

# OUR LADY OF LOURDES PARISH COUNCIL CONSTITUTION/BYLAWS

## ARTICLE I—NAME

The name of the organization is, “OUR LADY OF LOURDES PARISH COUNCIL”, hereafter referred to as the Parish Council.

## ARTICLE II—PURPOSES

The Parish Council shall be an association and shall have as its principal objective and purpose:

- To encourage full participation by the members of the Christian Community of Our Lady of Lourdes in the vibrant life of Christ which flows through it and which alone makes us the People of God. The members of the council must bear in mind that this objective can be accomplished only if the members of this Christian Community:
  - Will draw their strength from the sources of grace, which the Lord has provided.
  - Will utilize for the Community the various gifts, which the Spirit has given to each precisely for the building up of his people.

THEREFORE, as corollary objectives the Council must:

- Exchange ideas and suggestions, which further the principal objective within this local Community, keeping in mind its relationship to the Diocesan Community, and the Community of the Universal Church.
- Provide lay assistance, where appropriate, to aid the Pastor in the planning and implementation of means to foster the principal objective.

## ARTICLE III—OPERATION

Section 1: In ordinary matters, the council shall submit its recommendations to the pastor in the form of conclusions of motions duly made, seconded and passed by a majority vote. In weightier matters, the Council shall attempt to reach a consensus through study, frank discussion, and prayer.

Section 2: The Pastor shall take an active part in the work of the Council. If the Pastor, for grave reasons of fidelity to the Gospel, obedience to Church or civil law, or other serious financial, administrative or pastoral considerations, feels that he cannot in good conscience accept and carry out the recommendations of the Council, he shall fully and frankly communicate his reservations to the Council.

Section 3: The Pastor must authorize the Council’s recommendations before they can become Parish policy.

Section 4: If the Council remains in serious disagreement with the Pastor, or if the Council is seriously divided among its members, then the Pastor or the Council through its Executive Officer shall pursue the mean towards a resolution at the Parish Deanery level. If this is unsuccessful, then assistance is to be sought through the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

## ARTICLE IV—MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: All registered Parishioners age 18 and above of Our Lady of Lourdes Church shall be entitled to membership on the Parish Council.

Section 2: Membership is made up of ex-officio, elected and appointed members in accordance with Article VI.

Section 3: Ex-officio members are:

- a. The Pastor who shall take an active part in the council's work but shall have no voting rights.
- b. The Associate Pastors assigned to the Parish will be members but have a full voice and voting rights.
- c. An appointed Permanent Deacon will be a member of the Council with full voice and voting rights.
- d. Parish Staff as designated by the Pastor will be ex officio members of the Council but shall have no voting rights.

Section 4: At least 50% of the Council will be lay persons who are registered members of the parish and shall be elected by the parish community to the Council. These members will have full voice in the Council and voting rights.

Section 5: The Pastor, after consultation with Council members, shall name not more than 3 lay people who are registered members of the parish to be appointed members. In making these appointments, the Pastor shall endeavor to achieve a full representation of the parish community on the Council. Appointments are made and/or renewed on an annual basis.

#### ARTICLE V—OFFICERS

Section 1: The officers of the Council shall be an Executive Officer and Secretary.

Section 2: The officers shall be selected from among the Elected Council members at an annual meeting and shall serve one year or until their respective successors qualify. No officer shall succeed himself/herself more than one additional term.

Section 3: The Executive Officer is responsible for the Council fulfilling its objectives. He shall also preside at all meetings of the Executive Committee and Council. He shall appoint all Standing committee Chairpersons and may call special meetings. He shall be an "ex-officio" member of all standing and special committees.

Section 4: The Secretary shall take minutes of the Council meetings and see that they are distributed to the Council members within two weeks of the Council meeting and are made available to the Parishioners in a timely fashion. He/she shall also perform any administrative matters required in the course of the Council's business, such as writing letters or telephoning, or using electronic means of communication.

Section 5: In the event of a vacancy in any office, the Council shall elect someone from among its own membership to fill the office until the next regularly scheduled election.

Section 6: Each officer shall, at the expiration of his/her term of office, turn over to the successor all books, papers, and other records and property pertaining to the office not later than ten days after said election, and shall assist the successor in the transition period.

#### ARTICLE VI—NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Section 1: The Nomination/Election Committee shall be comprised of three members of the Council who have been chosen by the Council annually in September.

Section 2: Elections for the Parish Council will be held annually.

Section 3: The Nomination and Election process will be:

1. Nomination Selection 4<sup>rd</sup> Weekend in March.
  - a. Parish Council Representative will explain the responsibilities of the Parish Council.
  - b. Pencils and paper will be distributed to all registered parishioners at all the Masses the first weekend in April. They will be asked to nominate the names of registered parishioners (including their own, if they wish) who they feel to be qualified and who they would like to have represent them on the Council. The Parish Council email will also be made available for nominations.
  - c. Parish Council collection baskets will be placed by the exits to collect the nominations.

2. The nominating committee will tally the results and contact the nominees, reinforce the responsibilities of the Parish Council and see if they are willing to accept the nomination.
3. Nominees who meet the eligibility requirements, once they are approved by a majority vote of the council, submit a short Biographical explanation of themselves to include: name, picture, family and personal interests, Parish involvements, life experiences such as career, clubs, etc.
4. Nominees Bios will be published on the Parish website as well as in bulletin insert.
5. Ballots will be made and a plan for distribution and collection by the April Parish Council meeting.
6. Ballots will be distributed to parishioners at all Masses the first weekend in May. There will not be an absentee ballot process.
7. The Election Committee will tabulate the votes for verification of the count. They will also contact the members elected as well as those who were not elected.
8. New members will be introduced at the May Parish Council Meeting.
9. The newly elected members' names shall be announced to the Parishioners the last weekend in May.
10. The electees shall become members of the Council at an installation Mass on the First Sunday in June.
11. Nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected to full three-year terms.
12. No parishioner shall be eligible to serve more than two (2) consecutive full terms.

Section 4: The Pastor, by and with the advice and consent of a simple majority of the Council, may name not more than three lay persons to be appointive members and such appointive members shall serve for the same term of office as the elected members of the Council to which they are appointed. Such appointments shall endeavor, so far as is practical, to achieve a proper balance among sexes, races, knowledge, and competence desired on the Council.

Section 5: The Council may elect a replacement by a majority vote, in the event a vacancy exists for longer than 6 months before the next election. The Council may elect not to fill any vacancy occurring within six months of the next general election. Any Parishioner filling a vacancy shall serve the remaining term of the member who created the vacancy.

Section 6: A member of the Council whose performance is deemed detrimental by the Council or is not in accordance with the objective of the Council, or who has three consecutive unexcused absences from meetings, may be removed after the following steps:  
The Council Executive Officer or a member designated by the Council and/or Pastor will have a private discussion with the member and attempt to convince him or her to perform in an acceptable manner or resign from the Council.  
The Council thoroughly reviews all the circumstances of the case, in a closed meeting, and records its conclusions in the form of a resolution.  
The Council Secretary shall notify the member with a copy of the resolution and give him or her opportunity to appeal his or her case before a closed meeting of the Council.  
The member may be terminated by a majority vote of a closed meeting of the Council if none of the preceding steps remedy the situation. The Pastor may remove a member of the Council at any time without explanation when it is necessary to protect the privacy of the individual.  
The Pastor may also remove a member of the Council when there is an indication that the member's medical condition (e.g., onset of dementia) will not allow the individual to continue performing the full duties of a Council member.

#### ARTICLE VII—COMMITTEES

Section 1. An Executive Committee shall be established at the annual organizational meeting of the Council as provided in the By-Laws. The members of this committee include the officers of the Parish Council, the Pastor and one other member or the Council who is elected at the installation meeting.

Section 2: There shall be five standing committees:

- a. Liturgical
- b. Christian Formation
- c. Social Concerns
- d. Parish and Family Life
- e. Building and Property Maintenance

- a) LITURGICAL: Bears the responsibility for coordination of the liturgical life of the parish under the guidance of the pastor. The committee is guided by the liturgical documents of the Church and approved Diocesan guidelines. The Office of Worship is available to assist the Liturgy Committee in their formation and development.

GOALS and OBJECTIVES:

- i. Coordinating the liturgical life of the Parish
- ii. Promoting and developing the prayer life of the community through proper liturgical practice
- iii. Guiding and advising the parish on liturgical issues
- iv. Preparing all celebrations of the Eucharist
- v. Preparing all sacramental celebrations
- vi. Coordinating all sacramental, liturgical, and devotional celebrations scheduled by special groups in the parish
- vii. Ensuring the proper formation of all liturgical ministers in the Parish
- viii. Evaluating the liturgical life and celebrations of the parish
- ix. Communicating liturgical information to the pastor, ministerial groups, parish pastoral council and parishioners
- x. Promoting liturgical awareness and formation in the parish so that the assembly is led to a full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgy
- xi. Ensuring Visitation and Eucharist to those who are shut-ins or hospitalized,
- xii. Will support the following ministries:
  1. Lectors
  2. Commentators
  3. Music
  4. Ushers
  5. Collection Tabulators
  6. Altar Servers
  7. Sacristans and Cleaners of the Church
  8. Eucharistic Ministers
  9. Pastoral Care

- B) CHRISTIAN FORMATION: OBJECTIVE: To provide for the continual spiritual Christian Formation and education of the parishioners.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Provide a CCD program, including curriculum development, and text book evaluation and recommendation; training of teachers, and parent education and involvement.
- Determine goals for the parish's total Catholic education
- Provide necessary preparations parish members receiving the sacraments of Reconciliation, the Eucharist and Confirmation
- Maintain a resource center for religious educational material
- Maintain liaison with the Christian Formation Department, Diocese of Wilmington
- Elaborate, operate, and maintain the R.C.I.A/R.C.I.C

- c) SOCIAL CONCERNS: OBJECTIVES: The purpose of the Social Concerns Committee is to inform and involve people and resources of the parish in service to one another and to the larger community.  
RESPONSIBILITIES: Among the duties of the Social Concerns Committee are the following:

- Initiate and promote harmonious coordination of parish Christian service efforts with other parish organizations
- Communication with the various Parish Social Concerns ministries should be a 2-way street. The ministries should have an ongoing dialogue with the Parish Council
- Each of the Social Concerns ministries will provide an annual report of their activities to the Parish Council
- The Ministries included under Social Concerns include (but are not limited to) St Vincent de Paul Society, Right to Life, Legion of Mary, Knights of Columbus, etc.

D) PARISH & FAMILY LIFE: OBJECTIVE: To enrich the Christian Fellowship among the parishioners through social and fund-raising activities for parish projects.

- Hospitality
- Youth
- Support Group(s)
- Outreach Ministry
- Hispanics/Afro-Americans/Asians

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Hold at least one major fund-raising event annually
- Meet and welcome new parishioners and attempt to determine what their interests and needs are, reporting any pertinent information to the council
- Develop and coordinate a good parish social life program

f) BUILDING AND PROPERTY MAINTENANCE: OBJECTIVE: To maintain parish physical facilities in a first-class condition, utilizing the parishioners' talents and dedication to the greatest possible degree.

- Hall
- Rectory
- Priest's Home
- Cemetery

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Maintain a current list of maintenance items needing immediate repair, and longer range items, in order of priority, with projected costs and expected completion dates.
- Review maintenance list with Council at least semi-annually
- Get Council's approval of Building and Property Maintenance items and costs, and submit to finance committee for inclusion in annual parish budget
- Arrange or contract vendors for new facilities, maintenance, repair and follow-up to ensure projects are satisfactorily completed
- Hall rental and management and upkeep
- Foster the sacramental character of the Cemetery in appearance and in strengthening the faith, devotion, and consolation of Parishioners

Section 3: Special committees shall be named for short-term projects not covered specifically by a standing committee. These may be created and disbanded at any time by the executive committee and/or the Pastor, terminating when their function has been completed. The objective and responsibilities of these committees shall be determined at the time of their creation.

Section 4: Council representatives shall give at least a brief report of their committee's activities at each Council meeting; however, in no case should the interval between reports exceed three months.

Section 5: A Council member will serve as Chairperson of each Standing Committee as a liaison from the associated Ministries in that Committee. Every committee shall consist of the chairpersons if the Ministry. The committee shall be responsible to the Council President.

ARTICLE VIII—MEETINGS

- Section 1. The annual organization meeting of the Parish Council shall be held within the month of June of each calendar year.
- Section 2. Regular meetings of the Council shall be held monthly. The Executive Officer has the prerogative in consultation with the Pastor, to suspend meetings should the parish affairs be in such a state to warrant it.
- Section 3. Regular meetings will be open to all parishioners. The parishioners will be advised in advance whenever the Council deems that a meeting should be closed.
- Section 4. Special meetings of the Council may be called at any time upon the request of the Pastor, Executive Officer or a majority of the elected members of the Council.

ARTICLE IX—QUORUM

A quorum of the Council shall consist of a simple majority of the voting members of the Council.

ARTICLE X—AMENDMENTS

Amendments must be submitted in writing to the Council secretary at a regular meeting. The amendment must be read at the same meeting. Prior to the next meeting, copies will be distributed to all the Council members and then it shall be again read aloud. The proposed amendment must pass a 2/3 vote of the voting members of the Council present at a legally constituted meeting in order to be adopted.

ARTICLE XI—WAIVER OF THE CONSTITUTION

The Pastor may temporarily (six months or less) waive a portion of the Constitution when he feels it is in the best interests of the workings of the Council to do so.

ARTICLE XII—PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

- Section 1: VOTING: All matters of the Council requiring approval by vote shall require a majority vote of the elected Council members present at a legally constituted meeting.
- Section 2: RULES OF PROCEDURE: Robert's Rules of Order shall be used at all meetings.
- Section 3: WAIVER OF THE BY-LAWS: The Pastor may temporarily (six months or less) waive a portion of the by-laws when he feels that it is in the best interests of the workings of the Council to do so.
- Section 4: THE PASTOR: The Pastor shall point out to the Executive Officer any action of the Council, executive committee or other committees that he feels is contrary to faith or morals or to Diocesan policy, and offer guidance for the group to consider their action. The Pastor and the Executive Officer shall seek the advice of the Council, the Diocesan Council or the Bishop, depending on the policies and structures available in the Diocese, in those cases where reconsideration fails to resolve the problem and maintain the harmony of Christian community.

REVISION BY-LAWS: May 1979  
Policy reviewed and revised 12-12-2013  
Revised 8/15/2014