

BY LAWS – ST. MARK PASTORAL COUNCIL

1. **MISSION STATEMENT**

ST. MARK – one, holy, catholic and apostolic. A community united in the Spirit, the Word, and Prayer to witness the presence of Christ to one another and to the world.

2. **PREAMBLE**

We the members of *ST. MARK*, Vienna, Virginia, to be more expressive of our faith, declare ourselves willing to become active in the mission of our Lord, Jesus Christ, by sharing with our Pastor the responsibilities of our Parish community, in accordance with the Decree of the Apostolate of the Laity, Vatican II, the Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church, and the statutes for the Parishes of the Diocese of Arlington.

3. **NAME**

The name of this organization is the Pastoral Council of *ST. MARK* Parish, Vienna, Virginia, hereinafter referred to as “the Council”.

4. **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Council is to:

Advise the Pastor in making major administrative decisions affecting the Parish and to assist the Pastor in accomplishing his mission;

- a. Assist the Pastor in the ministerial development of the Parish through recommendations and active cooperation in the setting of long-and short-term goals for the Parish;
- b. Provide an open and honest forum of communication and dialogue regarding Parish affairs among Pastor, staff, and laity;
- c. Encourage volunteerism.
- d. Help maintain the viability of the parish itself and the overall spiritual growth of the parish community.

5. **OPERATION**

- a. The Council shall submit its recommendations to the Pastor in the form of conclusions resulting from considered reflection and discussion by the Council. The Pastor’s determination regarding any recommendation by the Council is final.
- b. The Pastor shall communicate to the Council by the next regularly scheduled meeting a response to its recommendations. If the Pastor, for any reason, believes that he cannot in good conscience accept and carry out the recommendations of the Council, he shall communicate such reservations to the assembled Council, as appropriate.

6. **MEMBERSHIP**

- a. The Council shall be composed of one elected or designated representative from each of the five standing commissions (Worship, Community Growth, Service, Religious Education, and Youth) and eight at-large members. The Pastor may appoint two additional members of the Parish to the Council.
- b. Commission representatives shall be appointed by their respective commissions to serve a term of two years. The commission representative may not serve more than two consecutive two-year terms. A vacancy left by a representative of a commission shall be filled by a new representative designated by that commission as soon as possible.

- c. At-large members shall be elected to serve on the Council according to the procedures specified in Paragraph 8b, below. Elected members shall have a term of two years. No elected, at-large member shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive full terms. If a vacancy occurs among the elected membership during the Council year, the Pastor may appoint someone to complete the term.
- d. The Council may request non-member representation from other councils, such as the Financial Council, committees, or the staff to assist the Council and to attend meetings regularly.
- e. A Recording Secretary (separate from the Council Secretary defined in Paragraph 7 a below), who is not a member, may assist the Council.
- f. Any member may be removed from the Council for cause. Removal shall be effected by consensus of all members at a regular or special meeting. Removal is warranted when a member's actions render him or her ineffective in carrying out the purpose of the Council. A member being considered for removal will be notified in writing and offered the opportunity to present extenuating or mitigating circumstances at the meeting at which removal is being considered.
- g. Any member may resign from the Council by filing a written notice with the Council Secretary (defined in Paragraph 7a below).

7. OFFICERS

- a. Whereas the Pastor presides over the work of the Council, the chairing and facilitation of the Council meetings are delegated to duly elect Council officers. The officers of the Council shall consist of a Chairperson, a First Vice-Chairperson, Second Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary.
- b. The members of the incoming Council shall, at the annual Parish Retreat, determine amongst themselves the offices to be filled. Following nominations, voting shall be by secret ballot; balloting shall continue until a candidate receives a majority of the vote.
- c. The Chairperson works closely with the Pastor to ensure that the Council fulfills the mission of the Parish through active collaboration with staff, parishioners, and other church groups. The Chairperson shall facilitate meetings of the Council and, in consultation with the Pastor, call special meetings as necessary. The Chairperson is responsible for the organizational aspects of the Council and chairs its meetings. In light of these responsibilities, it is important that the Chairperson possesses a good understanding of group process and has the necessary facilitation skills to fulfill this role effectively. The Chairperson shall provide periodic reports to the Pastor on the completed and projected work of the Council and shall perform all other duties that customarily devolve upon the office of Chairperson.
- d. The First Vice-Chairperson performs the duties of the Chairperson in the latter's absence and assists the Chairperson in conducting the Council's work
- e. The Second Vice-Chairperson performs the duties of the First Vice-Chairperson in the latter's absence and acts as the Council's liaison to the Finance Council.
- f. The Secretary assists the Chairperson in communicating with members of Council. The Secretary shall provide a copy of the meeting agenda to members at least five days prior to regular meetings.

8. ELECTIONS

- a. Any layperson that has attained the age of eighteen years by the date of elections, and who is a member of the Parish, shall be eligible to serve on the Council, and all persons meeting these same qualifications shall be eligible to vote in such elections.
- b. Elections for at-large members shall be held each year in November. Elections shall be by secret ballot, which shall be available to all eligible Parishioners. Four persons receiving the highest number of votes on the qualified ballots shall be declared elected. In the event of a tie, the candidate shall be chosen by lot. To promote continuity, four members shall be elected in even-numbered years, and four members shall be elected in odd-numbered years.
- c. The newly-elected Council members shall take office at the January Council meeting.

9. RELATIONSHIP OF COUNCIL TO PASTOR

The Pastor participates with the Council in the discernment/consensus process and Council deliberations, and through his own unique ministry of pastoral leadership. The Pastor's presence and active participation in the discourse are necessary elements in the process of formulating a policy.

10. RELATIONSHIP OF COUNCIL TO SCHOOL

The school represents one ministry of *ST. MARK* Catholic Church. A school representative, appointed by the principal, attends the council meetings each month to keep the council apprised of school programs and activities and to answer questions regarding the school. A PTPO representative is also invited to attend the council as a further means to develop and maintain awareness and appreciation of school activities and developments.

11. MEETINGS

- a. The Pastor's presence is a necessary condition for any official Council meeting.
- b. The regular meeting of the Council shall be held on the second Thursday of each month. (The Council normally does not meet in July or August.)
- c. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor, the purpose of which shall be stated in the call. Except in cases of emergency, at least five days' notice shall be given.
- d. Regular meetings of the Council shall be announced in the Parish bulletin on the Sunday preceding the meeting and are open to all Parishioners as observers. Meetings shall take place in the Parish Center. It shall be left to the discretion of the Executive Committee (defined below) as to whether any special meetings shall be open.
- e. The Recording Secretary shall provide minutes of all regular and special meetings of the Council, preserve them in a permanent record, and distribute copies of such minutes to all members of the Council at least one week prior to the next regularly-scheduled meeting. A draft copy of meeting minutes will be posted in the Parish Center for parishioners prior to the meeting at which those minutes will be approved.

12. COMMITTEES

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- a. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the officers of the Council and the Pastor. 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 the Secretary for dissemination prior to the meetings. Parishioners may propose agenda items through any Council member or through the parish staff.
- b. The standing committees of the Council shall have such powers as may be delegated to them by the Pastor. The standing committees are:
 - i. Nominations and Elections
 - ii. Constitution and By-Laws.
 - iii. Because of its canonical importance, the Finance Council shall be named by the Pastor, and may have ex-officio representation on the Council.
- c. Standing committees shall meet regularly to implement their work and shall report the progress or limitations of such work to the Council as required during the course of the year.
- d. The Chairperson, in consultation with the Executive Committee, may create special or ad hoc committees, which may from time to time be deemed necessary, and to designate the members thereof. Each special or ad hoc committee shall include one Council member, but not necessarily the Committee Chairperson.

13. CONSENSUS-BUILDING

- a. In matters of consequence to the Parish community, the Council shall make reasonable efforts to arrive at a recommendation through consensus.
- b. Every member of the Council must be involved in the consensus-building process and must be given the opportunity to speak to the assembled Council his or her consent or reservation regarding the matter under discussion.
- c. The discussion must continue, addressing any reservations until every member is either in favor of the recommendation or is willing to support the recommendation even though it may not be the preference of the individual member.

14. EVALUATION AND AMENDMENTS

The Council, by a consensus of its members, shall have the power to draft and amend these bylaws. Any registered Parishioner may request a copy of these bylaws. It is recommended that these bylaws be reviewed every three years.

Reviewed and Approved with editorial changes: April 10, 2014