does not meet eligibility criteria.
 - o The Pastor may also remove members for:
 - Grave cause.
 - Just cause with the consent of the Parish Pastoral Council.

Article IV: Leadership

1. **Pastor's Role:** The pastor presides over the Council and is responsible for its direction and agenda-setting.
2. **Facilitators and Record-Keepers:** The Council may designate members to serve as Key Facilitator, Facilitators, or Secretary to assist in meeting coordination, communication, and documentation. These roles are functional and do not hold authority over the Council.
3. **Committees:** The Council may establish committees or working groups to address specific pastoral or council tasks or concerns.

Article V: Meetings and Decision-Making

1. Frequency:

- o The **Parish Pastoral Council** must be convoked at least once each quarter but will generally meet **once per month**, except for December and one month during the summer.

2. Agenda Setting:

- o The **Pastor** convokes the **Council**, establishes the **times and places of its meetings**, and determines the **meeting agenda**.
- o The Pastor will attempt to **provide the agenda** to the Council **one week in advance**.

3. Quorum: For consultation to be most effective, it is advisable that a majority of members be present.

4. Consensus-Based Approach: The Council seeks to operate by consensus, ensuring all voices are heard before and/or as part of advising the pastor.

5. Executive Sessions: The Council may meet privately when discussing **sensitive pastoral, personnel, or financial matters**.

6. Open Meetings: At the pastor's discretion, the Parish Pastoral Council **meetings may be open to the Parish**.

Article VI: Relationship to Other Parish Bodies

1. **Collaboration:** When necessary, the Pastoral Council collaborates with the Finance Council, Parish Leadership Team, and possibly the Master Plan Team to ensure pastoral priorities align with financial stewardship and various long-term plans and parish needs.
2. It is recommended that the **Finance Council and Pastoral Council** meet once per year to update each other on the key activities of each council for the past and coming years.
3. It is recommended that the **Parish Leadership Team and Pastoral Council** meet once per year to update each other on the key activities of each council for the past and coming years.

4. **Support:** The Council supports the Parish Leadership Team's function as a coordinating body, ensuring various ministries are supported and aligned with the parish's mission and pastoral plan.

Article VII: Communication with Parishioners

1. The Council will keep parishioners **informed** of its recommendations by:
 - o **Publishing monthly meeting minutes** on the **Parish website**.
 - o Providing updates **in the parish bulletin** and **Mass announcements** when deemed appropriate.

Article VIII: Consultative Role and Responsibilities

1. **Consultative Character:** The Parish Pastoral Council possesses **only a consultative role**.
2. **Obligation to Consult:** The **Pastor should consult** the Parish Pastoral Council on questions of greater importance. **Failure to consult does not invalidate juridic acts.**

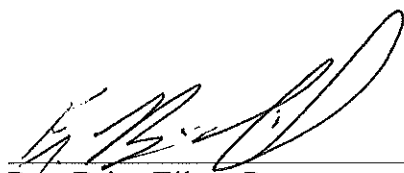
Article IX: New Pastor's Obligation

1. **When a new Pastor is installed**, he is to **confirm the existing Parish Pastoral Council** in its function unless, for grave cause, he **dissolves it** and causes a new Parish Pastoral Council to be selected.

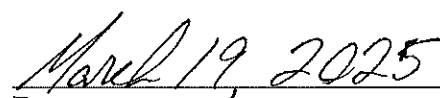
Article X: Amendments

The statutes may be amended with the pastor's approval following consultation with the Council.

These Statutes were unanimously accepted by the existing council and approved by:



Rev. Brian Eilers, Pastor
St. Joseph Catholic Church



Date