

St. Stephen the Martyr Pastoral Council Foundation Document

Parish Mission

St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic Church is a hospitable, welcoming, and joyful community. We are dedicated to continuing the earthly mission of Jesus Christ. We are formed through prayer, worship, sacraments, education, outreach and fellowship. We are responding to God's call to give as generously of our time, talent, treasure, love and forgiveness as God has been generous in giving to us.

Pastoral Council Mission

The Pastoral Council supports the mission of St. Stephen the Martyr in its entirety. For the good of the people of God, the Pastoral Council is a consultative body to the pastor/priest administrator/parochial vicar [hereafter referred to as "Pastor"]. The Pastoral Council advises the Pastor, coordinates with the standing commissions, and assists with the planning and implementation of parish policy.

Purpose of Council

The purpose of the Pastoral Council is to investigate pastoral matters, to study them, to reflect on them thoroughly, to discern their true nature, and to evaluate them, and finally, to draw sound conclusions and present these conclusions to the Pastor.

Council Functions

- A. To advise the Pastor regarding the overall pastoral planning needs of the parish and to be the primary body assisting the Pastor in development planning.
- B. To assist the Pastor in developing, reviewing, and carrying out a planning process which will result in broad goals, policies and a set of priorities reflecting the parish mission.
- C. To consult with parishioners, parish staff, parish leadership, councils and commissions, and other organizations in the course of planning parish matters.
- D. To provide advice and consultation to the Pastor on resources required for parish planning.
- E. When appropriate, to be actively involved in the implementation of these plans.

Scope of Council

The scope of the Pastoral Council is the life of the parish. This may include everything that pertains to the Pastor's ministries of proclaiming God's word, celebrating the sacraments, caring for the faithful, promoting the mission of the Church to the world, and being a good steward of parish resources. The scope, therefore, includes all practical matters of parish life, but excludes all matters of faith, orthodoxy, moral principles, and laws of the universal Church.

Council Membership

The Pastoral Council is comprised of:

A. Pastoral Member:

Pastor, Priest Administrator and/or Parochial Vicar

B. One each representative voting member from the:

Finance Council
Stewardship Commission
Faith Formation Commission
Liturgy Commission
Social and Human Concerns Commission
Facility and Grounds Commission

C. Appointed Members

Nine to Fourteen, parish-at-large adult representatives appointed by the Pastor. One member may be a youth position..

Position 1
Position 2
Position 3
Position 4
Position 5 – Youth Position
Position 6
Position 7
Position 8
Position 9
Position 10
Position 11
Position 12
Position 13
Position 14

Pastoral council members will serve a 3 year term which will include an optional term renewal of an additional 3 year term for an overall term of 3-6 years, as approved by the Pastor.

After serving a 6 year term, council members may request an extension of a 1 year term on a year to year bases subject to approval by the Pastor based on the needs of the council and seats available at that time. When a member does finish their term and leaves the council, after one year they can then be considered for another 3 year term if an open seat is available and is approved by the Pastor.

Terms begin in September and end in June. To ensure continuity between years, the term end dates for Positions 1 through 9 should be staggered so that fewer than 50% of the council member's terms will conclude on the same date. Council member's beginning and ending term dates will be discussed during the September meeting of each year and entered into the meeting minutes. All terms are non-consecutive. The term will lengthen, if the representative becomes the Vice Chairperson.

D. Emeritus position at discretion of Pastor – no voting privilege.

Member Nominations, Discernment, and Appointments

The Pastoral Council will institute a discernment process for all candidates interested in serving on the Pastoral Council. The Pastor will reserve the right to appoint candidates independent of the discernment process. After initial discernment process, Pastoral Council will advise Pastor on the suitability of the candidates. Final selection will be at the discretion of the Pastor.

In order to be considered for membership in the Pastoral Council, a prospective member must be a registered parishioner of St. Stephen the Martyr parish, be a practicing Catholic in good standing, and be ready to commit to the term required by the council position applied for.

Election of Officers

A Vice Chairperson and Administrative Secretary will be elected from and by members of the Pastoral Council. The Vice Chairperson term will be 2 years, the Administrative Secretary term will be 1 year. Elections will take place in September of each year or at the annual Pastoral Council retreat.

The Chairperson will not be elected; rather, the position will be filled by succession of the Vice Chairperson. The Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson will be serving total terms of 4 years each. This will ensure constant knowledgeable leadership on the Pastoral Council. If the Chairperson steps down for any reason, the Vice Chairperson becomes Chairperson and another Vice Chairperson is appointed to finish out the term. At the beginning of the next term a new Vice Chairperson will be elected. The Chairperson at the end of the term may remain on the Pastoral Council at the discretion of the Pastor.

Executive Committee

The Pastoral Council will have an Executive Committee consisting of the Pastor, Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Administrative Secretary and shall meet monthly, or as directed by the Pastor.

Meetings

As with everything we do for the Kingdom of God, all meetings begin and end with a prayer and reflection. Members are encouraged to take turns leading prayers.

The Chairperson or assigned representative will preside over every meeting. Meetings should begin and end on time. All members should arrive on time. If unable to attend a meeting, a member should contact the Chairperson ahead of time.

Regular council meetings are held monthly. Notice of a regular council meeting is to be published in the parish bulletin for two consecutive Sundays prior to the meeting. These council meetings are open to all parishioners as observers who may speak when recognized by the Chairperson.

Special council meetings may be called by the Chairperson or Pastor. Notice of such meetings and their purpose(s) must be given to each member in a reasonable period time prior to the meeting. Special meetings may be open to all parishioners or restricted to council members, depending on the purpose.

The agenda of each meeting will be developed by the Executive Committee two weeks prior to the next meeting. After that, additional agenda items may be submitted to the Executive

Committee by council or parish members. The final agenda should be made available to all council members one week prior to a regular meeting. New agenda items may be added by a council member at the meeting.

Meeting minutes shall be taken by the Secretary or his/her representative. Minutes shall be distributed to council members and representative members within one week of the meeting. Council members shall review them by the next meeting so that the minutes can be quickly amended and/or accepted.

Quorum: The Pastoral Council consists of 9 members. A simple majority must be present to conduct an official Pastoral Council meeting.

Attendance: Any member missing two consecutive council meetings without an excused absence will forfeit membership on the council and will be so notified in writing.

Resignations from the Pastoral Council should be submitted, in writing, to the council Chairperson.

Consultative Bodies

The relationship of the Pastoral Council and the six consultative bodies are described as follows:

The Pastoral Council establishes broad policies and guidelines in overseeing or carrying out of the parish mission.

The Finance Council oversees the stewardship of our finances.

The Faith Formation Commission ensures that we are formed and educated for the parish mission.

The Liturgy Commission inspires the spiritual and worship life of the parish.

The Social and Human Concerns Commission directs our investment in the needs of our brothers and sisters near and far.

The Facilities and Grounds Commission oversees the maintenance of our facilities that are needed for preparation for the parish mission.

The Stewardship Commission keeps before us the way Jesus lived His mission and inspires by example and encourages us to take the risk.

The Councils and Commissions will engage in their work with prayerful deliberation. They will share the mission and visions of St. Stephen parish, will provide reports and feedback on activities in progress and being planned, will reduce redundancy between each other, will provide adequate representation on the Pastoral Council, and will foster good communication among groups.

The Pastoral Council provides to the commissions and councils a common focus on all issues pertinent to parish life and aids in carrying out the mission of the Church based on the mission of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amendments

Amendments to this document can be introduced by any council member or representative member at a regular council meeting. Amendments should be submitted in writing. Action on an amendment will take place at the next regular council meeting and requires majority consensus by members present.