

ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH  
PARISH COUNCIL CONSTITUTION  
4427 Rocky River Drive  
Cleveland, Ohio 44135

**ARTICLE I – NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the St. Patrick Church (WP) Pastoral Parish Council hereinafter referred to as the Council.

**ARTICLE II – FUNCTION AND PURPOSE**

The Council is a consultative group that is led by the Pastor and charged with prayerfully discerning Parish needs, setting pastoral priorities, and empowering people to participate in the mission of Christ. It is the responsibility of the Pastor to call, convene, and preside over the Council. The Pastor invites the Council to join him in careful investigation, prayerful consideration, and consensual recommendations in service to the Parish. This three-fold agenda for Parish Pastoral Councils is derived from the role of the Diocesan Pastoral Council (Decree on Bishops #27) to accomplish the mission of Christ. Pastoral councils are not legislative bodies. The Council is a consultative body that plans, and coordinates pastoral matters for the Parish under the Pastor's leadership.

**ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP**

1. The Council will consist of eight (8) to fifteen (15) members, depending on Parish size.
2. There are three (3) categories of members:
  - Ex-Officio – including: Pastor, pastoral staff; administrator.
  - One (1) member will be appointed by the Pastor.
  - Two (2) nominations from the Parish Congregation.
3. **ELIGIBILITY** – For service is limited to baptized and confirmed Catholics who are registered with the Parish and who are active in support of the Parish, supportive of Church teaching and open to prayer, study, and dialogue. Other qualifications can include: working knowledge of the Parish, possession of time and energy, ability to listen to people with diverse views, desire to grow in spirit, openness to study, reliability, willingness to empower others for action, and desire to work collaboratively.
4. **TERM OF SERVICE** – Three (3) years on Council with a maximum limit for any term to be no more than five (5) years (one 3-year term with a possibility of two (2) one (1) year extensions at the discretion of the Pastor). All seats will be held for a specified term. It is recommended to use three (3) year terms with staggered replacement to ensure continuity. Once an individual has served one (1) full term on Council, they will be ineligible to be re-

nominated for a two (2) year period. It is also recommended that the Executive Officers be held for no more than two (2) years to allow for administrative continuity.

5. **VACANCIES AND FORFEITURES** – The seat of any vacancy, of any type (appointed, selected, or ex-officio) shall be filled for the remainder of the term by appointment by the pastor. Forfeiture of any seat on Council may occur after three (3) absences at the discretion of the Pastor.

#### **ARTICLE IV – SELECTION**

1. Within a Planning Council, the Pastor needs parishioners who are competent in strategic planning, facilitating change, and familiar with people and needs of the Parish. It is fitting that some nominations come from the congregation to insure broad representation. Sometimes a nominating committee is formed to conduct a search for the needed expertise and experience from within the parish congregation.
2. Nominations will be accepted during the last two (2) weeks of January.
3. At the February meeting, the Pastor and Council will review the nominations, and discern any new members.
4. The Pastor will contact those discerned to join Council to confirm their interest. Commissioning of Council will take place in March near the Feast of St. Patrick.

#### **ARTICLE V – OFFICERS**

1. Open the floor to nomination at a regularly scheduled meeting in the month of September.
2. This is an opportune time to hear what qualities are most important to the Pastor. And because it is essential that the Pastor be comfortable with the person who will chair his Council, he should have ample opportunity to voice reservations before the selection is made.
3. Allow those nominated to accept or decline the nomination to identify eligible candidates.
4. Provide candidates with a position description and invite them to express their strengths and weaknesses, along with their vision for the Council in service to the Pastor and the Parish.
5. Once the field of candidates is clear, a blind ballot can be taken. It is the responsibility of the Pastor to confirm, and report the outcome of the vote.

## **ARTICLE VI – COUNCIL OFFICERS**

Officers of the Council shall be elected by Council at the September Council meeting and shall serve a term of two (2) years following the election. The Officers are described as follows:

1. **President:** The President will preside as Chairperson of Council meetings, will prepare in consultation with the Pastor the agenda for each Council meeting, and will provide the agenda to the Secretary for distribution to all Council members and the Pastor prior to the indicated meeting. The President shall also serve as Chairperson of the Council Executive Committee and will be an ex-officio member of any other committees established by Council.
2. **Vice President:** The Vice President will represent the President in his or her absence and will perform all duties of that office as set forth above. In the event of the resignation of the President, the Vice President will serve as President until that position is filled by election by Council. The Vice President will be a member of the Executive Committee.
3. **Secretary:** The Secretary will take all minutes of Council meetings and will handle any Council related correspondence. The Secretary will notify Council members and the Pastor of the day and place for all Council meetings and will distribute the minutes of those meetings to Council and the Pastor prior to the next Council meeting. The Secretary will keep an attendance record of all Council members and notify the Pastor whenever any members fails to attend three (3) consecutive meetings. The Secretary will be a member of the Executive Committee.
4. **Vacancies:** Any officer vacancy occurring as a result of an officer resigning, or being removed, will be filled by a vote of Council.

## **ARTICLE VII – VOTING ON COUNCIL MATTERS**

1. Each Council Member will be entitled to one (1) vote on each issue coming before the Council requiring a vote for resolution of the issue. All votes are consultative in nature.
2. Voting may take place using a voice vote, a show of hands, or by written ballot.
3. The Pastor will have the discretion to accept a written ballot cast by mail or email from an absent Council member.
4. The Pastor shall not be a voting member, however, in the event of a tie, the Pastor may break a tie or influence a quorum.

## **ARTICLE VIII – COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

1. Council Officers will constitute the Executive Committee of Council.

2. The Executive Committee will fulfill the duties of Council should the Pastor request advice and counsel on a parish matter between regularly scheduled Council meetings.
3. Parish Committees are formed around the major areas of Parish Life: Education, Liturgy, Administration, Service, and Fellowship.
4. All members agree to be participants in one of the Parish Committees.
5. Each Committee must maintain representation on Council and communicate through regular reports.
6. Ad Hoc Committees can be established at a regular Council meeting or at the discretion of the Pastor for specific purposes as approved by the Pastor as the need arises. As the purpose and need for such Committee ceases, the Committee will be disbanded.

#### **ARTICLE IX – MEETINGS**

1. Council meetings will be held monthly September through May.
2. An Executive Committee meeting will convene prior to all scheduled meetings to establish meeting agendas. For the most part, only business specified in the agenda will be discussed or voted on.
3. Voting of 2/3 of the Council members will constitute a quorum for all Council meetings.
4. Voting conflicts may occur due to a members' knowledge of a specific topic. In this case the member can be a part of the discussion, however, they must recuse themselves' from the vote.
5. The Order of Business for Council meetings will include the following:
  - Opening prayer
  - Roll call
  - Minutes of the previous meeting
  - Committee reports
  - Pastor's report
  - Old business
  - New business
  - Closing prayer

## **ARTICLE X – PARISHIONER INVOLVEMENT**

1. Parishioners are welcome to address Council on various matters concerning Parish life.
2. To be heard at Council, a signed, written request or email must be submitted to the Pastor or Council Secretary, via email, delivered to the Rectory Office, or placed in the collection basket during any Mass. The envelope must be addressed to: The Parish Council Secretary.
3. Requests must be submitted at least two (2) weeks in advance of the Executive Council Meeting and will be placed on the agenda at the Pastor’s discretion.
4. The topic letter must contain a complete written description of concern, an email or phone number for follow up purposes and a signature.
5. Anonymous letters/emails will be not be accepted.

## **ARTICLE XI – OTHER INTERACTIONS**

1. **NON-ORDAINED PASTORAL ADMINISTRATOR** – Parishes can sometimes be placed in the care of a non-ordained pastoral administrator who manages the parish day-to-day. This administrator can also be delegated to preside over the Council. This may require a period of reorientation and adjustment. The Parish retains its own Pastoral and Finance Council and there are no changes needed in the constitution or bylaws with the exception of noting “or his delegate” whenever the Pastor is specifically mentioned.
2. **PARISH STAFF** – The Council is charged with supporting the Pastor and working alongside his staff in service to the Parish. Staff members are appointed to the Pastoral Council by the Pastor and have an ex-officio (non-voting) role. Still their expertise and experience are invaluable for council planning. Role confusion can arise for members of the Council who have other parish involvements beyond membership on the council. In these other involvements they are accountable to the staff person that coordinates the other Parish ministries. The Council members acknowledge the technical expertise of professional staff members and collaborate with them. They cooperate in setting parish priorities. They partner with staff in planning for the future. They collaborate in facilitating communication and encouraging the participation of all parishioners in various parish events, ministries, and organizations.
3. **OTHER COUNCILS** – Parish Financial Council and Diocesan Pastoral Council representatives have an ex-officio (non-voting) role on the Pastoral Council. The Parish Financial Council presents an annual report which is reviewed by the Pastoral Council and sent to the Bishop.
4. **PARISH CLUSTERS** – When a parish is from a cluster, they still retain their independence. In such relationships, the Pastoral Councils operates independently though

they are more attentive to the plans and activities of other members in the Parish cluster. There is little impact on the constitution or bylaws except for the addition of a representative from the cluster.

5. **PARISH MERGERS** – In the case of a planned merger, there are stages in the process which begin with the sharing of a Pastor and an increase in inter-parish cooperation. As merger plans develop, a transition team may be formed to coordinate parish activities. The transition team can be granted standing as an Ad Hoc Committee of the Pastoral Council. As a merger progresses, there is considerable energy spent on communication and coordination between parishes. A transition team may be formed out of the membership of the respective pastoral councils to help bring the process to completion. The Pastor may reorganize various structures, policies and procedures in anticipation of the merger to bring them into alignment with each of the respective parishes. This realignment may necessitate amendments to the constitution. At the completion of the merger, a new Pastor is usually assigned. At the discretion of the new Pastor, the existing Pastoral Councils are dissolved. Pastoral Councils can serve as a unifying factor during a merger, working together with staff throughout the process to foster cohesion and clarify any misunderstandings that may arise in the process.

## **ARTICLE XII – AMENDMENTS**

Proposed amendments to this document will be presented in writing to each Council Member and the Pastor prior to the meeting, at which time it will be introduced for discussion. Passage of an amendment will require a majority vote of the Council.

This Constitution and By-Law document dated February 18, 2014 and hereby amended on November 23, 2020, is the Constitution and By-Laws adopted by Council members of the 2020 Parish Council of St. Patrick Church. This document and all future Amendments must be on file with the Parish Secretary for permanent archival. It is the responsibility of the Council Secretary to forward all new amendments to the Parish Secretary for archival purposes.

This Constitution and By-Law dated November 23, 2020 will be forwarded to the Parish Secretary for permanent archival.

Council Members Approval:

Pat Singleton, President  
Paul Racette, Vice President  
Sherri Lanzilotta, Secretary  
Alice Haught  
Jeanne Gallagher

Denise Quinn  
Terese Crowley  
Dawn Martin  
Jeff Quinn

Pastor - Father John M. Pfeifer

## **APPENDIX A**

### **LIST OF NORMS FOR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS DIOCESE OF CLEVELAND**

- EXISTENCE** 1. Every Parish of the Diocese of Cleveland is to have a Parish Pastoral Council
- NATURE** 2. The Parish Pastoral Council is a consultative body which makes recommendations to the Pastor.
- AUTHORITY** 3. The Pastor is to preside over the Parish Pastoral Council.
4. The Pastor is to consult the Parish Pastoral Council on matters of major pastoral concern.
- PURPOSE** 5. The purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council is to promote the spiritual growth of the parish community and to plan ways for the parish to carry out the mission of the Church.
6. The members of the Parish Pastoral Council represent the interests and pastoral needs of the parish community
7. The Membership on the Parish Pastoral Council, except for those who are members by reason of their office, is to be determined in an appropriate manner which allows for the participation of the Parish community.
8. Members of the Parish Pastoral Council, except for those who are members by reason of their office, shall have a limited term.
- ROLES** 9. The Parish Pastoral Council is to select a Chairperson and other Officers from among its members.
- STRUCTURES** 10. The Parish Pastoral Council works with existing parish groups and forms new groups as needed to promote the spiritual growth of the parish and foster the mission of the Church.