

ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE



PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL GUIDELINES

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ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE

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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

May God bless you! I am pleased to present the revised *Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines*.

Parish pastoral councils provide a robust support for our parishes and allow parishioners to answer their baptismal call to share in the mission of Jesus within parish communities. Well- functioning councils help pastors to lead well, and assist the community in focusing on the parish mission, good planning, prudent stewardship of resources, and sound communication among parish ministries.

I encourage you to study this document and share it with all who serve in this Leadership position in your parish. I am confident that you will find these guidelines to be a rich source of best practices and practical assistance in this vital ministry. While the principles expressed are general, the guidelines address some of the diverse consultative structures that exist among our parishes.

Thank you for your service to your parish. You are in my prayers.

Sincerely yours in our Lord,

Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurtz, D.D.
Archbishop of Louisville

ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE

MISSION

We are the Catholic Church in Central Kentucky, a community of believers rich in our tradition and growing in our diversity, striving for fullness of life in God.

In communion with the Bishop of Rome, our mission is to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ by:

- **Worshipping** God in word and sacrament.
- **Teaching** and sharing our faith.
- **Serving** human needs, especially those of the poor and oppressed.
- **Promoting** holiness of life through continuing conversion.
- **Fostering** justice and reconciliation among all God's people.

We commit ourselves to thankfulness through responsible stewardship of all God's gifts.

GOALS

1. To identify, claim, and celebrate our vibrant Catholic faith, grounded in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
2. To help form and support, with the power of the Holy Spirit, an evangelizing faith in Jesus Christ.
3. To embrace the diversity of culture in responding to God's love.
4. To call forth and empower servant-leaders for ministry.
5. To promote excellence in Catholic formation and education for all ages to build up the Body of Christ, the Church.

INTRODUCTION

The life of a parish is made manifest in how it attends to God’s word, intercedes, praises, and gives thanks to God at the Sunday Eucharist and in prayer and ritual of many kinds (worship); in how it forms members through education and formation (catechesis); in how it builds up the body of Christ, the Church (community); and in how it witnesses to justice and cares for all those in need (service).

Jesus directs us to:

<----->		
PROCLAIM	the Word of the Gospel through	EVANGELIZATION, EDUCATION / FORMATION
CELEBRATE	as a community through	WORSHIP
REACH OUT	to the community through	SERVICE
SHARE	gifts and talents of the whole community through	ADMINISTRATION/STEWARDSHIP COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY
<----->		

The means for participation in the mission of the Church takes many forms. The various ministries and organizations in the parish ensure that the work of the Church is completed and integrated. Likewise, parish leadership provides significant ways for collaboration in consultation and planning. The parish pastoral council remains a most promising way to make sure such participation occurs.

Canon law states it this way, —After the diocesan bishop has listened to the presbyteral council and if he judges it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish; the pastor presides over it, and through it the Christian faithful along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office give their help in fostering pastoral activity.¶ (Canon 536 §1) —This pastoral council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by norms determined by the diocesan bishop.¶ (Canon 536 §2) ¹

PARISH MISSION

For most Catholics the parish is the most important part of the Church. It is where they publicly express their faith and join with others in communion with God and one another.

The parish as part of the archdiocesan Church works to accomplish the mission of Jesus. Through Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation, all Christians are called to share in this responsibility.

The mission statement of the parish gives direction and meaning to its activities. A community gets in touch with itself—its roots and dreams—in making an effort to express its mission. The statement acts as a public account of who this parish is and what it stands for. A good mission statement is broad and comprehensive. It reveals the parish’s purpose, its values, and directs its planning. From its mission, the parish finds resources for witness and service to the broader community in which it lives.

¹ *Code of Canon Law* Latin - English edition; Canon Law Society; 1995

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

All Christians, by their baptism, are called to share responsibility for the mission of Jesus according to their gifts and talents. This call, present since the beginning of the Church, was emphasized again in the documents of Vatican II and by the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*.

The role of the laity in the mission of the Church is identified as the lay apostolate, and the value of shared responsibility in the Church is clearly stated in *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, (*Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*.)²

- a. —...the laity, too, share in the priestly, prophetic, and royal office of Christ and therefore have their own role to play in the mission of the whole people of God in the Church and in the world.¶ §2
- b. —Incorporated into Christ's Mystical Body through baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through confirmation, they are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord himself.¶ §3
- c. —To fulfill the mission of the Church in the world, the laity has certain basic needs. They need a life in harmony with their faith, so they can become the light of the world.¶ §13

The Code of Canon Law clearly states:

—Christ's faithful are those who, since they are incorporated into Christ through baptism, are constituted the people of God. For this reason they participate in their own way in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ. They are called, each according to his or her particular condition, to exercise the mission which God entrusted to the Church to fulfill in the world.¶³

This call to active participation by the laity in the mission of the Church also has a foundation in Scripture:

- a. —Each one of you has received a special grace, so like good stewards responsible for all these different graces of God, put yourselves at the service of others.¶ 1 Peter 4:10
- b. —The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favor.¶ Luke 4:18-19

Pastoral leadership ideally encourages the fullest participation of all the faithful —clergy, religious, and laity—in their common mission. Likewise, parish leadership provides significant ways for collaboration in consultation and planning, as well as in the various ministries of the parish.

The means for participation in the mission of the Church takes many forms. The parish pastoral council remains a most promising way to make sure such participation occurs. Two other models used in the Archdiocese are the town hall and the advisory board.

² *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, Apostolicam Actuositatem*, in *Documents of Vatican II*.
Walter M. Abbott S.J., Ed., pp. 491-492,505

³ *The Canon Law: Letter and Spirit* C 204, §1, p.115

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

The parish pastoral council is a consultative body to the pastor/pastoral administrator. The council structure facilitates cooperation between the pastor/pastoral administrator, the staff, and parishioners to define and carry out the parish's mission which is connected to the mission of the universal Church and to that of Jesus.

In its leadership role the council has the responsibility to assist the pastor in:

- Defining the parish's mission – asking how the parish is to be rooted and grounded in God's love.
- Searching to discover the directives of the gospel – looking at and interpreting the world, persons, and events in a Christian context.
- Developing a pastoral plan with priorities and strategies to accomplish them, which sets direction for parish service.
- Providing organizational structures – building a sense of belonging and participation in the parish and working for clear, consistent, and easily accessible communication.
- Operating with organizational and procedural guidelines – providing clear parameters to promote and support stewardship as the way of life in the parish.

The scope of the council's work is to:

- Develop the parish as a community of faith and service in harmony with the beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church.
- Empower parishioners to share their faith.
- Focus decision-making in the parish in order to help the parish's mission become a reality.
- Enable clear, consistent, and easily accessible communication in the parish.

Parish councils pursue the parish's mission in connection to the larger Church and with awareness of its interdependence with other parishes, the Archdiocese, and the universal Church. Councils lead the parish through planning and direction-setting processes and strive for effective communication and interaction between committees, organizations, and the parish as a whole.

The council supports good relations with other churches and organizations within the community and participates in those endeavors related to the common good.

MEMBERSHIP

The council is made up of the pastor/pastoral administrator and a selection of parishioners. The size of the council will depend upon the number of parishioners, with the average range being from 8-12 members. This size is small enough to allow the group to know one another well, to dialogue, and to work creatively, and large enough for stimulating discussions and for accomplishing its work.

Members have a three-year term with the possibility of a second term. It is recommended that terms be staggered to provide for continuity.

Potential council members are surfaced through a process of self-selection and/or nomination, which creates a pool of people who have the gifts and willingness to serve in this leadership capacity.

Parishioners who are considering parish council service should participate in an orientation to learn more about the work of pastoral councils and have a conversation with current council members and with the pastor/pastoral administrator. They then prayerfully discern whether or not to leave their name in the pool for selection.

Criteria for membership:

- Fully initiated Catholic. (Fully initiated Catholics have received the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation.)
- Registered and practicing member of the parish.
- Ability to work with a diversity of personalities.
- Willing to participate in ongoing formation.

Role descriptions:

- Pastor/pastoral administrator presides over the council.
 - Serves as the spiritual leader.
 - Convenes and directs the council agenda.
 - Creates the environment for open communication among council members.
- Members:
 - Participate fully in the council's formation, prayer and deliberations.
 - Gather information and data regarding pastoral needs of the community.
 - Assist in developing the parish pastoral plan.
 - Communicate effectively with the entire parish.
 - Serve as a council link to staff and/or committees.

PARISH COMMITTEES

Committees enable parishioners the opportunity to exercise the stewardship of their time and talents in helping the parish move toward becoming the kind of Christian community envisioned in its mission statement. They are formed in each area of the parish's mission, namely: worship, service, formation, and administration to care for the needs of the people.⁴

The committee structure is intended to foster collaboration and interdependent relationships among various groups and organizations of the parish as well as with other parishes. This coordinated effort helps to bring about the genuine renewal of Christian life within the parish.

Worship: *CELEBRATING-SACRAMENTS-PRAYER-SPIRITUAL GROWTH-DEVOTIONS*
Service: *CARING-OUTREACH-WELCOMING- SOCIAL JUSTICE*
Formation: *TEACHING-LIFE-LONG FAITH FORMATION-YOUTH MINISTRY*
Administration: *PARTICIPATING-ADMINISTRATION-FACILITIES*

Archdiocesan agencies are available to committees for consultation and assistance in their development and ongoing enrichment.

The committees are configured to work in conjunction with pastoral staff and the parish pastoral council. The size of the parish determines the size and membership of the committee.

Each committee is responsible to:

Form its members as a praying and learning community of faith that is educated and renewed through prayer, study, and attendance at appropriate workshops, seminars, and similar learning opportunities.

Carry out goals and objectives of the pastoral plan in collaboration with other committees.

Formulate policy in consultation with the parish pastoral council.

Recommend an annual budget for related programs, supplies, equipment, and expenses in collaboration with the parish finance council:

- a. Committee submits to the designated person (e.g. business manager) the amount of money requested and the purpose for the expenditure.
- b. Designated person compiles requests for finance council review.
- c. Finance council presents draft budget to pastoral council.
- d. Pastoral council ratifies the budget and recommends it to the pastor for approval.

Submit regular written reports to the parish council and when called upon, to present issues or information at parish council meetings.

In parishes without a committee structure, care should be taken by the parish pastoral council to ensure that all areas of the parish mission are adequately developed and evaluated regularly.

⁴ Worship, service, formation, and administration are the recommended committee areas. Questions sometimes arise about the formation of committees in the areas of stewardship and evangelization. Stewardship and evangelization are major themes that should inform the work of all committees. Therefore it is not recommended that these areas become limited to one committee. Tasks or projects related to these major areas may be delegated to one or more committees, e.g. stewardship renewal to administration or hospitality to worship.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE
CELEBRATING-SACRAMENTS-PRAYER-SPIRITUAL GROWTH-DEVOTIONS

The worship committee is concerned with the liturgical functions that serve as the primary expressions of faith and worship, through the sacraments, as well as through programs explicitly involving spiritual growth and development. Outcomes that concern this committee include:

- The liturgies are prayerful, reverent, and spiritually moving.
- Parishioners participate fully and consciously in the celebration of the liturgy.
- The music at liturgies inspires prayer and worship of God.
- The preaching connects scripture to daily life and inspires Christian living.
- Parishioners are spiritually prepared to live the gospel in their daily lives.
- The parish provides a variety of prayer experiences and popular devotions.

Committee members form themselves as a praying and learning community of faith that is educated and renewed through prayer, study, and attendance at appropriate learning opportunities.

The committee, in accord with archdiocesan directives and resources, is concerned with training, developing, scheduling and renewing the laity in their participation in liturgical celebrations, especially the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, lectors, servers, ushers, cantors, greeters, and those involved in all areas of musical planning and participation.

This committee assists with the liturgical and sacramental needs of the parish community including those of shut-ins, care-givers, the ill, nursing home residents, and all others in unusual situations or needing assistance.

“The liturgy is rightly seen as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ....In it full public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Christ that is the Head and His members. Every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the Priest and his Body, which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others. No action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree.”⁵

SERVICE COMMITTEE for PARISH LIFE
CARING-OUTREACH-WELCOMING

The parish life committee is concerned with those matters that help to build the parish community spirit and improve Christian life in the community of the faith. Outcomes that concern this committee include:

- The parish is a supportive community where people care for one another and take an active and visible role in the life of the community.
- The parish attends to the special needs and situations of families today.
- The parish attends to the needs of the sick, homebound, bereaved and imprisoned.
- The parish reaches out to diverse populations, making appropriate accommodations for persons with disabilities to participate in the liturgy and parish programs.
- The parish engages in outreach to the poor.

This committee identifies and coordinates the social and recreational needs of the parish, maintains an annual calendar of scheduled events, and suggests and institutes programs of welcome for new parishioners.

It evaluates its activities—especially social, ministerial, and recreational projects—as to their effectiveness for community growth, and it institutes procedures to increase involvement of parishioners in planned parish activities.

⁵ *Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy)*, #7c-d

It helps the members of the parish family to develop a deeper understanding of and commitment to their respective roles. This includes programs of concern and support for single persons including the widowed, divorced and separated, as well as single parent families.

“[The Parish] ...adheres to its fundamental vocation and mission, that is, to be a “place” in the world for the community of believers to gather together as a “sign” and “instrument of the vocation of all to communion; in a word, to be a house of welcome to all and a place of service to all, or as Pope John XXIII was fond of saying, to be the village fountain to which all would have recourse in their thirst.”⁶

“The family isthe principal school of the social virtues which are necessary to every society....it is therefore above all in the Christian family....that children should be taught to know and worship God and love their neighbor...Parents should, therefore, appreciate how important a role the truly Christian family plays in the life and progress of the whole people of God.”⁷

SERVICE COMMITTEE for SOCIAL CONCERNS *SOCIAL JUSTICE-OUTREACH*

The social concerns committee promotes outreach programs with emphasis on social services, pro-life, social justice, and community ministries, and cooperates with other churches and civic organizations in projects aimed at community improvement. Outcomes that concern this committee include:

- Parishioners become educated about the principles of Catholic social and moral teaching.
- Parishioners accept their spiritual responsibility to address the needs of the poor and to promote a culture of life.
- The parish identifies and analyzes major social problems in the parish as well as in the larger civic community.
- The parish is aware of the extent of poverty in the local community.
- Parishioners are informed about the resources available to meet the needs of the poor.
- The parish maintains working contact with resource people and pertinent agencies for problems such as drugs, delinquency, alcoholism, and abuse of family members.
- The parish promotes suitable projects and advocacy in the areas of Catholic social teaching.

“The temporal order is to be renewed in such a way that, while its own principles are fully respected, it is harmonized with the principles of the Christian life and adapted to the various conditions of times, places and peoples. Among the tasks of this apostolate Christian social action is preeminent. The Council desires to see it extended today to every sector of life, not forgetting the cultural sphere.”⁸

FORMATION COMMITTEE *TEACHING-FAITH FORMATION-YOUTH MINISTRY*

The lifelong formation committee, working with the pastoral staff person, shall determine programs that will promote and support total educational and formational needs in all areas of the parish. In parishes with a school, the committee ensures that the policies are developed cooperatively with the school. In regional school settings this extends to each parish that sponsors the school. Outcomes that concern this committee include:

- The parish emphasizes lifelong formation and education for children, youth, and adults.
- The parish renews adult faith in all its efforts.
- Parishioners experience spiritual growth through involvement in small faith-sharing communities and/or parish based pastoral movements.
- The parish reaches out to non-practicing Catholics and the unchurched.
- A high quality K-12 religious education program is provided for children.
- There is an active youth ministry program.

⁶ *Christifideles Laici*, §27.6

⁷ *Gravissimum educationis (Declaration on Christian Education)*, §3

⁸ *Apostolicam Actuositatem (Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People)*, §7

This committee, in accord with the Office of Lifelong Formation and Education, develops policies and supports programs in religious education, catechesis, young adult ministry, youth ministry, adult formation, and the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults for the parish. The committee keeps current with related issues in the areas of catechesis and education and studies available resources on how adults learn.

“All Christians – that is, all those who having been reborn in water and the Holy Spirit are called and in fact are children of God – have a right to a Christian education. Such an education not only develops the maturity of the human person... but is especially directed towards ensuring that those who have been baptized, as they are gradually introduced to a knowledge of the mystery of salvation, become daily more appreciative of the gift of faith which they have received.”⁹

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE PARTICIPATING-ADMINISTRATION-FACILITIES

The administration committee upholds parish programs and ministries and strives for the integration of stewardship as a way of life. Outcomes that concern this committee include:

- The parish offers a wide variety of opportunities for parishioners to become involved in parish life and ministry and are personally invited to engage in ministry and leadership.
- The parish personally contacts and welcomes new members to the parish.
- The parish effectively communicates information about its ministries, activities, and events.
- Parishioners receive training for leadership and ministry.
- The parish is accountable for its use of the human and financial resources entrusted to its care.

This committee administers the stewardship renewal process and maintains close communication with other committees and organizations to facilitate participation of all parishioners.

In collaboration with the Finance Council, the committee inspects and inventories all parish properties, equipment, furnishings, and facilities. It reviews and recommends, with other committees as appropriate, a capital maintenance schedule for the parish and its facilities with needed additions, repairs, replacements and servicing. It recommends policies or guidelines to the parish pastoral council for use of parish facilities, including security, utilities, services, and personnel, and publishes approved guidelines upon approval of the parish council. It prepares and recommends, in coordination with the other committees, facility improvements.

The committee coordinates the fund-raising efforts of the parish.

“Worthy of special respect and praise in the Church are the laity, single or married, who, in a definitive way or for a period, put their person and their professional competence at the service of institutions and their activities. It is a great joy to the Church to see growing day by day the number of lay people who are offering the personal service to associations and works of the apostolate.”¹⁰

“All the members of the Church should make a concerted effort to ensure that the means of communication are put at the service of the multiple forms of the apostolate without delay and as energetically as possible.”¹¹

⁹ *Gravissimum Educationis (Declaration on Christian Education)*, §2

¹⁰ *Apostolicam Actuositatem (Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People)*, §22

¹¹ *Inter mirifica (Decree on the Means of Social Communication)*, §13

PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

The parish finance council is mandated by canon law. Canon 537 states: —Each parish is to have a finance council which is regulated by universal law as well as by norms issued by the diocesan bishop; in this council the Christian faithful, selected according to the same norms, aid the pastor in the administration of the parish goods with due regard for the prescription of Canon 532.¹²

Open communication between the pastoral council and the finance council is essential to ensure that the envisioned parish direction and priorities can be supported within the financial limits of the parish.

The *Financial Policies and Procedures Manual of the Archdiocese of Louisville* articulates the criteria for membership and the major responsibilities of the parish finance council.

¹² *Code of Canon Law* Latin- English edition; Canon Law Society; 19

**PARISH PASTORAL
COUNCIL**

**PARISH FINANCE
COUNCIL**

**PARISH
COMMITTEES**

MEMBERSHIP

Selected parishioners through parish process

Appointed by the pastor/pastoral administrator

Parishioners from each organization/sub-committee in a specific area of ministry (worship, service, formation, administration).

RELATIONSHIP TO THE PASTOR

Consultative

Consultative

Consultative

Pastor/pastoral administrator presides

Pastor/pastoral administrator presides

Pastor/pastoral administrator may choose to preside

RELATIONSHIP TO PASTORAL STAFF/TEAM

Paid staff in ministry areas; Hired by the pastor/pastoral Administrator; priest associate; deacon(s)

The relationship of council with staff is through the direction and coordination of the pastor/pastoral administrator

Determined by the pastor/pastoral administrator

Works directly with staff in the area of parish life specific to the committee

Council and staff work collaboratively to fulfill the parish's mission

PRIMARY FOCUS

Parish mission and planning

Financial matters of the parish

Implementing the ministry of its specific area of parish life

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Pastoral matters pertaining to the community within parish territory

Finance matters including annual budget and the development of financial resources needed to implement parish priorities

To work collaboratively with other committees linked with the pastoral council

METHOD OF DECISION MAKING

By consensus

By consensus

By consensus

PASTORAL COUNCIL PROCESSES

COLLABORATION

Collaboration is any type of cooperation between groups that involves personnel, programs, or resources. Collaboration has three distinct features:

1. The collaboration is based on a common and agreed-upon purpose and outcome that has been clearly defined.
2. The collaboration is a conscious effort having key personnel involved.
3. The groups working together with the cooperative venture are structured so that all parties share the task and commitment as equally as possible.

DECISION MAKING

Ultimately the pastor/pastoral administrator has responsibility for parish decisions. Pastors/pastoral administrators, however, are called upon to use a process of dialogue with the council.

Decisions of the parish pastoral council are considered official when ratified by the pastor/pastoral administrator. Ordinarily this takes place at the meeting during which the decision is made.

There are several levels of decision making. Choice of the appropriate level is based on the importance of the issues being considered, the emotional level, the number of people involved, the time available, and who has the authority to make the decision.

Consensus decision-making is recommended for major decisions. Using the spirit of consensus is desirable in all council matters.

Consensus is a process of seeking substantial agreement on a significant matter through open discussion, prayer, and resolution of major issues. The conclusion reached is one that all members can support.

Making decisions by consensus is based on the concept of shared wisdom and the belief that Jesus promised to send the Spirit to all the baptized. It necessitates each person sharing views on issues and listening to the wisdom of differing views in the light of the common good. The consensus spirit of decision making has the potential for generating a greater sense of unity among the group.

MISSION STATEMENT

A mission statement is a succinct statement that conveys your reason for being, what you do, and for whom. It should be clear, powerful, and broad enough to guide your decision making.

The statement unifies, motivates and clarifies and it should be spiritual and inspiring. It answers the questions:

- Who are we called to be?
- Why do we exist?
- What should we be about?

The best mission statements are short and state the obvious.

Tips for writing your mission statement:

- Bring in many perspectives. Get input from the community you plan to serve. You can obtain this input through meetings, surveys, or phone calls. Ask people what they think or need in regard to the area of services you plan to offer.
- Provide time to reflect on the information you gather, to write an initial draft, to allow key participants to read it, and to make changes.
- Be open to new ideas. Be open to different interpretations of what you should be doing and new ideas about how to accomplish your goals. Use brainstorming techniques to ensure that all ideas come forward freely. You can whittle them down later.
- Committees are better served if the group seeks to brainstorm major ideas and let a skilled writer develop these ideas into a draft statement that is then brought back to the committee for approval.

PASTORAL PLANNING

“The objective of our life is the kingdom of God, but we should carefully ask what we should aim for. If we do not look very carefully into this we will wear ourselves out in useless strivings. For those who travel without a marked road there is the toil of the journey and no arrival at a destination.” St. John Cassian

Pastoral planning is a way for the parish to accomplish its mission, giving parishioners a stronger sense of belonging. Parish planning is an experience of shared responsibility and solid stewardship. It addresses the matter of what we are called to be as parish at this time and what we need to be doing in order get there. Planning is done through the parish pastoral council in consultation with staff, committees, and parishioners.

- Planning is a leadership function in which planners are asked to look at the organization systemically and globally. They consider data that has been gathered in listening sessions, the current environment, and their own knowledge and expertise about what is most important.
- Planning asks fundamental questions such as: How are we carrying out our mission? Whom are we serving? Whom should we be serving?
- Planning deals with priorities, i.e. What is most important for the time period in question?
- Planners are not merely leaders of a parade; they must consider the prophetic as well as the popular.
- Plans typically involve a time frame of two to five years.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Policies are reflective of the parish’s values and lead to actions in carrying out parish goals.

A policy development process includes:

1. Research and data gathering.
2. Consultation with those responsible for carrying out the policy.
3. Determination of several alternatives.
4. Communication of the policy to the parish community.
5. Evaluation.

SELECTION PROCESS

RATIONALE

A passage from the Acts of the Apostles gives us food for thought regarding the use of a selection process for choosing parish pastoral council members.

“Having nominated two candidates, Joseph known as Barsabbas, whose surname was Justus, and Matthias, they prayed, „Lord, you can read everyone’s heart; show us therefore which of these two you have chosen to take over this ministry and apostolate which Judas abandoned to go to his proper place.” They then drew lots for them, and as the lot fell to Matthias, he was listed as one of the twelve apostles.”
Acts. 1:23-26

Some benefits of a selection process are:

- It allows the pastor, staff, and parishioners to recognize gifts in others and call them forth for service.
- It encourages parishioners to reflect on their own gifts and the needs of the community to determine if they feel called to serve.
- It fosters new leadership, allowing those not so well known to come forward without having to enter into a popular vote.
- It creates a process that is affirming, supportive, and unifying.

OUTLINE

1. Appoint an ad hoc nomination committee
2. Designate a weekend, approximately twelve weeks prior to the date chosen for the selection of names, to prepare the parish to enter into the process. Put an insert in the bulletin asking members of the parish to consider those members in the parish whom they think have the gifts to serve on the council. Include in the announcement some of the qualities of Christian leadership needed to fulfill the role.
3. On the same weekend, of the bulletin insert:
 - Focus on the theme of discipleship and the ministry of leadership at each liturgy.
 - Inform the whole parish about the upcoming selection of leadership for the parish pastoral council.
 - Invite the community to nominate candidates—themselves or others—during the liturgy or in the coming week.
 - Ask the parish community to pray for guidance as the parish seeks to call forth persons with the needed gifts and talents.
4. Send a letter to each person whose name surfaces and invite them to an orientation session to learn more about the role of the parish pastoral council. (More than one orientation session may be needed to give people an option.)
5. Hold the orientation session.
6. Develop an agenda for the session with the following elements:
 - Presentation on the role of the council in the parish.
 - Presentation by the pastor on his vision for the council.
 - Sharing by current council members of their experience on the council.
 - Ritual to express interest in continuing as part of the selection pool.

RITUAL

- A. The names of those willing to serve on the council are placed in an earthenware bowl or basket and are placed on a table near the altar before Mass.
- B. After the homily and before the Creed, the pastor introduces the ritual for parish pastoral council membership.

Pastoral parish council chairperson goes to the cantor stand and thanks all who participated in the selection process, which began the weekend of _____. Chairperson then provides a summary of the process:

This number ____ of parishioners invited ____ persons to consider being a part of the pastoral council. Of these ____ persons were eligible to serve. ____ were not eligible to serve because ____ (Give reason(s).)

We sent ____ letters of invitation to an orientation session of which ____ persons responded —no” for a variety of reasons and ____ accepted the invitation.

After the orientation session ____ persons agreed to have their names placed in the selection pool and to serve if selected.

I now present the names of the candidates for parish pastoral council to the community. (Say the names)

Father _____, the members of this parish called these men and women to serve the common good, and they have answered the call willingly. They understand the importance of the work of the pastoral council to the life of the parish and the responsibility it entails.

I, the pastoral council chairperson, am confident in the ability of any of these people and ask that you lead us in prayer so that, following the example of the apostles, we might rely upon the help of the Lord. (THE NAMES ARE HELD UP FOR THE PRAYER.)

- C. Pastor:

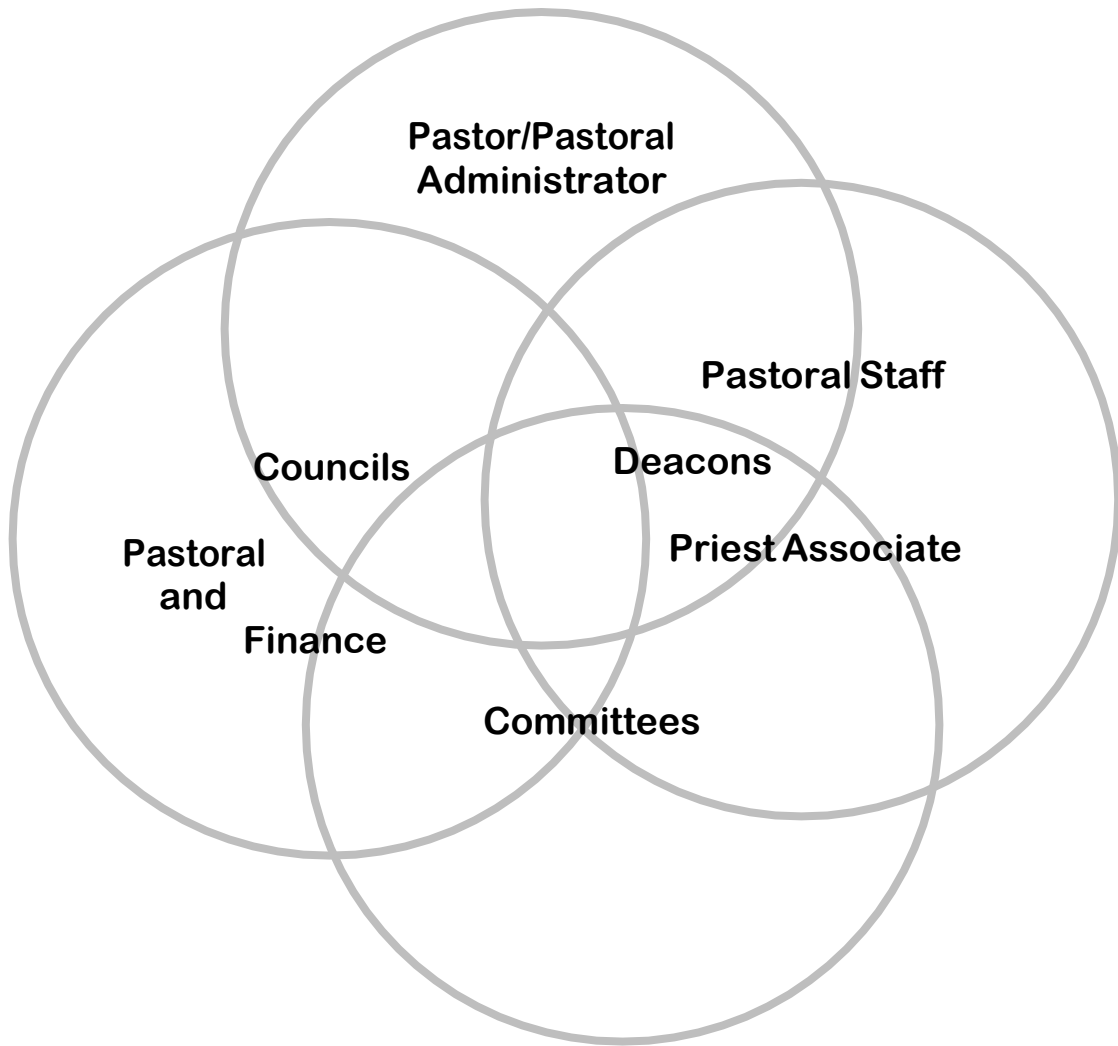
O God, our strength and our guide, help us to trust in your faithful presence as we select those members to serve on the parish pastoral council. Strengthen them in their leadership role and guide the council in all its deliberations.

May they be identified as Christ’s disciples proclaiming the Good News to the poor, may they be filled with bold, courageous faith to speak your truth to the world, and may they be guided by the Holy Spirit in all that they do. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord and our brother. Amen.

- D. Chairperson draws the # of names being selected and says _____ and _____ and _____ are selected to serve on the council for a three year term to begin on _____ and to end on _____.

PARISH ORGANIZATION

CONSULT COLLABORATE CONFIGURE COMMIT



OTHER MODELS

The parish pastoral council is the most common way pastors/pastoral administrators provide a significant way for collaboration in consultation and planning for the parish.

In the Archdiocese of Louisville two other models are used by pastors/pastoral administrators for the purpose of consultation and setting parish priorities. These models are the town hall and the advisory board.

TOWN HALL

PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

The pastor/pastoral administrator consults with the parish as a whole to define and carry out the parish mission, which is connected to the mission of the universal Church and to that of Jesus.

Through regularly scheduled meetings (monthly or bi-monthly) the pastor/pastoral administrator strives to:

- Develop the parish as a community of faith and service in harmony with the beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church.
- Build a sense of belonging and participation in the parish.
- Set direction for parish service.
- Establish parish priorities and strategies to accomplish them.
- Provide a means for clear, consistent communication within the parish.

MEMBERSHIP

The Town Hall is made up of the pastor/pastoral administrator and all registered and supportive members of the parish:

- The pastor/pastoral administrator selects a group of parishioners to assist in preparing and conducting the meetings.
- Pastor/pastoral administrator:
 - Convenes and directs the meeting agenda.
 - Creates the environment for open communication among the members.
 - Presides over the town hall meetings.

A typical parish town hall meeting consists of:

1. Prayer.
2. Giving an update on what is happening in the parish.
3. Reporting on actions taken on recommendations from the previous meeting(s).
4. Presenting a defined issue e.g. outreach to the needy in the community.
5. Discussing the issue and making recommendations on ways to address the issue.

ADVISORY BOARD

PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

The advisory board is an appointed body of the pastor/pastoral administrator.

The pastor/pastoral administrator meets with the board at least quarterly each year.

In its leadership role the board advises the pastor/pastoral administrator regarding parish priorities and strategies to accomplish them.

MEMBERSHIP

Five to seven members of the parish selected and appointed by the pastor/pastoral administrator.

A three-year term with the possibility of a second term is recommended, with terms being staggered to provide for continuity.

AGENDA

The advisory board's meeting consists of:

1. Prayer.
2. Background information about a specific issue is presented e.g. how to engage young people in the life of the parish.
3. The advisory board discusses the issue and advises the pastor/pastoral administrator on ways to address it.

Terms To Know

Consensus: A process of decision-making in which the members of a group engage in open discussion and prayer to work to reach substantial commitment on major issues that all members can accept without compromising any strong conviction or need.

Diocese: A portion of the people of God that is entrusted for pastoral care to a bishop with the cooperation of his priests, so that adhering to its pastor and gathered by him in the Holy Spirit through the Gospel and the Eucharist, it constitutes a particular church in which the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and operative. (Canon 369)

Discernment: A process that promotes a community's ability to seek the will of God in the life of the community. Communal discernment adds prayerful reflection and study to the consensus process.

Parish: A definite community of the Christian faithful that is established on a stable basis within a particular diocese (by decree of the diocesan bishop) and entrusted to a pastor as its own shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop. (Canon 515)

Pastoral Administrator: A deacon, religious, or lay man or woman appointed by the Archbishop to provide pastoral care and administrative oversight to a parish. Pastoral administrators are assisted by a priest, appointed by the Archbishop, who provides sacramental ministry to the parish (sacramental moderator). The Archbishop appoints a canonical pastor, (presbyteral moderator). Usually, this is a pastor of another parish. The sacramental moderator could be appointed to this role as well.

Pastoral Council of the Archdiocese (PCAL): The parish council chairs of each parish in the Archdiocese make up this council. The Archbishop consults this body semi-annually on major initiatives within the Archdiocese.

Priests' Council: The priests who are selected by priests or appointed by the Archbishop to advise him on major initiatives of the Archdiocese. By canon law, priests must be consulted on any major policy or structural change affecting people and parishes within the Archdiocese.

Regions: The parishes in the Archdiocese of Louisville are divided into regions, based on geography. They serve as a venue for priests to gather to conduct the business of the priest council. Other pertinent matters also are discussed at these meetings. Currently there are 11 regions within the Archdiocese.

Shared Responsibility: The principle that each member of the Church has the right and duty to assist the Church, offering time and talent so that its mission will be effective. The principle of shared responsibility received great emphasis during the Second Vatican Council.

Subsidiarity: A principle of authority whereby decisions are entrusted to the appropriate body and not assumed by a higher authority. Issues are dealt with and policies are established at the lowest proper level.

A MODEL FOR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL
ORGANIZATIONAL GUIDELINES
(CONSTITUTIONS)

PREAMBLE:

A mission statement reflecting the parish's relationship to the universal Church, the Archdiocesan Church and the mission of this parish.

These values are deeply rooted and permeate the life and work of the parish:

I. NAME:

The name of this body is the Pastoral Council of _____ of _____, Kentucky.

II. PURPOSE:

The parish pastoral council, established by the pastor/pastoral administrator, is a consultative body who shares his leadership in planning and visioning for the parish. He partners with the council in establishing structures to facilitate the life of parish. Together, pastor/pastoral administrator, council, and all members of _____ join in prayerful reflection about the parish's mission and ministry.

The council has responsibility to:

- A. Have a clear sense of the parish's mission and purpose.
- B. Collaborate with staff, committees, and organizations for the common good to make the parish a community of growing faith.
- C. Participate in on-going formation and training.
- D. Listen closely to the needs and hopes of the faith community.
- E. Serve as an instrument of planning and evaluation for the parish.
- F. Foster effective communication and establish goals that witness Gospel values.
- G. Advocate fiscal health in order for the parish to meet expenses and give generously to needs beyond the parish.

III. AUTHORITY:

- A. The pastoral council is consultative to the pastor/pastoral administrator. (Canon 536)
- B. All that pertains to the mission of the parish lies within the scope of the pastor/pastoral council.
- C. The pastoral council will be the planning and policy-formulating body that works collaboratively with staff, committees, and organizations for the common good.
- D. The power of the pastoral council comes from the unity within it, the sharing of gifts, talents and insights through fruitful dialogue, reflection in prayer, and consensus recommendations to the pastor/pastoral administrator.
- E. The pastor/pastoral administrator bears final responsibility for total parish ministry. The pastor/pastoral administrator, therefore, must ratify all actions of the pastoral council for them to be effective.

IV. MEMBERSHIP:

The pastoral council will be comprised of ____members selected from the parish.

All registered and fully initiated members of the parish above the age of 18 are eligible for membership on the pastoral council.

The pastor/pastoral administrator is a member of the council by virtue of his office.

V. OFFICERS:

- A. The pastor/pastoral administrator presides over the pastoral council, which is a separate and distinct office from the chairperson.
- B. The officers of the pastoral council will be chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary. They will be selected from the pastoral council and serve a one-year renewable term. When possible a non-member will be appointed to take minutes of council meetings.

VI. SELECTION AND TERMS OF OFFICE:

Selected members of the council:

- A. Serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms. After one year they may enter the process for another term.
- B. Will have staggered terms so that no more than half of the selected members will be replaced at one time.

VII. AREAS OF MINISTRY:

- A. The pastoral council is assisted in its responsibilities by parish committees and organizations, which are categorized within the four major areas of ministry: worship, formation, service, administration.
- B. Committees develop plans and programs in response to the needs of their area in accord with the pastoral council and the parish mission statement. A committee budget is developed in cooperation with the finance council and presented to the pastoral council.
- C. Committees submit summary reports from their meetings and activities. They work collaboratively with the pastoral council and parish staff in developing policies.
- D. Task groups may be formed by the pastoral council to meet specific objectives.

VIII. MEETINGS:

- A. The pastoral council will meet a minimum of ____times each calendar year.
- B. The pastoral council does not meet without the knowledge of the pastor/pastoral administrator.
- C. The chairperson may call special meetings of the pastoral council. Members will receive a written or verbal notice at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.
- D. Meetings of the pastoral council are open to parishioners as observers. Observers will be dismissed when confidential matters need to be discussed.

E. A summary of the meeting should be prepared and available to parishioners.

IX. DECISION PROCESS:

- A. All decisions made by the pastoral council will be made in the spirit of consensus decision-making.
- B. If the pastoral council cannot reach consensus, voting procedures will be followed. In such an event the actions of the council require a two-thirds majority.
- C. All decisions and actions of the pastoral council must be ratified by the pastor/pastoral administrator.

X. VACANCIES AND REMOVAL:

- A. Any member of the pastoral council may submit a written resignation to the pastor/pastoral administrator.
- B. For good cause: including absence from three consecutive meetings without good reason, physical or mental incapacity, or failure to fulfill duties as a council member; any member of the pastoral council may be removed by the pastor/pastoral administrator.
- C. A vacancy among members will be filled for the unexpired term by drawing lots from the previous pool of nominees.

XI. BUDGET:

The parish budget process has four phases and areas of responsibility:

- 1. All committees will submit budget requests to the finance council.
- 2. The finance council will study and compile all budget requests into one parish budget and present to the pastoral council.
- 3. The pastoral council will review the budget in light of parish goals and priorities.
- 4. The pastor/pastoral administrator approves the budget through the pastoral council.

XII. AMENDMENTS:

- A. All amendments to be considered will be presented to the pastoral council in writing.
- B. Proposed amendments will be decided by consensus (or two-thirds vote) of the council.

DATE OF APPROVAL: _____

SIGNED: _____

DATE OF REVIEW: _____

A MODEL FOR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL
OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES
(BY-LAWS)

I. PARISH NAME PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL:

II. MEMBERSHIP:

PASTOR/PASTORAL ADMINISTRATOR

- Consults the pastoral council regarding the pastoral care of the parish.
- Shares leadership with the pastoral council in planning and visioning for the parish.
- Partners with the pastoral council in establishing structures to facilitate the life of parish.
- Presides at all pastoral council meetings.

SELECTED

- Prepares for pastoral council meetings according to needs of the agenda.
- Attends pastoral council meetings and actively participates in deliberations and decision-making.
- Designs and implements formal listening opportunities for the whole parish.
- Collaborates with committees and organizations in planning for the parish.
- Works toward open communication between and among all aspects of parish life.
- Informs the chairperson or pastor regarding absences from meetings.

CHAIRPERSON

- Serves as an active member of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council.
- Calls and chairs all meetings of the pastoral council.
- Oversees the activities of the pastoral council.
- Prepares pastoral council meeting agenda in consultation with the pastor.
- Promotes open communication between and among the pastoral council, committees and organizations.
- Oversees the selection process for pastoral council membership.
- Provides formation and education opportunities for the pastoral council.
- Oversees updating of the pastoral council's organizational and operational guidelines.

VICE-CHAIRPERSON

- Chairs meetings in the absence of the chairperson.
- Works closely with the chairperson in overseeing the activities of the pastoral council.
- Succeeds the chairperson in case of resignation or disqualification.

SECRETARY

- Maintains written records of pastoral council minutes and files a copy in the parish office.
- Maintains records of pastoral council members including names, addresses, email addresses, telephone numbers, and attendance.
- Distributes minutes of pastoral council meetings and agendum of upcoming meetings to pastoral council members.

EX-OFFICIO, APPOINTED

- Attends meetings and actively participates in deliberations as appropriate.
- Supports pastoral council activities and decisions within the life of the parish.

III. PARISH COMMITTEES:

PURPOSE

Standing committees and organizations are established to enable the parish to effectively fulfill its mission. They are the means for implementing the parish's goals and priorities. The pastoral council, finance council, committees, and organizations work together to worship God in word and sacrament, teach and share faith, serve human needs, and build a community rich in faith.

COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

To facilitate:

- Inviting new members into the life of the parish.
- Engaging people in liturgy that is prayerful with good music and preaching.
- Providing prayer opportunities that nurture parishioners' faith, deepen their spirituality, and facilitate their ability to live the gospel message.
- Reaching out to non-practicing Catholics and the unchurched and playing a visible role in the local community.
- Responding to needs of people; supporting one another, and reaching out to the poor.
- Providing life-long faith formation through programs for children, adult formation opportunities, youth ministry, and young adult ministry.
- Ensuring the fiscal health of the parish so that it meets expenses and gives generously to needs beyond the parish.

IV. MEETINGS:

- A. Regular meetings of the pastoral council will be held at a time, date, and place determined by the pastor/pastoral administrator and council. Prayer will be part of the pastoral council's regular agenda. Reflection and study will be included in the context of the regular meeting when appropriate.
- B. The agenda will be determined before the meeting according to the needs and concerns of the parish.
- C. Notice of pastoral council meetings will be published in the bulletin. Parishioners are welcome to attend meetings as observers. When confidential matters need to be discussed, observers will be dismissed.
- D. Parishioners may submit in writing items for the pastoral council agenda. These requests are to be received by the parish council chairperson two weeks prior to the meeting. After consulting the pastor/pastoral administrator, the chair will place these items on the agenda as appropriate.
- E. Only business that is listed on the agenda for a special meeting of the pastoral council will be discussed at that meeting.
- F. Consensus is the preferred decision-making process for the pastoral council in major matters.

V. AMENDMENTS:

Operational Guideline (by-laws) may be amended by the pastoral council by consensus (or two-thirds vote) of the pastoral council.

DATE OF APPROVAL: _____

SIGNED: _____

DATE OF REVIEW: _____