

ST. AMBROSE CATHOLIC CHURCH-- BRUNSWICK, OH

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL GUIDELINES

NOTE: These Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines are understood to be reflective of—and consistent with—Christ Calls Us Together: Parish Pastoral Council Policy for the Diocese of Cleveland (established 10/25/90).

Mission Statement

The mission of the Parish Pastoral Council, as a consultative body to the Pastor, is to promote the spiritual and physical growth of Saint Ambrose Parish.

“All wisdom comes from the Lord and with Him it remains forever.” Sirach1:1.

Article I - Name

This ministerial group shall be known as the St. Ambrose Parish Pastoral Council (PPC).

Article II— Purpose and Function

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, on your own intelligence rely not; In all your ways be mindful of Him, and He will make straight your paths.” Proverbs 3:5-6.

A. Purpose

The basic purpose of the St. Ambrose PPC is two-fold:

1. To assess parish life (in collaboration with the Pastor and Parish staff) and plan ways to enhance the mission, ministry and spirituality of the parish through pastoral commissions.
2. To be a consultative body to the Pastor on major pastoral policy proposals.

B. Regarding the assessment of parish life

1. The PPC (in collaboration with the Pastor and parish staff) will conduct a general parish assessment every three years. This assessment will solicit input from the larger parish community and may involve such elements as the analysis

of parish demographics and statistics, survey research, town hall meetings, personal interviews, focus groups, etc.

2. From the assessment the PPC, with the Pastor and staff, will discern priorities for further exploration, planning and policy development.
3. The PPC will communicate the results of the parish assessment, and the priorities for further exploration, planning and policy development to the wider parish community.
4. The process of developing plans and policies regarding the identified pastoral priorities will include:
 - a) Prayer
 - b) Study of relevant church documents and teachings
 - c) Research (e.g., surveys, listening sessions, focus groups, personal interviews, analysis of parish demographics and statistics, and consultation with other parishes and diocesan agencies)

C. Regarding the role of being a consultative body to the Pastor

“Christ is like a single body which has many parts; it is still one body, even though it is made up of different parts.” 1 Corinthians 12:12.

1. The Pastor is responsible to ensure that major Pastoral policy proposals developed by the staff, other individuals or groups are brought before the PPC for review and recommendation.
2. Major pastoral policy proposals:
 - a) Relate to the overall direction and focus of the parish
 - b) Have a relatively broad impact on the life of the parish
 - c) Involve a significant change from past practice (i.e., something new or different)
 - d) Are separate from administrative concerns, which deal with the details and daily operation of parish programming, school curriculum, budgeting, personnel matters, and scheduling.

3. The process of deliberating over major pastoral policy proposals may include
 - a) Prayer
 - b) Study of relevant church documents and teachings
 - c) Research (e.g., surveys, listening sessions, focus groups, personal interviews, analysis of parish demographics and statistics, and consultation with other parishes and diocesan agencies)

Article III — Roles and Relationships

A. Regarding the assessment of parish life

1. The PPC (in collaboration with the Pastor and parish staff) will conduct a general parish assessment every three years.
2. The PPC, with the Pastor and staff, discern priorities for further exploration, planning and policy development.
3. Parish staff members are the lead agents in exploring, planning, and creating policy to reflect these pastoral priorities.

B. Regarding the role of being a consultative body to the Pastor

1. The relationship between commissions and the PPC will be mediated by the Pastor. Staff members attend commission meetings and bring major pastoral policy proposals that arise at the commission level to the Pastor. The Pastor then brings these issues to PPC for consultation.

Article IV— Membership

A. Composition

1. The PPC will be composed of:
 - a. 13 discerned “officio” parishioners;
and
 - b. Additional “ex officio” members including;
 - All members of the St. Ambrose Pastoral Staff
 - Additional PPC members appointed at the Pastor’s discretion, selected on an “as needed basis” if the PPC will be dealing with topics

- related to the individual's area of expertise.
- c. "Ex Officio" members may contribute to discussions, but do not participate in the consensus agreement.

B. Length of Term

1. The length of term shall be three years beginning in August.
2. Terms are non-renewable.
3. The membership will rotate on and off the Council as follows: 4 rotate in year one; 5 rotate in year two; 4 rotate in year three.

C. Desired Characteristics/ Qualities of Members

1. PPC members should be:
 - a) Active parishioners
 - b) At least 18 years of age
 - c) Willing to participate in consensus process
 - d) Able to work on a team
 - e) Skilled and willing to engage in a parish assessment process
 - f) Able to discuss matters, weigh options, and recommend practical conclusions.
 - g) Prayerful
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Article V— Officers and Appointed Representatives

A. Positions and Duties

1. Chairperson
 - a) Facilitates council discussions, making sure everyone speaks and is heard
 - b) Monitors the work of members between meetings
 - c) Participates on the Executive Committee
2. Vice-Chairperson
 - a) Assists the Chairperson
 - b) Facilitates council discussions in the absence of the Chairperson
 - c) Participates on the Executive Committee

3. Secretary
 - a) Records the minutes of the meeting
 - b) Assures that the minutes are sent, along with the agenda and any supporting documents to each PPC member at least one week before every meeting
 - c) Makes sure that minutes, along with the agenda and any supporting documents, are archived in the St. Ambrose Parish Office in both electronic and paper format.

B. Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee shall be comprised of the Chair, Vice-Chair and the Pastor.
2. The Executive Committee shall meet two weeks prior to the meeting to set the meeting agenda.
3. The Executive Committee shall provide the Secretary with the agenda and any supporting documents for distribution in a timely manner so that members receive these materials at least one week prior to the meeting.
4. Additional committee members may be appointed as needed at the discretion of the pastor.

C. Terms and Selection

1. Officers shall serve a term of one year.
2. Officers are discerned annually at the June meeting.
3. Officer terms are renewable.

Article VI — Responsibilities of Members

A. Preparation and Participation

1. PPC members are expected to read all materials sent to them

prior to attending the meeting.

2. PPC members are expected to participate in the deliberations at PPC meetings.
3. The majority of PPC work will ideally be accomplished at the regular PPC meetings, though there may be times when PPC subcommittees, or the council as a whole, will need to meet between regularly scheduled meetings.

B. Attendance

1. PPC members should make a ‘good faith’ effort to be at every meeting.
2. Members should report their anticipated absence to the PPC Chairperson prior to the meeting.
3. If a member is absent for two consecutive meetings, the Pastor and Chairperson may meet with this member to assess whether a pattern of absence is developing, and whether the member will be able to complete his or her term.

Article VII— Nomination and Selection Procedure

“It is clear that Christ Himself, wrote this letter, and sent it by us. It is written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the Living God, and not on stone tablets, but on human hearts. 2 Corinthians 3:3.

A. Nominating and Selecting Potential Council Members

1. The nomination process for potential parish council members shall begin in February and continue for three weeks.
2. Interested parishioners will be asked to nominate themselves or others as candidates for PPC.
3. Publicity to generate candidates for councils shall include (but not be limited to) the following:
 - a) Announcements at the meetings of various parish organizations (e.g., Women’s Guild, Liturgy Committee, CRHP, PSR, etc.)

- b) Homily and/or pulpit announcements
- c) Notice in parish bulletin and on web site

4. Nomination forms shall be passed out and collected at Mass (and potentially at the meetings of various parish organizations
5. Existing PPC members will call those nominated to confirm their interest and inform them of the time and date of the “orientation” meeting.
6. An orientation to the ministry of the PPC shall be held in early March.
7. After the orientation session, those interested will be asked to complete and submit a standard form which asks for their motivation to serve on council, as well as the gifts they would bring to the group.
8. PPC candidates will be invited to a meeting in early April where new members will be selected via discernment.

B. Replacing members Who have not Completed their Terms

1. When a member cannot complete his term, the PPC will submit the names of three parishioners who might potentially serve as a replacement.
2. Names of potential replacements shall be selected from among those interested in council who were not discerned. Replacement candidates may also include parishioners with specific gifts that the PPC needs to complete their work.
3. The final selection of a replacement is left to the discretion of the Pastor. The Pastor may choose a replacement that is not among those recommended by the PPC as long as his reasons are made clearly known to the PPC.

Article VIII — Committees/Commissions

A. Purpose

1. The PPC shall create “ad hoc” committees to perform certain delimited tasks relating to the work of the council on an “as needed” basis.
2. The PPC shall have standing committees including: Executive, Nominating, etc.

Article IX — Meetings

A. Number, length and format

1. The PPC shall hold monthly meetings from August to June, with no meeting in July and December. (a total of 10 meetings). Additional meetings may be held on an ad hoc basis as needed.
2. The standard length of a PPC meeting is two hours.
3. PPC meetings shall begin with 10 minutes of prayer and faith-sharing.
4. The agenda structure proposed by the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Office may serve as a model to inform PPC meeting agendas. See **Appendix A**.

Article X — Decision Making Process

“I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. 1 Corinthians, 1:10.

A. Consensus

1. PPC recommendations will ideally be made via consensus. See Appendix B. Other methods may be used as needed.

Article XI— Amendments

A. Procedure

1. Amendments to these PPC guidelines may be made on an as-needed basis.
2. After conversation with the Pastor and PPC Chair, proposed amendments shall be sent out in writing to all members prior to

the upcoming PPC meeting.

3. Proposed amendments to these PPC Guidelines shall be voted on at PPC meetings and must be approved by 2/3 of the thirteen (13) members to become policy.

Article XII — Interim Status

A. Operation in the Absence of a Pastor

1. Recommendations about significant plans, changes and related decisions need to be made in relationship to a Pastor. In the absence of a Pastor due to death, illness or leave of absence, such decisions cannot be made.
2. In the absence of a Pastor due to death, illness or leave of absence, council may find value in meeting to discuss issues and needs during the time of transition.
3. With the arrival of a new Administrator or Pastor, the PPC --as it exists shall remain intact and in operation for three months. At the end of this period, council solicits from the Pastor if he wants to continue with the council in its present form. The Pastor is free to make changes as appropriate.

