

**2016 PASTORAL COUNCIL BYLAWS**  
**Approved June 2, 2016**  
**ARTICLE I**  
**Membership in the Pastoral Council**

**Section 1. Statement of Purpose for this Article of the Bylaws**

Article IV, Section 3 of the Parish Council *Constitution* clarifies that wider Church legislation identifies several categories of members of the Pastoral Council who, respectively, will “assist in fostering pastoral activity,” each in their own appropriate way. These members include: the pastor, the pastoral staff, parish volunteers and representative parishioners chosen by the parish.

This Article addresses the membership of the Council in greater detail and then points to how each obtains membership in the Council.

**Section 2. The Pastor’s Participation in the Pastoral Council**

Archdiocesan policy and the application of canon 536 is understood to mean that the Pastor is himself a “member” of the *Pastoral* Council but it means this in a unique sense. Canon law, and its subsequent official interpretations, as the universal law of the Church, indicates that the role of the Pastor is not one of simply being just another participating “member” of the group, but rather that he “presides over the Council” [c. 536] in such a way that acknowledges that he is to be present both to participate in the deliberations and as the one being “advised” and “assisted” by the Council’s activity.

The Pastoral Council’s operation is essentially one of *collaboration*--the common action of the members of the parish *with* their pastor.

“The act of working together to achieve a common purpose is called **collaboration**. True collaboration requires mutual love and respect between those who are working together. Collaboration helps to build communion; it is at the same time an expression of communion. The pastoral council is called upon to support the pastor by working together with him to fulfill the evangelizing mission of the Church. By consulting with the pastoral council, the pastor exhibits a collaborative style of leadership which affirms the baptismal call of the laity to participate fully in the life of the Church.” *Policy and Guidance for Pastoral Councils, 2012*, p. 3

It is in this sense that we can say that a Pastoral Council is basically a group of “*the [lay] Christian faithful, together with those [parish staff] who share in pastoral care by virtue of their office in the parish, [who] assist [the Pastor] in fostering [providing] pastoral activity.*” [c. 536]

### Section 3. *Ex-Officio* Members

The following are “ex-officio” voting members of the Council (c. 536):

Those who hold either a “canonical office” in the parish, or its equivalent, are *ex-officio* members whose position in the parish automatically makes them voting members of the Pastoral Council under canon 536. These include:

A) the Pastor himself.

*This office is established by the law itself and it is conferred upon a priest by the Archbishop.*

B) compensated Parish Staff members or “parish employees” who are appointed by the Pastor to work in pastoral ministry in his name.

*The conferral of such an office in the parish is an act of governance entrusted by the Church to the Pastor alone who acts with the advice of his Pastoral and Administrative Councils such as the case may be. As an act of governance in practice these “offices” are established at the level of the parish by the Pastor who establishes a “Job Description” and hires the employee to fill the job. It is canon 536 which determines that these employees are ex-officio members of the Council.*

C) *volunteer* Staff members who are appointed by the Pastor to *direct* specific areas of the pastoral care of the parish in his name on a stable non-compensated basis.

*However informally it may be done, in principle the conferral of any such “office” in the parish would also be an act of governance entrusted by the Church to the Pastor alone. While it is not common practice for a Pastor to establish volunteer positions at the level of the parish by establishing a “Job Description,” to be entrusted to a **volunteer**, for the purposes of this Council, we acknowledge in this parish that the Pastor may choose to “direct” a specific area of pastoral care in the parish by delegating his responsibility to a volunteer. In this case, by virtue of the responsibilities entrusted to them, the Pastor (in consultation with the Volunteer) will also determine whether a Volunteer Staff member should also serve ex-officio on the Council.*

### Section 4 . At-large Members

At-large members are voting members who have been selected to represent the **entire** parish community.

*At-large* members shall consist:

A. of six (6) parishioners, two (2) of whose terms of office conclude **in** each **even** year on a rotating basis;

B. and when one is available, of one youth of High School age, whose term of office concludes each year.

Ideally the at-large Membership would include a minimum of at least two (2) adult women and two (2) adult men as well as one High School Youth on the Council.

At-large members are chosen by the process outlined in Article II of these Bylaws.

## **Section 5. Terms of Office**

A) Parish Staff are *ex-officio* members of the Pastoral Council only during and throughout the time in which they hold these positions.

B) At-large members;

1) Except for the one seat reserved for the Youth, which has a one year term, at-large terms are for two (2) years. The term officially is from August 1 of the year selected to July 31 of the **second** year of service.

2) At-large Members would normally only serve **three** (3) consecutive terms, except for a just cause,<sup>1</sup> at the discretion of the Pastor. See Art II, Sec 5.

*It is to be kept in mind that at-large membership on the Council provides both the possibility of fresh insights and a broader representation of the parish at large.*

*It is a most desirable **goal** that a variety of people be given the opportunity to serve on the Council. Given the size of our parish however, we recognize that the pool of willing and able parishioners is not unlimited and often poses a challenge.*

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<sup>1</sup>When canon law allows a "dispensation" from the ideal expressed in the law it often states that the legitimate granting of a dispensation has to occur **for a reason** which prompts the dispensation. The implication here is that the Pastor would not dispense from this desirable goal unless there was an identified need, giving him reason to do so. The standard for dispensation is therefore not the capriciousness of the Pastor but the needs of the parish which represent a **just cause** for making an exception.

## **Section 6. Voting**

A) The Council's deliberations are aimed at assisting in the pastoral care of the parish by advising the Pastor on all matters pertaining to the pastoral life of the parish. All decision-making is ordinarily made with consultation.

“Consultation is the act of conferring with others in order to make a decision or assess a situation. The relationship between the pastor and the pastoral council is one of consultation. The pastor respects and trusts the judgement of his councilors and so he confers with them about pastoral matters. Likewise, the councilors respect the unique role of the pastor as canonical head of the parish and strive to offer sound advice.”  
*Policy and Guidance for Pastoral Councils, 2012, p. 4.*

B) All members of the Pastoral Council enjoy both active and passive voice in all Council deliberations except as may be limited elsewhere in these Bylaws.

*Note: The definition of active and passive voice can be found in Article II, Sections 5 and 6.*

## **Section 8. Vacancies**

Vacancies occurring through resignation, or absence without due reason, shall be filled by the Pastor by using the most recent list of nominations. Such members shall complete the *remaining* year(s) of the original members' term.

Any member absent without due reason for three (3) consecutive meetings shall forfeit his/her membership and be so notified. Such a vacancy shall be filled as soon as possible following the notification.

Filling a vacancy shall not limit a member's ability to serve for at least 6 full years on the Council in their own right.