

## Sts. CYRIL & METHODIUS PASTORAL COUNCIL MANUAL

### ARTICLE I: Name and Purpose

1. The name of this organization shall be Sts. Cyril & Methodius Pastoral Council.
2. The Purpose of this Council is for the members to advise and assist the pastor in promoting the spiritual well-being of the parish and in the administration of the parish property.
3. The Pastoral Council and Commissions are units of service and not of authority.

### ARTICLE II: Responsibilities and Duties

1. The Pastoral Council shall consider with and advise the pastor on all matters that relate to the operation of the parish and join with him in implementing the decisions. But it is the pastor's prerogative to make all final decisions.
2. In accordance with diocesan policy, the pastor must keep all financial records and pay all bills, but the financial books and records, other than the records of the contributions of individual members, may be examined by the Pastoral Council at any time.
3. The Pastoral Council will interact closely with the parish Finance Council to assure the pastor and the parish membership that finances are available to support the council's goals and objectives.
4. The Pastoral Council must take time to develop spiritually so as to be more keenly aware of the Spirit's presence and functioning within the council and within the whole parish community.

### ARTICLE III: The Diocese

1. Ongoing training and workshops relating to the Pastoral Councils are available and accessible to clergy and laity throughout the diocese.

### ARTICLE IV: The Pastor

1. The pastor, as the chief governing person and accountable to the Bishop, must preside at the Pastoral Council meetings and participate in its activities.
2. The pastor is called to consultation by the Church. In this call, he must:
  - a. In turn, call the Pastoral Council and seek counsel on pastoral matters affecting the life of the parish.
  - b. Experience and participate in the interaction that follows
  - c. Be open, respectful, and receptive to the voice or voices of the parishioners.
  - d. Weigh seriously and respond appropriately to the collective wisdom or consensus of the Pastoral Council.
  - e. Make every effort to ensure the membership of the council is truly representative of the whole parish community.
  - f. Assist in the proper formation, training, and orientation of all council members.

- g. Ensure that the council's concerns reflect the whole Church (diocesan and universal) and its mission.
    - h. Facilitate council members' building their own community of faith, trust, and respect.
    - i. Assist in the preparation of council agenda.
3. The pastor should carefully consider the recommendations of the Pastoral Council and provide proper explanation to the council when acting contrary to its recommendations.
  - a. However, in matters that violate Church teachings or discipline, or in matters contrary to diocesan policy, the pastor, after appropriate explanation to the Pastoral Council, must withhold acceptance.
4. In cases of non-acceptance of counsel, for whatever reason, the pastor's position and reasons for it shall be presented to the Pastoral Council in writing.
  - a. Appeals may be made to the Bishop or his designee for clarification, consideration, or arbitration.
    - i. The Bishop or his designee will provide a written response to the appeal
5. In the absence of the pastor, the Pastoral Council can discuss matters but cannot make final decisions.
6. When a pastor leaves a parish through transfer, retirement, or death, all activity of the Pastoral Council ceases until the new pastor or assigned administrator reconvenes the council.
7. A new pastor should seek counsel from the existing Pastoral Council to become more informed about the nature of the community.
  - a. He should be reluctant to dissolve the Pastoral Council, even though it is his prerogative to do so.

#### ARTICLE V: The Pastoral Council

1. The Pastoral Council shall consist of seven (7) elected members. The pastor and any other priest or deacon assigned to the parish shall be members ex officio. The pastor may appoint two (2) additional members if he so wishes.
2. Members must:
  - a. Be baptized Catholics (in rare circumstances an exception can be made with the approval of the pastor)
  - b. Be registered in the parish
  - c. Have demonstrated a commitment to the parish community
  - d. Commit themselves to spiritual growth
  - e. Commit themselves to skills development as part of the Christian leadership process
  - f. Be willing to commit the necessary time and energy to offer effective consultation
  - g. Be familiar with programs of various diocesan commissions or standing committees
  - h. Be willing to participate in group training and formation
3. Members cannot serve on the Parish Council and Finance Council simultaneously.
4. Elected and appointed Council members shall assume office in January immediately after the election and shall hold office for three (3) years. Two (2) members shall be elected every year and every third year three (3) members will be elected.

5. All members may serve a second three (3) year term, if elected, but after two (2) consecutive terms, they shall be ineligible to serve again on the Council for two (2) years.
6. The Parish Council shall meet a minimum of once a quarter as well as when called by the pastor.
7. A real effort shall be made to make the Council membership representative of the whole parish.
8. If any parishioner feels strongly that the pastor or Pastoral Council has not followed the intent of the Diocesan norms, the parishioner may appeal through the following process:
  - a. A formal letter signed by the parishioner(s) will be submitted to the Pastoral Council describing their concerns and why they feel the intent of the diocesan norms were not followed.
  - b. The pastor and the Pastoral Council have an opportunity to correct or resolve the appeal
  - c. If resolution of the appeal is not obtained to the satisfaction of the parishioner(s), the Pastoral Council will vote either to reconsider the appeal or send it to the Dean for resolution.
  - d. Simple majority vote of the Pastoral Council will prevail.
  - e. The parishioner's letter, the minutes of the Pastoral Council meeting discussing the appeal, and a statement by the pastor and/or the Pastoral Council on their position in the matter are forwarded to the Dean for his deliberation.
  - f. If not resolved by the dean, all documentation, including the dean's position, is sent to the Bishop for deliberation and ultimate resolution.
  - g. The Bishop will respond in writing within 30 days.

#### ARTICLE VI: Officers

1. The pastor, as the chief governing person and accountable to the Bishop, must preside at the Pastoral Council meetings and participate in its activities. At the regular January meeting every year the Council shall elect by simple majority one of its own members as chairperson and another member as recording secretary. They shall hold these offices for one (1) year.
2. The pastor may delegate the chairperson to chair meetings even when he (the pastor) is present.
3. The recording secretary shall:
  - a. keep and record the minutes of all Council meetings and commission reports.
  - b. receive items to be considered for meeting agendas and help prepare the agendas with the pastor and chairperson.
  - c. Prepare a report on each Council meeting and shall make copies of the report available for the parishioners after review by the council. The minutes won't be approved until the following meeting.

#### ARTICLE VII: Elections

1. Members of the Ss. Cyril & Methodius Parish who are eighteen (18) years of age or older shall be eligible to vote in the election of Pastoral Council members.
2. In October, nomination ballots are provided to all parishioners for 2 Sundays and then on the third Sunday, the ballots are counted. The nomination ballot is prepared as per Appendix B.

3. Eligible parishioners have the right to vote in writing for two (2) individuals for nomination. Each eligible nominee will be contacted by the voting individual for permission to place that nominee on the ballot.
4. Election ballots are prepared from the top 6 nominees from the nomination ballots and handed out to parishioners at church. These Election Ballots will be provided in November. Ballots will be provided for 2 Sundays and then on the third Sunday, ballots will be counted. Only one ballot per parishioner. The Election Ballot will be prepared as per Appendix C. Ballots will be mailed to those parishioners who request a copy.
5. The ballot box will remain in the entrance of the church during all Masses until Close Election Sunday.
6. On Close Election Sunday immediately after mass, members of the Pastoral Council will count the votes cast. A simple majority of votes shall elect. The Pastor will be included in the count if needed.
7. In the event of a tie, a runoff election to break the tie shall be held. Nominating Committee shall prepare election ballots. Election ballots are to be handed out on the Sunday after the closed election and will be mailed to parishioners who request a ballot. Ballots returned by mail must be received on or before the second Saturday following Close Election Sunday. The ballot box shall remain in the entry of the church until the end of Mass on the second Sunday following Close Election Sunday. Immediately after Mass, the Nominating Committee shall count all votes. Additional runoff elections shall follow this same two-week schedule as needed. The Pastor will be included in the count if needed.
8. Final election results will be recorded to include the first alternate, second alternate, and third alternate (relative ranking only, not the number of votes received).
9. Parish Council vacancy:
  - a. When a member of the Pastoral Council ceases to be a member of the parish, he/she loses his/her position on the Pastoral Council. A Council member may also lose his/her position on the Council if he/she misses two (2) consecutive Council meetings without a very good reason. The absentee member must let the pastor, chairperson, or recorder know the reason for his/her absence. The Council will determine if the absence is excusable. When a Council member wishes to resign from the Council, he/she must submit his/her resignation in writing to the pastor, chairperson, or recorder.
  - b. If a Pastoral Council member leaves with less than a year on their term, the person need not be replaced. If more than a year remains, the council will approach the recorded alternates to confirm that they are still willing to serve. The alternate with the highest tally of votes will be the replacement.

#### ARTICLE VIII: Meetings

1. The Pastoral Council shall have regular meetings during the third or fourth weeks of January, April, July, and October. The chair or recorder shall remind all members of the meetings in person, by mail or by phone, at least three (3) days in advance. At the same time, the chair or recorder shall provide the members with the agenda for the meeting

2. Special meetings of the Pastoral Council may be called at the discretion of the pastor or any three members of the Council. The members must be given three (3) days' notice of the meeting in person, by phone, text message, email, or by mail. At the same time, they must be told the purpose of the meeting. The pastor alone, or a majority of the Council members present may declare the meeting an executive session.
3. A majority of Council members must be present to form a quorum at any meeting, regular or special.
4. All parishioners may attend the Council meeting as observers unless their input is requested from the council. They may speak only with the permission of the chairperson and will not vote on any motion.
5. Confidentiality is an important factor for some circumstances when the council may choose to meet in a "closed" or "executive" session. An atmosphere of openness is important, but some situations and matters discussed by the council should be kept confidential.

#### ARTICLE IX: Decisions

1. While every effort should be made to reach a consensus in the Council's deliberations, decisions may be made by a sixty percent (60%) majority of the Council members present at a Council meeting. However, the Pastoral Council is an advisory body and has no authority to make final decisions. That is the prerogative of the pastor, but the pastor must seriously consider the advice of the Council members.
2. If the pastor rejects the majority opinion of the Pastoral Council, he must clearly explain to the members in writing his reasons for rejecting it.
3. If a majority of the Council members disagree with the decision of the pastor, they may refer the matter to the bishop for arbitration.
4. The pastor may not vote at Pastoral Council meetings.

#### ARTICLE X: Committees and Commissions

1. There shall be an Agenda Committee which shall include the pastor, the chairperson and the council. Items for the agenda may be suggested by any member of the parish. The committee shall draw up the agenda for all meetings and the chair or recorder shall give a copy of the agenda to all of the Council members at least three (3) days before the meeting.
2. There shall be four (4) standing commissions:
  - a. Liturgy and Spiritual Development,
  - b. Religious Education and Youth Commission,
  - c. Building and Maintenance Commission
  - d. Family Life and Community Concerns Commission.
3. The pastor shall be an ex officio member of all Commissions.
4. A Pastoral Council member will serve on each of the commissions as a non-voting member.

- a. Commission chairs and commission members are appointed by the Parish Council. Members of commissions, who are not Pastoral Council members, do not actively participate in the consensus building process at council meetings.
- b. Commissions will bring recommendations to the council for consideration.

ARTICLE XI: Commission Duties

1. Liturgy and Spiritual Development:
  - a. Church services, Music, Eucharistic Ministers, Readers, Mass Servers, Ushers, sanctuary & altar decorations, retreats, etc.
2. Religion Education and Youth:
  - a. Religious education of children, teenagers and adults, youth retreats, and youth activities.
3. Building and Maintenance:
  - a. Building improvements and the maintenance of the parish buildings and grounds.
4. Family Life and Community Concerns:
  - a. The parish Council of Catholic Women, marriage enrichment, ministry to the aged, shut-ins, sick, the poor, and other community needs.

ARTICLE XII: Parliamentary Procedure

1. The rules contained in Robert's Revised Rules of Order shall govern all meetings of the Pastoral Council when they are not in conflict with this Constitution.

ARTICLE XIII: Other Parish Organizations

1. The existence of the Pastoral Council does not eliminate the necessity for other parish organizations, but all other organizations must work in harmony with and under the supervision of the pastor and Pastoral Council.

ARTICLE XIV: Amendments

1. Proposed amendments to this constitution must be in conformity with the Pastoral Council Norms of the Diocese of Austin and must be approved by the pastor and a two-thirds majority of all the Pastoral Council members.

END OF MANUAL

APPENDIX A  
RECORD OF REVISIONS TO CONSTITUTION

Revision	Date	Location and Description of Revision
1	2002 Jan 21	Article VII, Sec. 1 Revised regular scheduled meeting day
2	2002 Apr 23	Article VI, Sec. 2 through Sec. 6 Revised entire election process
3	2017 January	Revised entire document
4	2019 April	Updated election procedures and aligned with Diocese norms.
5	October 2023	Election procedures, pastoral council membership, updated responsibilities, renumbered paragraphs

APPENDIX B  
NOMINATION BALLOT FORM  
#### NOMINATIONS FOR PASTORAL COUNCIL

To: PARISHIONER

Please review the following information and nominate two (2) individuals for the Pastoral Council Election. Only men and women who are practicing Catholics, members of Sts. Cyril & Methodius Parish, sixteen (16) years of age or older, and are willing to devote some worthwhile time to working in the parish, shall be eligible for membership on the Pastoral Council.

The following individuals are currently serving on the Pastoral Council and ARE NOT eligible for nomination:

Member 1	Member 2
Member 3	Member 4
Member 5	Member 6

The following individual(s) have served on the Pastoral Council for six years and ARE NOT eligible for nomination.

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The following individual(s) are currently on the Pastoral Council and will be going off the Council. They have served for three years and ARE eligible for nomination.

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Keep this portion



Return this portion

#### Nominations

In the spaces below nominate no more than two (2) individuals for the Pastoral Council election:

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After nominating, please remove the bottom portion of this form. A ballot box provided at the church entry will be available at all Masses from Sunday October to Sunday, October. Mailed ballots must be received on or before Sunday, October. If you cannot return the ballot in person, please mail to:

Nominating Committee Member or Church Address



APPENDIX C  
#### PASTORAL COUNCIL  
ELECTION BALLOT

TO: PARISHIONER

Please review the following information and vote for no more than two (2) individuals for the Pastoral Council Election. Only men and women who are practicing Catholics, members of Ss. Cyril & Methodius parish, sixteen (16) years of age or older, and are willing to devote some worthwhile time working in the parish and are eligible for membership on the Pastoral Council.

Please vote for one (1) or two (2) individuals listed below  
But do not vote for more than two (2) individuals.  
Voting for more than two (2) individuals will invalidate your entire ballot.

Thank You!

Keep this portion  
Return this portion

#### Election Ballot

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

After voting, please remove the bottom portion of this form. A ballot box provided at the church entry will be available at all Masses from Sunday November to Sunday November. Ballots must be received on or before Sunday, November.

If you cannot return the ballot in person, please mail to:

Nominating Committee Member or Church Address