



Saint James the Greater Church

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PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL GUIDELINES

ARTICLE I. ESTABLISHMENT & PURPOSE

Section 1. St. James the Greater Church has been established as a parish of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati in order to provide for the pastoral care of the Christian faithful throughout the community of White Oak, Hamilton County, Ohio.

Section 2. The exercise of pastoral care to the St. James Church community through teaching, sanctifying and governing has been entrusted to its appointed pastor by the Archbishop of Cincinnati.

Section 3. The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church calls all the laity to “share diligently in the salvific work of the Church”. To help provide for the realization of that obligation and to assist our pastor in his ministry, a parish Pastoral Council will be established. In addition, a parish Finance Council will be established as set forth in the Code of Canon Law.

Section 4. The mission of Saint James the Greater Parish will be to live the Catholic life through worship, proclamation of the Gospel, and service to others.

ARTICLE II. PARISH LAY ORGANIZATIONS

All St. James the Greater Church affiliated councils and organizations will strive to:

- promote the spiritual growth of the parish community;
- be a visible witness to all people of the message and service of Our Lord Jesus Christ through community and worship;
- assist our Pastor in whose ministry of Christ we have been called to share.

ARTICLE III. PASTORAL COUNCIL

Section 1. Purpose & Nature As put forth in the Code of Canon Law, Pastoral Council is a consultative body that will investigate, consider and propose practical conclusions about matters of spiritual importance to the Parish.

A. Parish pastoral planning is the principal activity of Pastoral Council consisting of:

- Articulating a vision of where the Parish should be going
- Deciding a method to assess the needs and issues of parishioners
- Identifying pastoral priorities or goals that address the needs of the Parish
- Proposing concrete actions and programs that achieve the pastoral goals
- Determining the personnel, financial and physical resources needed

- B. As representatives of the members of the St. James Parish, Pastoral Council is the primary means by which the voice of the parish membership is represented.
- C. Pastoral Council will conduct itself in a spirit of prayerful discernment, dialogue, and consensus building.
- D. Pastoral Council will assist our Pastor in helping all parishioners participate fully in the life and mission of the Parish, and will foster a sense of unity between all commissions, ministries, committees, organizations, and parish members, as we work together for the good of the Parish.
- E. Pastoral Council will work to ensure that all parish activities are in alignment with the Parish Lay Organization Mission Statement spelled out in Article II.

Section 2. Membership Criterion, Designations & Expectations

A. Membership Criterion

- 1) All members of Pastoral Council must be baptized persons, confirmed in the Roman Catholic Church, and in good standing with the Church.
- 2) All Council members must be registered members of St. James the Greater Church for a minimum of one year prior to their selection or appointment and in addition must be regular active participants in the sacramental life of St. James, supporting the Parish through their gifts of time, talent, and treasure.
- 3) No paid employee of St. James the Greater Church may serve as a voting member of Pastoral Council.
- 4) Any member of the Parish Pastoral Council may be removed by majority vote of the Council due to repeated unexplained absence or for actions deemed gravely opposed to the integrity of the Parish.

B. Membership Designations

- 1) The Archbishop of Cincinnati, the Pastor and all clergy assigned by them to serve the Parish shall be *Ex-Officio* members of the Pastoral Council by virtue of their office. Because these members share the responsibility to receive recommendations of the Council and to decide on their implementation, they will not vote at Council meetings.
- 2) *Voting Members* of Pastoral Council shall normally number nine (9) and consist of at least three (3) men and three (3) women to be selected from the parish membership for a term of three years in accordance with Section 6 below. The remaining three (3) members shall be selected without regard to gender.
- 3) The following shall be the criteria for the selection of Council members:

EXPECTATIONS OF PASTORAL COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

- **willing to listen and respect the ideas of others**
- **willing to consider the needs of the *whole Parish***
- **willing to give time to prepare for and attend meetings**
 - **willing to serve in a consultative capacity**
- **committed to work in a spirit of prayer, dialog, consensus-building and planning**

Section 3. Leadership & Officers

- A. By virtue of his office, the Pastor presides over Pastoral Council and its meetings. The Pastor will actively listen and participate in the Council's discussions and deliberations.
- B. The principal officer of the Pastoral Council is the Chairperson. Once a year, immediately following parish elections, the Pastor shall select a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. The Pastor may solicit recommendations from the Council membership concerning this appointment. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall serve a one year term, and may be reappointed for a second one year term.

The Chairperson shall manage the discussion at Pastoral Council meetings and the Vice-Chairperson will do so in his/her absence.

- C. A Recording Secretary of the Pastoral Council shall be appointed by the Pastor and will be responsible for keeping custody of the official record of monthly agendas and approved minutes of Council meetings. The Recording Secretary will not be a member of Pastoral Council and will, therefore, not participate in the discussion or voting.

Section 4. Committees

- A. The Executive Committee shall consist of the Pastor, the Parochial Vicar (if one is appointed), the Chairperson, and the Vice-Chairperson. The Pastor may, at his discretion, appoint additional Pastoral Council members to the Executive Committee on a temporary basis. The Executive Committee is responsible for developing an annual plan for Pastoral Council, including goals and methods of achieving them. The Executive Committee is also responsible for preparing and distributing an agenda in advance of each Council meeting along with the minutes of the previous meeting to all members of the Council.
- B. Ad Hoc Committees may be suggested by the Pastor or a member of the Pastoral Council at any time, and established with simple majority approval of the Council and the approval of the Pastor. Each of these committees will remain in existence until its work is concluded or until the Committee is discontinued by the Council or the Pastor. Each of these committees shall be chaired by a Pastoral Council member appointed by the Council Chairperson and may include others who are not Council members.

Section 5. Meetings

- A. Pastoral Council shall normally meet ten (10) times a year. Meetings are held monthly except in July and December and meetings will be limited to two hours. Special additional meetings may be called by the Pastor and the Executive Committee. Upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, and for good cause, a regularly scheduled meeting may be dispensed with.
- B. Each meeting of the Pastoral Council shall begin and end with prayer offered by one or more members of the Council. In keeping with the pastoral aspect of the Council's purpose, each meeting will begin with a period of faith formation for the members.
- C. The members of Pastoral Council should strive for consensus in making recommendations to the Pastor. Resolutions and motions proposed by the Council will be approved by a majority vote of those present and voting. The Chairperson will have the responsibility to ensure the orderly progress of each meeting, and may limit discussion of a particular agenda item when necessary to complete the agenda.
- D. Because of the important role played by the parish school in our mission, our school principal will be invited to address Pastoral Council once a year, usually at its May meeting if there is no other item pertaining to the school that needs to be brought to the Pastoral Council at an earlier time.
- E. The Pastor is to fulfill the primary role in ensuring coordination and communication between parish organizations. In order to help ensure that ongoing process, Council will regularly invite parish organizations to share a report of their activities during a regular meeting.
- F. All regular monthly Pastoral Council meetings are open for attendance by any member of the Parish. Any non-member of the Council who wishes to address the Council should seek inclusion on the agenda by contacting the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson at least one (1) week in advance.

Section 6. Nomination, Selection of Members & Vacancies Nomination and selection of Pastoral Council Voting Members will take place annually and result in the selection of one (1) woman, one (1) man, and one (1) person of either gender to serve for a term of three years.

- A.** Nominations for all normal vacancies will be sought, usually in March. Council will solicit recommendations from the Parish at large by way of announcement in the weekly parish bulletin, pulpit announcements and any other method that might encourage volunteers. They will also work to identify other candidates so as to bring forth a Pastoral Council that allows for representation of the entire parish community.
- B.** The Pastor and the full Council shall be responsible for educating all potential nominees as to the responsibilities of Pastoral Council membership.
- C.** The final slate, in its entirety, of nominees for Pastoral Council membership shall require approval by the Pastor. The final slate will then be considered and approved by a simple majority of the seated Pastoral Council members.
- D.** Final selection of new members to Pastoral Council shall be overseen by the whole Council. The members of Pastoral Council, the Pastor, and other ex-officio members of Council shall meet with the recommended new members. The Chairperson will oversee a discernment process which will consider the needs of the parish and the talents/gifts of those recommended for Council membership. Such a process must begin with a significant time in prayer, invoking the guidance of the Holy Spirit in this process. Since several patterns exist for this type of discernment, it is the responsibility of the Chairperson in consultation with the Pastor to determine how this process will unfold. The discernment process shall take place no later than the last day of May.
- E.** Terms on Council shall begin on June 1st.
- F.** The unexpired term of a Pastoral Council member created by either resignation or removal from office, shall be filled by approval of a simple majority of Council members upon the recommendation of the Pastor. If the amount of time left on the term in question is brief, the Council may agree to leave the seat unfilled until the next discernment process. At that time, a selection can be made for the remainder of the unfulfilled term.

ARTICLE IV. RELATIONSHIP TO FINANCE COUNCIL

Section 1. As put forth in the Code of Canon Law, the parish Finance Council is to assist the Pastor in his prescribed obligation to properly administer the goods of the Parish. As called for by the Archbishop of Cincinnati, the Finance Council shall operate independently from Pastoral Council on matters pertaining to the business and financial management of the Parish.

Section 2. It is always the role of Pastoral Council to determine the spiritual priorities of the parish and to develop a plan to respond to them. These needs are to be made known to the Finance Council for the funding necessary to implement the plan. Finance Council shall carry out its work with full consideration of the parish pastoral plan and spiritual priorities that have been developed with direction from Pastoral Council.

Section 3. Pastoral Council is required by the Archbishop of Cincinnati to “receive and recommend” the annual parish budget and to approve any non-budgeted expenditures of \$10,000 or more. In order to comply with these requirements, a parish Finance Council report will be provided to Pastoral Council no less than once a year.

ARTICLE V. AMENDMENTS

This document may be amended only at a regularly scheduled Pastoral Council meeting by a favorable vote of no less than two-thirds of the total Council membership and the approval of the Pastor. A copy of any proposed amendments must be presented to Parish Pastoral Council at least one month prior to a scheduled vote on their adoption.

This Parish Laity Organizational Practices document was originally approved by St. James the Greater Pastoral Council on April 20, 2005 and represents a restatement in total of all other formerly adopted St. James the Greater Church Pastoral Council governance documents. Article 3, Section 3 B was amended by Council in 2006. The document was again amended and approved in April, 2010 and again on March 8, 2017.

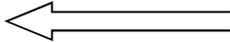
Appendix A

Parish Structure

Archbishop



Pastor



Advisory Groups to the Pastor

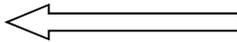
1. Pastoral Council
2. Finance Council



Parochial Vicar

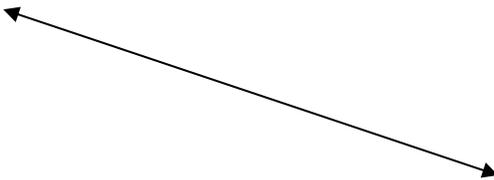


Staff



Advisory Groups to Staff Members

1. School Advisory Commission (to the Principal)
2. Finance Council (*to the Business Manager*)



All parish organizations

Appendix B

PARISH ORGANIZATIONS

| WORSHIP | PARISH LIFE | EDUCATION | SOCIAL OUTREACH | YOUTH | SPIRITUALITY | ADMINIS- TRATIVE |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| Worship Commission Adult Choir Children's Choir Youth Choir Cantors Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLOW) Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion Lectors Servers Ushers R.C.I.A. Eucharistic Adoration Bereavement Wedding Coordinators | Festival Bridge Groups Couples Ladies p.m. Ladies (day) Ladies Softball Ladies Volleyball Old Timers Softball Fish fry Sunday Coffee Volunteer Dinner Parish picnic Seniors | School Advisory Committee School PTO | St. Vincent de Paul Society Cookie Connection Giving Tree Scarves for the Homeless Blood Drive | Boy Scouts Cub Scouts Girl Scouts Brownies American Heritage Girls Athletic Association H.S. Youth Group Young Adult Group | St. Mary's Ladies Society Father's Ministry MOMS Shepherds of Christ L.I.F.E. Marriage Preparation Team Prayer Chain Familia | Office Volunteers (includes mailers) Money Counters |