

Church of Our Lady of Good Counsel – St. Thomas More

PARISH COUNCIL BY-LAWS

(Approved 9/18/2017)

Article I – Council

1. Number; Tenure; Qualifications. The Council shall consist of not less than twelve (12) nor more than twenty-five (25) members, all of whom must have been, when elected, registered members of the Church of Our Lady of Good Counsel - St. Thomas More for more than one year. Council members are expected to attend mass regularly in the parish. To the extent practicable, Council membership will be evenly split between original parishioners of both Our Lady of Good Counsel and the Church of St. Thomas More. The number of Council members shall be fixed from time to time by action of the Council. No Council member shall be eligible to serve more than three (3) consecutive two-year terms, following which a person's service as a Council member must lapse for a minimum of one (1) year before being eligible again to serve. Any vacancy on the council, regardless of how such vacancy shall have been created, may be filled by the remaining members of the Council then in office. Any person elected to fill a vacancy on the Council shall serve throughout the term of the person replaced. Nominations of persons for election as Council members must be done in accordance with Article II, Section 6 of these by-laws. Staff of the Church of Our Lady of Good Counsel – St. Thomas More are ineligible to stand as voting Parish Council members.
2. Removal. Any member of the Council may be removed at any time, with or without cause, by a vote of a majority of the entire remaining membership of the Council.
3. Meetings. The Council shall hold a minimum of eight (8) monthly meetings between the months of September through June of each calendar year. The June meeting shall be the Annual Meeting. Parish Council members are expected to attend all monthly meetings. Special Meetings may be called at any time upon not less than two (2) days notice by the Pastor, the President, or any five (5) members of the Council. The purpose of each Special Meeting shall be stated in the notice thereof.
4. Quorum. A simple majority of entire membership of the Council will constitute a quorum.
5. Voting. All issues to be voted on shall be decided by the presence of a quorum of the membership.

Article II –Officers and Duties; Elections

1. Officers. The officers of the Council shall consist of (1) Pastor, ex officio, (2) a President who shall be a layperson, (3) a Vice President, and (4) a Secretary. The executive committee shall be comprised of these four (4) officers.

The officers shall be elected at the Annual Meeting and shall serve their respective terms until the election and qualification of their respective successors. The President, Vice President and Secretary shall be elected for a term of one (1) year, which shall begin as of the date of the September meeting.

Vacancies occurring between Annual Meetings shall be filled by the Council, by the affirmative vote of a majority of the entire membership.

2. President. The President or, in his or her absence, the Vice President, or, in the absence of both, the Secretary shall prepare the agenda and preside at all meetings of the Council.
3. Vice President. The Vice President shall discharge the obligations and duties of the President in the event the President is absent or otherwise unable to serve, and shall have such other duties as may be assigned to him or her by the Council.
4. Secretary. The Secretary shall notify council members of scheduled meetings each month, keep the minutes of the meetings, and furnish copies of said minutes to Council members at least one week in advance of the next meeting.
5. Election of officers. The President, Vice President and Secretary shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Council. Members of the Council whose terms shall have expired will not be eligible to vote for incoming officers.

The election shall proceed as follows: A Nominating Committee consisting of three (3) Council members appointed by the President, shall, at least thirty (30) days prior to the Annual Meeting, prepare a slate of candidates to be voted on by the Council, nominating one or more eligible Council Members for each office. Notwithstanding the above, any member of the Council may nominate another qualified member for office from the floor at the Annual Meeting.

At the Annual Meeting, the slate prepared by the Nominating Committee, together with any nominations from the floor shall be presented to the Council and a vote shall be taken. In the event of a contest for any office, voting shall be by written ballot and the majority of the Council members present and able to vote shall decide the outcome

6. Election/Appointment of Council Members. The Parish Council may, after consultation with the Pastor, select new Council members for the next year in either of the following ways:
 - a) The Nominating Committee shall provide the Council with a list of candidates for consideration by the Council in the formation of a ballot to be used to establish a slate of candidates to be voted on by the entire Parish community during an election to be held over the course of three weeks prior to the Annual Meeting; OR
 - b) The Nominating Committee shall solicit new Council Members by posting vacancies in the Parish Bulletin, website, public bulletin boards and/or other appropriate sites, requesting interested parishioners submit brief biographies to the Secretary of the Parish Council who will, in turn, present them to the entire Council for consideration of appointment in advance of the Annual Meeting.

Article III – Council Committees

1. Committee Staffing. All committees shall be comprised of a Committee Chair and, where there are more than two (2) members of a committee, a Co-Chair. The Chair or the Co-Chair shall be a member of the Parish Council.

The Chair or Co-Chair of each Committee shall be appointed by the President and serve for a term of one (1) year.

The President, in consultation with the Committee Chair or Co-Chairs shall appoint Committee members who shall serve terms of one (1) year. Committee members not members of the Council may attend Council meetings and participate therein, but shall have no vote.

All Parish Council members must participate in at least one Committee.

2. Committees. The Council shall be served by a number of standing committees together with such other committees as the Council may from time to time constitute and appoint for the purpose of furthering the welfare of the Church of Our Lady Good Council - St. Thomas More. The standing committees shall consist of the following:
- (a) The Administration Committee shall provide assistance to the Pastor in matters relating to Parish Council administration and budgets, Parish property and Parish operations. By way of example, the scope and interests of the Administration Committee shall include Parish financial operations, fund-raising activities and the preservation, maintenance, repair and modification of Parish property.
 - (b) The Communications Committee shall receive and disseminate information, views and opinions concerning matters of interest and significance to the Parish. By way of example, the scope and interests of the communications Committee shall include the Parish weekly bulletins, the Parish web-site and special announcements. The Committee shall also be responsible for communicating Parish events to the community and to other parishes.
 - (c) The Community Outreach Committee shall organize and promote programs which support neighborhood organizations and charities. By way of example, the scope and interest of the Community Outreach Committee shall include sandwich-making for the NY Common Pantry, Saturday Breakfast Program and other parish and senior outreach activities.
 - (d) The Education Committee shall organize and promote programs intended to advance the intellectual and spiritual interests of the Parish. By way of example, the scope and interests of the Education Committee shall include lectures, group discussions and other educational programs.
 - (e) The Liturgical and Spiritual Committee shall seek to promote the spiritual growth of the Parish through greater understanding and love for the Liturgy. By way of example, the scope and interests of the Liturgical and Spiritual Committee shall include matters concerning altar servers, decorations and vestments, the Parish music program, ushers, lectors, Eucharistic ministers and matters of special spiritual interest such as retreats, missions, days of recollection and special programs.
 - (f) The Social Committee shall seek to promote and encourage fellowship and Christian spirit among all parishioners. By way of example, the scope and interests of the Social Committee shall include planning events such as holiday parties, new parishioner gatherings and other social events of interest to parishioners and clergy.
 - (g) The Respect Life Committee shall devote its efforts to developing an awareness within the Parish and community of the sacredness of human life and the preservation of life from conception to natural death including the rights of the unborn, imprisoned, disabled and elderly. By way of example, the scope and interests of the Respect Life Committee shall include encouraging pro-life activities and working in furtherance of these values with appropriate groups within the Archdiocese and community.
 - (h) The Youth Committee shall work to encourage the young people of the Parish to deepen their faith and further their religious education, formation and understanding of their faith and commitment to the church.

Article IV – Amendments

No proposed amendment to these By-Laws shall be voted upon until at least one (1) meeting subsequent to the meeting at which it is proposed.

A copy of the proposed amendment shall be presented to each Council member not less than one (1) week prior to taking a vote thereon.

Amendments shall be effected by the affirmative vote of at least the majority of the entire membership of the council, whether or not present at the meeting. Written votes should be received by an Officer prior to voting on the amendment.