

**PARISH OF THE
HOLY TRINITY
PASTORAL
COUNCIL
CONSTITUTION**

PASTORAL COUNCIL MEMBERS

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Richard H. A. Washburn, *Deacon*

Richard Nobes, *President*
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Donna Hoffman, *Secretary*
Patricia Nobes, *Assistant Secretary*

Arlene Liepshutz, *Parish Staff*
Linda Meicht, *Parish Staff*
Maura Nedwell, *Parish Staff*
Michael Van Allen, *Parish Staff*

Michael Cozzolino, *Parish Trustee*
Mary Howard, *Parish Trustee*

Dawn Brownson, *Chair of Finance Committee*

Anne Drew, *Council Member*
Ray Paul, *Council Member*

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PASTORAL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

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AUTHORITY & PREAMBLE

Authority:

Can. 536 §1. If the diocesan bishop judges it opportune after he has heard the presbyteral council, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish, over which the pastor presides and in which the Christian faithful, together with those who share in pastoral care by virtue of their office in the parish, assist in fostering pastoral activity.

§2 A pastoral council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by the norms established by the diocesan bishop.

Preamble:

This Parish of the Holy Trinity Pastoral Council is organized pursuant to the recommendations of the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II), and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, which states that Catholics have a right and a duty to express their opinion on what pertains to the good of the Church, and that pastors should willingly consult their people, and use their prudent advice. By establishing this pastoral council, the Pastor of the Parish of the Holy Trinity has acknowledged that there is wisdom to be found among the community of parishioners and has expressed his desire to consult with them concerning the mission and operation of the parish, especially with respect to pastoral planning and evangelization.

Therefore the scope of the Council concerns pastoral matters. These may include everything that pertains to the pastor's ministries of proclaiming God's Word, celebrating the sacraments, caring for the faithful, promoting the mission of the Church to the world, and being a good steward of parish resources. There is, in short, nothing about which the pastor may not consult the council, apart from faith, orthodoxy, moral principles or laws of the universal Church.

However, the Parish of the Holy Trinity Pastoral Council is mindful of and shall respect the limitations of its scope and function. Canon law allows it to offer advice, but gives it no power of governance. Nor does it have primacy over any other canonical council, including the Finance Council. The Council's proper role is not to implement but (in the words of Canon Law) to investigate, ponder and recommend. Thus its duty is to investigate pastoral matters, to consider them thoroughly, and to propose practical conclusions about them to the pastor in the form of recommendations. These conclusions or recommendations come about through a process of consensus. If the pastor accepts the recommendations, he may direct their implementation. While Council members may assist, implementation is the responsibility of the pastor, not the Council.

The Pastoral Council, through its members, also has the responsibility to reach out to the wider community to bring all people the saving mystery of Christ. This thrust towards mission, service, and ecumenism is a vital aspect of a pastoral council in today's church.

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this organization will be "The Parish of the Holy Trinity Pastoral Council" which will hereinafter be referred to as the "Pastoral Council" or the "Council."

ARTICLE II: GENERAL FUNCTIONS

The general functions of the Pastoral Council shall be:

1. To assist the Pastor in his leadership function especially of pastoral planning and evangelization: that is of organizing, promoting, and coordinating the apostolic activities within the parish, and to help make the Gospel known and lived in the wider community.
2. To assure through its committees continued assessment of the spiritual and temporal needs of the parish and the community and to relate them to the Pastor.
3. To set priorities for its consideration and recommendations, and to establish goals and objectives concerning means of addressing the needs of the parish and the community. These goals and objectives should be reviewed and assessed regularly.
4. To coordinate with such other councils as may be established by the Pastor.
5. To serve as a permanent and flexible structure for constructive dialogue among the laity, clergy, and religious of the parish in order to facilitate cooperation as a Christian community and the fulfillment of Christ's saving mission.
6. To provide leadership, direction, education, resources and encouragement in accordance with the continuing goals of the parish, the Diocese and the Universal Church within its allowable scope of activities.

ARTICLE III: PURPOSE

As the primary consultative and advisory body in the parish, the purpose of the Pastoral Council is to be a visionary body and also to assist the Pastor in the life and ministry of the parish; while recognizing that as a Bishop's representative and the parish's spiritual leader, the Pastor bears ultimate responsibility for and authority in the parish community. The Council has no veto authority relative to the Bishop's decision regarding Diocesan programs, or to decisions of the Pastor regarding programs or activities of the parish.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1.

The Council shall be composed of ex-officio, appointed, and elected members. The members of the Council shall make recommendations by a process of consensus. Members shall agree to observe Robert's Rules of Order during all meetings. Appointed chairpersons shall speak on behalf of their respective committees. All

discussion shall be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and support. The Council shall consist of not more than twenty (20) members.

The term of an appointed member shall end upon their election to the Council. This provision is not applicable to ex-officio members.

Section 2.

The ex-officio members shall include the following:

- a. Pastor
- b. Deacon
- c. Staff Person for Faith Formation
- d. Staff Person for Finance
- e. Staff Person for Liturgy & Christian Initiation
- f. Staff Person for Pastoral Care
- g. Two (2) lay trustees (appointed by the pastor) in consultation with the Bishop
- h. Chair of the Finance Committee or their designee.
- i. Others appointed *ad hoc* by the Pastor

Section 3.

- a. Chairs of any standing committees established by or with the approval of the Council pursuant to Article V of this constitution shall be members of this council, if they are not so already.
- b. The Pastor, or the Council itself, with the Pastor's approval may appoint non-elected members for specific terms to meet such specific needs or situations as may arise, or to head up such activities as may be deemed advisable by the pastor or the Council in the interests of the parish.
- c. All appointments by the Council are subject to approval/consent of the Pastor.

Section 4.

Elected members shall be a minimum of six (6) and a maximum of eight (8) in number, and shall be elected pursuant to Article VI of this constitution.

ARTICLE V: COMMITTEES

Section 1.

The Pastor and Council may establish such standing committees, subcommittees, and ad hoc committees, appoint their chairs, fix their membership, and assign their responsibilities, as it deems appropriate.

Section 2.

The terms of office for the committee members and chairs shall be one (1) year, provided however that such members and chairs may be reappointed by the Pastor and Council after determining the willingness of such members and chairs to continue to serve. Reappointment shall take place not later than May of each year.

Section 3.

The chair of each standing committee shall be considered an ex-officio member of the Council, if such chair is not already a member of the Council.

Section 4.

The President and Pastor shall be deemed ex-officio members of all standing committees and shall be notified of any meetings of such committees.

ARTICLE VI: ELECTION

Section 1.

Any registered and active member of the parish who is eighteen years of age or older is eligible to be a member of the Pastoral Council. Any member of the Council who ceases to be a parishioner shall also cease de facto to be a member of the Parish Pastoral Council.

Section 2.

The requirement set forth in section 1 hereinabove concerning age, shall not apply to the chair of any standing committee appointed by the council pursuant to article V, whose purpose is to deal with or to represent the youth of the parish.

Section 3.

The Pastor in consultation with the Council shall appoint a nominating committee of three (3) Council Members not later than March 1, whose purpose shall be to guide the selection process. The Vice-President of the Council shall be one of the three and shall chair this committee.

Section 4.

The selection process shall take place during the month of May so that new members may be present at the June meeting. The process shall be as follows:

- a. In addition to a verbal announcement from the pulpit during Sunday Masses, a notice shall be placed in the Sunday Bulletin by the Chair of the nominating committee not later than the second weekend in March requesting the congregation to nominate either themselves, or some other parishioner. Such notice shall include description of duties and commitment.
- b. In addition to a second verbal announcement from the pulpit during Sunday Masses, a second notice shall be placed in the succeeding Sunday bulletin by the Chair of the nominating committee.
- c. After the two notices have been announced at Mass and published in the bulletin, the nominees shall be contacted by the Chair of the nominating committee to verify their willingness to serve. Information regarding the nature and role of the Pastoral Council shall be supplied to the nominees.
- d. At a weekend liturgy not later than the second weekend in May, the President of the Council, or in his absence, the Chair of the nominating committee shall arrange to have sufficient persons selected to fill such vacancies as may occur. This selection process will be accomplished by a process of guided discernment among the selected nominees with the guidance of the nominating committee. Final selection shall be subject to the pastor's approval.
- e. New members shall be seated at the June meeting.
- f. After being seated at such meeting, new members shall have all the responsibilities of current Council members.
- g. Any requirements and limits concerning the size of the Council contained in this constitution shall be waived for the meeting at which new members are seated, and for the purposes and only for the duration of that session, there may be more than twenty (20) members.

Section 5.

There shall be a total of not less than six (6) nor more than eight (8) persons selected in the above manner. For each year of this nominating process, sufficient persons shall be selected to fill such vacancies as may occur.

Section 6.

The term of an elected member shall be twenty-four (24) months from the June meeting in which they are seated to June of the second year following such seating. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution, no person shall serve on the

Council for more than two (2) terms consecutively. Additionally, there shall be a two (2) year gap following the second consecutive term before a parishioner is eligible to serve on the council again. No two individual parishioners from the same household (i.e. husband and wife) shall be eligible to serve on the council simultaneously. In case of any vacancies that may arise, the council President shall contact any former nominees and they will be assisted in a process of guided discernment to fill the vacancy. Staff vacancies will be filled by the respective newly appointed staff member. If necessary the vacancy shall remain until the next June meeting at which time other places are filled.

Section 7.

The President and the Vice-President in consultation with the Pastor shall establish an orientation procedure for new members.

ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS

Section 1.

The Council shall meet a minimum of four (4) times a year, and at such times, or upon schedule as may be established by the Pastor in consultation with the Council Chair. The council may only meet when the Pastor is present, except in the case of an interregnum between pastors

Section 2.

Insofar as may be practicable, the Pastor and all members of the Council shall be furnished with a notice of any regularly scheduled meeting, a copy of the agenda for the meeting, as well as the minutes of the previous meeting at least seven (7) days before the date of the meeting. The secretary shall furnish this information.

Section 3.

Notice of each meeting shall be published in the Church Bulletin the Sunday prior to the meeting by the secretary.

Section 4.

Regular meetings of the Council are open to the members of the Parish. The President shall provide a reasonable period of time during any regular meeting for parishioners in attendance who are not members of the Council to offer suggestions, present problems, or discuss issues.

Section 5.

Items for the agenda may be presented to the Council President by any member of the parish. Those items to be listed on the agenda must be given to the President no later than ten (10) days prior to the next meeting. The President will discuss the agenda with the Pastor at least seven (7) days before the meeting. Other items may be added to the agenda under "any other business" unless they are deemed by the Pastor and the President to merit a longer discussion as an agenda item at the next meeting or be seen as unsuitable for discussion at the meeting.

Section 6.

Any member of the Council or any Council Officer who is absent from three (3) or more consecutive regularly scheduled meetings may be asked to resign from the Council. It will be the responsibility of the Vice-President to investigate the reasons for those absences and report to the President; the President, after consultation with the pastor, shall take appropriate action.

Section 7.

The Council may at any time, whether during a regular meeting or at any other time, acting upon motion of the Pastor or President or upon consensus of the Council, convene into executive session. If it convenes an executive session during a regular council meeting, it may immediately reconvene into the regular meeting following the executive session. Such executive session shall be guided by the following strictures and requirements concerning confidentiality:

- a. Such executive sessions shall not be open to the public.
- b. Each member of the Council attending such executive session shall do so only upon understanding that all matters discussed in such executive session are to be kept confidential.
- c. A member who does not agree that such matters should be kept confidential shall so state, and shall absent himself or herself from the proceedings of such executive session.
- d. A member who violates the requirements for confidentiality may be removed from the Council.

ARTICLE VIII- OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL

Section 1.

The Officers of the Council shall be: President, Vice-President, and Secretary.

Section 2.

The members of the Council shall elect among their members the above officers by a majority vote of the members then present at a duly constituted meeting. The President and Vice-President shall be selected from members elected to the Council, and shall not be selected from among the appointed members. The President and Vice-President shall be elected at the June meeting, or if there is no June meeting, at the meeting next after the selection of new members, and shall take office at the September meeting, or the meeting next after such election, whichever is earlier. The appointment of officers is subject to the approval of the Pastor.

Section 3.

The term of office shall be one year. No officer may hold more than two (2) terms consecutively, except the Secretary who is hereby excepted in the interests of organizational continuity.

Section 4.

In addition to any other duties of the officers as may be assigned by the council or by the pastor, the Duties of Officers shall consist of the following: The President shall

- a. preside over all meetings of the Council,
- b. compile the agenda for all meetings in consultation with the Pastor.
- c. present an annual report of the work of the Parish Pastoral Council to the Pastoral Council and the parish.

The Vice-President shall

- a. preside when President is absent,
- b. chair the Nominating Committee.
- c. be responsible for the orientation for the new Council members and communications for the election process,
- d. investigate the reasons for absences from meetings by members of the Council, pursuant to Article VII, Sec. 6,

The Secretary shall

- a. take or arrange to be taken, minutes of each meeting,
- b. take, or arrange for the posting of such minutes at each of the entrances of the parish churches,
- c. send or arrange to be sent the following to all members at least seven (7) days prior to the next meeting: agenda, minutes, notice of the meeting,
- d. take role at each meeting,
- e. be responsible for any communication from the Council to any other entity, organization, or individual.

ARTICLE IX-AMENDMENTS

Section 1.

Amendments to this Constitution shall be proposed by any member of the Council by filing the proposed amendment, in writing, with the President. The President shall send a copy of the proposed amendment to the Pastor and all members of the Council and enter it on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting.

Section 2.

The proposed amendment will not be examined until the meeting after it shall have been proposed and discussed, provided however, that such amendment must be discussed at the next succeeding meeting after it shall have been proposed pursuant to section one hereinabove of this article.

Section 3.

When approved by consensus of the Council, the proposed amendment shall become part of the Constitution, subject to the approval of the pastor.