

THE CHURCH OF SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER
BUFFALO, MINNESOTA

CONSTITUTION OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

MISSION STATEMENT

We are people, called by God,

- Proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ;
- Forming an active faith community;
- Celebrating the sacraments of the Catholic Church;
- Fostering unity with people of all faiths;
- Respecting the life and dignity of all people; and
- Sharing our gifts of time, talent and treasure

DEFINITIONS

By-laws - a standing rule or practice that governs the conduct of business of the Council, including the rules governing elections and the conducting of meetings.

Council – the Parish Pastoral Council of the Church of St. Francis Xavier, Buffalo, Minnesota.

Guidelines – from the document: “Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils: Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis to the Church of St. Francis Xavier, Buffalo, Minnesota.”

Members – the appointed or elected members of the Council

Pastor – the pastor or parochial administrator who is duly appointed by the Archbishop of St. Paul and Minneapolis to the Church of St. Francis Xavier, Buffalo, Minnesota.

ARTICLE I: PURPOSE

The purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council is to be a consultative and advisory body to the pastor offering recommendation and counsel to him in matters which affect the pastoral vision and ministry of the parish. Guideline VI: This does not include matters of finance, staffing or any other parochial administration of the parish. (The consultative role is modeled after Canon 515 and Canon 536 of the Code of Canon Law.)

This Constitution and By-laws cannot supersede the guidelines of the Archdiocese, the Code of Canon Law or the civil law.

ARTICLE II: MEMBERS

A. MEMBERSHIP

The Council is to be representative of the whole parish in its membership. Each member must be a registered baptized member practicing the teaching of the Catholic Church, regularly and actively participating in the parish liturgies by sharing time, talent, and treasure.

The Council shall be composed of ten (10) people, including the pastor, or the person who, in his stead, is appointed administrator of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church of St. Francis Xavier, in accordance with the legislation of the Roman Catholic Church.

Six (6) members of the Council shall be elected by the members of the parish and shall be designated as "elected members." The minimum age for an elected position is 18 years old.

Three (3) members of the Council shall be appointed by the pastor and shall be designated as "appointed members." The minimum age for an appointed position is 18 years old.

A minimum of three (3) candidates is required to hold an election. If this minimum is not met, council vacancies will be filled by appointment of the pastor.

Individual parish staff members may be asked by the pastor to attend a meeting when a topic pertinent to his/her area is to be discussed.

B. TERMS OF OFFICE

The term of office for each elected and appointed member shall be for three (3) years, commencing in June of each year.

No person, except the pastor, shall serve more than six (6) consecutive years as a member of the Council, whether in an elected or appointed capacity, or in combination of such capacities.

C. VACANCIES

Vacancies on the Council by reason of resignation, death, disability of other cause, except termination of term of office, shall be filled by appointment by the pastor. Members who must be absent from meetings should contact the pastor or an officer. Any member who is absent for three consecutive meetings without expressed reason will be automatically terminated.

ARTICLE III: OFFICERS

The officers shall be the pastor, a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and a secretary. These four will constitute the executive body of the Council. Members of the Council shall elect the officers of the Council (other than the pastor) annually in June of each year. Their terms of office shall be one (1) year with a maximum of one (1) additional consecutive term. All officers shall be voting members of the Council.

The general responsibilities of the officers are to prepare the agenda and coordinate the meetings and to facilitate the implementation of its decisions when needed. Responsibilities also include that the chairperson conducts the meetings, the vice-chairperson serves as a substitute when needed, and the secretary collects the minutes and publishes them for distribution and approval.

(Note: Canon 536, n.1 prescribes that the pastor presides over the Parish Pastoral Council. In virtue of his office, the pastor makes the final decision regarding whether and how to implement the recommendations of the Council. In making this decision he is guided by the universal law of the Church, diocesan statutes and civil law." Guideline V)

ARTICLE IV: MEETINGS

Meetings shall be held every month September through June of each year.

Special meetings may be called by the pastor or upon request of any six (6) members of the pastoral council. The pastor, in consultation with the officers, will determine the need for special meetings. Meetings will not be held without the presence or approval of the pastor.

A quorum for the conducting of business at any meeting of the pastoral council shall be a majority of the voting members of the council.

Members are to vote on pastoral matters of the parish after deliberate and prayerful discussion to recommend such matters to the pastor for his consideration and final decision.

ARTICLE V: COMMITTEES

The Council shall establish committees, commissions or "ad hoc" committees, as needed. These committees will directly assist in the pastoral work of the parish. The necessity and function of the committees will be reviewed regularly.

ARTICLE VI: AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

By-laws to this constitution are attached.

Any proposed amendment to this constitution or by-laws shall require a 2/3 majority of the full voting membership of the council prior to submitting the recommendation to the pastor and the archbishop. Such proposals shall be provided to all members in writing three (3) weeks before its vote for approval. Any changes recommended by the Council shall be published in the bulletin. All amendments need to be approved by the pastor and archbishop before taking effect.

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BY-LAWS

1. ELECTION PROCEDURES

Nominations for the positions of elected members shall be accepted in April of each year with the candidates' names published for two (2) weeks in the church bulletin prior to the election. The elections shall be held in May of each year in a public place, by procedures recommended by the Council. A minimum of three (3) candidates is required for an election to be held.

2. CONDUCTING OF MEETINGS

- Dates, time and location of meetings shall be determined annually.
- All meetings will begin with prayer, scripture and prayerful reflection.
- The pastor shall preside over the meeting and the chairperson will conduct the proceedings.
- A member serving as secretary shall take the minutes and distribute them to members following the meeting via e-mail. The proposed minutes shall be approved by the members via e-mail within one week after receiving them and then posted to the parish website.
- The pastor shall determine the agenda in consultation with any or all of the officers.
- Each meeting shall be conducted in an orderly manner, following the business indicated by the agenda.
- Members are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly and respectful manner.
- While the meetings are open to all parish members to attend as observers, the meetings are not an open forum for participation by others outside of the council members.

3. PARISH ORGANIZATIONS/LIAISON

Members of the Council may be liaisons to a specific committee or organization to ensure mutual communications between the council and the committees. These committees/organizations to be represented shall be determined from time to time.

Liaisons who are not members of the committee shall not be involved in the business of the committee, but only serve as communication to the Council as to current events of the committees and to convey to the committee anything from the Council that is pertinent to them, excluding the other business of the Council.

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Foundational Documents

The book "Making the Parish Council Pastoral" by Mark Fischer (2010) is a supporting document of the Church of St. Francis Xavier Constitution of the Parish Pastoral Council. Each member of the Council is to review the book; new members are provided the book for review upon election to the council.

Reference:

Fischer, M. (2010). Making the Parish Council Pastoral. New York: Paulist Press.