

Pastoral Council Constitution
St. Francis De Sales Catholic Church
2000 Elizabethtown Rd., Lumberton, NC 28358

Constitution

Preamble:

The St. Francis De Sales Catholic Church Pastoral Council is the lay leadership group chosen on the local level to assist and guide the parish to achieve its own mission in the pursuit of the desire to know, love and serve God, as well as to love each other. The parish community chooses the members of the Pastoral Council to develop and sustain the various ministries that are required to bring the Lord's work to completion in the community.

The Pastoral Council, in a shared relationship, supports the Pastor¹ of St. Francis De Sales Catholic Church in preparing, implementing and accomplishing the plans and programs for the support of the Parish. The Pastor may delegate responsibility for certain boards, committees and commissions of the parish, except the Parish Finance Council, to the Pastoral Council as it carries out its functions consistent with the guidelines set forth in the Diocese of Raleigh's "Pastoral Council Norms" (Section 2.2, Pastoral Administrative manual, Diocese of Raleigh, 2004).

Article I

Name:

The name of this organization shall be the **St. Francis De Sales Catholic Church Pastoral Council**.

Article II

Purpose:

The purpose of the St. Francis De Sales Catholic Church Pastoral Council is to advise the Pastor in matters concerning the parish particularly in assisting and guiding the parish in achieving defined goals and objectives. The Pastoral Council shall develop and maintain the various ministries according to the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* of the Catholic Church, the Diocese of Raleigh, the Fayetteville Deanery and the parish of St. Francis De Sales Catholic Church.

The Council, in concert with the Pastor, shares the responsibility of fostering the common good of the parish. The Council is advisory in nature; that is, it seeks consultation and consensus in a collective environment while serving as the predominant planning body within the parish.

Article III

Membership:

The membership of the Pastoral Council shall consist of up to twelve lay parishioners who are in full communion with the Catholic Church. A clear majority of the Council's members are to be elected at-

¹ The term, Pastor, is used throughout this entire document to refer to the Bishop's appointed head of the Parish, on whom the Bishop has conferred the office/title of Pastor, Parochial Administrator or other appropriate appointment.

large by registered members of the parish who are at least 18 years of age. The Pastor, at his discretion, may appoint members to ensure balance and pastoral effectiveness.

The Chairperson of the Parish Finance Council is automatically a member of the Pastoral Council (“Pastoral Council Norms,” op.cit.) as directed by the Bishop.

All members of the Council, elected or otherwise, shall be considered full voting members with all rights and privileges.

**Article IV
Officers:**

Officers of the Council shall consist of:

- (1) Chairperson
- (2) Vice Chairperson
- (3) Secretary

The election/appointment of officers and terms of office are specified in the By-Laws (see Article VI below).

**Article V
Meetings:**

The Council will meet monthly or at the discretion of the Pastor. Meetings require the presence of the Pastor. Meetings may be conducted via electronic media as well as in a traditional physical presence format. Committees of the Council may meet at the discretion of the Pastor or their Chairpersons.

**Article VI
Amendments to the Constitution:**

The Pastoral Council Constitution may be amended at any time by a favorable vote of two-thirds of the total number of Council members, inclusive of all elected and appointed members at the time of the vote, provided that the proposed amendment(s) is (are) available to the members at least one month prior to the meeting held for a voting decision. This one month notification provision may be waived by unanimous consent of all Pastoral Council members. The Constitution and proposed amendments to the Constitution, must first obtain the tentative approval of the Pastor and must then be forwarded to the Bishop for final approval before they can be put into effect. Once approved, the revised document must be sent to the Chancery to be kept in the permanent parish file.

By-Laws of Pastoral Council Constitution

St. Francis De Sales Catholic Church

2000 Elizabethtown Rd., Lumberton, NC 28358

Article I

By-Laws:

By-Laws of the Pastoral Council are established or amended by the Council's membership provided that: (1) they do not contradict any of the provisions of Articles I through V, the Diocese of Raleigh's directives, or the "Pastoral Council Norms" (op.cit.); and (2), they are approved by the Pastor. Amending the By-Laws is addressed below in Article II, Amendments to the By-Laws.

A. Purpose

The purpose of these By-Laws is to serve as a supplementary tool to the Constitution.

B. Membership:

1. The Pastor is not considered a member of the Council but presides as a Bishop does with the Council of Priests. The Pastor must be present for the Council to convene.
2. Council members are elected, appointed or designated by the office held as in the case of the Chairperson of the Parish Finance Council. Elected members serve a single three-year term and cannot be elected again until a minimum of one year has passed. Any parishioner or an elected member whose term has expired, may be appointed by the Pastor at any time. Pastoral appointees may serve a term of up to three years and may be reappointed at the discretion of the Pastor. All members serve at the will of the Pastor. Exceptions to these criteria may be made by the Pastor from time to time to address significant pastoral needs or in the event of a vacancy on the Council.
3. Members of the Council must be: (1) at least 18 years of age; (2) in full communion with the Catholic Church; and (3), a registered member of the parish for at least one year.
4. Paid employees, if any, of the St. Francis De Sales Catholic Church Parish may not be members of the Pastoral Council. However, employees may attend meetings of the Pastoral Council as resource persons or to facilitate communications.
5. Immediate family members of current Council members, including spouses, siblings, children and parents, are ineligible to serve on the Council at the same time.

C. Election of Members:

1. An Election Committee of at least three persons, who will not be running for office in the current election, will be appointed by the Pastor. The Pastor may consider suggestions for Committee members from the Pastoral Council. The Election Committee will be responsible for the conduct of the election of members to the Pastoral Council. The Committee's duties include:
 - a. Announcing the elections to parishioners by whatever means feasible and in a timely and professional manner.
 - b. Informing parishioners of the eligibility criteria to be a Council member, the nomination and election processes, as well as the schedule for these to be announced in the parish.
 - c. Inviting nominations from all parishioners, normally in early November.
 - d. Informing nominees of their nominations; explaining to them the eligibility criteria to be members of the Pastoral Council; providing them with copies of the Council's Constitution & By-Laws; and obtaining from them an appropriate biographical sketch.
 - e. Vetting nominees with the Pastor for eligibility.

- f. Preparing and distributing information about all eligible nominees to parishioners at least two weeks prior to the announced election date.
- g. Conducting the election, normally in early December, in as simple and transparent a manner as possible.
- h. Counting the votes and providing the results to the Pastor who will officially declare those that have been elected to the Council based on the number of votes received by each candidate. In the event of a tie, the Pastor will use tie-breaking criteria consistent with the pastoral needs of the parish to determine the person(s) that will be awarded the remaining vacant seat(s) on the Council.

D. Organization:

- 1. The Pastoral Council will normally hold its first organizational meeting for the calendar year in January. The prior year's Chairperson of the Council will plan and convene the meeting of the Council for the new year, and will invite the newly elected or appointed members, as well as those continuing members with unexpired terms from the prior year. The Chairperson will function as such until a Chairperson of the new Council is elected, even if the former's term of service on the Council has expired.
- 2. To the extent feasible, approximately one-third of the Council's membership will rotate off the Council each year so that a majority of members will be continuing annually to provide stability. The Pastor, after consulting with the Council, will determine the most effective way to achieve balanced membership annually.
- 3. The officers of the Council (Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary) will normally be elected at the first organizational meeting of the Pastoral Council for the new year, and will serve for one year (January through December) or until their successors have been elected/appointed.
- 4. The election of officers will be conducted by a person that is selected by the Pastor and that will not currently be seeking or be eligible for office. Nominations for Chairperson will be invited from among the Council members. When all nominations have been made, the nomination process will close and the Council members will vote by secret ballot. The candidate with the most votes will be declared the Chairperson. If there is a tie, another vote is taken. If a tie still results, the person with the most years of cumulative service on the Pastoral Council will be named the Chairperson. If a tie still exists, the Pastor will decide who will be Chairperson. In similar manner the positions of Vice Chairperson and Secretary will be elected.
- 5. Under special circumstances and with the agreement of all Council members, the Pastor may appoint one or more of the officers.
- 6. Officers may be reelected to the same or other positions, if eligible.
- 7. Immediately following the election of officers, the newly elected Chairperson assumes the office and takes over conducting the meeting from the prior (outgoing) Chairperson. The same applies to the newly elected Vice Chairperson and Secretary.

E. Meetings:

- 1. The Council will establish the time and place of meetings in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson with the approval of the Pastor. The Chairperson is responsible for providing adequate notification of meetings to all members of the Council.
- 2. The development of the agenda for Council meetings is the responsibility of the Chairperson in consultation with the Pastor.
- 3. In general, the conduct of Council meetings should follow the guidance set out in the Diocese of Raleigh's "Pastoral Council Norms" (op.cit.) and, if necessary, Robert's Rules of Order.
- 4. Since the Pastoral Council is an advisory as well as a planning body, decisions should be reached by consultation and general agreement in a harmonious and professional atmosphere.

First step: Ascertain and study in a thorough manner all of the available facts.

Second step: Reach a common understanding of the facts so that differences resulting from various interpretations of information are minimized.

Third step: Arrive at a consensus of the best way or ways to proceed.

Fourth step: Submit the proposal or recommendation to the Pastor.

Final step: The Pastor reviews, accepts, rejects, selects or modifies and approves with or without conditions, the Council's recommendations.

5. Proposals from the Council require the approval of the Pastor prior to any attempt at implementation, temporary or otherwise. In the event the Pastor disapproves a proposal/recommendation, the Council, with concurrence of two-thirds of the members, may appeal the disapproval to the Dean of the Fayetteville Deanery. If the Dean's action is not satisfactory to the Pastor or the Council, the decision may be appealed to the Bishop of the Diocese of Raleigh. The decision of the Bishop is final.
6. Registered parishioners of St. Francis De Sales Catholic Church, as well as clergy and religious associated with the parish, may attend Council meetings as observers.
7. If an observer wishes to address the Council, he/she should obtain permission from the Pastor or Chairperson.
8. In the event the parish does not have a regularly assigned Pastor, Council meetings will cease until a new Pastor is appointed. In this situation, the Bishop may direct the Council to continue to function for the good of the parish and within certain guidelines.

F. Committees:

1. Standing committees shall be established as follows:

- i. Communications/Media
- ii. Evangelization
- iii. Facilities, Grounds & Maintenance
- iv. Faith Formation & Education
- v. Liturgical
- vi. Outreach/Social Ministry
- vii. Strategic/Long-range Planning
- viii. Youth/Young Adults Ministry

Other committees/ministries may be established as necessary.

2. Each committee shall have a chairperson recommended by the Pastoral Council Chairperson and approved by the Pastor. The recommended committee chairperson does not necessarily have to be a current Pastoral Council member. Members of these committees do not have to be Pastoral Council members. If a committee does not have a currently serving Pastoral Council member, the Pastoral Council's Chairperson shall appoint one of the Council's members to serve as that committee's liaison to the Council. Either the committee chairperson or the Pastoral Council liaison shall ensure that a report is available to the Council at each regularly scheduled meeting of the Pastoral Council. Standing committees' membership and chairpersons are appointed/reappointed annually upon the recommendation of the Pastoral Council Chairperson and with the approval of the Pastor. Committee members and chairpersons may be reappointed as often as the Pastor approves.

G. Pastoral Council Functions:

1. It is the function of the Pastoral Council to collectively be aware of parish activities, practices, procedures and policies, and to provide practical advice to the Pastor concerning them so as to encourage conformity of life and actions of the people of God with the Gospel.
2. The Council shall prepare a Parish Strategic/Long-range Plan and update it annually. This may be done by a designated committee (such as a Parish Strategic Planning Committee) of members of

the Pastoral Council and/or other parishioners appointed by the Pastor. The planning process should engage all segments of the parish. The Parish Strategic/Long-range Plan should be presented to the Pastor for approval by the end of May each year so that he may submit it to the Diocese by the end of June.

3. The Council shall schedule a briefing by the Chairperson of the Parish Finance Council on the annual budget of the Parish as close to the beginning of the fiscal year (July 1) as is reasonable. It is the responsibility of the Parish Finance Council to prepare a budget for the Parish each year and adopt it with the approval of the Pastor. The Parish Finance Council may choose, at its discretion, to request input from the Pastoral Council during the budget preparation process. The Chairperson of the Parish Finance Council then presents the annual budget as a finished product to the Pastoral Council for information purposes only.

H. Duties of Pastoral Council Officers:


1. Chairperson's principal responsibilities:
 - a. Preside at Council meetings.
 - b. Prepare the Council meeting agenda based on consultation with the Pastor.
 - c. See that notification of meetings is provided to Council members and, in general, the Parish.
 - d. Serve as the official spokesperson of the Council.
 - e. Oversee the general functioning of the Council and its constituent units, particularly as stated in the Constitution and By-Laws of the Pastoral Council.
2. Vice-Chairperson's principal responsibilities:
 - a. Assist the Chairperson in the exercise of his/her responsibilities.
 - b. Preside at Council meetings and other events in the absence of the Chairperson.
3. Secretary's principal responsibilities:
 - a. Record the proceedings of the Council's meetings (Minutes) and ensure that copies of them, along with any other substantive material presented at council meetings, are filed appropriately in the parish's permanent records.
 - b. Communicate relevant items of Council proceedings to the appropriate parish constituents as directed by the Chairperson or Pastor.
 - c. Submit Minutes of each meeting of the Pastoral Council at the next meeting of the Pastoral Council for approval.

Article II Amendments to the By-Laws:

These By-Laws of the Pastoral Council Constitution may be amended at any time by a favorable vote of two-thirds of the total number of council members, inclusive of all elected and appointed members at the time of the vote, provided that the proposed amendment(s) is(are) available to the members at least one month prior to the meeting held for a voting decision. This one month notification provision may be waived by unanimous consent of all Pastoral Council members. Proposed changes must be approved by the Pastor and a copy must be sent to the diocese. Once approved, the revised document must be sent to the Chancery to be kept in the permanent parish file.

Unanimously approved by the Pastoral Council on November 19, 2014
(date)

For the Pastoral Council: 
April Pittman, Chairperson, Pastoral Council

Approved: 
Rev. Zacharie Lukielo Tati, Pastoral Administrator