

# St. Jude Church

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## **Pastoral Council**

*Foundational Document*

*(Constitution)*

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## Introduction

Recognizing that the **wisdom** of the People of God informs sound pastoral decisions, Father Frank Kosem updated the pastoral council of St. Jude Church on September 30, 2018. The documents of the Second Vatican Council recommended the establishment of such councils. They say that Catholics have a right and duty to express their opinion on what pertains to the good of the Church. Pastors should willingly consult their people, says the documents, and use their prudent advice. By establishing a pastoral council, the pastor acknowledges the wisdom of his parishioners and expresses his desire to share with them his responsibility for the governance of the parish.

## Pastoral Council

### Scope

The focus of the council is pastoral matters. These may include everything that pertains to the pastor's ministries of proclaiming God's word, celebrating the sacraments, caring for the faithful, serving as liaison for the parish community with the pastor, promoting the mission of the Church to the world, and being a good steward of parish resources. The scope includes all the practical matters of parish life. The pastor may consult the council on all matters, apart from faith, orthodoxy, moral principles or laws of the universal Church.

### Purpose

#### *Consultative*

Pastoral council is to investigate pastoral matters, to consider them thoroughly, and to propose practical conclusions about them. The council's task is: 1.) Study those matters brought to its attention and shed light on them; 2.) Reflect on them thoroughly, to discern their true nature, to evaluate, ponder and to pray about them; and 3.) Draw sound conclusions. The council presents these conclusions to the pastor in the form of recommendations. This threefold task of the council-investigating, considering, and recommending conclusions-is called pastoral planning. If the pastor has accepted the recommendations of the council, he directs their implementation. Council members may assist him, but strictly speaking, implementation is the responsibility of the pastor, not the council.

#### *Awareness*

Pastoral council is to gather feedback and foster innovative ideas from parishioners about their perceptions and feeling pertaining to the parish and community. This feedback, provided to the pastor, is for his awareness of the positive and negative feelings which could affect the parish spirituality. The pastor will then use this information to discern on pastoral matters.

### Relationship with Staff and Finance Council

The pastor consults others besides the pastoral council about parish governance. He relies upon the parish staff for their ability and consults them daily about the management of parish operations. Indeed, he may occasionally ask parish staff members to attend council meetings to put their knowledge at the service of the pastoral council. Moreover, the pastor relies on the finance council to develop,

monitor, and report on the parish budget. Finance council members were selected for their technical skill in realms of accounting and finance. The pastoral council, by contrast, offers practical wisdom. That is the ability to investigate pastoral matters in a general way, to reflect on them deeply in dialogue, and to propose conclusions proper to the parish.

## Meetings

The pastoral council meets once a month from September to November and then January to June. Meetings should stay between 1 to 1.5 hours in length. Between monthly meetings, council members are expected to follow up on the action items from the monthly meeting and prepare for the next. This usually entails research and work with ad hoc committees.

The first meeting of a new pastoral council term is dedicated to the call and mission of Christ's Church and to receive commitment from all Pastoral Council members. Meetings are expected to be a forum for the exchange of knowledge, experiences and wisdom.

## Agenda

The pastor and council officers jointly develop the agenda based on the current needs of the parish. The agenda states the goals for the meeting, the means and process for reaching the goals, and the materials needed to accomplish them. The agenda guides the meeting. See Appendix for an sample agenda.

## Responsibilities

1. Conduct periodic formal solicitation for honest objective input from the parish community. It needs to be broad scale to cover the diverse demographics of the parishioners.
2. To engage and collaborate with all parish groups to aid in the mission of the Church.
3. Periodic review and appropriate adjustments of this document to keep it in line with the needs of the parish community.

## Pastoral Council Membership

### Individual Qualities

Pastoral council members are chosen for their ability to carry out the main tasks of the council-the work of investigating, considering and recommending practical conclusions. They are fully initiated Catholics, in good standing with the Church, who reflect the parish's various neighborhoods, social and professional groups, and apostolates. Finally, they are parishioners noted for their faith, good morals, and prudence.

### Duties

The council members must be able to attend monthly meetings and other ad hoc meetings as necessary. They must be able to have interactions with fellow parishioners, attend parish social events and take part in ministry meetings. Observations of these interactions will then be conveyed at the monthly meetings.

## Selection

A maximum of eight (8) members are allowed on council at any given time. Each member shall serve a term of four (4) years. Bi-annual selection of four (4) members will occur on the odd calendar years. This will occur in the spring in accordance with the process identified herein.

- a. One (1) member shall be appointed by the Pastor
- b. One (1) member shall be appointed by the School Principal
- c. Two (2) Representative-at-Large members from the parish community

## Representatives-at-Large

Representatives-at-Large provide a means to give the make-up of the council a better cross section of pastoral life. This cross section allows for greater viewpoints to aid the pastor's discernment and with pastoral council effectiveness. Representatives-at-Large shall be chosen in the spring of each selection year in accordance with discernment procedures established by the officers. The officers shall establish a schedule and requirements, which will govern the discernment process. The schedule shall be established in such a manner as to ensure that the discernment process will be completed prior to the Feast of Pentecost in each odd calendar year.

### *Nominations*

In general, the discernment process will begin with a two to three-week period of open nomination. To ensure the widest possible participation in the nomination and discernment process, it is the sense of the pastoral council that the nomination process should be mentioned at Mass during the appropriate time frame and that notice be provided in the Parish bulletin and other suitable publications, as determined by the nominating committee.

### *Determination of Interest*

Once the nominating committee determines which eligible parishioners have been nominated for discernment ("candidates"), the nominating committee will contact each candidate and ask them to positively state their interest in serving on the pastoral council by letter to the Pastor, or at his discretion, members of the nominating committee, by a date certain.

### *Orientation*

All candidates who positively state their interest in serving on the pastoral council shall be invited to an Orientation meeting. The purpose of the Orientation meeting will be to provide the candidates with a forum to air any questions they may have and to give a sense of the function and responsibilities of the Council. All members of the pastoral council shall attend the Orientation meeting.

### *Candidate Selection:*

All candidates and pastoral council shall meet for the selection process. Each candidate shall be asked to respond orally to questions posed by the Pastor, or in the Pastor's absence, the Chairperson. Once all candidates have had opportunity to respond to the questions posed, the Pastor will lead the pastoral council members and candidates in a time of reflection and prayer. The pastoral council and candidates will then, by secret ballot, identify two (2) candidates who they believe to be best suited for service on

the pastoral council. The ballots will be collected and tabulated by the Nominating Committee, and the results presented to the Pastor or Chairperson. The two (2) candidates receiving the most votes shall be the new Representatives-at-Large during the next term of the pastoral council. In the event that, because of a tie vote, the results cannot be finalized, those candidates receiving the same number of votes shall be presented to the pastoral council and candidates in a second ballot. The results of this ballot shall be collected and tabulated in a manner like the first ballot. If another tie, the Pastor casts the deciding vote. Upon completion of the voting process, all unelected candidates are then released.

## Officers

The pastor presides at every meeting of the council. He consults, he accepts or rejects recommendations. The pastor and members select three officers from among their number. They are the chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary. With the pastor, the officers develop the agenda a week before the regularly scheduled Pastoral Council meeting. All officers serve a term of one (1) year. There is no limit on the number of consecutive terms an officer may serve. Officers are elected during the candidate selection meeting. For the years when there are no candidate selections, officers are selected at the April Pastoral Council meeting. The officers' terms shall begin after Mass on the Feast of Pentecost in each calendar year and will conclude a year later on the Feast of Pentecost.

### Chairperson

The chairperson should have served one (1) year on Pastoral Council prior to serving as chairperson. The chairperson facilitates council discussions, making sure that everyone is allowed to speak and to be heard. The chairperson monitors the work of the members between regular meetings. The chairperson is nominated by the pastoral council members and is elected by a simple majority vote of the pastoral council members. In the event of a tie, the Pastor casts the deciding vote.

### Vice-chairperson

The vice-chairperson assists the chairperson and facilitates meetings in the chairperson's absence. If the Secretary is not in attendance, the vice-chairperson assumes the Secretary role. The vice-chairperson is nominated by the pastoral council members and is elected by a simple majority vote of the pastoral council members. In the event of a tie, the Pastor casts the deciding vote.

### Secretary

The secretary keeps the minutes of the meeting and ensures they are distributed a week after the monthly meeting. In addition, the secretary provides the agenda to all members the week leading up to the monthly meeting. The secretary is nominated by the pastoral council members and is elected by a simple majority vote of the pastoral council members. In the event of a tie, the Pastor casts the deciding vote.

## Attendance

Pastoral Council is both a responsibility and a privilege. Members are expected to make attendance and participation a priority. As a courtesy, notification of meeting absences shall be given to the Chairperson or Secretary as soon as possible prior to the monthly council meeting. More than two (2) unexcused absences in a row shall be grounds for removal from the pastoral council. In the event of a vacancy on

pastoral council, due to the removal or the resignation of a member, the Pastor and Chairperson shall nominate a replacement to be approved by the remaining pastoral council members. Said replacement shall serve the remainder of the vacant term.

### Term Limits

It is crucial that pastoral council members remain committed to the requirements and importance of the pastoral council. To keep the council aligned with the makeup of the parish at large, and to avoid undue burden on members of pastoral council, members are limited to two (2) consecutive terms. After completion of a second term, a member must come off of pastoral council. That member is then eligible to become a member again during the next nomination period or to complete a vacant term.

## Appendix

# PASTORAL COUNCIL AGENDA (sample)

MEETING DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Attendance:

	Role	Term Ends	Present	Absent
Fr. Kosem	Pastor			
Bill Elwer	Chairperson	2019		
Carie McKinney	Vice Chairperson	2020		
	Secretary			
Jason Danford	Member	2020		
	Member			
Sara Solet	Member	2019		
Colleen Rosado	Member	2018+1		
Shannon Kopp	Member	2020		

Others: \_\_\_\_\_

CALL TO ORDER

OPENING PRAYER

REVIEW & APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING'S MINUTES

BUSINESS

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

REVIEW TAKE AWAYS

NEXT MEETING

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

CLOSING PRAYER

## Representative-at-Large Nomination Process and Timeline

Action	Due Date
Officers compose nomination timeline.	
Timeline approved by pastoral council. (January Meeting)	
Pastoral Council identifies future council demographic needs.	
Establish nomination committee.	
Provide nomination forms.	
Provide information for bulletin	
Nominations begin date.	
Each council member provides two nominations.	
Nominations end date. (About three weeks after begin date.)	
Letters with orientation dates provided	
Date Response letters need to be received	
Nomination Committee starts follow-up process with non-response nominee(s).	
Date for receiving letter, email, or verbal confirmation of interest. (drop dead date)	
Orientation meeting where nominees confirm further interest	
Selection of Representatives-at-Large.	
Selection of Officers for next year/term	
The Feast of Pentecost (Induction)	