

The Pastoral Council of Saint James Church of Gouverneur

—CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS—

PROLOGUE

There are different gifts but the same Spirit; there are different ministries but the same Lord; there are different works but the same God who accomplishes all of them in everyone.

—from Saint Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (12:4-6)

By divine institution Holy Church is ordered and governed with a wonderful diversity.... In the Church not everyone marches along the same path, yet all are called to holiness and have received an equal privilege of faith through the justice of God.... The distinction which the Lord has made between sacred ministers and the rest of the People of God bears within it a certain union, since pastors and the other faithful are bound to each other by a mutual need.... And so amid diversity all bear witness to the wonderful unity in the Body of Christ. This very diversity of graces, ministries and works gathers the children of God into one, because "all these things are the work of one and the same Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:11).

—from the Second Vatican Council's
Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (32)

ARTICLE I. NAME

This body shall be known as the Pastoral Council of Saint James Church of Gouverneur—hereafter referred to as the Pastoral Council.

ARTICLE II. NATURE, FUNCTION, AND SCOPE

The Pastoral Council provides a regular occasion for the pastor and the people of the parish in his care—by means of a representative body—to reflect together on the work of this parish and to discern what is needed to further the mission of Jesus Christ and his Church in their community. The Council assists the pastor in his ministry of leadership by helping to identify needs, establish policies, formulate goals and priorities, and produce and implement a plan of action as a means toward achieving these goals. The scope of the Council is properly pastoral and therefore includes that which pertains to the ministries of the Word, Sacrament, and Charity, as well as the stewardship of parish resources in as much as it applies to pastoral matters.

ARTICLE III. ROLE IN DECISION-MAKING

In conformity with the universal law of the Church (cf. canon 536) and diocesan policy (cf. *Diocesan Guidelines for Parish Councils and Trustees*, January 25, 1991), the Pastoral Council is to be a consultative body. Consultation is a means by which the pastor shares the responsibility of decision-making in order to reach the best possible decision and to implement it more effectively. In all decisions the pastor and the Pastoral Council have the responsibility to uphold and implement the laws of God and his Church, as well as the particular policies of the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

ARTICLE IV. CONSENSUS

The Pastoral Council's consultative role in the decision-making process is best accomplished by building consensus. Given the nature of the Council, this process must always be accompanied by prayer, remaining ever conscious of the presence of the Holy Spirit and open to his guidance. The process requires an open and honest exchange of viewpoints and reasons—which may often, at first, be in opposition. Beginning with a thorough study of the issue at hand, the Council then gives it careful consideration before recommending practical

conclusions. By listening, discussing, and modifying positions, a movement is made toward a consensus on the best position, taking into account both the insights of the pastor and the contributions of those consulted. In those cases when no consensus preference can be reached, a vote may be needed in order to determine the prevailing opinion of the Council.

ARTICLE V. THE PASTOR AND THE PASTORAL COUNCIL

The pastor is to be the presiding officer (chairperson) of the Pastoral Council, although he may delegate a vice chairperson to preside. Meetings are only to be held with the pastor present. As chairperson, the pastor guides the decision-making process by promoting discussion, clarifying issues, explaining positions, responding to preliminary conclusions, and helping the body reach consensus. The pastor does not vote. Unless he has previously agreed to abide by the decision of the Council in a particular matter, the pastor gives or withholds his approval to all decisions of the Pastoral Council.

ARTICLE VI. MEMBERSHIP

A. MEMBERSHIP IN GENERAL

Members of the Pastoral Council must be fully initiated members of the Catholic Church—that is, have received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist—who are at least sixteen (16) years of age, in good standing, and are both registered and active in the parish. As a body, they should be broadly representative of the local Catholic community. As individual parishioners, they should be noted for their faith, good morals, and prudent decision-making.

B. MEMBERSHIP EX OFFICIO

Among the Council's *ex officio* members are the pastor, permanent deacon(s) assigned to the parish, St. James School Principal, and all duly appointed lay trustees of the parish under the pastor's care.

C. MEMBERSHIP AT LARGE

There are also 3 (three) members at large from the parish. No *ex officio* member may simultaneously serve as a member at large. The term for each member at large shall be three (3) years, beginning July 1st. The terms of members at large from the parish should be staggered so as to ensure some continuity in the Council from year to year. Members at large may choose to serve a second term, but may not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. Members at large are expected to attend three-fourths (3/4) of the meetings in any given year of their term; failure to do so, without reasonable cause, will result in the loss of their place on the Council. In the event of a vacancy among its membership at large, the pastor may appoint an eligible person to complete the term of the replaced member after consulting with the Council.

ARTICLE VII. SELECTION OF MEMBERS AT LARGE

At its March meeting, the Pastoral Council shall appoint an Election Committee to facilitate the process of selecting new members. In late April the Committee will inform parishioners of any upcoming vacancies on the Council as well as the duties and responsibilities of membership. Nominations will then be taken during or after all Masses the first Sunday in May. Each registered parishioner will have the opportunity to nominate up to three (3) adults for membership (including himself or herself). The Committee will then tabulate the nominations. Those who have received the most nominations will be contacted to determine their willingness to serve on the Council. Once the willingness of the nominee(s) has been determined, a final vote for open seat(s) will take place on a succeeding Sunday in the parish among the top 3 candidates who received the greatest number of nominations. The timetable for this process may be adapted as necessary when the parish calendar dictates. Additionally, the pastor may appoint members to serve on the Council *for a specific reason* (i.e. vacancy for any reason, special project knowledge, expertise, etc.).

ARTICLE VIII. OFFICERS

As stated above, the pastor shall serve as the chairperson and presiding officer of the Pastoral Council. From its eligible membership the Council may select a vice chairperson to assist the pastor in the general administration of the Council, particularly with preparation of the agenda for each meeting. As previously noted, the pastor may delegate the vice chairperson to preside at meetings. The Pastoral Council shall also select a secretary—either from among its membership or outside of it—who will record the minutes of each meeting and handle the Council's documentation and correspondence. It is the secretary's responsibility to see that each member is sent a copy of the agenda and the minutes of the previous meeting at least one (1) week before any scheduled meeting.

ARTICLE IX. MEETINGS

All meetings of the Pastoral Council are open to all parishioners and invited guests of the pastor and/or council, although the Council retains the right, when deemed necessary, to meet in executive session. Regular meetings shall be held on the third Thursday of September, November, January, March and June, at 7:00p.m. At the discretion of the pastor as presiding officer, the date and time may be changed or special meetings may be called as the need arises. Meetings are to be held in the parish hall (school library). An agenda for each meeting is to be prepared by the pastor in collaboration with the vice chairperson and published at least one (1) week beforehand. Minutes from each meeting are to be recorded by the secretary, amended and/or accepted at the following meeting, and made available within the parishes. Each meeting shall begin and end in prayer, and should last no more than two (2) hours. Guests may be invited to address the Council. Non-members who wish to address the Council must request to do so of the pastor no less than three (3) days before the meeting in order to be considered for that meeting. When consensus cannot be reached and a vote is called, it is to be governed by commonly observed parliamentary procedures. With the exception of the pastor and permanent deacon(s), all members of the Council (including both *ex officio* members and members at large) may vote. A simple majority of voting members must be present to constitute a quorum—specifically, 4 voting members when there are no vacancies on the Council.

ARTICLE X. COMMITTEES

Committees shall be established to carry out the work of the Pastoral Council in specific areas. These committees shall report to the Council and may not function independently of it. Each particular parish shall have its own general committee, composed of its trustees and members at large. Other standing committees may be formed to assist in coordinating the many aspects of pastoral life and ministry, especially as they involve the various programs, organizations, and societies within the parishes. These committees can and should include members from beyond the Pastoral Council, but must retain at least one member from the Council as a liaison to it. *Ad hoc* committees may also be formed for an articulated purpose and period of time as deemed necessary to respond to particular needs.

ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Amendments to this Constitution and its By-Laws may be proposed only by members of the Pastoral Council. Proposed amendments must be made in writing at a regular meeting and may not be voted upon until at least the next regularly scheduled meeting. All amendments require a vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the total voting membership of the Council for passage, and are subject to both the policies of the Diocese of Ogdensburg and the approval of the diocesan bishop.

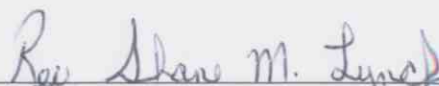
ARTICLE XII. APPROVAL OF THIS CONSTITUTION

Upon its acceptance by the Pastoral Council, this Constitution and its By-Laws shall be submitted to the Bishop of Ogdensburg for his approval. When approved, it shall supersede all others which precede it.

The above Constitution and By-Laws have been accepted by the Pastoral Council of Saint James Church, of Gouverneur, New York, on this 20th day of July, in the year of our Lord 2018.



Most Rev. Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg



Rev. Shane M. Lynch
Pastor



Trustee, St. James Church



Trustee, St. James Church