

PARISH COUNCIL MANUAL

LIVING THE SPIRIT LEADING WITH GRACE, WISDOM, VISION

© ARCHDIOCESE OF MILWAUKEE, 2005

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Parish Council Manual, Seventh Edition
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OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

March, 2003

Dear Friends,

Since my arrival in the Archdiocese I have marveled at the quality of leadership I experience in our parishes, large and small, rural and urban. This is due in no small part to the outstanding commitment and partnership of pastors, deacons, lay ministers and council members to the mission of the Church.

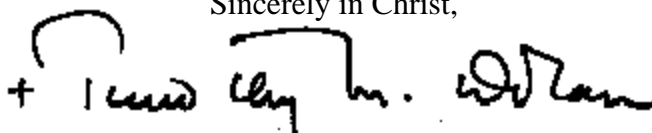
Vatican Council II reminded us that through Baptism all members of the Church are called to holiness and share responsibility for the mission of the Church. (*Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, art. 33.*) Parish council ministry is a significant means for living these principles.

Since the close of that historic council, our archdiocese has worked diligently to form and guide lay leaders for their work in the Church. This manual is a key resource. I pray that you will find in it the information and support you need

- To lead parishes that live, share and celebrate our faith in Jesus fully;
 - To guide the manner in which you work together as members of His Church;
 - To involve the faithful more completely in the mission activity of the Church, to take responsibility as members of the Church
- and
- To inspire others to respond to the call to serve as parish council members in the future.

Council ministry in these times is both a challenge and an honor! Together, with God's help and your committed, faithful partnership, the Church of Southeastern Wisconsin will "live the Spirit – with grace, wisdom and vision!"

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend Timothy M. Dolan
Archbishop of Milwaukee

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

Each parish council is unique because each parish is unique. Yet all parishes, wherever they are, have the same mission. That mission is to continue the work of Christ within the local community. Parishes do this by calling people to holiness and supporting them in their Christian life through the proclamation of the Gospel, prayer and worship, reaching out to those who are hurting or in need, building up the community and expanding the Reign of God.

The Parish Council Manual: Living the Spirit: Leading with Grace, Wisdom, Vision is a resource manual for parish councils. Its primary purpose is to promote quality ministry by those selected to serve as parish councilors, to strengthen their partnerships with the pastor, parishioners, standing committees and the parish staff. This manual spells out the role and responsibilities of parish councilors and helps them examine and sharpen their skills for leadership. The role and responsibilities of the pastor described throughout the book also apply to priests who serve as temporary administrators and those assigned by the archbishop as parish directors.

The canon law quotations in the manual are used with permission from the *Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Edition* (Washington, Canon Law Society of America, 1998).

A WORD OF THANKS

To: You, the Council Member

- For listening and responding to a call to council ministry and saying “Yes.”
- For giving your time and talent so generously, leading the parish as the new century and new millennium begin!

To: Our Bishops

- Whose inspiring leadership has brought us this far by faith.
- Who urge us to embrace the future with faith, hope and love.
- Who challenge us to live faith-fully.

To: Don Lozier, Marliss Rogers, Fr. Michael Hammer, Marilyn Bowman and Gerald M. Schaefer and all whose dedicated work since 1970 led us to this edition.

I hope you will find the *Parish Council Manual: Living the Spirit: Leading with Wisdom, Vision, Grace*, a valuable and useful resource for you personally, for your council, and for the Church in Southeastern Wisconsin.

Noreen Welte, Director
Office for Parish Councils & Planning
March, 2003

GETTING THE MOST FROM LIVING THE SPIRIT: LEADING WITH GRACE, WISDOM, VISION

PART I PARISH RESOURCES:

TABS 1-5

This section is to be used by council members at each meeting. This is where you insert your council's:

- Parish Mission Statement and Long-Range Plan
- Agenda
- Minutes
- Constitution and Bylaws
- Committee Listings and Reports

PART II ARCHDIOCESAN RESOURCES:

TABS 6-15

This section contains church documentation and resources to help council members understand their role, function and responsibilities. Our hope is that councils will read, discuss, use and adapt this material as they face the challenges of their leadership role, practice and improve their skills, and model faith, hope and charity to the parish community.

PARISH COUNCIL MANUAL

PARISH MISSION STATEMENT AND LONG RANGE PLAN

LIVING THE SPIRIT

PARISH COUNCIL MANUAL

PARISH COUNCIL AGENDA

LIVING THE SPIRIT

PARISH COUNCIL MANUAL

PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

LIVING THE SPIRIT

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PARISH DOCUMENTS PARISH COUNCIL CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS POLICIES

LIVING THE SPIRIT

PARISH COUNCIL MANUAL

PARISH ORGANIZATIONAL CHART STAFF AND COMMITTEE MEMBER LIST

LIVING THE SPIRIT

PARISH COUNCIL MANUAL

STARTING POINTS

LIVING THE SPIRIT

THE PARISH

“A parish is a certain community of the Christian faithful, stably constituted in a particular church whose pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor as its own proper pastor under the authority of the diocesan bishop” (*c. 515 §1*).

This definition of parish lists several aspects that describe **the essentials** of what it means to be a parish.

A PARISH IS A CERTAIN COMMUNITY...

This implies that the community should be identifiable by the members who compose it. That is, there should not be so much fluidity in membership that the parish community cannot be identified. The Christian faithful, incorporated in Christ through Baptism, are the “People of God”. Each parish community has its own **unique identity** since it is composed of the people who constitute it.

...STABLY CONSTITUTED...

This means that parish communities are not formed and then quickly dissolved. The community’s stability is one of its hallmarks as parish. Only the diocesan bishop has the authority to establish, dissolve, or notably alter parishes, and he does so only after consulting with the diocesan council of priests (*c. 515 §2*). This provision further guarantees that parishes will retain a sense of identity and stability since they are not merely self-forming and self-dissolving groups.

Membership in a parish guarantees an individual that the community, through the ministry of the pastor and others, will attend to his/her pastoral needs.

...WITHIN A PARTICULAR CHURCH...

The parish is part of the larger church through its connection with a particular church known as a diocese and its bishop. Hence, the description of the parish includes the fact that the parish exists within a diocese “in which the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church of Christ is truly present and operative” (*c. 369*). Parishioners are to be conscious not only of their parish communion, but also of the fact that they are members of both the diocese and the universal church (*c. 529*).

...ENTRUSTED TO A PASTOR...

The pastoral care of the parish community is “entrusted” to a pastor who acts as its shepherd. The diocesan bishop is authorized to name a pastor.

Within the parish community the pastor carries out the duties of teaching, sanctifying, and governing in cooperation with other priests and/or deacons assigned to the parish and with the assistance of lay members of the community (c. 519). The pastoral care of the parish includes preaching and teaching the Word of God, catechetical formation and Catholic education, promoting social justice and evangelization. Pastoral care also includes visiting and caring for parish members, especially the sick, dying and those in special need (cc. 528-529).

*(Note: References to Canon Law are from the **Code of Canon Law**, Washington, D.C.: Canon Law Society of America, 1999, and used with permission.)*

THE PARISH COUNCIL

While the pastoral care of the parish is entrusted in a special way to the pastors as the shepherd of the community, a parish council is provided in every parish to assist the pastor in fostering the pastoral activity of the parish (c. 536).

A finance committee exists in every parish to assist the pastor in financial administration of the parish (c. 537).

DEFINITION

A parish council is a group of people, chosen from and by the parish community, who together with the parish priest(s) guide, i.e. determine the direction of the parish, oversee its pastoral activity and temporal affairs as the community attempts to fulfill the mission of the church.

NATURE

The parish council is a **consultative body**. As such, it exists as a wisdom group commissioned to discern, proclaim, and make visible the presence and action of the Spirit within the community. By its very nature it is to provide counsel.

Historically the term consultative refers to the bringing together of appropriate, informed parties to identify the best possible conclusion to issues. This type of consultative process has been part of church history for centuries and can be traced all the way back to the apostles.

Today the parish council continues this ancient tradition by carrying out its work through a process that includes consulting parishioners before reaching a major decision. The parish council needs to be open to the opinions of parishioners and to the concept of sharing in one another's wisdom.

The *Code of Canon Law* states that a parish council is governed by the norms determined by the diocesan bishop. These norms for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee are found on pages 6-9 in this section. They clarify, among other things, that parish councils are mandated for each parish in the Archdiocese and outline how the consultative role of the parish council as stated in the *Revised Code* is to be expressed. The parish council:

- develops and maintains a mission statement,
- engages in a continuous process of pastoral planning, and

- after prayerful study and dialogue, develops policies concerning parish and pastoral matters.”

Because the structure for parish councils in this archdiocese includes the pastor and associate pastor(s) as members, the parish priest(s) are ensured an integral role in the policy-making process.

Parish council and committee members need orientation and on-going training in effective consultation. When a parish council understands and uses the consultation process, trust builds among members, frustrations diminish, and the parish council is better prepared to focus on the important issues facing today’s parish. Consultation opens the parish council to discerning the best course of action to further the mission of the church in the parish community.

PURPOSE

The parish council, similar to the archdiocesan pastoral council, is to “investigate all those things which pertain to pastoral works, weighing them and proposing practical conclusions about them” (*cc. 511, 536*).

In a broad sense, this main purpose of the parish council, the stewards of the parish mission, can be described as pastoral planning. This purpose is consistent with its nature as the wisdom group within the community. The focus of parish councils is on mission, not on management.

FUNCTION

The parish council fulfills its purpose through a variety of functions.

- It continuously examines the various aspects of the life of the parish in light of the parish mission statement.
- It assesses parish needs, determines priorities and options to meet those needs with available resources, and evaluates programs and services designed to meet parish needs.
- It weighs issues and proposes practical conclusions to the pastor about them.
- It develops policies that serve to carry out the parish mission.

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

- ✓ Articulate the parish mission
- ✓ Ensure the implementation of the parish mission
- ✓ Provide a model of prayerful leadership

PARISH DIRECTION

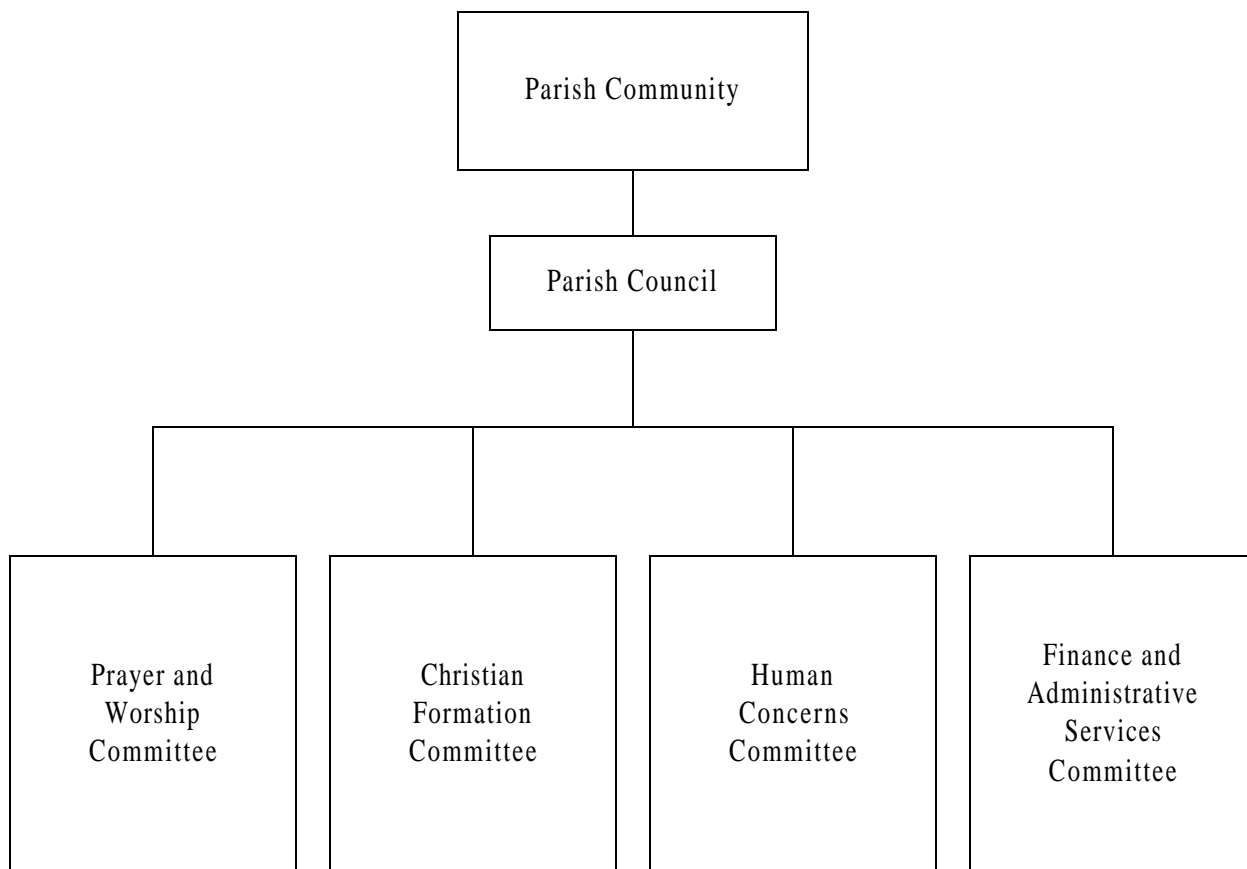
- ✓ Determine the direction of the parish based on the parish mission statement
- ✓ Advise the pastor about issues pertaining to the mission

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- ✓ Develop policies that support the direction of the parish
- ✓ Communicate parish policies to appropriate groups
- ✓ Monitor the implementation of parish policies.

PLANNING

- ✓ Assess parish needs and available resources
- ✓ Determine priorities and options
- ✓ Evaluate programs and services



PARISH COUNCIL NORMS

ARCHDIOCESE OF MILWAUKEE

The Code of Canon Law mandates that parish councils in a particular diocese be “governed by norms established by the diocesan bishop” (c. 536 §2). Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan issued as archdiocesan law the following Parish Council Norms superceding all previous norms.

(All references to pastors include pastoral team moderators, administrators and parish directors.)

EXISTENCE

1. In the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, a parish council is to be established and operative in every parish to unite laity, religious and clergy in a community of prayer, leadership, service and pastoral action.

For missions and parishes that are clustered, special arrangements which respect the nature of the relationship established among the parishes involved can be made. These alternative solutions must be clearly reflected in the constitutions.

NATURE

2. The parish council, a body of parishioner-representatives, serves in a consultative role to the pastor. As such, it exists as a wisdom group commissioned to discern, proclaim, and manifest the presence and action of the Spirit within the parish community. (c. 536 §1, 2)

PURPOSE

3. In the Second Vatican Council’s spirit of shared responsibility, the parish council examines and considers all that relates to pastoral work, and proposes practical conclusions to the pastor concerning the ongoing life and mission of the parish. The parish council is to be in communication with and sensitive to the needs and concerns of parish members and parish staff.

FUNCTIONS

4. The parish council
 - **develops and maintains a mission statement**, which embraces the total scope of parish life: worship, proclamation of the Word, service, education, administration, and social concerns.

- **engages in a continuous process of pastoral planning** that takes into consideration the needs of its parishioners, the archdiocese, the community and the world.
- after prayerful study and dialogue, **develops policies** concerning parish and pastoral matters. The pastor's presence and active participation in the dialogue is a necessary element in the process of policy formation. The parish council's policy decisions are to be consistent with faith and morals, civil and church law, and archdiocesan policy. In this way, the parish council reflects the working union of the parish with both the archdiocese and the universal church.

CHARACTERISTICS

5. Following is a list of essential characteristics of parish councils in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. The parish council is: prayerful, faithful, pastoral, representative, discerning, prophetic, empowering and collaborative. All of these characteristics combine to make the parish council effective in developing a pastoral plan for the parish and its surrounding community.

MEMBERSHIP

Ex-Officio

6. The priest(s) of the parish, as its spiritual leader(s) and as representative(s) of the bishop in the parish, are **ex-officio** members of the parish council and participate fully with all other members in parish council deliberations. The trustees are also ex-officio members of the parish council. All council members work together to discern what is best for the parish in the light of the Gospel and the church's teaching, and as they listen to what the Spirit is saying to the People of God.

ROLE OF PASTOR

7. The *Code of Canon Law* stipulates that the pastor is to preside at the parish council. In the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, the pastor presides by:
 - a) being in attendance at all council meetings;
 - b) making certain that the scope of the parish council's concerns reflects the entire mission of the church;
 - c) enabling the parish council to build a community of faith and an atmosphere of trust among parish council members;

- d) making certain that they have adequate training;
- e) assisting in formulating the parish council agenda;
- f) sharing in the dialogue that leads to the formulation of policy;
- g) serving as chief administrative officer of the parish;
- h) carrying out the policies formulated by the parish council.

If the pastor judges that a proposal is contrary to church teaching or discipline, or violates a diocesan norm, the pastor may withhold execution, giving the parish council the reasons. In such a case the parish council may appeal to the Office of the Archbishop or one appointed by him for clarification or arbitration. Any decision resulting from such an appeal shall be final. In the meantime, the effect of the action shall remain suspended.

Archdiocesan policy states that the pastor be free of the parish council chairperson role, in order to concentrate energy on other duties.

MEMBERSHIP

At-Large

8. All parish council members are to be in full communion with the Catholic church as outlined in the *Code of Canon Law* (c.205), namely, “those who are joined with Christ in its visible structure, by the bonds of the profession of faith, the sacraments, and ecclesiastical governance.”

The process of selection of parish council members must be stated in the parish council constitution. All parish council members (ex-officio and at-large) are to be adequately prepared for their role as Christian leaders. This includes opportunities for spiritual growth, a theological foundation, and training in skills required to meet their responsibilities.

STRUCTURES

9. Each parish council is to develop a parish council constitution and bylaws and submit them to the archdiocese for approval. The document is to be reviewed, evaluated and revised every five years by the parish council and resubmitted for approval.

A parish council chairperson is selected from and by the council members as its chief officer responsible for planning and leading council meetings and committee coordination. A vice-chairperson and secretary are also selected by and from the parish council.

COMMITTEES

10. The parish council forms committees of parishioners in each of these areas: **Prayer and Worship, Christian Formation, Human Concerns, and Finance / Administrative Services**, as well as other areas deemed necessary by the council. All of the committees are accountable to the parish council and make recommendations consistent with the overall parish mission.

Because of its canonical responsibilities the **Finance / Administrative Services Committee** (c.537) is to include as members the pastor and the trustee-treasurer, as well as other members. The pastor's rights and duties as set forth in the *Code of Canon Law* (c. 532) are to be observed, namely: *In all juridic affairs the pastor represents the parish according to the norm of law. He is to take care that the goods of the parish are administered according to the norm of canons 1281-1288.* The parish council receives, reviews and recommends approval of the annual parish budget to the pastor.

When the pastor makes a request to the archbishop for a **proxy for extraordinary administration**, the request is to include the opinion of the parish council and the signatures of the two trustees.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy M. Dolan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and a cross at the end.

Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan
Archdiocese of Milwaukee, 2003

ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A PARISH COUNCIL

1. A PARISH COUNCIL IS PRAYERFUL

The parish council agenda provides sufficient time to reflect on the Gospel. Many councils use prayer as “bookends” to begin and end their meetings. Other councils “salt” their meetings with prayer. They begin with a seasonal hymn or the parish mission statement. After approval of minutes and a report from the pastor, they read the Gospel for the following Sunday, and share insights or connections with the work and life of the parish. Before they adjourn, the members share prayer needs and parish concerns, pray the Lord’s Prayer and leave with a blessing and sign of peace. These councils realize that the work entrusted to their care is an extension of the Lord’s.

2. A PARISH COUNCIL IS FAITHFUL

Parish councils believe that the Holy Spirit is guiding the Church. If a matter comes before them for consultation about which they feel unqualified or lack sufficient knowledge, councils are humble enough to take initiative to find out, become informed about issues, procedures, and their rightful role or responsibility in the matter. Faithful councils promote parish unity and the mission of the larger church.

3. A PARISH COUNCIL IS PASTORAL

Through Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, all Christians are called to serve the people of God. The ministries of word, worship, service and administration are basic to the practice of being pastoral in the community. Parish councils strive to find the best resources and methods to serve the people of the parish as they fulfill the mission of the church in this time and place.

4. A PARISH COUNCIL IS REPRESENTATIVE

The parish council is a representative body rather than a body of representatives. Because they are not one-issue people, council members listen with openness to parishioners and faithfully present their expressed concerns, ideas and questions at the council meeting. In this way council

members bring a fuller picture of the community to the council table, representing all facets of the parish.

5. A PARISH COUNCIL IS DISCERNING

Parish councils represent faith communities, not public businesses. Rather than Robert's Rules of Order, the parish council makes recommendations in an atmosphere of prayer, respectful discussion and openness to the Holy Spirit. Guided by a firm, faith-oriented value system, the parish council works to determine how the mission of the Church is best accomplished in its own community, molding its actions and decisions in response to that mission.

6. A PARISH COUNCIL IS PROPHETIC

The parish council needs courage and foresight to set the direction of the parish community, challenging the parish to grow in response to the Gospel. This task will involve patience, watchfulness and a desire to hear the prophetic voice of the Holy Spirit calling for growth within the community. This prophetic work is not predicting the future but interpreting the path that the parish is to follow on its current faith journey in response to the Gospel and the needs of the Church.

7. A PARISH COUNCIL IS EMPOWERING

Every parish member has a contribution to make for the good of all. The parish council makes every effort to get to know parishioners' hopes and talents. Councils invite parishioners to share their expertise to deepen the faith of the individual, and to strengthen the parish and the broader community. Connecting parishioners' talents with community needs enables them to live out the mission of the Church in their daily lives.

8. A PARISH COUNCIL IS COLLABORATIVE

The parish council challenges itself as well as individual members, the staff, committees, organizations and other groups in the parish to work together. A clear, common understanding of the parish's mission fosters collaboration. The parish will strive to seek ways to collaborate with other parishes, community organizations and congregations to foster the common good of the broader community. In society and in the church, the demands of the present and future will stretch limited resources. Collaboration is an effective way to meet those needs and to utilize the resources.

COUNCIL WORK AREA

ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PARISH COUNCILS

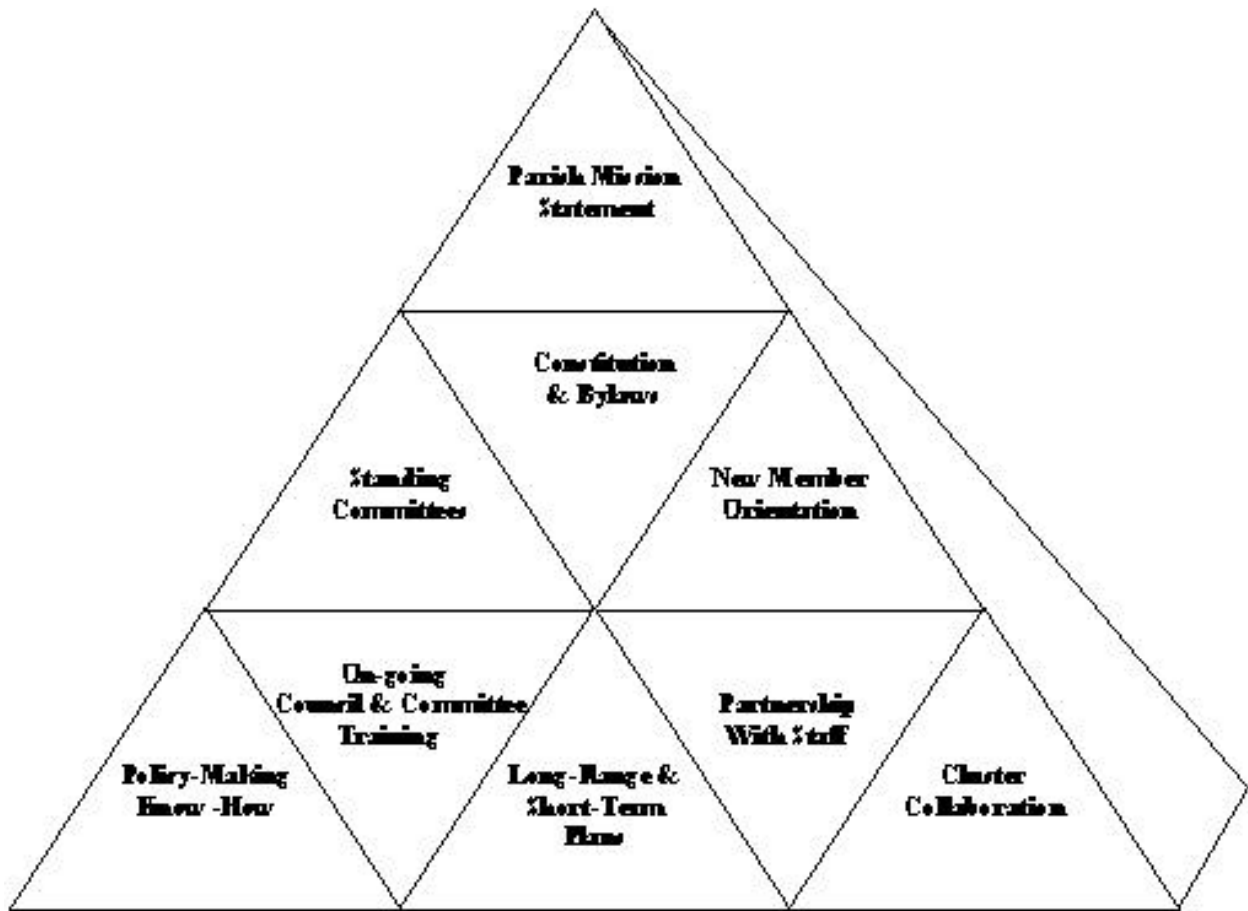
Parish councils who consistently demonstrate the characteristics listed below strengthen their parishes. These characteristics develop over time and with practice.

Review the list below.

- Is there one characteristic I could/should/will work on this year?
- Is there a characteristic our council could/should/will work on together as a group?

Characteristic	Description	Do Well	Work On
Prayerful	Our council gathers in a spirit of celebration. Time spent in prayer, study and reflection helps members to bring Christ's ministry to life today and to proclaim the Word of God in the world.		
Faithful	Our council attends workshops and conferences sponsored by the archdiocese to keep informed about issues facing the large church and our own. We are humble enough to admit when we lack information and ask for help from experts.		
Pastoral	Our council recognizes that not all parish life experiences are without pain. The council helps create an environment in which misunderstandings are clarified, conflicts resolved, and hurts healed. The council works to strengthen parish relationships and celebrate the peace of Christ.		
Representative	Council members listen to the longings, needs and dreams of the people in the parish, then faithfully consider concern, ideas and questions that are expressed. Rather than a body of representatives, the council is a representative body. They serve by establishing policy that draws from Gospel values to define the scope and limits of parish activity.		
Discerning	Decision-making is guided by a firm, faith-oriented value system that is flexible and open to the Holy Spirit. The council patiently and courageously seeks God's will for the parish. Members recognize the active presence of the Holy Spirit in the community.		
Prophetic	Our council challenges the whole parish to grow by naming the unique mission to which the parish is called at this time in the history of God's people. Parishioners feel called to change and we celebrate transformation.		
Empowering	Our council challenges all people of the parish to grow spiritually and invite them to bring their gifts in response to the Gospel and the need of the community. The council celebrates diversity.		
Collaborative	Because our council has a clear understanding of the parish's mission and a deep commitment to be good stewards of all God's gifts, it fosters collaborative links within the parish as well as with parishes and groups outside the parish boundaries.		

BUILDING BLOCKS OF A VIBRANT PARISH COUNCIL



COUNCIL WORK AREA

BUILDING BLOCKS OF A PARISH COUNCIL

	Points	Your Score
On a scale of 1 (Don't Know/Rarely) - 10 (Always), how do you rate your parish council?		
1. Council constitution and bylaws is approved by the Archdiocesan Office for Parish Councils and Planning within the last 5 years.	10 points	_____
2. The parish mission statement is reviewed annually.	10 points	_____
3. Council nominees/members attend Archdiocesan orientation sessions and other formation/training events.	10 points	_____
4. Regular meetings of the parish council include prayer, formation and consensus decision-making.	10 points	_____
5. Parish committees understand their mission, roles and responsibilities, provide regular reports to council, and work with appropriate parish staff.	10 points	_____
6. Trustees are elected in a manner consistent with Wisconsin state statutes; understand and carry out their roles and responsibilities as stated in <i>The Parish Trustee Manual (Finance/Administrative Services Committee Handbook)</i> .	10 points	_____
7. Planning is an on-going process for council, staff and committees.	10 points	_____
8. Council, committees and staff understand and use the process of policy formation and implementation.	10 points	_____
9. Parish leaders collaborate within the parish and with neighboring parishes, and promote working in partnership with ecumenical and civic groups to strengthen the larger community.	10 points	_____
10. The parish representative to the APC district council attends and participates in APC district meetings.	10 points	_____
	Total Points	_____

The area we will improve/develop/refine this year is:

PARISH COUNCIL MANUAL

MISSION OF THE CHURCH

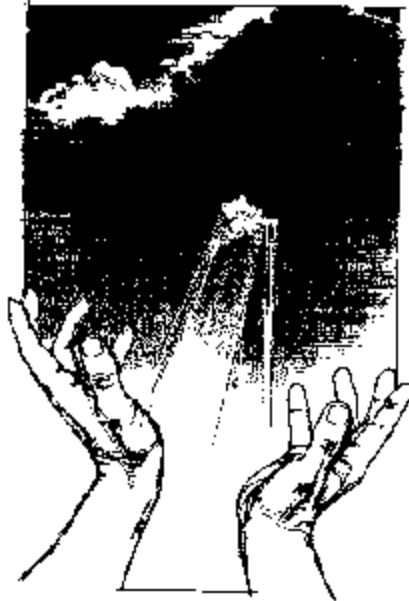
LIVING THE SPIRIT

***In the beginning was the Word;
the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.¹
He was in the beginning with God.²
all things came to be through him,
and without him nothing came to be.³***

***The Word was made flesh,
And made his dwelling among us,
and we saw his glory,
the glory as of the Father's only Son,
full of grace and truth.¹⁴***

Prologue of the Gospel of John

The Word made flesh was JESUS, who embodied God's love for us by becoming man, and reconciled humanity to God. Filled with the Spirit, Jesus lived a life of loving service, which gave glory and honor to the Father. He was a teacher, friend, son, kinsman, and man of faith. His life served as a model of holiness for his followers, then and now. What did he do during his brief sojourn? What was His mission?



THE MISSION OF JESUS

JESUS PROCLAIMED THE GOOD NEWS

Beatitudes	MT 5 LK 4:18	PARABLES	
First preaching at Nazareth	LK 4:16ff	Ten Lepers	LK 17:11ff
He taught with authority	LK 4: 31-32	Sower and seed	LK 8: 4ff
His authority is questioned	LK 20:1ff	Lamp under a basket	MT 5:15, MK 4: 21, LK 8:16
The “Great Discourse”	LK: 6:17ff	Good Samaritan	LK 10:25-37
I am the way, the truth and the life	JN 14:6	Mustard Seed; Yeast	MT 13:31ff, MK 4:30ff, LK 13:18f
Love one another as I have loved	JN 5:12	Widow’s Mite	LK 21:1ff
Woman at the Well	JN 4:1-42	Lilies of the fields	MT 6: 25-33, LK 12:22ff
The Greatest Commandment	MT 22:34-40		

HE HEALED, SERVED OTHERS

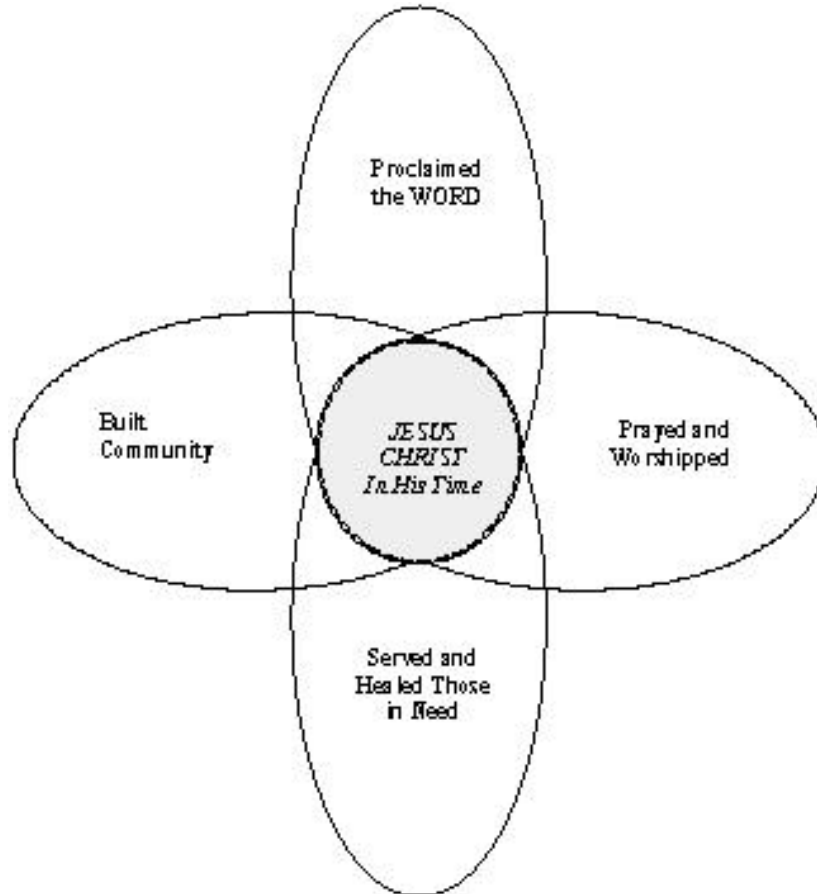
Washing of apostles’ feet	JN 13:1-17
Man with an unclean spirit	LK 4:33ff
Cures: Leper, paralyzed man.	LK 5:12ff
Cure of Centurian’s Servant	LK 7
Calming of the sea	MT 8:23-27, MK 4:35-41, LK 8:22
Cure of demoniac	MT 8:28-34, MK 5:1-20, LK 8:26
Jairus’ daughter	MK 5:21-43, MT 9:18-26, LK 8:40-56
The sinful women	LK 7:36-50

HE CELEBRATED IN RITUAL AND LIFE WITH FRIENDS, FAMILY AND STRANGERS

Wedding at Cana	JN 2:1-11
Multiplication of the loaves	MT 14:13-21, MK 6:30-44, LK 9:10ff, JN 6:1-13
Last Supper	MT 26:26-30, MK 14:22-25, LK 22:19ff
The Emmaus travelers	LK 24:13ff

JESUS PRAYED

Alone and with his community	MT 14:23, 11:27-31; 26:36-46; LK 9:18; 6:12; 9:29; 9:18; 22:39-46; 10:21-22; MK 1:37 3:21; 14:32-42; 6:41, JN 17
Jesus taught others how to pray	LK 18:1; 11:5-13; MT 18:19-20; JN 14:13,14; 16:23,26,27
“Our Father”	MT 6:9-15, LK 11:2FF



JESUS BUILT A STRONG COMMUNITY

He called, taught and sent apostles & disciples to share his mission.

First Disciples	MT 4:18-22, MK 1:16-20, LK 5:1-11
Levi	Lk 5:27
Selection of the Twelve	LK 6:12ff
Mission of the Twelve	LK 9:1-6, MT 10:1-8, 14, MK 3:13-16; 6:7-13
The Seventy-two	LK 10:1-20

JESUS SAVED US THROUGH HIS SUFFERING, DEATH AND RESURRECTION

MT 26-28; MK 14-16; LK 22-24; JN12-21

JESUS ENTRUSTED HIS MISSION TO THE APOSTLES AND DISCIPLES

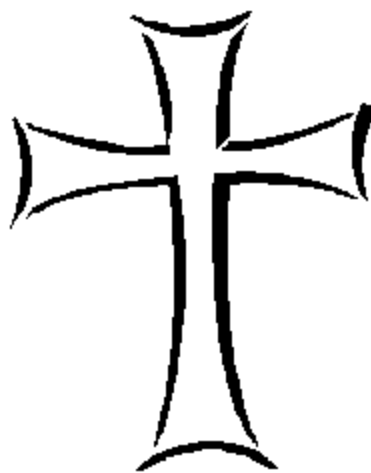
Go, make disciple of all nations, baptize them in the name of the father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you. (MT 28: 19-20)

*Today, the Church continues the mission work of Jesus.
The Church does not exist for itself, but for the mission of Christ.*

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

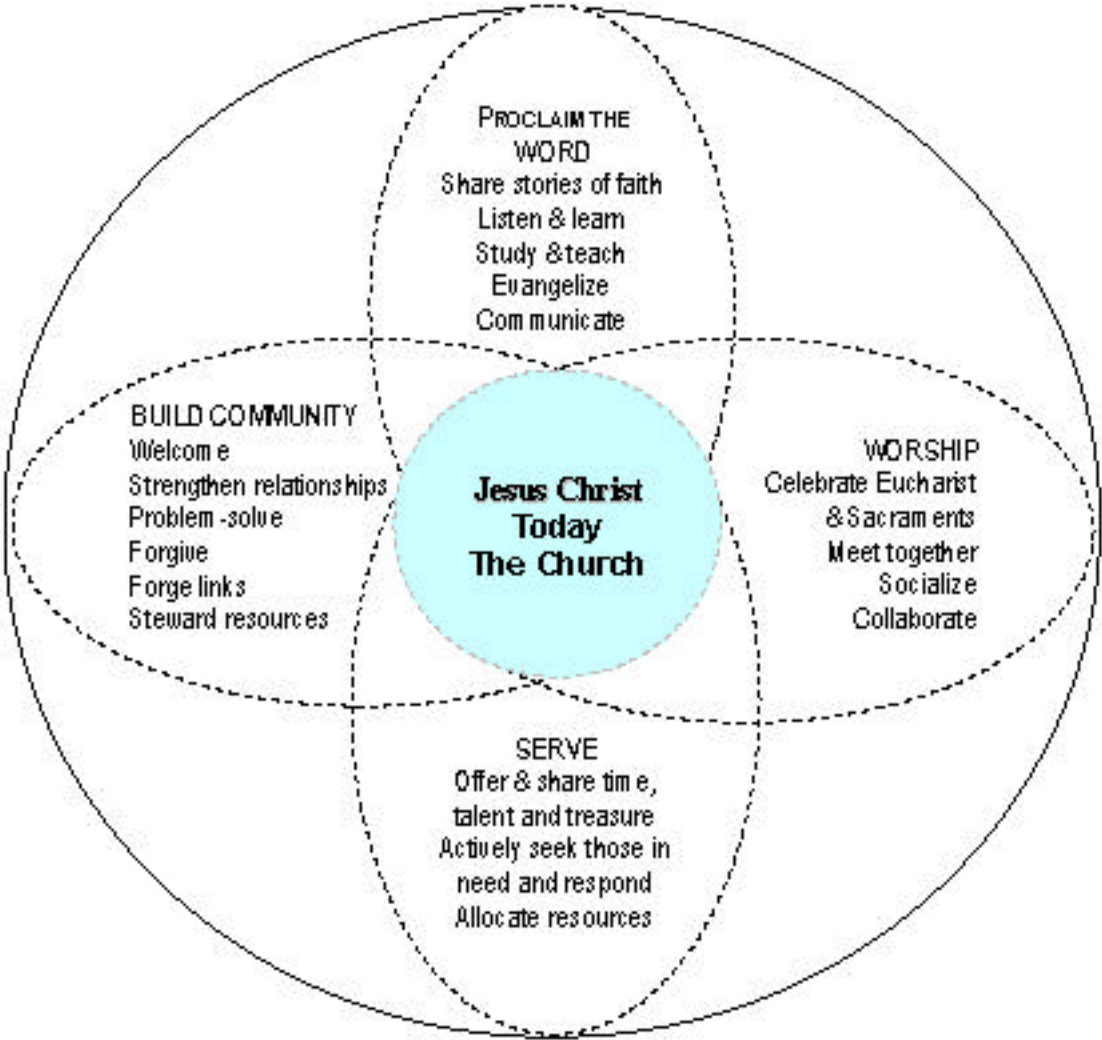
The Church continues the mission of Christ within and through its members when we:

- **Proclaim the WORD** –
Listen to the scriptures, allowing its truth to:
 - Penetrate our hearts
 - Deepen our faith and
 - Be transformed by its message.
- Evangelize, **share the good news** of salvation with those who have not heard it.
- Gather in **community** as baptized believers, to experience and witness the **strength of the Body of Christ**.
- **Celebrate** the mysteries of our faith in **liturgy and sacraments**, sharing the grace-full times of our lives.
- Seek to discover the needs of our communities, local, archdiocesan, national and worldwide, and attempt to heal those needs through generous **service**.



**WHAT KIND OF EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES
ILLUSTRATE THESE LIVED GOSPEL VALUES?**

MISSION IN ACTION



EUCHARIST WITHOUT WALLS

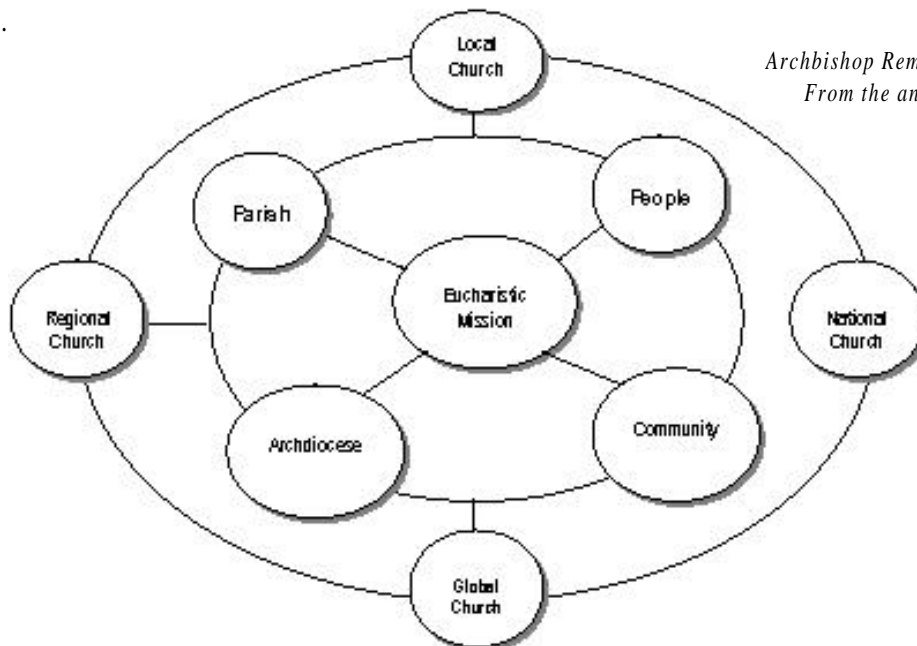
Ours is a Eucharistic Church. But what does this mean? What is the core of the Catholic faith and how does it affect us on a day-to-day basis?

As a Eucharistic community we do not focus inward, caring only for our own security and comfort. We extend ourselves to help others in need, even when it's not convenient. We believe in the Body of Christ, putting the welfare of the community before our own needs and wants. We take the Gospel message to heart, challenging injustice and transforming Christ's words into action.

The nourishment received at the Eucharistic table is more than an individual experience. In a culture that prizes self-sufficiency, the choice to share Eucharist is dramatically counter-cultural. Through Eucharist, Christ forms us into one community, united in the Holy Spirit. As a community we must reach out, bringing Christ's presence to others. Being *Eucharist Without Walls* is not always comfortable. Yet as Catholics, it forms the essence of our faith.

The ritual of joining our hearts in prayer at Sunday Mass must carry out into all aspects of our lives. Otherwise we have not truly shared in Jesus' table. Worshipping at Mass and receiving Communion within the full community is essential to being Catholic. Faith is a gift, and tending and nourishing this gift keeps it strong and flourishing. As we receive the Body of Christ we become more and more the Body of Christ. It is this faith that empowers us as God's Eucharistic people to reach out with Christ's love, confident in the power of the Holy Spirit to lead our way.

Eucharist Without Walls comes to life in our archdiocese through numerous efforts in three primary areas: Word, Worship and Service. The Gospel Word teaches us how to live. Worship takes on the many forms of sacramental life within the Church. Service, as Christ taught in word and deed, calls us to reach out to those in need.



Archbishop Rembert G. Weakland
From the annual report, 1998

THE MISSION OF THE PARISH

Simply put, parishes exist to continue the mission of Jesus in a particular locale. The parish council challenges and encourages the whole parish to grow by stating the unique mission to which **this parish** is called at **this time** in the history of the People of God. This is the parish Mission Statement.

WHAT IS A PARISH MISSION STATEMENT?

The **mission statement** is a brief, comprehensive description of the parish, its overall direction and unique role as ambassadors for Christ in a particular location. It should be short, clear, and easily understood by all in the parish. It tells:

- Who we are, what are our roots;
- Reflects Catholic tradition and Vatican II theology;
- Includes the values of the believing community and their mission priorities.

The mission statement becomes the **measuring tool** by which the council, committees and staff determine whether their actions move the mission of the parish forward.

COUNCIL'S ROLE

As the primary wisdom community, the council puts their deep and mature understanding of the identity and purpose of the parish into words. Formulating, revising, and serving as stewards of the parish mission is an important work entrusted to council, a work that is never done. People in the parish are always learning; always in the process of “becoming.”

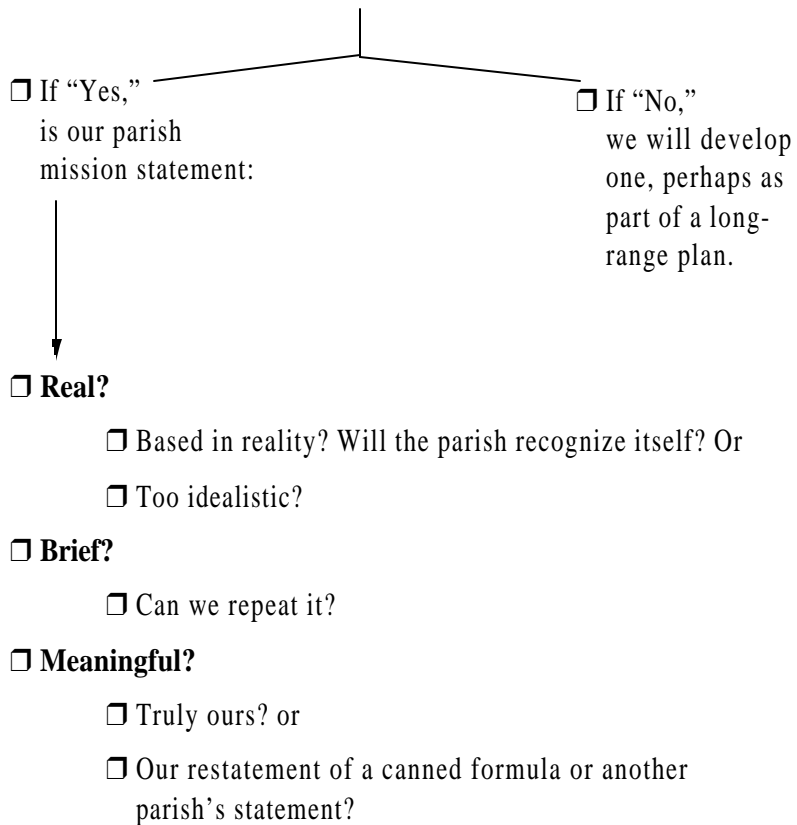
Therefore, the council reviews the mission statement annually and revises it, if necessary, to reflect the unique personality of the parish as it evolves. The council also ensures that the parish carries out its stated mission and that the pastoral needs of all parishioners are met. The parish benefits when council takes the initiative to do the following:

- learn about parish history, about the people, customs and traditions of the parish
- become sensitive to the broader community to understand how the parish serves its neighborhood, town, village, area

- explore the social concerns of the community
- work with other parishes, congregations, and community organizations in an effort to develop a sense of the mission of the Church in today’s world
- use outside resources to help learn more about Vatican II, the Church in the world, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee
- read and discuss the documents of Vatican II and the pastoral letters of the U.S. Bishops to expand their understanding of the challenges facing the contemporary Church
- attend archdiocesan leadership conferences and workshops, borrow video presentations, or invite local facilitators to work with the council to help them develop personal and spiritual leadership skills.

COUNCIL WORK AREA

Our Parish **has** a parish mission statement.



Alive?

- Can we name current actions that demonstrate how it works?

Followed?

- Are people actually changing, reaching their full potential, learning, serving, and growing in their faith?

Value-oriented?

- Makes clear what we hold ourselves accountable for? or
- Full of jargon?

Effective?

- Directing us to do the right things? or
- Just to do things right?

A call to evangelize?

- Does it challenge us to practice our faith beyond parish boundaries?



AFTER FURTHER REVIEW...

Is it time to:

- ✓ Write, review or revise the Mission Statement? or
- ✓ Reconsider how to use the Mission Statement?

HOW TO REVIEW OR REVISE THE MISSION STATEMENT

1. Council appoints one or two of its members to serve as an ad hoc Mission Statement committee.
2. The Mission Statement committee
 - a. Develops a plan and time line for the overall process (*See steps 2 b-d*). The plan should:
 - ✓ Involve wide parish participation.
 - ✓ Take no more than 6–8 weeks, from appointing the committee to affirmation of the new statement.
 - b. Gather parishioners to provide in-put. In small groups parishioners brainstorm words and phrases to answer the following:
 - i. Describe the members of our parish. (Who are we culturally? What are our roots?)
 - ii. What do we do as a believing community?
 - iii. Why? And how do we do what we do?
 - iv. Who do we serve?
 - c. Collate and synthesize the responses
 - d. Develop a preliminary draft of the Mission Statement using the following criteria:

Is the new Mission Statement:

 - Brief and easily understood?
 - Does it express the spiritual nature of the parish?
 - Is it inspiring so as to motivate and challenge people?
 - Does it reflect the parish's individuality, location, composition, relationships and accountability?
 - e. Present draft for review by the parish council. Revise draft if needed.
 - f. Present final draft and seek council affirmation and pastor's approval.
3. Council presents approved Mission Statement to the parish, to staff and committees.

HOW TO USE AND LIVE THE PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

1. Publish it as a bulletin cover or create a prayer card and distribute widely.
 Yes. Person(s) Responsible: _____
 No. Reason: _____
2. Ask staff, committees, and parish organizations to develop annual and long-term (3-5 yr.) goals based on the Mission Statement. Or develop a parish long-range (strategic) plan.
 Yes. Person(s) Responsible: _____
 No. Reason: _____
3. Ask council, staff and committees to refer to it before every major decision is made.
“How does our decision support our mission statement?”
 Yes. Person(s) Responsible: _____
 No. Reason: _____
4. Incorporate it into community prayer on the parish feast day or other appropriate Sundays and feast days throughout the year.
 Yes. Person(s) Responsible: _____
 No. Reason: _____
5. Incorporate it as part of the prayer at each parish meeting.
 Yes. Person(s) Responsible: _____
 No. Reason: _____
6. Teach it to school children and Christian Formation children and youth.
 Yes. Person(s) Responsible: _____
 No. Reason: _____
7. Give Mission Statement prayer cards to new parishioners when they register.
 Yes. Person(s) Responsible: _____
 No. Reason: _____
8. Distribute throughout the neighborhood as part of an evangelization effort.
 Yes. Person(s) Responsible: _____
 No. Reason: _____

SAMPLE MISSION STATEMENTS

Mission Statement

Inspired by Francis of Assisi,

St. Benedict the Moor Parish

Is a table set for all who hunger for the
nourishment of the gospel.

We welcome and
nurture
the gifts of our
urban
community

We call upon the Spirit
To help us build a just
and
peaceful world.

We celebrate “God Among Us”
With all people.

PARISH COUNCIL MANUAL

HOW THE PARISH WORKS

LIVING THE SPIRIT

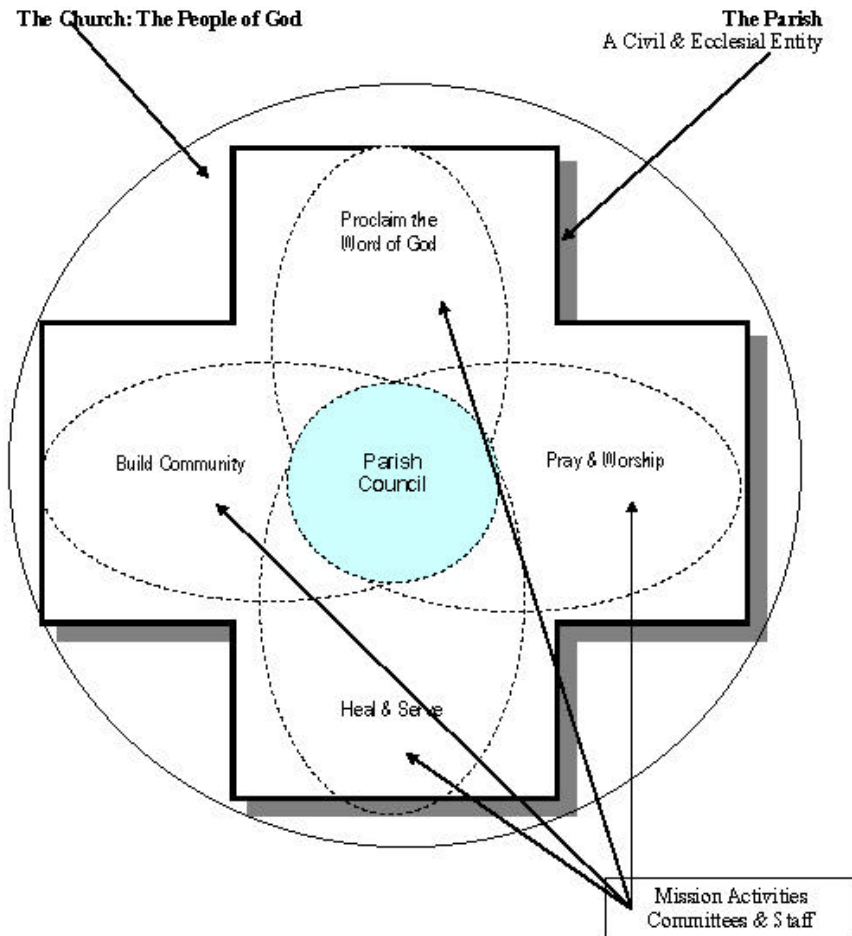
**There is a variety of gifts, but the same Spirit;
there are different ministries, but the same Lord is served.
...To each person the manifestation of the Spirit
is given for the common good.**

1 Corinthians 12:4-8

HOW THE PARISH WORKS

Whatever happens in the Church today happens as God works through the people, the community of faith, women, men, and youth who gather faithfully to celebrate the mysteries of our faith.

Certain inter-related parish systems create the infra-structures that organize the **People of God**, give the members voice to discern the direction of the parish and ensure that the community carries out its mission. These parish systems include the **parish council** and **committees**, the **parish staff** – the administrative and management system, and the **parish corporation, the legal entity**.



THE PEOPLE OF GOD

The members of a parish are among the worldwide believers Vatican II documents refer to as “the people of God,” a community of baptized people with diverse talents and needs, spiritual and temporal. Out of this community, God calls leaders to serve in a variety of ways.

- Some respond through religious vows or ordination. These members devote their entire lives to service to the Church.
- Others respond as professional lay ministers. These members direct their life’s work to service of and with people in parishes.
- Most of us respond by sharing our time and talent, bringing faith to life in our parishes and communities, serving others in many ways and places. We live Eucharist Without Walls in our homes, workplaces and community.

The members of the parish community identify and invite men and women of the parish to serve in the leadership roles of parish council. These parish members work with the pastor to ensure that the mission of Jesus is carried out.



ORDAINED MINISTERS

PARISH PRIESTS

Parish priests are leaders who foster the faith of the people. They encourage and challenge them to carry out Christ's work and the mission of the Church in the world. They are appointed by the Archbishop to serve one or more parishes. Priests serve by:

- Presiding at liturgy, preaching the Gospel and teaching; they are the sacramental leaders of the parish
- Fostering works by which the spirit of the Gospel, including issues of social justice, is promoted
- Visiting the faithful, ministering to the sick and dying, seeking out the poor, supporting and strengthening marriage and family living
- Calling forth leadership in others
- Working with the bishops and their brother priests to model and promote concern and partnership with the diocesan and universal church (c. 528-529).

THE PARISH PASTOR

The pastor plays a pivotal leadership role in the parish. In addition to the ministries listed above, the pastor:

- Calls forth the gifts in the community
- Ensures that a well-functioning parish council exists
- Serves as chief administrator in the parish, holding positions in both the parish council and the parish corporation.

The pastor is entrusted with animating and affirming the council as well as ensuring that the parish is challenged with a broad vision of the Church, a vision which:

- looks beyond parish boundaries
- calls the parish to be a sign of God's presence in the world
- motivates others to reach out to the larger community
- is imbued with the rich traditions of the Church
- calls forth a collaborative spirit.

All parish priests are *ex officio* members of the parish council. Parish councils do not formulate policy independent of the parish priests, nor do the priests formulate policy without the advice of the parish council.

Parish councils recognize and respect the unique role that priests, especially pastors, hold in the parish. As leaders, the priests are responsible for implementing archdiocesan and parish policies and parish council decisions. They share this responsibility with other staff, whether paid or volunteer, and with parish committees. The parish council, committees and parishioners need to give parish staff, including priests, the latitude to exercise effective administrative leadership.

*[The title “pastor” includes all those who have been given canonical administrative authority as established by the *Code of Canon Law* (c. 519 & 521) and includes pastoral administrators and parish directors (c. 517, §2; 539; 540).]

DEACONS

Deacons share in Christ’s mission in a special way. The sacrament of Holy Orders marks the deacon as one like “Christ, who made himself the ‘deacon’ or servant of all.” Deacons assist the bishop and priests in a variety of ways. Some assist in the celebration of the divine mysteries, above all the Eucharist, and in the distribution of Holy Communion. Some deacons enter into covenants with parishes and are authorized to assist at and bless marriages, proclamation of the Gospel and preach, preside over funerals, or dedicate themselves to the various ministries of charity.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1570

LAY LEADERS

TRUSTEES

For civil purposes, every parish in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee is incorporated under Wisconsin Statute sec. 187.19. In order to meet the requirements of the statute, two parish members who are

- practicing Catholics and
- at least 25 years of age are
- Elected by parishioners for a renewable two-year term to serve the parish as trustee secretary and trustee treasurer.

The archbishop, vicar general of the archdiocese, pastor, and parish trustees form the board of directors for the parish corporation. They are entrusted with overseeing the parish's civil and legal matters. *Parish Trustee Manual (Finance/Administrative Services Committee Handbook)* has detailed information about the role of parish trustees.

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

Each year the parish calls from among themselves a group of women, men, and youth to serve as leaders for the parish for a term of service defined by the parish council constitution and bylaws. The parish council is entrusted with overseeing the parish mission and with setting direction for the parish.

The Parish Council:

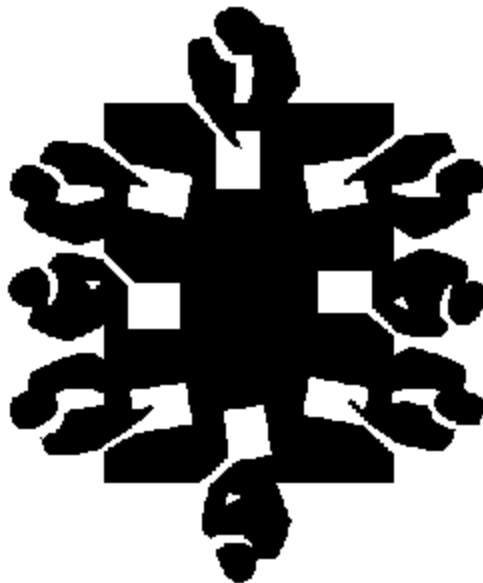
- Works with parishioners and staff to discover the vision for the future of the faith community
- States the parish mission
- Develops policies that support the mission
- Engages in planning and goal setting to promote the mission and make the vision a reality
- Evaluates how well the parish is carrying out the mission of the Church in the world.

PARISH STAFF

Parish staff includes the parish priests and people who are entrusted with managing specific processes, programs and projects that help the parish fulfill its mission.

The **administrative staff** includes any person, paid or unpaid, who is accountable for directing or coordinating specific operations, programs or projects in one or more parishes. **Administrative positions** will vary from parish to parish and may include such titles as pastoral associate, director of religious education, director of prayer and worship, youth minister, ministry coordinator, principal. Paid staff meet regularly to coordinate their efforts and ensure that their day-to-day decisions and activities further parish and archdiocesan goals and long-range plans as well as align with policies, job descriptions and budget restrictions. Administrative staff members have the right to make decisions in the areas of their expertise. Administrative staff members are ultimately supervised by and accountable to the pastor.

Support staff are people who provide the day-to-day services that help the parish operate effectively and efficiently. Support staff positions will vary from parish to parish and include such titles as secretary, custodian, and bookkeeper. Usually these are paid positions, but some parishes have volunteers in these positions. Support staff are supervised by and accountable to the pastor or to another designated staff member.



PARISH STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS

The work of the parish is accomplished by people who serve in one or more of three structures that form the “organization” we call parish: the parish corporation, parish council, and parish administration. How the parish corporation and parish administration intersect with council is described briefly below.

THE PARISH CORPORATION – A LEGAL STRUCTURE

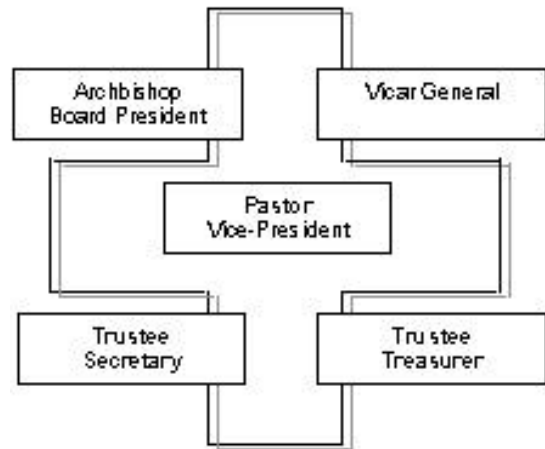
All parishes in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee are incorporated under Wisconsin Statute sec. 187.19. The parish corporation is a civil structure that has authority only in those civil and secular matters for which it was created. Two examples of corporate functions are the abilities to own property and enter into contracts.

Who are the Parish Corporation Board Members?

What does the Parish Board of Directors do?

The **Board of Directors** of the parish corporation attends to all the temporal matters that are affected by civil law or archdiocesan guidelines, such as:

- Acquisition or sale of property
- Execution of construction or major remodeling contracts
- Investment management
- Lending or borrowing money and similar transactions.



Trustees are members of the parish and are elected by parishioners for a renewable two-year term. Trustees also serve with the parish finance / administrative services committee. The pastor and both trustees, as board members of the parish corporation, are **ex officio** members of the parish council. The archbishop has the right to approve or disapprove any lay trustees elected by the parish or appointed by the pastor to fill a temporary vacancy of an unexpired term. Trustees need the same qualities as other council members. They need the same orientation to parish council ministry. They have the same rights and responsibilities, work from the same sense of shared leadership, and participate fully and equally in parish council decision-making with other members of the council.

*[The role of the two lay trustees is fully explained in the **Parish Trustee Manual (Finance/Administrative Services Committee Handbook)**, available from the Office for Parish Councils and Planning.]*

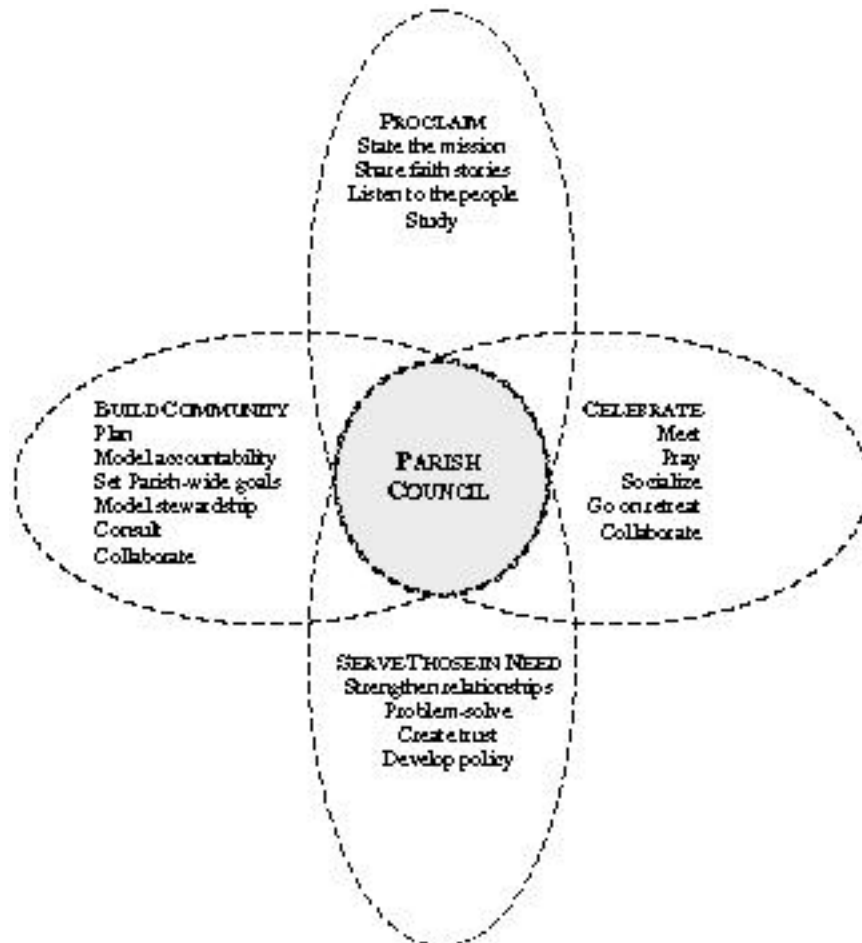


THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH – AN ECCLESIAL STRUCTURE

THE PARISH COUNCIL – STEWARDS OF THE PARISH MISSION

The Parish Council is a group of parishioners, selected from and by the community. They serve as the primary consultative body of parishioners, who advise the pastor on the spiritual needs and temporal affairs of the parish, articulate the parish mission statement, develop parish policy, promote parish planning, and monitor the progress of the parish mission and annual goals. Their focus is on MISSION, not on management.

What activities illustrate the responsibilities of the parish council?



WHAT DOES THE COUNCIL DO?

The council is entrusted with the work of

- Drawing from the broader community, the unique mission of the parish at this particular time in the history of the Church. They state the mission clearly.
- From that sense of mission, the parish council promotes planning, sets goals, develops policies, ensures that resources are allocated in such a way that the goals can be achieved, and evaluates mission effectiveness regularly.

The parish council itself is not involved in the day-to-day work of implementing goals. That work is entrusted to parish committees and staff.

PARISH ADMINISTRATION

THE PARISH STAFF – SHARING MINISTRY

Administration is a system that enables the sharing of responsibility and empowers people to accomplish the parish mission.

The pastor serves as chief administrator.

The parish staff is the primary group who shares the pastor's ministry of administration and management.

The staff are people employed by the parish to implement parish policy as formulated by the council and to manage daily operations in their area of influence.

Although not paid for their work, some parishioners accept management responsibilities when they agree to chair a parish committee or a group that is affiliated with the parish. People who serve in these roles are also entrusted with managing operations in their area of influence according to parish policy as formulated by the council.

WHAT DOES THE STAFF DO?

The functions of parish staff are to:

- Promote spiritual growth and leadership development opportunities among people in the parish.

- Assist council and committees in determining the parish mission and goals.
- Design, implement and evaluate programs, services and activities that carry out the long-range goals of the parish and archdiocese.
- Design procedures consistent with policies approved by the council to carry out the mission of the parish.
- Manage the daily operations of the parish.
- Maintain open communication with and among various groups and individuals in the parish, the archdiocese and the larger community.

PARISH COMMITTEES – PARISH MISSION IN ACTION

Parishioners participate in the mission of the parish in a significant way when they work as members of the parish committees.

The parish staff and committees are entrusted with the day-to-day implementation of parish plans and goals, develop plans and procedures to achieve the goals. Some goals require collaboration between staff and parish members with a particular expertise or interest. All goals will require cooperation and collaboration.

Staff and committees do this by developing objectives/strategies, delegating tasks, assigning resources and measuring progress in their particular areas of mission. They communicate their progress to the council regularly in minutes, reports and through their liaison to the council.

PARISH COMMITTEES

Purpose

Committees carry out a wide variety of tasks. They study, pray, and act to make the parish a center through which its members carry out its mission. Committees develop strategies to implement parish policies and goals in their area of mission; provide continuous opportunities for people to grow spiritually through active participation in parish life.

Relationship between council and committees

The word “committee” comes from the French word, comité, meaning “to entrust.” Although the council sets direction and develops/approves an overall plan for the parish, the actual work of carrying out those plans is entrusted to committees and staff.

In other words, committees are working bodies of the parish.

Committees implement plans and develop procedures for their specific area of responsibility according to the priorities and goals of the parish council.

The council holds each committee accountable not only for accomplishing its objectives, but also for doing so in the context of the parish mission statement and within the boundaries defined by parish policy.

The parish council norms of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee mandate that each parish has four permanent standing committees.

What are the four mandated standing committees?

The four mandated standing committees are:

- Prayer and Worship – which coordinates the practice and activities related to celebrating the mysteries of our faith in community worship;
- Christian Formation – which coordinates practices and activities (including the educational and formational aspects) related to proclaiming the Word of God in the world;
- Human Concerns – which coordinates the practices and activities related to serving those in need, making justice a lived value of the parish;
- Finance / Administrative Services – which coordinates practices and activities that bring forth the talents, gifts and resources of the whole community in service to God.

How does the council hold committees accountable?

The council:

- Reviews regular committee reports to ensure that specific committee and group plans are integrated with long-range and short-term plans for the parish
- Meets with each committee for an annual comprehensive report of goals and accomplishments, policy and resource needs
- Develops policy that supports the ministry of the committees
- Provides people serving on committees, groups and staff with regular opportunities for leadership development and training.

Do committees get involved in council matters?

Committees are involved in council matters in three ways:

1. By **bringing proposals** and other recommendations to council
2. By **participating in long-range planning** and evaluation of current policies, plans and programs
3. By **following the lead of council** – developing vision, mission, goal and policy statements for their own committee or group that respect the scope and limits of their area of influence.

Are we limited to four committees?

It is recommended that a fifth permanent committee be formed – a conciliation committee, to ensure that attention is given to the practice of healing organizational hurts and strengthening parish relationships. The conciliation committee develops and carries out procedures for resolving conflicts in ways that are consistent with the mission of the parish. For more information please see section 9.

The council may develop policy that establishes additional standing committees as well as ongoing committees that are deemed necessary but are not designated as permanent. The council may also establish ad hoc committees or work groups.

Large parishes with many committees may choose to organize the committees with a common focus under a **commission “umbrella”**. The committee chairpersons serve as the commission members in a particular ministry area. They meet 3-4 times a year to coordinate and facilitate communication and planning among the groups within the ministry area, and provide opportunities to initiate or discuss proposals to be presented to the council. See Organizational charts in Appendix.

What is an *ad hoc* committee?

***Ad hoc* committees are temporary committees formed to complete a specific task within an established time frame.** They disband when the task is finished.

Some examples are: a committee to plan the 150th anniversary of the parish; a task force to recommend the purchase of computer equipment; a committee to revise the parish employee handbook; a task force to lead the parish strategic planning process. Ad hoc committees are expected to file regular reports with the standing committee to which they are assigned.

How do committees get their work done?

Each committee selects one of its members to serve as chairperson. Council members and paid staff do not chair committees. A chairperson:

- Calls regular committee meetings
- Facilitates discussion and decision-making
- Delegates tasks
- Oversees the performance of those tasks
- Helps evaluate results
- Coordinates and communicates with the council according to council policy.

Committees are formed by and are accountable to the council for performing specific tasks that help parish fulfill its mission. As chief administrator, the pastor is ultimately responsible for ensuring that committee work is managed well.

What is the relationship between council and staff?

Parish staff members serve as resource persons in their areas of expertise, both to the council and to the standing committees. Although they may not chair committees, staff members participate as full members of standing committees, subcommittees, and ad hoc committees.

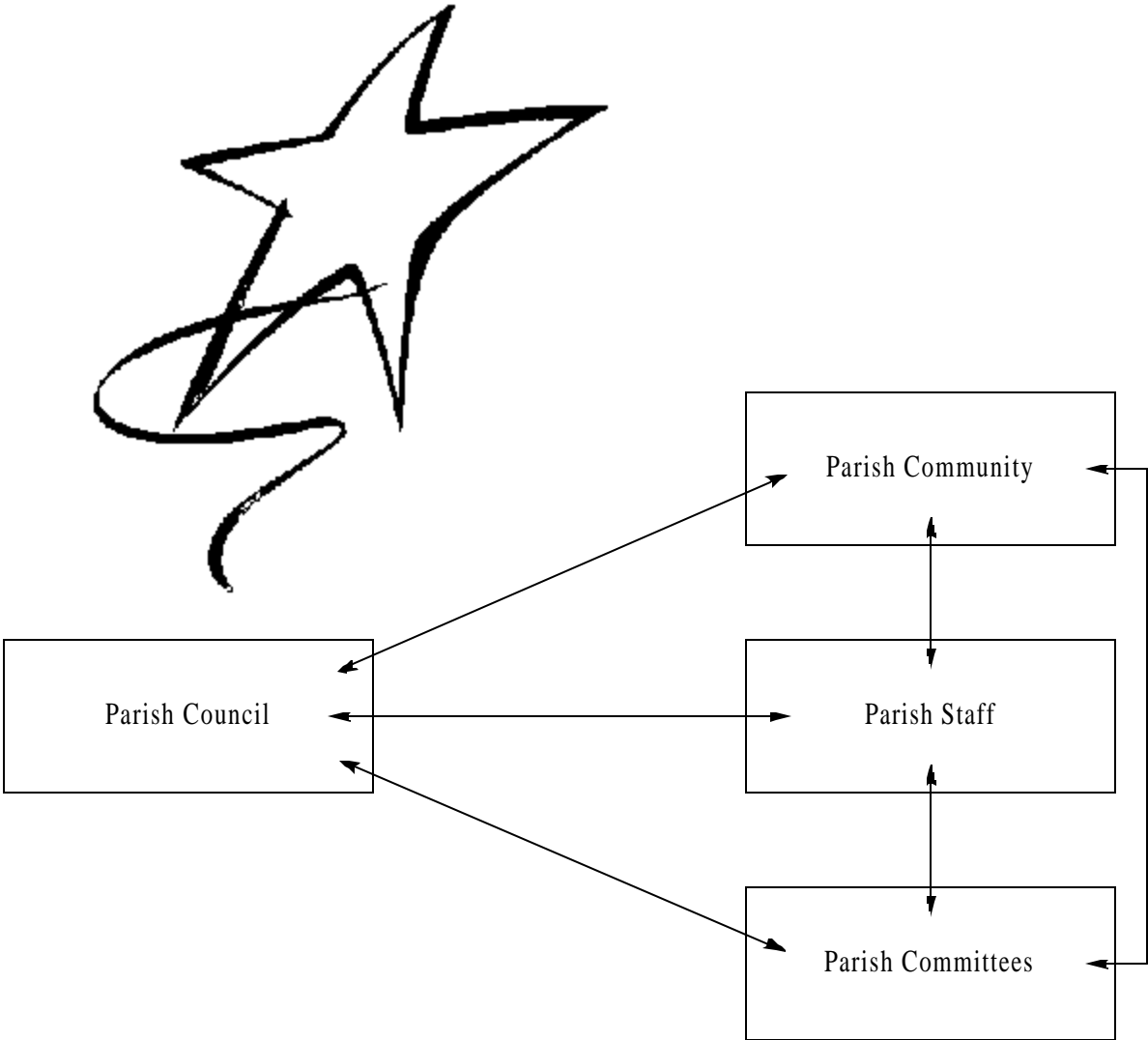
Staff members may not serve as parish council members of the parish where they are employed. Additionally, to avoid a conflict of interest, we strongly recommend that immediate family members of parish employees not serve on council during their term of employment.

Do committees need council approval for everything?

No. The scope and limits of each committee's work is stated in the parish council bylaws. In a spirit of subsidiarity, committees make ordinary decisions to accomplish the work entrusted to them. A committee requests council approval when their understanding of a policy is not clear or when they see a need for action that lies beyond the limits set by current parish policy.

[For more information about policy-making, see section 11]

COMMUNICATION LINKS



COMMUNICATION AND THE COUNCIL: PROCLAIMING THE WORD

Communication and leadership are inextricably linked. The ability to communicate effectively can define the council as visionary leaders. It determines how the council is accepted, and more importantly, who is willing to follow council's lead. Good communication in the parish means that messages are consistent, repetitive, constantly reinforcing each other in order to build credibility and create continuity.

TO THE PARISH STAFF

Primary Communication Link: The Pastor

The pastor encourages regular coordination and communication among people who are entrusted with managing the work of the parish. **The pastor serves as the communication link between the staff and council.**

Although the pastor functions as a liaison, the parish council needs a formal system of communication with the parish staff.

- Policy decisions, directives and concerns which require administrative staff attention need to be in writing.
- Each parish should develop a parish policy manual in which to record decisions of the parish council.
- Council policy may require one or more formal opportunities each year for administrators to work together in developing effective parish leadership.

TO COMMITTEES

Primary Communication Link: The Council Liaison

An important communication link between the parish council and the standing committees is the role of liaison. The liaison is an at-large member of the council, selected by the council to serve as a conduit of information from the council to the committee, from the committee to the council.

The Council Liaison Does

- Keeps the committee informed of the decisions, actions or policies developed by the council.

- Reminds the committee of the mission statement and goals of the parish as they relate to the particular focus of the committee.
- Give regular committee up-dates/reports to the council. This report is a summary of current work, planned future developments and any recommendations needing in-put, direction or approval from the council.

The Council Liaison May

- Be actively involved in the work of the committee, participate in the decision-making of the committee.

The Council Liaison Does Not

- Serve as an officer of the committee.

TO THE PARISH AT-LARGE

Communication Link: The Entire Council

Conversations, bulletin announcements, parish newsletters and publications, posters, events, townhall meetings, are among the resources council has to facilitate on-going communication.



COUNCIL, COMMITTEES, AND STAFF – WORKING TOGETHER

The following list of functions can be used as a guide. The council may adapt items to fit the particular parish situation. *Starred (*) items, however, reflect state law or archdiocesan policy and should be implemented as stated.*

PARISH COUNCILS

COMMITTEES *[Commissions/Boards]*

PARISH STAFF *[Includes priests & parish directors]*

1. * Develop a constitution and bylaws according to archdiocesan norms. Develop guidelines for council committees.	Develop a clear statement of purpose and function within the context of the parish mission as well as the constitution and bylaws of the parish council.	Have job descriptions developed in compliance with guidelines of the archdiocesan Department for Human Resources.
2. * Provide for selection of new members according to bylaws.	Select or recruit members according to statement of purpose and function.	Are hired, supervised and evaluated by the pastor in accordance with archdiocesan policy. <i>Note: The pastor is the chief administrative officer of the parish. Priests are accountable to the archbishop for the overall naming of the parish.</i>
3. Provide orientation and ongoing formation for council members.	Recruit members and provide for their orientation and ongoing formation.	Assist in providing parish council and committee orientation/formation upon request.
4. * Conduct regular open meetings and allot a specified time on the agenda for parishioners who are not council members to speak.	Conduct regular open meetings and allot a specified time on the agenda for parishioners who are not committee members to speak.	Assist and participate in parish council and/or committee meetings as appropriate. The priest(s) serves(s) as <i>ex officio</i> member of the council. Other staff may be <i>ex officio</i> members of specific committees.
5. Represent total parish needs.	Represent specific needs and special talents in an area of interest.	Hired or appointed in light of parish needs and stated priorities.
6. Operate out of a vision of Church shaped by post-Vatican II documents and the needs of the parish.	Operate out of a vision of Church shared with the parish council and parish staff.	Operate out of a vision of Church shared with the parish council and its committees.
7. Prayerfully discern and articulate the parish mission.	Assist in the discernment and articulation of the parish mission within their respective areas of responsibility.	Assist in the discernment and articulation of the parish mission.

PARISH COUNCILS	COMMITTEES	PARISH STAFF
8. Formulate broad goals and directions for the parish.	Provide input into the development of broad parish goals and develop committee goals congruent with parish goals.	Provide input into the development of broad parish goals and committee goals, and develop program goals in conformity with these.
9. Assure the development of long-range plans to carry out the parish mission.	Assist in parish long-range planning in specific areas. Implement plans where appropriate, being respectful of the roles of the staff.	Assist in parish long-range planning. Develop and implement program plans in specific areas.
10. *Formulate and approve parish policy. Ensure that parish policy is implemented.	Work with staff to implement parish policy. Identify needs, research issues and formulate policy in their respective areas of responsibility. If the scope of a policy reaches beyond a committee, parish council approval is necessary.	Work with committees to shape and implement parish policy. Develop program rules, regulations, and practices that support parish policies.
11. Provide minutes/reports to parish council members, committee chairpersons, staff and parishioners.	Provide minutes/reports to the parish council, committee members, paid staff and parishioners.	Communicate program information to the parish council, committees and parishioners.
12. Maintain communication with appropriate archdiocesan offices and agencies for guidelines and resources.	Maintain communication with appropriate archdiocesan offices and agencies for guidelines and resources.	Maintain communication with appropriate archdiocesan offices and agencies for guidelines and resources. Provide necessary information and reports to parish council and committees.
13. *Review and approve the annual parish operating budget.	Determine budget priorities in their respective areas of responsibility and make recommendations to the parish council through the Finance/Administrative Services Committee.	Prepare program budgets with appropriate background information. Make recommendations to committees regarding needs.
14. Assume the responsibility to assure adequate funding for the parish mission.	Assist in revenue development as directed by the parish council.	Cooperate in projects for revenue development.

PARISH COUNCIL	COMMITTEES	PARISH STAFF
15. Consider and give final approval for the establishment of any new parish staff position.	Recommend to the parish council the establishment of new parish staff position.	Assist in the identification of the need for any new staff position. Assume responsibility for developing and updating job descriptions.
16. Work cooperatively with all committees and appropriate staff members.	Work cooperatively with the parish council and appropriate staff members.	Work cooperatively with the parish council, parish committees and other staff members.
17. Ensure that collaboration is taking place within the parish.	Identify those parish groups and persons with whom the committee might collaborate. Participate in collaborative ventures as appropriate.	Facilitate collaboration within the parish.
18. Ensure that the parish participates in dialogue that leads to collaboration beyond the parish.	Identify groups and persons outside the parish with whom the parish might collaborate. Participate as appropriate in planning, implementing such efforts.	Assist in the identification of groups and persons outside the parish with whom the parish could be collaborating. Participate in such collaborative ventures as appropriate.
19. Ensure that parish-affiliated societies, organizations, clubs and activities are accountable in the areas of mission and finances to the appropriate person or group (e.g. the parish council, committee or staff.)	Work cooperatively to ensure that parish affiliated societies, organizations, clubs and activities are accountable in the areas of mission and finance.	Assist, when appropriate, in designing and implementing accountability procedures for parish-affiliated societies, organizations, clubs and activities.
20. Evaluate council operation, roles, responsibilities, relationships as well as committee structure and guidelines.	Assist in the evaluation of the committee structure and evaluate the committee's own operation, roles, responsibilities and relationships.	Assist in the evaluation of the parish council and committees as appropriate.

PARISH COUNCIL MANUAL

LEADING WITH GRACE

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP CONCILIATION

LIVING THE SPIRIT

The ministries which exist and are at work at this time in the Church are all, even in their variety of forms, a participation in Jesus Christ’s own ministry as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep, the humble servant who gives himself without reservation for the salvation of all.

(Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, December, 1988, Christifideles Laici, No. 21)

THE PARISH COUNCIL AS SPIRITUAL LEADERS

The responsibility of assisting the pastor to guide the parish, to “shepherd” the mission, requires a Parish Council made up of **faithful women and men**. Spiritual leadership by the parish council means that council members realize that the work they do is not their own. Rather, spiritual leaders work in partnership with God, with the community, and with the Church.

...IN PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD



The first essential characteristic of a parish council is that it be a **prayerful group**. To many people the concept of a prayerful group is the rather narrow view that the parish council must simply be a group of people who pray together. In fact, the concept is broader – including the idea that as a prayerful group the parish council’s major function is to discern the will of God for the parish community. Quite an awesome and humbling responsibility which leads to another essential characteristic – discerning.

The parish council is discerning, meaning that the group is open to the power of the Holy Spirit. If **council meetings occur in the context of prayer and openness to the Holy Spirit**, the ideal of working for “the common good,” will prevail. However, in order for this openness to happen individual opinions and prejudices must be set aside. Council members must openly listen to one another and to other parishioners when making “prayerful decisions.”

Communal prayer at parish council meetings is vital. It sets the tone for the meeting and places people in the proper frame of mind. Many people come to meetings after a long day at work where they may need to be aggressive and argumentative in order to accomplish their work. These same people need to adjust to the “servant leader” attitude in which the tables are turned from what “I think” and what “I want” to

what is best for the parish community. Prayer helps to clear minds and hearts for the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Parish council prayers cannot be perfunctory—something to “get out of the way” before the real meeting starts. Members who view prayer this way do not properly understand the spiritual leadership role of the parish council members. Some council members may feel uncomfortable praying as a small group. If this is the case, the parish council should seek assistance and training from the parish staff or parishioners who are skilled in group prayer. These people can be invited to help the council become a more prayerful group through modeling and practice.

Another misconception is that spiritual leadership is measured by one’s display of involvement in liturgical prayer. Parish council members do not have to be lectors, servers, Eucharistic ministers, choir members or ushers; nor do they have to publicly articulate their relationship with God. Spiritual leadership is not about doing, it’s about being. **Parish council members provide good example and are models of Christian living.** They are visible members of the parish community. Above all, they are approachable and good listeners, even when they may not like what they are hearing. Parish councilors are able to set aside their own opinions and prejudices in order to try to understand the feeling of others.

DEVELOPING THE SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP OF THE PARISH COUNCIL INVOLVES FIVE FACTORS:

- Developing the habit of praying together
- Learning more about the culture of the community
- Learning more about the mission of the Church
- Developing leadership and group skills
- Monitoring the carrying out of the parish mission.

1. Developing the Habit of Praying Together



“Salt” the meeting with prayer. Using an agenda format that mirrors the components of the Eucharistic celebration, keeps prayer from becoming merely “bookends” for the meeting.

The Sunday readings can be the basis of sharing prayer and discerning new insights. The Scriptures are the focus of the Church’s liturgy, which can help the parish council focus more intently on the mission of Christ.

Good prayer experiences at regular council meetings enable councilors to develop their ability to listen to the Holy Spirit. In this way the parish council will carry out its work in the parish with confidence.

During these rapidly changing times, wise parish councils insert silent prayer into the decision-making portion of the meeting, in an effort to discover or **discern God’s will for the parish**. Each time they develop policy or plans for the future, alone or in partnership with other parishes, the council asks: “Is this what God is asking us to do?” “What are the indicators?” “How will moving in this direction help us make our vision for the future our reality now?” The Holy Spirit gives the gift of discernment. Praying for that gift, allowing for silent prayer to reflect on God’s action within and through the parish, should be a regular part of the council’s prayer.

Retreats, days or evenings of reflection can provide parish council members with concentrated, quiet time. Away from other responsibilities, councilors come to know one another, explore their roles and responsibilities as parish council, clarify their relationships with one another, committees and staff, and share their spiritual perceptions.

...IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY

2. Learning about the people, their customs and traditions



can provide a wealth of understanding which will help councilors better fulfill their role of consultation and discernment. In order to meet the needs of the parishioners and discern the will of God in the parish community, council members must listen to and elicit responses from the parish-at-large.

To be approachable and good listeners, even when they may not like what they are hearing, councilors need to set aside their own opinions and prejudices in order to try to hear and understand the feeling of others.

When parish councilors are aware of the issues, long range vision and short term goals of the broader community, they can help the pastor and parishioners understand how their parish fits into the neighborhood, city, county, state, country, world. Exploring the social concerns of the community and working with other congregations and community organizations develops a sense of the mission of the Church in today’s world.

...IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CHURCH

3. Inspired council members take time to learn more about the Mission of the Church

The Church continues the mission of Jesus Christ—to bring about the Reign of God. Jesus taught us how when he taught and preached, prayed and worshipped, and when he served others, especially the poor and marginalized. **Today, His mission is reflected in our ministries of Word, Worship and Service.**



The ministry of the Word includes education, catechesis, evangelization, theological reflection and the liturgy of the Word. At the parish level evangelization and catechesis are of vital importance. Catechesis aims to “make faith living, conscious and active, through the light of instruction.” Catechesis is related to evangelization and either follows it or goes hand in hand with it. Evangelization is spreading the Good News. While in some Church documents, evangelization precedes catechesis and in a sense prepares the way for catechesis, the pastoral reality is that we are all in need of attending to the Good News of Salvation throughout our whole lives. Every form of catechesis is oriented in some way to adult catechesis, for it is only adults who are capable of a full response in faith to God’s initiative.

The ministry of worship includes all the ways we celebrate the paschal mystery-through the sacraments and especially through Sunday Eucharist. The symbolic actions of the sacraments effect what they symbolize, celebrate what they promise and express the Church’s faith and relationship with Christ. The Church uses bread, wine, water, oil, the Word and the actions of the priest and the people to celebrate what is near and dear to her-her intimacy with the Triune God, through the death-resurrection mystery of Christ.



The ministry of service embraces many forms of outreach to others and advocacy for more just systems in society. Our identity with the poor is stated vividly in the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*:

The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of people who, united in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, press onward towards the kingdom of the Father and are bearers of a message of salvation intended for all people. That is why Christians cherish a feeling of deep solidarity with the human race and its history. (#1)

4. Developing leadership and group skills

In his book *Leadership is an Art*, Max DePree states that “The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say, ‘Thank You!’ In between the two, the leader must become a servant and a debtor.” He goes on to say that leaders do not inflict pain, they bear it. This description of leadership is very much in keeping with the leadership role of the parish council. The council’s role is one of servant leadership.

5. Monitor the carrying out of the parish mission

The parish council that is rooted in the mission of the Church, attentive to the needs and hopes of the local community, and makes decisions in the context of prayer, leads the parish with grace when it:

- Articulates its mission
- Calls forth, acknowledges and puts the gifts and talents of the members to work to accomplish the mission
- Establishes and maintains strong partnerships in the community, cluster, district, and archdiocese
- Promotes an understanding and appreciation for the building of the kingdom of God
- Insures that there is accountability for the mission and
- Supports the work of staff and committees to accomplish the mission of the parish.

TOOLS TO HELP PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS GROW IN SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP



- ✓ Eucharistic Agenda format (See Section 14.)
- ✓ Mission Statement (See Section 7.)
- ✓ Participation in annual leadership conferences offered by the Archdiocesan Office for Parish Councils & Planning
- ✓ Subscribing to and reading a quality Catholic publications, journals, newspapers and magazines.
- ✓ Contact your Parish Consultant

MORE RESOURCES

DePree, Max, *Leadership is an Art*

Covey, Stephen, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*

Olsen, Charles M., *Transforming Church Boards into communities of spiritual leaders*

PRAYER AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council meetings can become the locus for individual and group spiritual formation and growth. Effective councils find ways to allow prayer to permeate the whole meeting, not just as “bookends” to the agenda. Here are several ways:

1. Frame the prayers to the agenda

Frame traditional opening and closing prayers in relation to the primary agenda topic. The opening prayer might focus on the image of God and create an openness to and awareness of the Spirit’s presence and leading. The closing prayer might be a thankful offering of the work done as a gift to God.

2. Intersperse prayers of thanksgiving

Follow each committee report with prayers of thanksgiving. Or conclude committee reports by singing a hymn or song, such as “Now Thank We All Our God.”

3. Glean for prayer

Ahead of time, the chair may ask one or two members to listen and note anything that would be the basis for prayers of thanks. Another would listen and note needs or opportunities for the parish in collaboration or the wider Church, for prayers of intercession. Still another might listen and note areas within the council itself that would be the basis of prayers of petition, and a fourth would listen and note the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the council of the congregation to give praise.

4. Prayers of confession

Being human, each of us and all of us together must admit that we are in need of help and forgiveness at times. Advent or Lent, or times when a conflict arises are appropriate times for the council to model their hope of becoming a reconciled community. By listing those feelings of weariness, hurt, sadness, boredom, confusion, frustration, elation and fulfillment, beginning with words such as: “Lord, we admit that we are:....” Follow this by singing a hymn such as “Amazing Grace.”

5. Sing the prayers

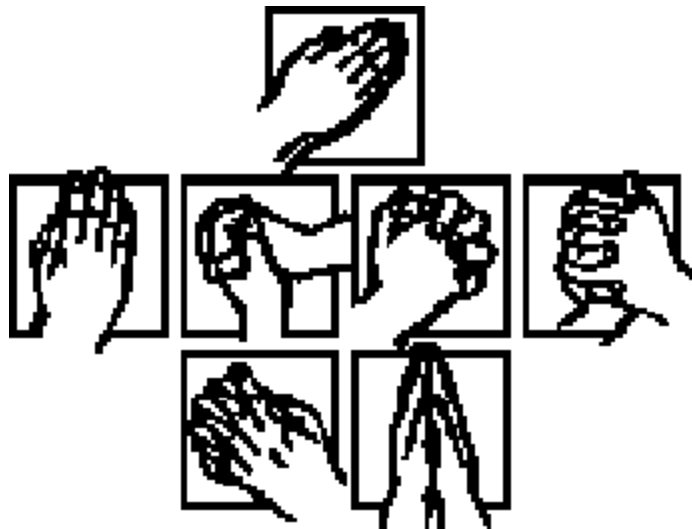
A favorite familiar seasonal hymn, or a simple chant of the “Our Father,” can rejuvenate the spirit.

6. Take “timeout” for prayer

When is it time for a break? When emotions are running high and blocking good decision-making or a group process; or after twenty minutes of deliberative debate, egos take over. Three to five minutes of silent “time out” for personal refocusing and prayer can help. Let each one silently consider these questions:

- Am I closing myself off from information that we need to make this decision?
- Whom do I need to forgive to be fully present here?
- What is an image of God that needs to come to bear on this situation?
- How does the scripture we read shed light on us now?
- Am I operating on a need-to-win or need-to-save-face mode?
- How would servant leaders make this decision?

Design the meeting agenda after the order of the Mass



HEALING PARISH HURTS: THE CONCILIATION COMMITTEE

“Very often [the people’s] Christian vision will suggest a certain solution in some given situation. Yet it happens rather frequently, and legitimately so, that some of the faithful, with no less sincerity, will see the problem quite differently...Let them, then, try to guide each other by sincere dialogue in a spirit of mutual charity and, above all, with particular interest in the common good.”

*Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World
Vatican II 7 December 1965*



Conflict has been a fact-of-life since the beginning. Conflict can be both destructive and creative. The challenge for the parish council, in the face of conflict, is to commit to finding ways to **resolve the conflict in a spirit of mutual charity and with anxious interest, above all, in the common good.**

- Working through differences requires an atmosphere of trust. Trust results when individuals operate from the human values of respect, honesty, courage, and integrity. Real change can happen - in a parish and its members - when conflicts are resolved in an atmosphere of human trust.
- Resolving conflict is important for every individual or organization. As Church, Gospel values call us to stretch our understanding of that process. Gospel values challenge us to love and to forgive one another - to heal, not just settle, our differences. Real reconciliation can happen - in a parish and in its members - when conflicts are resolved in an atmosphere of trust.
- Unresolved conflict drains life from the parish. Moving on without healing, love, and forgiveness can result in permanent brokenness in the parish community. Resolving conflict by paying attention to both human values and Gospel values strengthens relationships among people in the parish and community and moves them closer to making their vision a reality.

COUNCIL'S ROLE IN RESOLVING CONFLICTS



Council's role is to establish policy that sustains an environment in which effective conflict resolution can occur. When conflicts occur among paid staff, they are handled by the pastor according to procedures outlined in the parish's employee handbook. Parish councils do not get involved in actual conflict resolution procedures.

When conflict involves people serving in committee ministry, policy developed by council determines how the conflict is handled. The council may outline a conciliation procedure that is available to individuals, committees, or groups in the parish. Or councils may develop policy to establish a conciliation team, a small group of parishioners trained in mediation skills who agree to serve the parish for a term in that role.

While conflicts may have their origin in philosophical or personality differences, three additional factors are often involved in conflicts among people in parishes: the goals each party is trying to achieve, the relationship the conflicting parties have with each other, the relationship of each party's goals to the larger Church.

Parish policies that are developed to enhance conflict resolution usually include three principles:

- deal with the conflict **as soon as possible**
- brainstorm **creative solutions**
- follow the **principle of subsidiarity**.

The principle of **subsidiarity** states that conflicts should be dealt with at the most immediate level possible. The first effort should always be to resolve grievances and disputes between the two persons or groups who are in conflict. If that approach is unsuccessful, the next step may be to take the matter to mediation with another person or with a parish conciliation team.

BEFORE CONCILIATION...

All benefit when each party is committed to a conciliation process that is

- simple
- accessible
- timely

- conducted openly
- effects no reprisal against anyone who brings forward a complaint, grievance, or problem.

Councils need to make clear decisions, set policy, about the role of the parish conciliation committee. Does it have the last word? Or does it simply recommend, counsel, and advise the pastor on a course of action? In either case, it is important that the pastor be able to trust the judgment of the committee.

The following suggested steps are designed to ensure that decisions are made on an informed and consistent basis. A fair and just process upholds the dignity of all individuals involved and has the greatest potential to resolve differences.

SELECTING A CONCILIATION TEAM



A conciliation team may be formed as a standing committee or as an ad hoc committee to address a particular grievance. A common concern is that an ad hoc committee may be “handpicked,” i.e. selected with a desired outcome in mind.

A standing committee can be selected to serve for a one- or two-year term, be familiar with parish policies, and be “on call” to convene within a reasonable time frame. A committee of three individuals allows for a tie-breaker and makes scheduling meetings easier than it might be with a larger group. The pastor should feel comfortable with the committee, but objectivity must be the clear factor in the selection. Former council members who are pastoral by nature, familiar with parish policy and experienced with decision-making through discernment may be good choices for conciliation team membership. All members of the conciliation team should receive training in mediation. Contact your parish consultant at 414-769-3539 or 800-769-9373, x539 or e-mail parishconsultants@archmil.org.

SAMPLE CONCILIATION PROCEDURE

When a parish conciliation team is assigned by the pastor to mediate in a conflict, the following or a similar format is used:

PREPARATION

People serving as the parish conciliation team notify all parties who have a stake in the outcome that a mediation session is scheduled for a particular date, time, and place, and they invite these parties' participation. Copies of all pertinent written materials are sent to all participants in advance of the session.

GATHERING

The participating parties meet with the conciliation team in a spirit of prayer and hospitality. The chairperson leads the group in asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

STUDY

Some time is devoted to reading, reflecting on, and discussing a passage from Scripture. Before the conciliation process continues, the team chairperson reads guidelines for the procedure that is consistent with parish policy. All questions about the procedure are answered.

LISTENING

The conciliation team listens to issues as they are presented by both sides.

PRELIMINARY AGREEMENT

The chairperson states each issue that has been raised and asks if there are any areas of agreement. Areas of agreement are written down.

STATEMENT OF CONFLICT

The chairperson identifies specific areas in which parties have not yet come to agreement. The committee decides whether more information is needed and assigns responsibility for bringing that information to the next meeting. Parties schedule a second meeting.

FOCUSING ON MISSION

If no additional information is needed, the committee chair reads the parish mission statement aloud. The team and individuals in conflict discuss how the mission statement affects the issue under consideration.

PROPOSAL

The conciliation team chair calls for proposals from either side. If none are forthcoming, the chair calls for proposals from the conciliation team.

DISCUSSION

Proposals are considered from the perspective of how effectively they support the mission of the parish, the common good.

PRAYER

All gathered pray that the Holy Spirit will guide them in discerning God's will for the parish in this matter.

CONSENSUS

Agreement that supports the mission, upholds the common good and is satisfactory to all parties is reached. If consensus is not reached in a reasonable amount of time, a new meeting date is agreed upon.

CELEBRATION

All offer thanks and extend the greeting of peace!



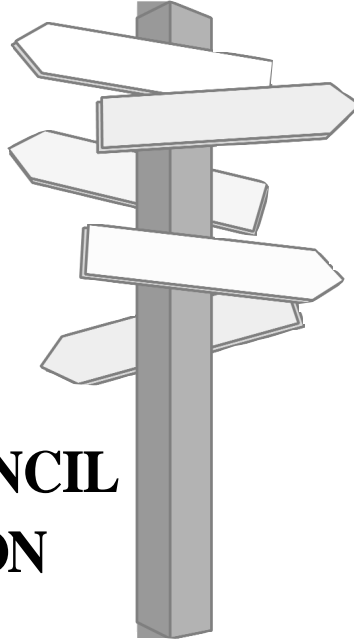
PARISH COUNCIL MANUAL

LEADING WITH WISDOM: I CONSULTATION

LIVING THE SPIRIT

**Day by day, dear Lord,
Of Thee three things I pray.
To see Thee more clearly,
Love Thee more dearly,
Follow Thee more nearly,
Day by Day.**

Richard of Chichester, c. 1197-1253



THE PARISH COUNCIL AND CONSULTATION

PRINCIPLES

- As the designated “wisdom community” of the parish, the council plays a consultative role when it offers the pastor practical insights concerning the life and mission of the parish.
- When parish councils face decisions that impact their mission, identity or function as a parish, or their partnership with parishes with whom they collaborate, they offer their insights to the pastor through a process of discernment that leads to consensus.
- To discern means to come to full knowledge. The process of discernment is a search for full knowledge of God’s will or wisdom in a particular instance.
- Discernment involves calling upon the Spirit to be present, remaining open to the broadest possible input from the community, and providing opportunity for prayer and reflection in each step of the process.
- Because it is consistent with the church’s mission as God’s people, prayerful discernment that leads to consensus is the preferred method for decision-making while serving on parish council.
- Arriving at consensus is a learned skill that, with practice, allows one to fully live out the call to parish leadership.

- Because the selection of council members is not a race or contest, prayerful discernment, guided by a facilitator, is also the preferred method for selecting people who will serve a term on parish council.

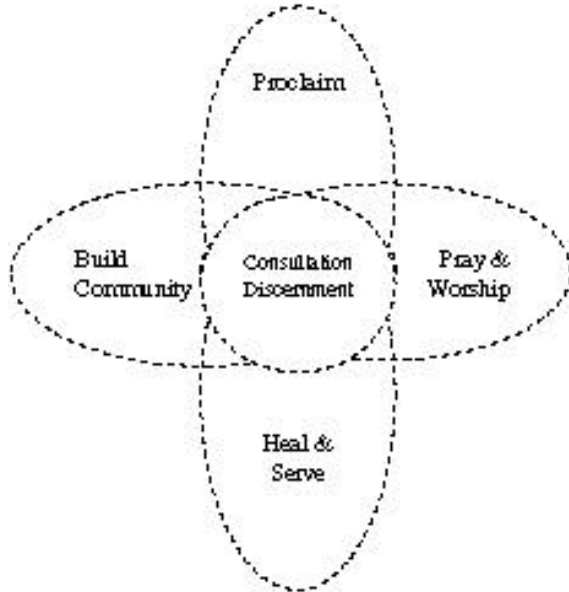
READINGS AND RESOURCES

Deegan, Arthur X. II, ed. (1995) *Developing a Vibrant Parish Pastoral Council*.

Morris Danny E. and Charles M. Olsen (1997) *Discerning God's Will Together: A Spiritual Practice for the Church*.

Rademacher, William J with Marliss Rogers (1989) *The New Practical Guide for Parish Councils*.

GETTING STARTED: QUESTIONS TO ASK



When we make decisions, do we formally consider the needs of everyone who has a stake in the outcome:

- The congregation?
- The parish staff?
- Parishes with whom we collaborate?
- The archdiocese?

Do we need to develop policies relative to discernment?

How will we measure our progress in expanding the use of discernment in our parish?

How is discernment another way to Proclaim the Word, Build Community, Heal and Serve, and Celebrate?

CONSULTATION AND THE PARISH COUNCIL

The Code of Canon Law (c. 536.2) states that the parish council has a consultative role. The Code also states in the same canon that the council “is governed by norms determined by the diocesan bishop.”

In the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, the Parish Council Norms clarify that parish councils are mandated for each parish and designates the role councils are to play.

Norm 3 defines the **scope** of their consultative role:

The parish council

*...examines and considers all that relates to pastoral work,
and proposes practical conclusions to the pastor
concerning the ongoing life and mission of the parish...*

Norm 4 states the **manner** in which the parish council’s consultation is to be **expressed**.

The parish council

*...develops and maintains a mission statement ...
...engages in a continuous process of pastoral planning ...
...develops policies ...*

WHAT DOES ‘CONSULTATION’ MEAN?

Historically the term “consultation” refers to:

- **the bringing together of appropriate, informed parties**
- **to identify the best possible conclusions to issues.**

This type of consultative process has been **part of Church history** for centuries and can be traced all the way back to the apostles. Recent examples include the Second Vatican Council when the Holy Father consulted all the bishops of the world. During the synod held in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee in 1987, the archbishop consulted with all the faithful of the ten counties of southeastern Wisconsin. The archbishop continues the on-going work of consultation on matters of importance to the archdiocese through the Archdiocesan Council of Priests and the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council.

This ancient **tradition continues in parishes** when the parish council, the designated wisdom community of the parish, *the appropriate, informed party*, offers practical insights, *the best possible conclusions*, to the pastor concerning the life and mission of the parish.

DISCERNMENT

When a matter of great significance comes before the council, the pastor and council enter into a process seeking to know the will of God. The process is called **discernment**.

- They pray for openness to and guidance from the Holy Spirit
- They work together, to obtain and study information from knowledgeable sources
- They analyze and discuss the matter fully
- They pray to know the wisdom of God and arrive at consensus.

Discernment comes from the Latin word, *discernere*, which means: “to separate,” “to distinguish,” “to determine,” “to sort out.” **Discernment requires time** to gather and sort through information, to pray about the issue individually and as a group, to discuss all options in an effort to find a solution that supports the common good and responds to God’s call for the parish at this time in its history.

When a pastor and parish council understand and use this consultation process of discernment, trust builds among members, frustrations diminish,

and the parish council is better prepared to focus on the important issues facing today's parish. Effectively used, consultation enables the parish council to discern the best course of action to further the mission of the Church in the parish community because:

- They arrive at conclusions with insights beyond their own
- bolstered by faith and the support of all involved in the process, they are able to
- speak with *one voice* as they report their conclusions to the parish community.

The **parish benefits** because the council speaks with clarity, and leads with greater confidence.

All involved in the parish mission move forward with assurance. Parish council members need orientation and on-going training in effective consultation and discernment. [Contact your parish consultant. See appendix.]

WHEN IS CONSULTATION USED? FOR DECISIONS ABOUT...

1. Matters essential to the parish.

The pastor consults the parish council when the parish faces decisions on matters that are essential to its

- **mission**
- **identity**
- **function**
- **purpose of the parish.**

2. Matters with far-reaching impact.

Other decisions that benefit from a process of prayerful discernment are those that have far-reaching impact on parish leadership, on the whole parish community, or on the cluster of parishes with whom they collaborate.

3. Developing parish policy.

The consultative role of the parish council involves developing and approving parish policies. Because the structure for parish councils in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee includes the priest(s) as member(s) of the council, they are ensured an integral part in the policy-making process.

Decisions discerned after in-put from parish committees, staff, parishioners and archdiocesan personnel, allow council members to share the wisdom and bring clarity to policy-development.

4. Selecting new council members.

Many parishes use discernment as a process for selecting new members to council. In such a process the whole parish enters into the consultation. They

- Pray that women and men will be open to the call to serve through leadership.
- Identify and encourage parishioners to personally enter into a process of reflection and prayer.

Those who are nominated continue the process of discernment personally and in partnership with council members.

5. Selecting new council officers.

At the beginning of each year the whole council gathers to discern their own leadership at a transitional meeting. Details of the election are stated in the parish council bylaws. Committees are also encouraged to discern their leadership annually.

WHAT DOES A DISCERNMENT PROCESS INVOLVE?

- **Praying** for guidance from and openness to the action of the Holy Spirit throughout the process.
- **Consulting** parishioners and/or other experts, listening to them in a sincere effort to understand their insights or points of view.
- **Sharing conclusions** at the council table, listening to all opinions, **analyzing them with a sincere desire to know God’s will** or wisdom in this particular instance.
- **Working to achieve consensus.** *The goal of discernment is consensus which, when achieved, enables the council to speak with “one voice.”*

This process
of seeking
to know the
Will of God
is called
discernment.

WHAT DOES DISCERNMENT REQUIRE OF THOSE ‘DISCERNING?’

- **Faith**, belief in the power and presence of God in our personal lives and in our faith community.
- **Prayer**, calling upon the Holy Spirit to be present throughout the process of decision-making. (Romans 12:2ff)
- **Preparation**, research and study information necessary to make an informed decision. Facts, not opinion.
- **Identified** criteria for making the decision.
- **Being open** to and obtaining input from the community. A willingness to be open to a final decision that may be different from the opinion I currently hold, but is in the best interest of the common good.
- **Personal reflection** on the issue being discerned.
- **Group dialogue and listening**, articulating the pros/cons for and against the proposal.
- **Personal reflection and communal prayer** for the gift of discernment. (Ephesians 5:8-10, 15-17)
- **Consensus**. Each member of the council states their position based on their perception of God’s hope for the parish at this time. *This is not a vote*. After all members have been heard, the chair states whether or not consensus exists or is near. If needed, further dialogue takes place. This may result in an improvement of the initial statement. In the end, **agreement may not be unanimous, but those who initially favored another response are able to support the final decision of the group**.
- **Confirmation**. (Colossians 1:9-14) Once the decision is made there is a sense of peace in the decision. Over time there is clarity that it was the right decision.

Do not conform yourselves to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your minds, so that you can judge what God’s will is – what is good, pleasing and perfect.

Romans 12:2

A MODEL FOR CONSULTATION

BEFORE THE MEETING

1. Identify the issue and criteria

- Is it a key, significant issue/matter?
- What criteria, guiding principles, must be considered in this matter?

Be selective in the number of issues to be discerned. In terms of an annual agenda, there may be only several significant decisions over the period of a year, certainly not more than one per meeting.

2. Commitment to seek God's wisdom

This is a personal and group commitment. We tend to hold on to our pet investments and our pride. Jesus said: "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." (*Jn 12:24*). Take time to name what needs to "die" (your biases, preconceived notions) before the discernment begins.

One test for readiness for discernment is to ask if there is truly willingness and readiness to follow *whatever the Spirit's leading may bring*.

3. Listen, research and study

Gather information and facts from many quarters and listen with openness to one another. Allow time for silence both at and between meetings for prayer and "deep listening." Members prepare to offer input to the group, keeping criteria in mind.

AT THE MEETING

4. Opening prayer and discussion

An opening prayer helps focus the group on the issue. (*Rm 12:2ff*)

All members state their insights or positions only once (1-2 minutes) and without debate. **The purpose is to consider all possible options and integrate the thinking of the group.** In this cooperative spirit, alternate ideas and positions can lead to a greater sharing of ideas and increased creativity. Winning becomes a group effort rather than an individual conquest.

Every group member will disagree on occasion, but they should not become disagreeable or argumentative. Open and honest communication

is necessary in developing consensus and members should not “agree” with majority proposals just to avoid conflict.

A deliberative debate or discussion that has gone on longer than twenty minutes will be ego driven. When this occurs, stop for two minutes to refocus. (Tilden Edwards, *Living in the Presence*)

5. Synthesis: stating a preferred option

One or more directions may emerge for the group’s discussion. The facilitator or chair rephrases the possible actions in the form of a proposal.

6. Identify reasons against each proposition

Allow personal reflection time, with a **specific time limit**, to list individual reasons **against** each proposal.



As a group share reasons against. If the group is large, regroup in circles of 5-8 people. Round one, each person shares one of their reasons by saying: “One reason is...” *Do not* say “I think one reason is...” The point is to engage every group member in the project of listing all possible reasons against, whether or not a particular reason is held personally by the individual who states the reason. Continue with a second, third, round until all possible reasons against are listed. If an individual has no more reasons against to share after the first round, they may “pass”.

(If more than one group is working, each group will list their reasons on newsprint and share their responses before going on to the next step.)

7. Identify reasons for each proposition

Allow personal reflection time, with a specific time limit, to list individual reasons for each proposal.



Return to the group or circle to share reasons **for**. Round one, each person shares one of their reasons by saying: “One reason is...” *Do not* say, “I think one reason is...” The point is to engage every group member in the project of listing all possible reasons **for**, whether or not a particular reason is held personally by the individual who states it. Continue with a second, third, round until all possible reasons **for** are listed. If an individual has no more reasons **for** to share after the first round, they may “pass”.

(If more than one group is working, each group will list their reasons on newsprint and share their responses before going on to the next step.)

8. Individuals share conclusions

Entire group prays (*Ephesians 5:8-10, 15-17*). In silence, each member

- Reviews all reasons **for and against**
- Considers how to respond to: **“What is the will of God for us in this matter? Why?”**

Each one shares their conclusions.

REACHING CONSENSUS

9. Consensus

When all discussion is finished, the chair/facilitator discerns that consensus is approaching and **restates what is perceived as the will of the group.**

Each member in turn responds with one of these or a similar response:

- I like the statement as presented. (*Consensus*)
- I am concerned, but will support the statement. (*Consensus*)
- I cannot support the statement. (*Non-consensus*)

10. Affirmation of consensus

After all have spoken, the pastor confirms the consensus of the group.

11. if disagreement continues

If the group is near-but-not-at consensus, or if serious division is present, or the group is at an impasse, the chair/facilitator

- a. Asks: “What would it take, what adjustment can we make, so that all can support our decision?”
- b. Revisit the guiding principles/criteria and test for openness to the work of the Spirit. Then repeat steps 4-9.

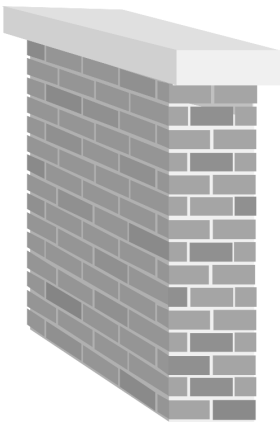
Options for Impasse

- Vote, majority rules.
- Table the decision to seek further information, to relax tension in the group, to avoid greater disharmony.
- Give the decision-making process and authority to an ad hoc group.

12. Seek Confirmation *(Colossians 1:9-14)*

- Pray in thanksgiving for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- Internal confirmation: Invite a response to:
 - How do you feel about the process we have used?
 - How do you feel about the decision we have made?
(Is there initial peace and joy?)
- External confirmation: Over time, evaluate the correctness of the decision made.

WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES TO CONSENSUS?



- 1. Rigidity in one's opinions.** “My mind is made up. I won't move no matter what is said.” Close-mindedness spells the demise of consensus.
- 2. Aggressiveness,** whereby an individual assumes a hostile, suspicious attitude toward all contrary opinions. They may not be too sure of their own opinion, but they come into the dialogue with the attitude that they're not going to let anyone get the better of them.
- 3. Smothering,** that is, a member who is unwilling to hear other opinions or seeks to repress their expression in an effort to avoid conflict. It may be that they are impatient with the dialogue, or in a hurry, or are simply the sort of person that doesn't like to get deeply into matters.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF CONSENSUS?

- 1. People are heard.** There is true participation.
- 2. The group achieves creativity** because, believe it or not, two heads are better than one. At times, the group can achieve synergy, an efficiency greater than any one member's contribution.
- 3. A sense of unity and community** grows in the group. When prayer and reflection are the context, there is also a growth in faith.

HOW ARE CONSENSUS AND DISCERNMENT RELATED?

Discernment is **the process** of prayerful decision-making, where the group seeks to comprehend the Will of God in a particular situation. The hoped for **outcome of discernment** is *group consensus*.

These readings are provided to help you discover the value of discernment.

READ / REFLECT / PRAY

Brother and Sisters:
If there is any encouragement in Christ
Any solace in love,
Any participation in the Spirit,
Any compassion and mercy,
Complete my joy by being of the same mind,
with the same love,
United in heart, thinking one thing.

Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vain glory;
Rather, humbly regard others as
more important than yourselves,
Each looking out not for their own interests,
But also for those of others.

Have in you the same attitude that is also in
Christ Jesus.

Your brother,
Paul

Philippians 2: 1-5

REFLECT

- Parish councils are stewards of the mission of the parish.
- Councils speak with authority and lead with confidence when, after prayerful discernment, they speak with “one voice.”

PRAY

O God with us, we take this moment in time to consider Your Will.

For to us has come the responsibility to lead our parish community in Your ways.

We gather with mixed feelings, at times inadequacy, at times frustration, but mostly with hope.

O Wisdom, keep us faithful to the Gospel, and respectful of our great Tradition. Help us to be responsive to your Spirit's promptings, as we continue to grow, to stretch beyond the provincial, the parochial, the prejudiced, the myopic.

Now we consider the issue before us. Knowing that You are here, we can be open with each other, anxious to share our personal visions, affectionate in our advising one another, and eager to celebrate an outcome for the good of all. In Your Presence, we offer ourselves anew to consider Your Will. O God with us, lead us to Your Wisdom.



DISCERNMENT OF NEW PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

TIMETABLE...

JANUARY	Review	Council: Review the nomination/discernment process in the bylaws. Identify the selection committee.
FEBRUARY	Educate	Council Members: Visit parish groups. Selection Committee: Organize process, print information in bulletin, etc.; prepare materials for nomination process.
MARCH	Call by Name	Selection Committee: Invite parishioners to pray, reflect and nominate new council members; invite nominees to observe a council meeting.
APRIL	Orient	Selection Committee: Publish biographies of nominees; attend orientation session with nominees.
MAY	Select	Select new council members according to bylaws. Pastor: Announce the names to the parish.
JUNE	Welcome and Thank	Council: Include new and retiring members in a transition meeting.
ALL YEAR	Seek	Council: Help parishioners discover and share their gifts; look for ways to help everyone bring out the best in themselves.

ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL SELECTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS		
200___	200___	200___

DISCERNING A CALL TO SERVE ON PARISH COUNCIL

Encourage nominees to reflect on these or similar questions.

WHAT KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS MUST I HAVE?

Some of the characteristics below can be helpful. No one comes in the door fully able to see themselves as parish leaders. The understanding of what it means to serve on parish council comes over time.

Characteristic Description

1. Ability to collaborate

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

Council members are seekers. They understand that the Church is much broader than one group or one parish. They seek justice and are able to work effectively with diverse individuals and groups for agendas of peace. **They lead with *patience*.**

2. Deep love for the parish and its mission

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

Council members are **believers**. They celebrate with community in worship and practice linking liturgy with life. They welcome all who come to celebrate, share their own faith stories, and desire to know more deeply what it means to be a Eucharistic people. **They lead with *joy*.**

3. Willingness to grow in holiness

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

Council members are **spiritual leaders** who model Christian living. They learn from their mistakes. Their vision is formed through prayer and reflection. They remain open to the work of the Holy Spirit in the parish and especially open to the work of the Spirit in their own lives. **They lead with *faith*.**

4. Desire to serve

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

Council members are **servant leaders**. They offer their gifts to the community not from a sense of control, but from a sense of shared responsibility. They seek the will of God for the parish through open hearts and minds. With the clergy, they share the responsibility of making known the Gospel and witnessing to it in the community. **They lead with *humility*.**

5. Broad vision

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

Council members are **change agents**. They have enduring respect for the unique mission of the parish in this place and time in the life of the Church. They are willing to challenge the status quo and initiate action in order to affirm or change it. They are willing to plan, model, experiment, take risks. **They lead with *courage*.**

6. Continuous learner

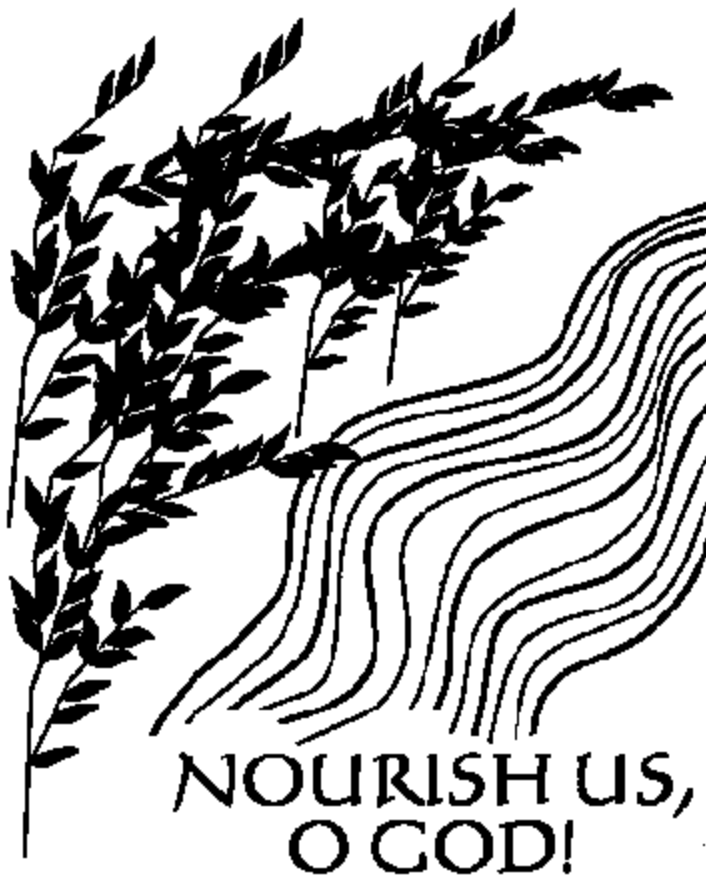
Have	<input type="checkbox"/>
Need	<input type="checkbox"/>

Council members are good **listeners**. They are able to hear the deep longings of people, to facilitate conversation around difficult issues, to follow-up awareness with action, to reconcile differences, alleviate fears, offer comfort. **They lead with respect.**

7. Sense of stewardship

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

Council members **empower others**. They help create and sustain an environment that brings out the best in all the resources of the parish community-human, financial, and material. **They lead with wisdom.**



PARISH COUNCIL NOMINEE WORKSHEET

Please take a few minutes to answer the questions on this page and the next...

BEFORE I DECIDE...

- **In what areas of ministry have I been involved?**

- **How would I describe the quality of those experiences? Why?**
 - Participatory
 - Satisfying
 - Challenging
 - Real opportunities for spiritual growth

- **What new areas of ministry interest me?**

- **How would I describe the mission of our parish?**

- **Relative to the mission, what three qualities do I think our parish needs most right now?**
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

- **Why, in my opinion, was I nominated?**

PARISH COUNCIL NOMINEE WORKSHEET

- **Am I willing to make a three-year commitment?**

- **How do others in my household feel about me serving on council?**

- **Is there anything I will have to let go of in order to serve on council?**

- **Do I have experience with consultation, planning and developing policy?**
 - Much (and I enjoy it!) None, (but I'm willing to learn!)
 - Some (but, I could use a little more practice!) None

- **Am I willing to:**
 - Take risks? Learn with others?
 - Work with others? Listen to others?
 - Invest time in policy-making? Invest time to understand the “big picture?”

- **Do I meet all of the following requirements?**
 - Registered member of the parish?
 - Baptized, practicing Catholic?
 - Over 18 years of age?
 - Participant in parish worship life especially the Mass and sacraments?
 - Willing to participate in an orientation and in a discernment process or an election?

IF I DECIDE TO CONTINUE, WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP?

ORIENTATION

It is ideal when everyone who accepts nomination for council membership attends an orientation session. Some councils host an orientation in their own parishes. Others ask nominees to attend an orientation with nominees from other parishes at a convenient location in the archdiocese in April, May or June. During the orientation session, nominees will meet others who have been nominated; learn more about the general roles, responsibilities, and expectations for council members; and have a chance to ask questions of the facilitator as well as those who are already serving on council.

Some parishes may also ask nominees to attend a second, informal session to learn more about their own parish council - its constitution and bylaws, meetings, current plans, and future goals.

DISCERNMENT OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

During a discernment for council membership, a facilitator:

- Leads the nominees and any others present in prayer for guidance of the Holy Spirit
- Gives nominees time to reflect, personally and with the group, on key issues about parish life
- Helps nominees identify their own gifts for service to the parish
- Helps the group gathered to seek the wisdom of God for the parish.

THE PRAYERFUL SELECTION OF NEW PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

THE GATHERING

- Lighting of the Christ Candle
- Seasonal Hymn

SAMPLE

PRAYER FOR OPENNESS AND THE GIFT OF DISCERNMENT

(All) Blessed are You, Holy God, Who has given each of us talents,
For our own good, and for the service of others,
To shape and guide our parish, and to give You glory!

Blessed are You for relying on us in our limited humanity!
Purify our motives, so that our first wish is to learn and do Your Will.

Help us, O Wisdom, to prayerfully discern new members for our council.
Open our hearts that we may see with the eyes of Christ, hear with His ears, think with His mind,
Love with His heart, and to decide with His single-mindedness.

Blessed are You, Lord our God! You have given to each of us the gift of faith and the sign of baptism,
A share in the present and future mission of the Church.

Help us share the task of shepherding in the name of Jesus, the one true Shepherd.
To Him are glory and honor, love and praise, forever and ever. AMEN.

SHARING AND LISTENING

Council Statements: A designated council member reminds the discerning community of the criteria for members, the goals of the parish and other pertinent information.

Candidate Statements: A facilitator leads the nominees in a discussion to address these or similar questions:

- How are you currently involved in the parish?
- Why do you feel called to parish council ministry? Why do you think you were nominated?
- What issues, concerns, challenges will/should the parish council address in the coming 2-3 years?
- What skills, talents, expertise or life experience do you bring to move the work of the parish forward?
- If not selected for ministry on council how will you offer your talents at the service of the parish?
- Are you able to make a 3-year commitment?
- Is there anything you will have to let go of in order to serve on council?

DISCUSSION

- Clarifications and Additions

PERSONAL REFLECTION

SAMPLE

Parish Councilors are:

- Prayerful:** They are believers who attend liturgy regularly. They willingly share their own faith stories, and desire to know more deeply, what it means to be *Eucharist Without Walls*. Their actions are guided by Gospel values.
- Pastoral:** They are able to hear the deep longings of the people, to facilitate conversation around difficult issues, to follow-up with action, to reconcile differences, alleviate fears, offer comfort.
- Representative:** They have the ability to listen well to others, and represent all members, not just a few.
- Discerning:** They are able to dialogue in an effort to reach consensus for the common good.
- Prophetic:** They respect the unique mission of the Church and are willing to challenge the status quo to initiate action to affirm or change it.
- Empowering:** They help create and sustain an environment that brings out the best in all resources of the parish community – human, financial and material. They work well with others.
- Collaborative:** They understand the challenges facing our parish, cluster, and archdiocese. They are servant-leaders who share their talents generously and from an attitude of shared responsibility.

After a period of reflection, facilitator asks the nominees:

Is there anyone among you who wishes to withdraw their name from consideration?

THE WORD OF GOD

- Proclamation of Scripture 1 Cor. 12:4-11

All: Loving God, we have heard your living Word call to us;
We have opened our hearts to you. We pray now for the gift of discernment.
Send your Spirit to help us choose leaders who will imitate
the model of servant leadership shown us by your Son, Jesus Christ.
May the same Spirit help us, in our discernment, that your Kingdom may come.

CALL PROCESS

- Each one writes on a ballot the names of those they ***most strongly believe are called and gifted for council ministry at this time***. The number of names corresponds to the number of open positions.
- Ballots are placed on the Bible.
- The facilitator tallies the ballots and announces those selected. Those with a simple majority are deemed selected. (A second or third ballot may be required due to a tie or lack of a simple majority.)

SAMPLE

- Seek Commitment

Pastor (*to newly selected*): Are you willing to serve as members of the parish council?

Newly selected: I am, with the help of God.

Pastor (*inquires of those not selected to council ministry*): Will you restate your intentions regarding other ministries or committee work.

Nominees respond.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

(All) Loving God, thank you for these parishioners who are ready and willing to be of service to our community of faith. Bless those selected for council ministry as they begin their journey. Bless and renew all gathered here, that we might be women and men enthusiastic for Your mission, generous in our love, and eager to be among Your people as ones who serve. We ask this through Jesus Christ, who came as servant to us all. Amen.

Sign of Peace.

WE GO OUT TO LOVE AND SERVE



PARISH COUNCIL MANUAL

LEADING WITH WISDOM: II POLICY DEVELOPMENT

LIVING THE SPIRIT

The parish council ...

after prayerful study and dialogue,

develops policies concerning parish and pastoral matters.

The pastor's presence and active participation in the dialogue is a necessary element in the process of policy formation.

The parish council's policy decisions are to be consistent with faith and morals, civil and church law, and archdiocesan policy.

In this way, the parish council reflects the working union of the parish with both the archdiocese and the universal Church.

Archdiocese of Milwaukee Parish Council Norm 4

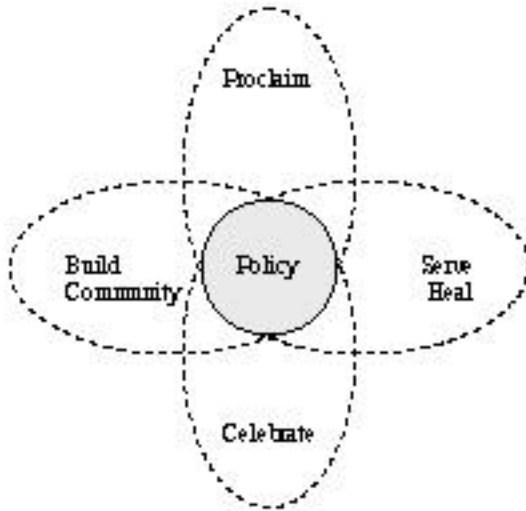
DEVELOPING POLICY...

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

- Council's primary role is to set direction for the parish. Councils set direction when they develop and approve plans, long range and short-term, and when they develop and approve parish policy.
- Parish staff, committees, and members implement parish policies.
- A policy defines the scope and limits within which work is accomplished. Well thought-out policies enable councils to oversee the mission of the parish without managing it.
- As individuals move in and out of council roles, policies ensure continuity in fulfilling the parish mission.
- Parish committees, groups, and staff develop policy and procedures within their particular areas of mission that flow directly from parish policy. As individuals move in and out of parish management/administrative roles, policies ensure consistency in fulfilling the mission.
- Policy and other proposals can originate with needs expressed by members of the parish, with parish committees, groups, staff members, or with the council.
- Developing policy is not just a nice thing to get around to someday. It can be an integral part of seeking God's will for the parish and a key step in linking what the faith community believes with what it does as parish.

GETTING STARTED

QUESTIONS TO ASK



- As a parish, what are some of our surface values? What are our deep values as God's people? Which do our current policies seem to mirror more: our surface values or our deepest values?
- What question currently before our council indicates a need for parish policy?
- How will we go about developing policy for the parish? With what area of parish life shall we begin?
- How will parish policy help us Proclaim Good News? Serve? Build Community? Celebrate?
- Where will we record our policies?
- How will we let parish members know about new policies?
- Do we need outside assistance to learn more about policy-development for parishes.

READINGS AND RESOURCES

Carver, John (1990). *Boards that Make a Difference: a new design for leadership in nonprofit and public organizations.*

Archdiocese of Milwaukee (2001). *Parish Committee Resource Book*

ABOUT POLICY...

What is a policy?

- A policy is a **statement of direction, a guide for action** that ensures that the acts of people in a particular organization are consistent with the values of that organization. In a parish, policies ensure that action taken by parish members and staff is consistent with Gospel values.
- A policy is not a rule, a regulation, or a statement of procedure. Instead, a policy is a **directive about the scope and limits of an organization's acts**. Policies are narrow enough to give clear guidance but broad enough to leave room for the discretionary action of those who must carry it out.

Who is bound by parish policy?

- Generally, a policy is binding on the entire group represented by a governing body. **Parish policies** are binding on any group that is part of or affiliated with the parish, including any group that uses the parish's name or tax identification number.

Why do parishes need policies?

- Policies **help parishes** reach their **goals**.
- Policies state **what** will be done without stating **how** it is to be accomplished.
- Policies ensure that parish groups, committees and staff will have the resources and tools they need to accomplish the work of the parish.
- Policies make the difference between just talking about what “we’re going to do” and actually doing it consistently and well.

When is a policy needed?

- Policies should always accomplish something. A policy may need to be written or an old policy amended when:
 - there are questions about accountability
 - people seem confused about a parish issue, practice, decision
 - people seem to be using current policies as permission to do things that are no longer consistent with the mission.
- Do not write a policy:
 - Just for the sake of having one
 - To control people
 - To respond to an isolated incident

AN EXAMPLE

The essential mission of the Church, and a practice of every parish, is proclaiming the Word of God.

Jesus commissioned the apostles to “Make disciples of all nations, teaching them all I have commanded you.” The church continues to embrace that challenge of bringing the Gospel message beyond parish boundaries into the world. Evangelization is one of our enduring mission “works.”

To ensure that the parish will continue that tradition, the council might develop a policy stating that a parish evangelization team be active throughout the year. Because of that policy, the council would hold itself accountable for:

- Reviewing the parish’s strategic plans to be sure that they support the ongoing existence of such a team.
- Reviewing the parish budget to ensure that sufficient resources are designated for recruiting and training team members and for helping them carry out their work.

The policy would not spell out how the evangelization team would operate, but it could specify activities such as “coordinating efforts with neighboring parishes” or “communicating regularly with people who are managing the parish’s RCIA program” as being within the *scope* of the policy.

The policy could also specify *limits* within which the evangelization team would operate. For example, the policy might state that, to avoid confusion about the importance of evangelization as a mission practice of parish life, it cannot be used as a tool to promote a financial appeal, census taking, or a volunteer recruitment effort.

AREAS OF POLICY

Policies are developed to address a need or an issue related to the vision, mission, and goals of the parish.

VISION-ORIENTED POLICY

Vision-oriented policies answer questions like:

- *What needs can we meet?*
- *How can our work promote the mission of the Church?*
- *How can the world look different as a result of the work of our parish?*

Rather than waiting to respond to, approve, or “rubber-stamp” random proposals from other parish groups, **an effective council initiates policy.**

For example, a council that sees a need for being a more welcoming faith community in a changing neighborhood may initiate policies that:

- Require the annual budget to include funds for “welcoming” programs and projects.
- Require committees to actively recruit new members each year.
- Require regularly inviting non-member neighbors to parish events.
- Encourage partnership with other parishes or community groups for projects or programs.

MISSION-ORIENTED POLICY

Mission-oriented policies answer questions like:

- *Are we who we say we are?*
- *Are our actions consistent with our deepest values?*
- *Are our actions consistent throughout the system?*

An effective council regularly reviews the parish mission statement and determines whether each area of mission is supported by policy.

Where there are gaps, the council may initiate policy to fill those gaps. Where existing policy is not meeting current needs, the council initiates changes to the policy.

For example, the parish mission statement may declare that the parish is committed to using its human and temporal resources to achieve a significant level of outreach. But current policy limits financial outreach to 2% of the parish’s net income and most parishioners involved in out reach are recruited primarily to meet the needs within the parish itself. In that case, the council would review policy either to align it with the mission statement or amend the mission statement to more clearly reflect parish policy.

GOAL-ORIENTED POLICY

***Goal-driven policies
answer questions like:***

- *What is expected of those who are doing the work?*
- *What strategic results are achieving those results?*

The council itself does not implement policy but delegates implementation to the working bodies of the parish - staff, committees, and groups - under the administration of the pastor. Goal-oriented policies support objectives outlined in the parish’s long-range or strategic plan.

For example, one parish goal may be to encourage more vocations to lay and ordained ministry. In that case, the council might develop policy that requires the presence of and funding for an ongoing vocations committee in the parish.

Parish councils do not develop policies related to management operations or procedures, such as specific school or personnel policies.

Once the council develops policy, parish committees and staff use those policies to guide them in developing practices and procedures in their specific area of influence.

PARISH POLICIES <i>(Developed by the Parish Council)</i>	PARISH MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES <i>(Developed by staff, committees, etc.)</i>
The parish will operate a K-Grade 8 day school.	Day school students will wear uniforms. <i>(Developed by School Committee)</i>
The parish will celebrate three Eucharistic liturgies each weekend.	Mass times will be 5:00 p.m. Saturday; 8:00 and 10:30 a.m. on Sundays. <i>(Developed by the Prayer & Worship Committee)</i>
Parish youth athletic programs are open to all youth with a parent who is a registered member of the parish.	Teams composed of students, ages 5-12 will be assigned practice times ending before 9:00p.m. Teams composed of students ages 13-18 may be assigned practice times ending after 9:00p.m. <i>(Developed by the Athletic Committee)</i>
Parish budget will designate 5% of the annual income for donation to the poor.	During a particular calendar year, monies will be donated to agencies that meet criteria A, B, C, and D. <i>(Developed by the Human Concerns committee)</i>

HOW IS POLICY DEVELOPED IN A PARISH?

STEPS IN THE POLICY MAKING PROCESS

- 1. Someone sees a need for a policy and brings it to the attention of the parish council. Council refers the policy development task to an appropriate committee, commission, group or staff.**

Example: People are concerned about offering alcoholic beverages as raffle prizes.

- 2. The appropriate committee, commission, group or staff gather information about the issue or need and its impact on the parish. They develop a policy proposal using a format similar to that found on page 9.**

Example: The study is conducted by an existing group or an ad hoc committee formed for this purpose. They find out if/what the archdiocese recommends, and learn if/how other parishes developed policy in this matter.

- 3. The formal proposal is presented to the agenda committee**

Example: The agenda planners assign adequate council meeting time to discuss the proposal and provide council members with all relevant material before the meeting.

- 4. The policy is approved, rejected or amended.**

Example: Council discusses the proposed policy and comes to consensus about the wisdom of the policy for the parish.

- 5. The policy is implemented by parish staff or committees.**

Example: The parish no longer offers alcoholic beverages as raffle prizes at parish social and fundraising events.

- 6. Parish council monitors the implementation of the policy.**

Example: Council, committees, staff, and parish groups are responsible for supporting the policy, communicating to others and ensuring that policy is enforced.

- 7. Parish council monitors the effectiveness of the policy.**

Example: During annual reports to the council, each committee updates council on the impact of the policy.

HOW IS A FORMAL PROPOSAL PRESENTED?

1. Prepared in writing.

Writing out a proposal ensures that the proposed action is clear and specific. It should include:

- ✓ Background information or materials which will help parish council members make an informed decision.
- ✓ Steps which led to the proposal.
- ✓ Perceived advantages and disadvantages.
- ✓ Answers to the appropriate policy questions.

2. Given to the agenda committee and distributed to council members.

The written proposal is submitted to the council's agenda committee who will place it on the meeting agenda in the first possible opening. The agenda committee is responsible for sending copies of the written proposal and all relevant materials to each council member at least one week before the meeting during which the proposal will be considered.

3. Presented at the council meeting.

A member of the policy development group presents the proposal at the parish council meeting.

4. Discussed and decided upon by the council.

Proposals are presented one at a time and decided upon by consensus. If a decision is not reached within about an hour, council is deemed not ready to make a decision and resumes discussion on the proposal at the next meeting.

5. Filed in the parish policy book and council minutes.

The secretary or another designated council member maintains a file of all proposals presented to council and records action taken on each proposal. Approved policy proposals become part of a parish policy manual that is accessible to every staff person and committee chair as well as to all interested parishioners.

Submitting a written proposal has five major purposes:

- to provide an organized method for groups and individuals to place items on the council agenda
- to clearly state an issue for council to consider
- to ensure that all interested people have an opportunity for input
- to prepare council members for decision-making
- to make more efficient use of council meeting time

**SAMPLE
FORMAT**

PROPOSAL TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

FROM: _____
[Person, Committee, Group]

DATE: _____

TOPIC: _____

PROPOSAL:

[All pertinent materials are attached]

RATIONALE: [Statement of need, presentation of alternatives, potential implementation plan]

PARISH COUNCIL ACTION:

Approved/ Date _____

Amended/Date _____

Rejected/Date _____

THE FINAL POLICY STATEMENT

The policy that is finally adopted may look different from the formal proposal. A policy statement need not burden people with reams of paper. It should simply communicate effectively the guidelines within which council expects people and groups to operate.

Parishes benefit when their policies:

- **are written down.** Instead of just giving a stamp of approval to the language of a formal proposal, the act of writing a direct, accurate policy will naturally draw attention to points that need further clarification.
- **are brief.** Simple, specific wording and simple sentence structures add clarity. Experienced policy-makers suggest limiting a written policy to one page. Keeping policies short and clear demonstrates respect for those who will implement the policy.
- **are up-to-date.** Adopt policies that will be used in regular decision-making or that meet the parish’s current needs. This demonstrates that leadership is aware of and on top of changes.
- **mean what they say.** Follow up with the people who are implementing the policy to ensure that it is clear, is working, and that they have the resources they need to carry it out.
- **kept in one place.** Decide who will be responsible for keeping a complete record of current policies. Be sure to keep that record accessible to all interested people in the parish. Easy accessibility to policies helps create trust in the community.



TOPIC

Parish Facilities Use by Non-Parish Groups

POLICY:

Parish facilities may be reserved for use by groups whose mission is consistent with the mission of our parish. Non-parish groups will be assigned space that has not been previously assigned to parish groups. Parish groups [those who use the parish name and/or tax identification number] are given priority in assigning parish space. However, parish groups cannot “bump” non-parish groups.

Fees for the use of space will be assessed on a sliding scale based on ability to pay as determined by the parish business administrator.

Groups who wish to reserve parish facilities for regular use will renew their applications during the first month of each fiscal year. The renewal is based on continued availability of space and demonstrated compliance with parish policy.

Groups using parish facilities are responsible for any damages incurred.

This policy will be implemented by the parish business administrator.

DATE APPROVED: _____

WORDING POLICIES

Good policies create a message that is clear and easy to read. Keep it simple is a good rule to keep in mind when writing policy. Avoiding wordy phrases is important. For example,

INSTEAD OF:

Any shortfalls in stewardship funds received will be reported to the council by the stewardship committee.

Committees must submit reports to the council secretary during the months in which they meet.

All parish staff and committee chairs are expected to read all memos submitted to them, sign the “I have received and read this memo sheet,” and then return it to the council secretary.

TRY:

The stewardship committee reports shortfalls in funds received to the council.

Submit reports to the council secretary after each committee meeting.

Read all memos, sign the reception sheet, and return it to the council secretary.

Short words and phrases are easier to read and remember. To simplify the language in policies, try some of the alternate phrases suggested below.

INSTEAD OF:

a large number of
at all times
at an early date
due to the fact that
for the purpose of
in accordance with
in as much as
in order to
in the event of
in view of the fact that
take appropriate measures
with reference to
advance planning
close proximity
on a daily basis
joint cooperation
throughout the entire
first priority
all parishioners

TRY:

many
always
soon
because
for
by
since
to
if
because
act
about
planning
near
daily
cooperation
during
priority
parishioners

PARISH COUNCIL MANUAL

LEADING WITH VISION PLANNING

LIVING THE SPIRIT

THE COUNCIL AND PARISH PLANNING



PRINCIPLES

The Parish Council...

Engages in a continuous process of pastoral planning that takes into consideration the needs of its parishioners, the archdiocese, the community and the world.

Parish Council Norm 4.

- Preparing an **annual parish calendar** is not just a matter of gathering and entering data about programs and events. It is another way in which the council, staff and parish community can link the celebration of Eucharist with their daily lives.
- The parish benefits when the annual parish calendar respects the rhythms of the liturgical, educational and environmental seasons, the culture of the membership and the larger community.
- The parish benefits when scheduled events promote commitment to the vision, mission and goals of the parish.
- Calendars are time and space management tools.
- The mission of the parish benefits when the **annual parish council** calendar incorporates a well-paced plan for receiving comprehensive reports from and conversation with those engaged in each area of mission.
- The parish council calendar is a tool that helps the council organize its work of monitoring the implementation of the long-range (strategic) plan throughout the year.
- The **council's monthly agenda** is a tool that helps the council do immediate planning by looking ahead 1-3 months, to help promote timely work by committees, staff and parishioners and keep pace with all the seasons of the year.

READINGS AND RESOURCES

- Bernier, Paul SSS. (1993) *Eucharist: Celebrating Its Rhythms in Our Lives*
- Juknialis, Joseph J. (1993) *Secrets of a Surprising God*.
- Mick, Lawrence E. (1983) *To Live as We Worship*.

GETTING STARTED

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Do we consider the rhythms of the liturgical calendar when we develop, review and approve our parish calendar?
- Do we consider the rhythms of our seasonal weather, school year, culture and community when we develop, review and approve our parish calendar?
- Does our parish celebrate any special feasts during the year [the feast of the saint after whom our parish is named, for example]?
- How can the council, committees and staff work together to develop the annual calendar?
- Where can the parish calendar be posted to inform all of the work we do?
- How can efforts done in partnership with neighboring Catholic parishes and ecumenical ventures be incorporated in the calendar?
- How does developing and following the calendar help us progress in mission together?

ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES

Calendars are one of our most important time management tools.

People say you can tell a lot about an organization by looking at two things: its checkbook and its calendar

Every parish has its own priorities. Leaders may need to pay attention to a fiscal year, a school year, and the rhythms of ethnic feasts, national observances, holidays and seasons in order to plan programs and activities in ways that meet the needs of the people in the parish.

Unfortunately, **variables** like deadlines, limited space, competing priorities, and “the way we’ve always done things,” may vie to become the #1 variable – the organizing principle – around which leaders plan a parish calendar.

Fortunately, **a parish is different from other organizations.** Parish leaders can use an organizing principle that springs not from what they do but from who we are as God’s people. They can use the rhythms of liturgy and the liturgical year and the challenges of parish mission activity to enlighten, support, underscore, and focus the annual calendar.

THE ANNUAL PARISH CALENDAR

This calendar planner helps the council and staff members develop the annual parish calendar. It honors both liturgical and cultural points of view and recommends council agenda items for each calendar month.



WHO

Council, committees and staff, leaders of parish groups and organizations; or an ad hoc committee representing all groups identified above.

WHAT

Adapt these recommendations to develop an annual calendar to meet YOUR parish needs.

HOW

- **Start at the beginning.** When does your parish year BEGIN: January (Calendar Year)? December (Advent - the Liturgical Year)? July (Fiscal Year) or August/September (School Year)?
- Invite parish staff to **add a list of significant dates** such as First Communion and Confirmation as well as important dates for schools and religious education programs that serve the parish.
- **List key parish activities** to show how council work connects with the work of the parish as a whole.
- Add committee activities that help meet mission goals and current plans, such as Human Concerns projects, adult education events.

- Include **cluster activities** to show how your parish is engaged in partnership with the bigger Church.

THE PARISH COUNCIL CALENDAR

The council calendar can be a useful tool helping the council pace itself as they monitor the implementation of the mission and goals of the parish.

When the council focuses on the bigger picture of the overall mission and leaves the work of implementation to staff and committees, everyone moves the work of mission forward.

We recommend that the council review the goals and accomplishments of each committee by receiving a comprehensive report from staff and committee officers once a year. (Council and committees will find the booklet, “Building Blocks of a Vibrant Parish,” helpful in planning the report and guiding their dialogue.)

- Annual reports might include:
- Status of committee membership, activity
- Accomplishments of last year
- Goals for the current year
- Policies: status of those approved; areas of policy need
- Other

Councils benefit when committee reports are received before the budget is planned for the following fiscal year. In this way parish leaders have a clearer understanding of the scope and goals of the committees and ministries. Then they can look for budget recommendations that support the parish mission priorities.

RECOMMENDED PARISH COUNCIL MONTHLY AGENDA PRIORITIES

July **Organizing for the year’s work.**

- Review roles and responsibilities of council officers and members
- Consider communication needs: council to staff, committees, parish at-large, archdiocese, and cluster
- Affirm the annual council calendar

August **The mission and current year parish priorities**

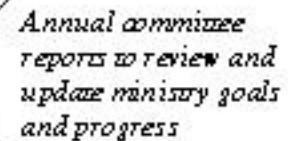
- Review Mission statement
- Review over-all goals for the year
- Review decision-making process: discernment & consensus

September Annual report – **Prayer & Worship ministries**

October Annual report – **Christian Formation ministries**

November Annual report – **Human Concerns ministries**

December Annual report – **Finance/Administrative Services ministries**

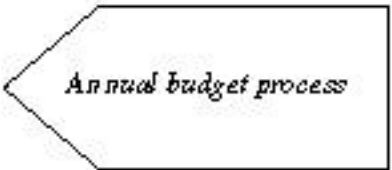


Annual committee reports to review and update ministry goals and progress

January **Organizing** for budget planning

February Begin **budget and nomination** processes

March **Preliminary budget proposal** review



Annual budget process

April **Orientation** of nominees

Recommend for approval or revise **budget proposal**

Evaluate **collaboration projects progress**

May **Selection of new council members**

June **Celebrate!** Thank retiring members and welcome new members



Selection of new members

THE COUNCIL’S AGENDA: A PLANNING TOOL

WHO

The pastor and council officers develop the agenda for the parish council. The parish delegate to the APC joins the agenda planners as needed, bringing issues for discussion regarding the district or the archdiocese.

WHY

The monthly agenda guides and facilitates the work of the council as it monitors the successes and on-going needs of the ministry areas (planning); and offers advice to the pastor (consultation).

No meeting should extend beyond two hours. If there is a topic that needs extended time for discussion or decision-making, the group will be wise to arrange a special meeting to address only that issue. When meetings move beyond two hours, or discussion on a particular topic goes beyond the time allotted (20+ minutes) without obtaining the consent of the whole group, the matter is more likely to be resolved by sheer frustration than clear-mindedness, or openness to the influence of the Holy Spirit!

IMMEDIATE PLANNING

The monthly agenda includes time for the parish council to look at the immediate future, asking:

- “What will happen in the parish, committees, and programs over **the next 3-4 months?**”
- “What impact do the liturgical, seasonal, academic, civic and cultural calendars have on our community, staff, committees or parish activities and events?”

This brief look ahead, gives the council:

- A *heads-up*, time to ensure that nothing important will *fall-between-the-cracks* in the immediate future.
- It helps them anticipate the needs of the mission and the parish, as well as their own agenda.
- It enables the council and its liaisons to staff, committees and the parish at-large to communicate in a timely way.

Since the primary focus of the council is mission of the Church, the following agenda format serves as a reminder that the council is a unique group: the leaders of a *faith* community. This format, designed to reflect the Eucharistic liturgy, is one way parish councils can model *Eucharist Without Walls*.

PARISH COUNCIL AGENDA

WE ASSEMBLE IN GOD’S NAME

1. Opening Prayer

WE CELEBRATE OUR PAST

2. Review and approve minutes
Guest and Visitor Comments
Pastor’s Report

WE PROCLAIM GOD’S WORD

3. Reading from Scripture
– Personal and Shared Reflection

WE PRESENT OUR OFFERING

4. Ministry Area Report/Organizational Work
5. New Business, e.g. proposals, information, discussions
6. Old Business, e.g. decisions pending

Monitoring
accomplishment of the long
range plan annual goals

7. IMMEDIATE PLANNING:

Immediate
Planning

- What ministry area will be reviewed at the next meeting? Or what organizational work will we do? Who will make the presentation? How will we prepare for the meeting?
- Looking ahead:
What will happen in the parish in the next three months?
- Communication: In light of work accomplished at the meeting, what information needs to be shared? With/by whom? How?

WE GIVE THANKS

Closing prayer, blessing and sign of peace

WE GO OUT TO LOVE AND SERVE

Month	Liturgical Season	Council Calendar	Holidays Special Observances
<p>DECEMBER Special Feast Days: 4 St. Nicholas 8 Immaculate Conception 11 Our Lady of Guadalupe 25 Christmas 27 St. John, the Apostle & Evangelist Holy Family Sunday</p>	<p><i>The strategic year begins with the season of Advent.</i> Historically God's People waited a very long time for the promise of a Messiah to be fulfilled. During Advent we also wait and become aware of our own spiritual longings of our deep need for God.</p>	<p>1. Receive the annual report of the Finance/Administrative Services Committee 2. Acknowledge the efforts of all involved in helping the parish celebrate the spirit of the Advent season. 3. Consider any proposals. 4. Support the efforts of parishioners involved in projects and programs that be fruitful in need. 5. Hold a holiday social with council, committees, staff and other invited guests.</p>	<p>KWANZA New Year's Eve</p>
<p>Our Parish</p>			
<p>JANUARY Special Feast Days: Mary, the Mother of Jesus Epiphany 25 Conversion of St. Paul</p>	<p><i>Christmastime extends from the Christmas vigil on Christmas eve, December 24, until the Feast of the Epiphany on the Lord in January.</i></p>	<p>1. Pastor and pastoral staff give reflection. 2. Request financial input from committees and groups as preparation for budgeting for the coming fiscal year. 3. Form ad hoc committee to begin planning the annual selection process. (Refer to parish council bylaws.) 4. Look at the Strategic Plan goals for implementation in the following year. How will these goals impact budget planning?</p>	<p>Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Martin Luther King Obsevrance National Prayer Vigil for Life National Migration Week Vocation Awareness Week Catholic Schools Week</p>
<p>Our Parish</p>			

Month	Liturgical Season	Council Calendar	Holidays / Special Observances
<p>FEBRUARY Special Feast Days: Ash Wednesday Lent Rite of Election-RCIA Catholic Past Month 3 St. Blaise 14 St. Valentine's Day 22 Chair of Peter</p>	<p><i>Ordinary Time continues the days between Christmas Eve and Lent. During this time of year we reflect on all God has accomplished for us and through the parish.</i> As days grow slowly longer, the council members and staff turn their thoughts to the coming year, parish goals, opportunities for members to participate in the work of the parish and budget needs.</p>	<p>1. Begin bulletin/pulpit announcements to educate the parish about parish council in preparation for nomination of new members to council. 2. Finance/budget committee meets with committees and staff to develop budget for new fiscal year. 3. Request preliminary budget from Finance / Administrative Services committee based on priorities determined by council.</p>	<p>President Day</p>
<p>Our Parish</p>			
<p>MARCH Special Feast Days: 17 St. Patrick 19 St. Joseph 25 Annunciation</p>	<p><i>Lent is a season of dying to ourselves and seeking reconciliation with God and one another.</i> During this season the budget committee helps parish council staff and committees look at the goals, needs and resources for the coming year. Difficult decisions need to be made that may require letting go of pet projects or great ideas. It may also result in some quiet disappointment or full-scale conflicts.</p>	<p>1. Invite council nominees to attend a council meeting. 2. Request to attend orientation session for fourth nominees. 3. Receive preliminary budget by Finance/Administrative Services committee with recommended options.</p>	
<p>Our Parish</p>			

Month	Liturgical Season	Council Calendar	Holidays Special Observances
APRIL Special Feast Days: 25 St. Mark the Evangelist	<i>Existence celebrates life, the gift of Resurrection!</i>	1. Publish information about parish council nominees 2. Provide and participate in an orientation session for and with council nominees 3. Make bulk mail/pulpit announcements about the selection process for new council members 4. Review amended budget proposal 5. Evaluate collaborative partnership goals 6. Acknowledge the efforts of all involved in collaborative ministries	Earth Day
Our Parish			
MAY Special Feast Days: 1 St. Joseph, Worker 3 St. Philip & James, Apostles 14 St. Matthias, Apostle 15 St. Isidore 31 Visitation	<i>Existence reminds us of God's abundant blessings</i> The signs of new life through our sacramental identity are all around: candidates and catechumens, the newest members, those who receive their First Communion the Sacrament of Confirmation, youth moving on from elementary to middle or high school, high school seniors moving on to jobs or college. Some council members will complete second terms. Some staff members may also be moving on. This is a time for saying "Thank you" and "I thank be to God."	1. Continue council nominee orientation 2. Select new council members 3. Determine calendar process (See p. 3) 4. Approve the final budget proposal 5. Evaluate progress on current annual goals 6. Celebrate this year's successes with staff committees and other parishioners who helped along the way 7. Acknowledge the efforts of all who assisted in sacramental preparation	Mother's Day Memorial Day Graduations
Our Parish			

Month	Liturgical Season	Council Calendar	Holidays Special Observances
<p>JUNE Special Feasts: Trinity Sunday Corpus Christi 11 St. Barnabas, Apostle 24 Birth of John the Baptist 29 St. Peter & Paul</p>	<p><i>Easter season closes with Pentecost, the season which we celebrate the diverse charisms and gifts present in the early and present Church. We ask the Holy Spirit for the courage to share the gifts we have beyond the parish into the world.</i></p>	<p>1. Old and new members meet together (Transitional Meeting) 2. Document selection of new council officers 3. Parish council committee self-evaluation 4. Outgoing members discuss new ways to serve 5. Say "Thank you" to outgoing members of council 6. Acknowledge all who served in Christian formation ministries</p>	<p>Flag Day Father's Day</p>
<p>Our Parish</p>			
<p>JULY Special Feasts: 1 St. Thomas, Apostle 21 St. Mary Magdalene 25 St. James, Apostle 26 St. Joachim's Ann parents of Mary</p>	<p><i>We begin a long series of 50 busy days. It's the best through the sunny days of summer and into the season of harvest.</i></p>	<p>1. New council officers take up their responsibilities (See Council By-laws) 2. New and returning committee chairs organize, recruit and train new committee members 3. Set key events that council membership roster is up-to-date on archdiocese names list (Work with parish webmaster/administrator) 4. Dates for archdiocesan leadership events are communicated to appropriate people 5. Seek approval of the parish council annual calendar</p>	<p>Independence Day</p>
<p>Our Parish</p>			

Month	Liturgical Season	Council Calendar	Holidays Special Observances
<p>AUGUST Special Feast Days: 1 Transfiguration 15 Assumption of Mary 24 St. Bartholomew Apostle</p>	<p><i>Commission of Confessory Time</i> "You Crown the year with riches, All you sown in justice" Psalm 115</p> <p>Committees gear-up by reviewing their goals for the year and developing their own project and meeting calendars to guide the implementation of this year's goals in their area of ministry.</p>	<p>Council Calendar</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review Mission Statement 2. Review membership of committees to ensure that ministry is being shared well 3. Council members determine how they will connect and communicate with committees (Liaisons? Other?) 4. Council review decision-making process and other ground rules to guide their work together 5. Pastor and staff meet with council to talk together about goals for the year, reaffirm the common vision 6. Plan a day/evening of spiritual formation for council, committees and staff 7. Seek approval of the council calendar if not done in July 	<p>Holidays Back-to-school Preparation</p>
<p>Our Parish</p>			
<p>SEPTEMBER Special Feast Days: 8 Birth of Mary 14 Triumph of the Cross 15 Our Lady of Sorrows 21 St. Matthew Apostle & Evangelist Catechetical Sunday</p>	<p><i>Confessory Time</i> "Behold the Harvest.... There sowing to us is reaping, sowing and laughing" Psalm 111</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review Prayer and Worship Ministries 2. Consider any Proposals 	<p>Labor Day Opening of School Year Grandparents' Day Harvest Festivals</p>
<p>Our Parish</p>			

Month	Liturgical Season	Council Calendar	Holidays Special Observances
OCTOBER Special Feast: 1. St. Francis Assisi 2. St. Luke, Evangelist	<i>Ordinary Time continues.</i> We gather the fruit of the harvest	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review Christian Formation ministries 2. Review principles for effective councils 3. Attend archdiocesan leadership conferences 4. Consider proposals 	World Family Day Columbus Day Halloween
Our Parish			
NOVEMBER Special Feast: 1. All Saints 2. All Souls Feast of Christ the King	<i>Now there is no more Ordinary Time.</i> The liturgical year comes to a close with the celebration of the Feast of Christ the King	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review Human Concerns ministries 2. Consider any proposals 	Election Day Veterans Day Thanksgiving
Our Parish			

DESIGNING ALTERNATIVES

Some parish councils may meet less often than monthly. For example,

- A number of parish councils meet 10 months per year.
- Some common councils that lead two or more parishes may choose to meet together every other month and use the months between common council meetings to meet with committees in their respective parishes.

Other councils may decide to meet more than once during certain months when the agenda is full and not at all during the months when the agenda is less demanding.

BLESSING OF CALENDARS

READ

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8

REFLECT

What time is it in your life?

SHARE

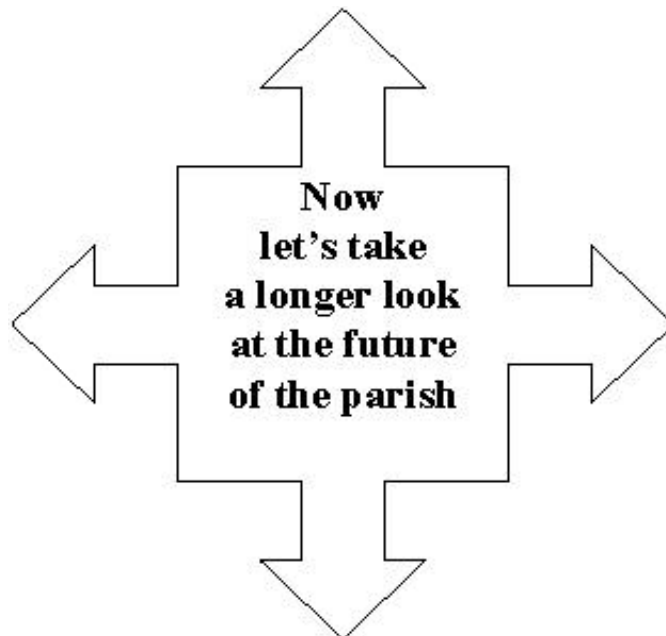
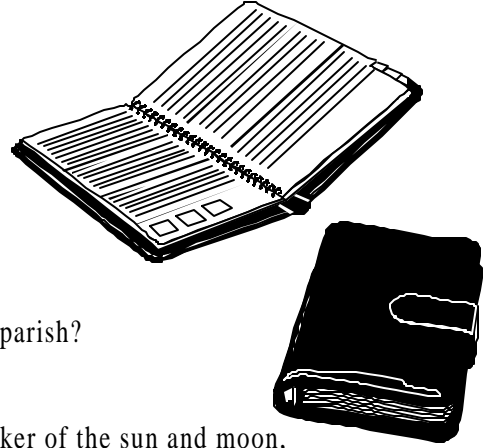
What time is it in the life of the parish?

PRAY

O Lord of time and eternity, Maker of the sun and moon, we praise and thank you for the gift of time. As we map out a plan for our work together, we ask your blessing on calendars, reminders of the opportunities and passage of time. May we celebrate the gift of each day, remembering that it is given to us through your generous love.

Bless each of us who will turn these pages, month by month. Journey with us through the year, granting us wisdom, vision and grace to discern Your Will for the good of our parish.

We ask this blessing in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!



LONG RANGE (STRATEGIC) PLANNING AND THE PARISH COUNCIL

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee looks to a future in which Catholics continue to work diligently to meet the needs of the church and of society. In the 1998 annual report for the Archdiocese, Archbishop Weakland notes:

“One of the major challenges we have faced in our archdiocese is that of planning for the future of the church in southeastern Wisconsin. In the past decade, we have worked diligently to find ways of meeting the needs through prayerful answers.”

The next decade will offer new and ongoing challenges for the church and society. Planning answers these questions:



- What are we doing as a faith community now? How well are we “working” together?
- What do we believe the future (5-10 years) holds for us in all areas of life and mission?
- What must we continue to do to ensure the success of the mission in the future we envision?
- How can we make that happen?

Wise planning remains the primary tool for being prepared to meet the possibilities the future may present. A good plan helps the parish meet the future with grace, wisdom and vision.

WE BELIEVE...

in God’s loving-kindness revealed to us in the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit who forms us into a Eucharistic community, the Church.

WE AFFIRM...

that every person is called to share fully in the Church’s mission: to teach, to serve and to sanctify.

WE ENVISION...

a Church which hears and proclaims the teachings of Jesus, prays, celebrates the breaking of the bread and works for the common good.

THEREFORE, WE PLAN...

to identify goals and carry out the strategies that will make this vision a reality.

THESE EASY STEPS ARE DESIGNED TO ANSWER SIX QUESTIONS ABOUT PLANNING:

1. Get Organized

The pastor and parish leaders decide what the outcome of the process will cover. This decision determines the kind of information the parish gathers, the people who are asked to participate, and the length of time the process might take. The council appoints a leadership task force to oversee the planning process. The Office for Parish Councils & Planning has resources to guide the task force in their work.

Schools are a significant ministry in many parishes. The Office of Schools, Child and Youth Ministries offers a process for school planning that is compatible with the process of overall parish planning offered by the Office for Parish Councils & Planning.

2. Kickoff Event: A First Look

Gather the leadership of the parish, invited guests, and interested parishioners for a first look at the current activities and needs of the parish community. Share pertinent, up-to-date information.

In preparation for the kickoff event, the council asks each committee with staff to review and evaluate their ministry, guided by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee resource, *Building Blocks of a Vibrant Parish*. Discussion of the parish mission will focus on four basic ministries: worship, word, service, and leadership and administration as outlined in the guide. Another helpful resource is the annual parish report. When a 5-year series of reports are compared, the planning task force may identify certain trends in the parish.

This overview of parish activity is done in light of the parish mission statement.

3. A View from the Pew

Parishioners hear the results of the kickoff event and have opportunity to respond by offering added input through surveys, town hall meetings, phone inquiry or other means the parish planning task force may wish to use.

4. Visioning Event

Parishioners and parish leaders gather to dream the future for the parish. Parish ideals and Gospel values challenge the parishioners, the council and committees to begin to imagine and articulate their preferred future. The vision establishes the foundation for action and gives ownership to the parishioners.

Why do we want to plan?

How shall we go about it?

What are we doing now?

What would we like to be doing in the **future**?

5. Action Plan

The council and planning task force capture the enthusiasm of the visioning event into a vision statement. Staff, committees and others build a plan based on the vision and directional statements. The plan lists strategies and annual goals to make the vision the reality. The plan becomes the measuring stick by which the council, staff and committees evaluate their movement toward the vision. The plan motivates all to work more effectively for the common good.

How will
we make it
happen?

6. Council and Pastoral Approval

Parish leadership's acceptance of the plan precedes its public announcement and celebration. A good plan flows from the spirituality and insight of the parish and becomes the responsibility of the entire parish.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What do we mean by parish or collaborative planning?

Parish or collaborative planning is an organized way for the entire parish or a cluster of parishes to determine the future mission and ministries of the parish or cluster.

Those appointed by the parish(es) involved:

- Review the present mission and activity of the parish(es)
- Propose a realistic and inviting vision for the future
- Develop a plan to help the parish(es) to move toward the desired future over a three to five year time span.

Why should a parish or cluster of parishes consider planning?

Planning can help a parish or cluster:

- Be more proactive than reactive
- Create a shared vision for the future
- Foster a greater sense of responsibility among parishioners
- Make better use of limited resources
- Ensure that each area of ministry receives the proper amount of time, talent and treasure

When is a parish or cluster ready to plan?

Planning can be a benefit at any time. Some circumstances that support quality and effective planning include:

- The support and commitment of the pastor, council, committees and staff
- A well-formed parish council: parish mission statement, current constitution and by-laws
- Lack of crisis or pressing situation.

How long will it take?

This process can be accomplished in six to nine months, longer if necessary.

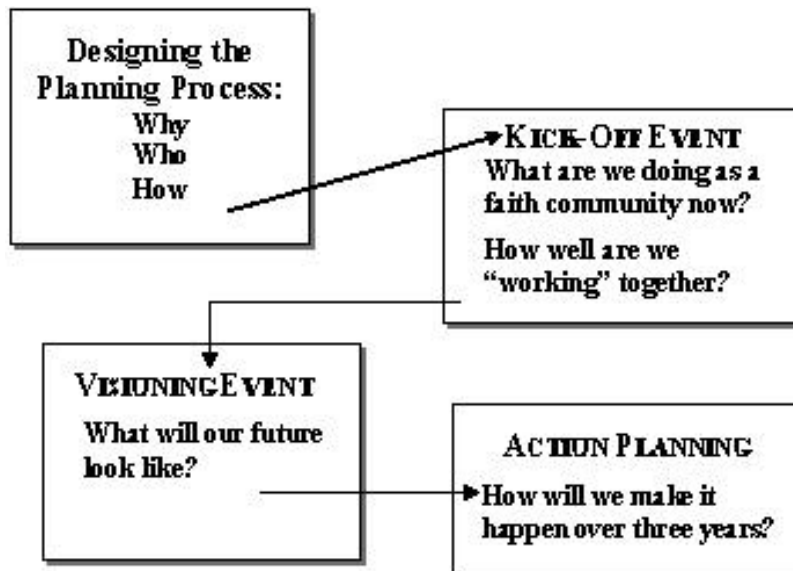
Parish or Cluster - Does it matter?

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee encourages clusters to plan together. At the same time, individual parishes need to develop their own plan as well. The process outlined by the Office for Parish Councils & Planning and here will be useful in either situation.

What are the advantages of this planning process?

The planning process:

- Provides opportunities for the entire parish to be involved
- Supports the planning role of the pastor and parish council without adding unnecessary additional burdens
- Allows for enough flexibility and options so it can be used in a variety of parish settings.



WHO PLANS?

PARISH COUNCIL

Planning is a major function of the parish council. The council routinely assesses the needs of the parish and the resources available to meet those needs. The council determines priorities and options. The council evaluates the programs and services of the parish. When necessary, the council appoints a planning task force to assist in the planning process.

DESIGN COMMITTEE

This group of parish leaders - including the pastor administrator or director, the council chair, and one or two key leaders - meets with the Parish Consultant and a member of the Office of Parish Councils & Planning in order to determine the scope and timeline for the planning process.

PLANNING TASK FORCE (INDIVIDUAL PARISH)

The planning task force is a sub-committee of and appointed by the parish council. Its primary task is to oversee the planning process in order to gather the information needed by the council to develop a strategic plan for the parish. A suitable number is 10 members. The Task Force should include people familiar with planning as well as people who have a balanced vision for the future of the parish.

PLANNING TASK FORCE (CLUSTER OF PARISHES)

The planning task force is comprised of three or more members of each parish in a cluster, appointed by their parish councils. Their role is to understand the goal of the planning effort and to oversee the planning process until the plan is approved and communicated. At this time, the task force ceases to exist and the parish councils take on the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of the plan and its annual renewal.

KEY LEADERS

There are at least three sources of key leaders to consider inviting to participate in the planning process. Key leaders from the parish communities are people who have a keen sense of the parish past and present. They may bring ideas that will refresh the vision of the collaborative effort. Key leaders from the community may be government or business leaders, members of the ecumenical community, or people who are known to

have a strong desire to improve the neighborhood. Key leaders from the archdiocese would include those who have expertise in particular ministerial areas.

PARISH COUNCIL AND LEADERSHIP COMMITTEES

Members of the parish leadership - council members, committee chairs and members, and staff attend a kickoff event to assess the current state of the parish or cluster. This is a working session that helps identify the strengths/weaknesses, opportunities and challenges that exist in the parish/cluster at this time. These same leadership people help identify a need for additional data and participate in the visioning event and the action plan sessions.

PARISHIONERS

A critical part of the planning process includes thoughtful input by the parishioners. The planning task force summarizes the information obtained at the kickoff retreat. They inform the parish of the results. The parishioners then respond to the information in some way - supporting some statements, challenging others and adding insights that were not mentioned at the kickoff event.

BASIC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THIS PROCESS

PASTOR, PARISH DIRECTOR, PARISH ADMINISTRATOR

The support and involvement of the pastor/parish director or administrator is crucial. While the planning task force will do a great deal of the work, the pastor, director or administrator retains the responsibility for choosing and endorsing key elements of the process. The pastor, director or administrator works in close consultation with the parish council.

PARISH COUNCIL

Planning is a function of the parish council. The council assists the pastor by suggesting people to appoint to a planning task force that serves as an ad hoc committee of the parish council. Council members participate in all aspects of the planning process and oversee its implementation.

PLANNING TASK FORCE

The planning task force organizes and oversees the entire planning process:

- **Enlisting participation** of parish staff and committees to gather information about the current status of a particular ministry, parish membership and resources – human and temporal, or the cluster
- **Summarizing data** and enlisting the participation of parishioners at-large to review and add to the parish “snapshot”
- **Helping parishioners and key stakeholders dream of a future** that captures the imagination, and is both attractive and attainable. They summarize the work in a vision statement and present it to the council for affirmation.
- **Training staff and committees** in the art of developing a long-range plan
- **Presenting the plan** to the parish council for approval and implementation.

PARISH STAFF

Principals, directors of religious education, directors of youth ministry and other staff members hold critical information and have an important perspective. The task force seeks out staff members for help and information. The staff participates in the process as requested by the task force.

PARISHIONERS

Parish members are involved in several ways, they:

- Keep abreast of the planning process and the summaries of information gathered
- Share their thoughts and ideas, adding their suggestions throughout the process, particularly in the “view from the pew”
- Review and respond to drafts of the materials developed by the task force and its committees

PARISH COMMITTEES

Because of their role in the parish, parish committees have information that is valuable during the data-gathering process. Their participation in the process is to be expected. In addition, these parishioners will have the responsibility for developing and implementing the plan.

ARCHDIOCESAN STAFF

The Office for Parish Councils & Planning will provide training of parish leadership and the planning task force, resource materials and research tools. The office will be available for ongoing consultation throughout the six to nine month process.

Parish consultants and staff members from other offices are available to help parish leaders gather or focus information in their areas of expertise.

TASK FORCE CHAIRPERSON’S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The task force chair serves as project manager and leads the process. The chair is a key leader who is critical to the success of the process. The task force chair:

- Studies and understands the tasks and responsibilities of the task force and planning process
- Chairs meetings, prepares agendas, facilitates decision-making processes and monitors the completion of the process timeline
- Works closely with the pastor and parish council chair
- Communicates with the staff, parishioners and parish council
- Establishes the planning calendar in accord with the parish calendar
- Oversees the drafting of reports and the final plan
- Ensures that meeting minutes are kept and the process is documented.

PLANNING TASK FORCE MEMBERS ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Task force members:

- Attend all task force meetings
- Assist in gathering information about the parish and its activities in the areas of word, worship, service and administration as assigned
- Attend and participate in the events hosted by the task force
- Provide input and assist in the development of the various aspects of the planning process
- Lead committees if needed for the collection of additional information.

*Write down the vision, inscribe it clearly
to be easily read, since this vision is for
its time only.*

*Eager for its own fulfillment it will not
disappoint. If it comes slowly, wait, for
it will, without fail.*

Habakkuk 2:2-4

PLANNING CHECKLIST

PARISH COUNCIL

- __ Establish the planning process: review planning timeline to ensure coordination with budgeting process, the calendar and the routine of parish life and the church seasons.
- __ Communicate the process and importance of planning with the various committees, staff and organizations within the parish.
- __ Decide how parishioners will be informed of the process and the ongoing results including: present reality, vision for the future, decisions about the strategic plan.
- __ Consider at what point and in what manner the parishioners could best be involved in the process.
- __ Identify parishioners for appointment to a planning task force as an ad hoc committee of the council.
- __ Review the parish mission statement.
- __ Ask staff and committees to review Building Blocks of a Vibrant Parish in their particular ministry areas: Word, Worship, Service, Finance/Administration.
- __ Prepare to participate in the planning process whenever possible.
- __ Prepare to evaluate the ongoing input of the planning task force and make recommendations about the action statements.
- __ Recommend the final plan to the pastor for approval and implementation
- __ Oversee plan implementation. (See Annual Parish Council Calendar)

A PLANNING TIMELINE



1. Plan for Planning

What: Design the Overall Planning Process

Who: Pastor, council chairs, one or two key leaders of the parish,
Office of Parish Planning and Collaboration, parish consultant.

2. Kickoff Event

Date _____ Time _____ Place _____

What: Assessing the current reality – A First Look

Who: Pastor, parish council, committee members, key personnel and
parishioners who will lead or facilitate elements of the process.

3. View from the Pew

Date _____ Time _____ Place _____

What: Offer in-put to the task force regarding the focus of the planning process.

Who: Parishioners

4. Visioning Event

Date _____ Time _____ Place _____

What: Articulate what the preferred future will look like

Who: Pastor, task force members, staff, all parishioners

5. Action Planning Event

Date _____ Time _____ Place _____

What: Training to develop the plan (sequential steps) to make the vision a reality

Who: Staff members, committees, council and parishioners, those who will be
expected to implement the plan.

6. Presentation to Council

Date _____ Time _____ Place _____

What: Final draft of the plan presented to council for their review and approval

Who: Chair or entire planning task force with council

7. Call for Implementation

Date _____ Time _____ Place _____

What: Presentation to the parish at-large

Who: Pastor

8. Monitoring the success completion of the plan over time

What: Oversight, review and update of plan bi/annually

Who: Council

SAMPLE Five Year Plan

Ministry Area: Administration		Date Today	
Directional or Vision Statement			
<i>We will have an effective communication system in place.</i>			
Goal			
<i>Parish communication tools – bulletins, announcements, newsletters, minutes, policy statements, etc. will be user-friendly, clear, easily understandable and accessible by parishioners, staff, committees.</i>			
Objectives 20__ to 20__	Objectives 20__ to 20__	Objectives 20__ to 20__	Objectives 20__ to 20__
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> List and evaluate all present communication tools; develop methodical plan to improve each. Up-date all membership lists, census, committees, staff, organizations, etc. Keep current. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Propose overall plan to improve communication tools. Obtain council approval. Initiate plan. Share outcomes with council in annual report. Ensure that membership data is current. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continue implementation, oversight and review of the communication plan. Evaluate initial outcomes. Ensure that membership data is current. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust plan as needed. Review priorities and assess quality of over-all parish communication. Do random mid-term assessment of overall communication improvement plan. Ensure that membership data is current.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> List and evaluate all present communication tools; develop methodical plan to improve each. Up-date all membership lists, census, committees, staff, organizations, etc. Keep current. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continue implementation, oversight and review of the communication plan. Evaluate initial outcomes. Ensure that membership data is current. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust plan as needed. Review priorities and assess quality of over-all parish communication. Do random mid-term assessment of overall communication improvement plan. Ensure that membership data is current. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continue implementation, oversight and review of the communication plan. Up-date as needed. Consider revision of the five-year plan. Ensure that membership data is current.

Ministry Area	Date				
Directional or Vision Statement					
Goal					
		Objectives 20__ to 20__	Objectives 20__ to 20__	Objectives 20__ to 20__	Objectives 20__ to 20__

PARISH COUNCIL MANUAL

EFFECTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS EFFECTIVE COUNCIL MEETINGS

LIVING THE SPIRIT

*He called the Twelve together
and gave them power and authority
over all devils and to cure diseases,
and he sent them out to proclaim
the kingdom of God and to heal.
...So they set out and went from village to village
proclaiming the Good News and healing everywhere.
...On their return the apostles gave an account
of all they had done.*

Luke 9:1-2, 6,10

EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

PRINCIPLES

- The parish council meets in order to link what people experience in life and liturgy with what the parish is about as a community doing the mission of Jesus.
- Every meeting is an opportunity to build and strengthen community.
- The parish council includes the parish priest(s), lay trustees, and parishioners chosen from and by the community to serve a definite term of service on council.
- Council officers include the chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary. These officers work closely with the pastor to develop the agenda, and foster the on-going formation, development and functioning of an effective council.
- Each officer is also accountable for carrying out certain responsibilities delineated in the council by-laws.
- Every member of the council is responsible for working with the whole council to oversee and foster progress in doing the parish mission.
- The parish council meets regularly as stipulated in the parish council constitution. Meetings are held at a time and place convenient for

members and parishioners, who are always welcome and encouraged to attend council meetings.

- Frequent, regular meetings help council members get to know one another and to develop a sense of working together as a group.
- Council meetings have agendas planned and distributed in advance by the pastor and council officers.

READINGS AND RESOURCES

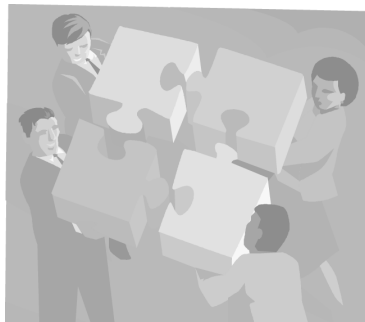
Olsen, Charles M. (1995) *Transforming Church Boards into communities of spiritual leaders*

WHO IS PRESENT AT A COUNCIL MEETING?

Though we share a common faith, people come to council meetings with a wide variety of backgrounds and perspectives. Who are these people?

MEMBERS

According to their constitutions, parish councils have two to three categories of members:



- **At-large members** are selected by and from the registered parishioners who choose to participate in the selection process. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee requires that at least two-thirds of the total council membership be at-large members. *(See sample Constitution Article IV. Common councils aim for a fair representation of the at-large members from each parish served.)*
- **Ex officio members** qualify for membership on the council because they also hold another office or position in the parish. The pastor and two lay trustees, as officers of the corporation, serve as ex officio members, and are full participants, with equal voice in discussion and deliberation as well as in the decision-making process. The Archdiocese requires that the number of ex officio members not exceed one-third of the total council membership. *[See Norm 6 and stipulations in Article IV, Section 2 of the council constitution.]*
- **Appointed members** fill vacancies on the parish council. The council chairperson appoints a qualified parishioner to fill the position for the

duration of an unexpired term. These appointed members are full members of the council with equal participation in deliberations and decision-making. They may choose to participate in the selection process at the end of their appointed term

Guests include any parishioner, staff member, or someone invited to serve as a resource on a particular topic, present a proposal, comment on a proposal being considered. Parishioners who wish to observe the council in action are welcome. The council chair determines when guests may speak in accordance with council policy. Guests do not participate in decision-making.

Parish staff – pastoral, administrative, or support – and permanent deacons are NOT eligible for parish council membership, nor are they eligible to serve as parish trustees at a parish in which they are employed or assigned.

Parish staff members, however, are valuable resources to the parish council. Council members benefit when they invite and welcome input from the staff.

THE PASTOR



The pastor consults the council, inviting their wisdom in matters related to the mission of the parish and their assistance in developing policies to support the mission. He seeks their vision in planning for the future of the parish and its growth, and monitoring the yearly accomplishment of parish goals to fulfill the vision or plan.

The pastor **presides over the council** but does not chair the meeting. He provides the motive for the meeting. He “consults” the council because he wants to know the parish more profoundly and serve it more effectively. He wants the practical wisdom of parishioners, not just the expert opinion of the staff. The better he knows the parish, the better he can help the members live the Gospel. Without the pastor present, there is no one for the council to advise.

When the pastor meets with the council, he expresses faith in the members. He believes that the council will offer their best insights about matters of importance to the parish and its mission. Council and pastor are united by a common desire to serve the parish, to accomplish the mission God has entrusted to them. The pastor motivates the council by posing questions and participating in the dialogue in their united search for the best solutions, the common good.

THE CHAIRPERSON

Facilitate (verb) to make easier.

These few words simply and precisely describe the role of a meeting chairperson. Facilitating requires unique skills and gifts which not everyone possesses. It is important to note, however, that many of the skills helpful in this role may be learned and/or improved with practice.

An effective chairperson...



1. Is the leader for the meeting, not just a moderator, and has the responsibility of moving the meeting forward, encouraging participation, and getting the agenda accomplished. The chairperson continually assesses what needs to be done to move things along, to promote discussion and to draw out members.
2. Listens attentively without bias.
3. Asks questions and makes suggestions rather than gives answers. Identifies repetitious, random or irrelevant comments.
4. Respects the group's time and honors the concerns of each group member.
5. Assists the group to clarify its direction on the issues before them.
6. Helps the group seek creative solutions.

✓ Check your parish council by-laws for a full description of responsibilities.

Before the meeting, the chairperson

1. Reads the minutes of the previous meeting and committee reports.
2. Works with the pastor and other council officers to prepare the agenda seven to ten days before the meeting.
3. Brings all materials needed, including a personal calendar, to the meetings.
4. Arrives ahead of time to ensure that the meeting room is set up.
5. Meeting Room checklist:
 - __ a. The room is large enough to comfortably accommodate the participants.

- __ b. There is adequate lighting and ventilation.
- __ c. The room is free of distractions and interruptions, such as telephones, loud noises, other activities.
- __ d. The room is appropriately furnished. Chairs are comfortable enough for the length of the meeting.
- __ e. All necessary materials are available or prepared such as chalk boards, overheads, easel and newsprint, pencils and paper, and handouts are available.
- __ f. Name tags are prepared or available if everyone is not already acquainted.
- __ g. Refreshments as appropriate.

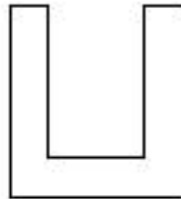
Room Arrangements

Select a room arrangement that enables all participants to see and hear each other and provides members a writing surface if needed. If parish - ioners are present to observe or to present a report, be sure a seating area is set-up for them.

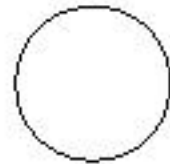
Box Shape



U-Shape



Round Table



Triangle



Square



Oval



Getting started, the chairperson:

1. Begins promptly, on time and ends on time.
2. Introduces new members and/or guests.
3. Makes sure all are clear about the roles, ground rules and expectations.
4. Reviews, revises and follows the agenda.
5. Briefly acknowledges latecomers as they arrive, indicating the agenda item the group is working on.
6. Manages the use of time. Sets limits for each item. Few parish meetings should extend beyond two hours. If an agenda item requires the group's attention for an extended time, it is better to table the topic and schedule a special meeting to address the issue when people are fresher and can focus on it alone.
7. Reviews action items from the previous meeting. Was there appropriate follow-up?

During the meeting, the chairperson:

1. Facilitates discussions:

Asks Questions

- George, how do you feel about this?
- Mary, how would you answer John's question?
- We've heard from everyone but Jane on this. Jane, what is your feeling?
- Jack, do you understand what Susan just said?

Asks for a Summary

- Lots of good ideas have been presented in the last few minutes. Can someone summarize the major points before we go on?
- I've lost track. Will someone summarize what we've decided so far?

Asks for Examples

- Judy, can you give us an example of what you mean?
- Tom, can you expand on that?

Tests for Consensus

- Before we go on let me check to make sure that we have all agreed to...
- It seems we have come to some agreement on this. Could I test our agreement with a show of hands?

Surveys the Group

- Sam, why don't you ask the others how they feel about your proposal.
- How does everybody feel about this? Let's start with Maria.

Is Supportive

- Let's give Jose a chance to tell it the way he sees it.
- Dave, you've had your say. Now it's Harold's turn. Give him a chance to explain.

Checks Targets or Goals

- Are we asking the right questions?
- Do we need other in-put on this?
- Are these the most important goals?
- Is this the only way to get it done?

Confronts Differences

- Nick, you haven't said so but its clear to me that you don't agree. Is that right? Can you explain your point of view?
- Martha, you seem to be holding back on this. Is there something here you disagree with? Why?

Looks into the Future

- If we did it this way, what's the worst that could happen?
- If it doesn't work what have we lost?
- If it works, how will it affect our future?

2. Deals with interruptions and distractions with flexibility and diplomacy.

Intervenes quickly

- Acknowledge the distracter's main point
- Reiterate the goal and the time constraints of the meeting
- Defer the topic to another time
- Quickly bring the meeting back on track
- A brief break or minute of silence may help diffuse the tension.

3. Deals with conflict.

- Isolate the conflict by identifying the issue(s) involved
- Discuss the issues and the facts. Dealing with facts separates the response to the issue from the person expressing the response.
- Keep personalities out of the discussion.

4. When confrontation occurs, these strategies may be helpful:

- **Clarify the objectives:** Conflict sometimes develops because participants have different understandings of the meeting's objectives. Clarifying and reaching agreement on objectives is an important first step.
- **Strive for understanding:** People involved in a dispute often do not listen carefully to the opposition's presentation. They are too busy formulating a rebuttal to listen. As the meeting leader, you may find it necessary to stop the action and make sure each party in the dispute can state the opposing position and supporting reasons.
- **Focus on the rational:** Emotional involvement is a natural part of confrontation. However, sound decisions cannot be reached when participants are too emotional. Therefore, for the benefit of the outcome, focus attention on rational considerations, facts, supporting reasons, potential problems if a certain course of action is followed.
- **Generate alternatives:** What alternative solutions might incorporate the needs of the diverse points of view involved in the confrontation? This is a challenging part of the process since participants often cannot see any alternative other than their own. Group members not at either extreme can become a resource to generate some reasonable alternatives. Get everyone involved.
- **Table the issue:** Tabling can be an effective way to deal with conflict when an individual needs time to consider the arguments that have been presented. It works particularly well as a face-saving device. People sometimes find themselves in a position of having argued so strongly for a position they cannot gracefully change even after being convinced of the logic of a different position. Tabling gives a person time to work this out. It also protects the whole group from coming to a premature decision on an important issue.
- **Use humor:** If you are good with humor, it can be used to reduce the emotional tenseness of confrontation. It can serve as a release and clear the way for more rational problem solving.
- **Call a time-out.** Call for time to think and pray.

At the end of the meeting, the chairperson:

1. Ends on time or negotiates for additional time in 10-15 minute increments.
2. Helps the group summarize the meeting's results
 - What was/was not accomplished?
 - What will be done as a result of the meeting? By whom?
 - Determine what communication is needed to staff, committees, parishioners, partners in mission (cluster), others. Assign communication responsibilities.
3. Requests in-put for the next agenda.
4. Asks members to evaluate the meeting and their participation in it. Is there any ground rule that needs to take on more importance for the group?
5. Thank all for their work and commitment to the parish.
6. Closes the meeting with a Sign of Peace.

EFFECTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Before the meeting, council members:

1. Read the minutes of the previous meeting and committee reports.
2. Submit agenda items to the chairperson at least 10 days before the meeting.
3. Bring all materials needed, including your calendar.
4. Arrive on time. If you must be absent, inform the chairperson before the meeting and offer any input that will assist the work of the group.
5. Turn off personal cell phones/pagers/beepers.

During the meeting, council members:

1. Take responsibility for:
 - Starting on time
 - Staying on the subject
 - Keeping order
 - Listening to others
 - Keeping records

- Arriving at a decision
 - Giving input to the next agenda
 - Ending the meeting on time
2. Stay on the agenda item being dealt with and help others stay on it.
 3. LISTEN to the others in the group
 - with openness
 - to understand their point
 - without judging
 4. Speak when it is your turn:
 - With “I” statements
 - Briefly
 - With charity and courtesy
 5. Use the option to “Pass”.
 6. Ask for clarification when you don’t understand what someone is saying.
 7. Protect the rights of others to have their opinion and feelings heard. Encourage silent members to speak.
 8. Avoid communication that disrupts the group – sarcasm, diversions, asides, digs.
 9. Keep notes on things you agree to do after the meeting.

After the meeting:

1. Carry out assignments and commitments.
2. Communicate to others decisions or information they should know.
3. Keep appropriate information confidential.
4. Support decisions made by the group and the contributions of others.

SIX CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

Unlike business or civic groups, when the parish council meets, they gather as representatives of a **faith community**. The focus of the council's work is the MISSION. The manner with which they go about their task serves to model our unity in Christ. Every meeting becomes an opportunity to proclaim the Word, heal and serve, worship, build and strengthen community.

The council exercises its authority as a consultative and policy-making body when it is in session with the pastor present. During the meeting councilors offer the pastor their practical insights, collective wisdom and apply Gospel values as it proposes policy to address current issues of pastoral importance.

COUNCIL MEETINGS ARE EFFECTIVE WHEN...



1. **There is a well-thought-out agenda**, clear about what topics are slated for information sharing, for discussion or for decision-making; and which items relate to planning, or policy-development.

Who: Pastor and council officers

When: 10-7 days before the meeting

2. **Prayer and faith-sharing set the tone** and help the group to focus on key values.

What: See sample agenda, planning calendar.

3. **Members come to the meeting prepared** to share their faith, insights and wisdom; open to the ideas of others; ready to explore a variety of options and find a solution or response that will support the common good and further the parish mission.

Who: Secretary

When: Seven days before meeting

What: *Send agenda and other material to councilors*

Who: Chairperson

When: Before the meeting

What: *(See following pages)*

Who: Members

When: Before the meeting

What: *Review the agenda; read pertinent materials; consider ideas to share regarding issues for discussion, decision, policy. Bring pertinent available information to the table. Pray for guidance of the Spirit.*

4. **Discussions are carried out in a respectful, inclusive, prayerful manner.**
5. **Decisions made through consensus**, are not assumed, but reaffirmed by each member present, including the pastor.
6. **Members follow-up on commitments** between meetings.

EFFECTIVE PARISH COUNCILS

Effective parish councils, as individuals and as a group:

1. Believe strongly in the mission of the Church and desire to implement it.
2. Value personal prayer, private and group prayer, and the sharing of faith.
3. Get along well with others, interact with them, and include others to foster and strengthen partnership.
4. Are open to hearing a wide-range of ideas.
5. Understand the past, see what is now, even when there is ambiguity, pain or lack of certitude, and can imagine the future with hope, develop options and possibilities, and accept the risks involved.
6. Is/Are self-motivated and can motivate others.
7. Have emotional maturity and self-control.
8. Have empathy for the feelings of others.
9. Accept and value the diverse personalities with whom they serve.
10. Get things done.

Rate yourself or your council from [1=never, 10=always] in each category.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Believe										
Value										
Get along										
Are open										
Understand										
Motivated and motivating										
Emotional maturity										
Empathy										
Value diversity										
Get things done										

PARISH LEADERSHIP

QUALITY INDICATORS

Vision

The leadership group enlarges its horizon and allows itself to be stretched by God's grace to new attitudes and action.

Service

The leaders are not so concerned with their own personal preferences, but are primarily concerned with the common good, the real needs within the parish and broader community.

Confidence

Leaders function from trust generated by faith in the presence of God, knowledge of their role, function and the scope of their responsibilities; and a clear vision of where they intend to lead the parish.

Consensus

Leaders' decision-making is rooted in faith and prayer, informed through consultation and conforms to the common good.

Needs/Resources

When leaders come to the point of recognizing major needs, they can match them with equally major resources; place the resources of the parish at the full service of justice and charity. The mission and money mesh.

Welcoming

Leaders encourage and truly welcome new or different ideas from their peers, welcome outsiders into their midst, people of different parishes, cultures, mind-sets, experiences. They open their hearts to those who are "different."

Spirit of God

Leaders allow themselves to be animated by the Spirit of God, by truth, unity, courage, discipline, imagination, generosity, forgiveness, justice and all the other gifts of the Holy Spirit. A people of HOPE!

PARISH COUNCIL MANUAL

SAMPLE DOCUMENTS

CONSTITUTION
BYLAWS
COMMITTEE GUIDELINES
AGENDA
COUNCIL MEMBER NOMINATION FORM

LIVING THE SPIRIT

PROCESS FOR PARISH COUNCIL CONSTITUTION REVIEW, APPROVAL AND RATIFICATION

STEP 1. COUNCIL REVIEW & APPROVAL

Every five years the Parish Council appoints an ad hoc review committee to assist them in reviewing and, if needed, revising their Parish Council constitution and bylaws. After initial review and approval by the Council, the committee forwards a copy to the Office for Parish Councils & Planning for Archdiocesan review and approval.

STEP 2. ARCHDIOCESAN REVIEW & APPROVAL

The director of the Office for Parish Councils & Planning reviews the documents, and contacts the pastor and council chair to inform them of the approval. A dated copy of the approved document is filed in the Office for Parish Councils & Planning.

STEP 3. RATIFICATION BY THE PARISH

After the receiving archdiocesan approval, the council presents the documents for review and approval by the full parish membership. Ratification of the constitution is an important step in the process of developing the document. There are several ways to accomplish this.

**FIRST: PRESENT APPROVED DOCUMENT TO THE PARISH-AT-LARGE.
THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS TO DO THIS:**

Option 1: Parish Bulletin

A column or bulletin insert informs the parish that the constitution and bylaws have been reviewed and approved by the archdiocesan Office for Parish Councils & Planning. Anyone who wishes to review the documents is urged to stop at the parish office. Documents are available for review for two weeks.

Option 2: All-Parish Meeting or Assembly

During a scheduled parish meeting a presentation of the major parts of the document are noted and changes are explained briefly. This is an ideal way to educate parishioners on the role of the Council and see its connection to the archdiocesan church.

Option 3: Regularly Scheduled Parish Council Meeting

All parishioners are invited to attend the next Council meeting, where a presentation reviewing major parts of the document and brief explanation is provided.

SECOND: PARISHIONERS' REVIEW AND COMMENT

Following the presentation, the document is made available for parishioners' review and comments to the Council chair or pastor within a two-week period. If no major concerns are forthcoming, the document is declared ratified at the next Council meeting. If there are significant concerns, the Council or writing committee revises the documents for review at the next Council meeting and consults with the Office for Parish Councils & Planning.

The pastor may seek additional support by requesting ratification by parishioners' applause at the weekend liturgies.

THIRD: NOTIFY THE ARCHDIOCESE OF RATIFICATION

Return one copy of the letter of approval with the date of ratification to the Office for Parish Councils and Planning.

PARISH COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

SAMPLE

CONSTITUTION OF

Parish Council

(Insert Parish Name)

, Wisconsin

(Insert City/Village)

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this organization shall be _____ Parish Council, hereinafter referred to as the “Council.”

(Insert Parish Name)

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

Form 1

- Section 1.** The Council shall be a vehicle by which each parishioner gives expression to those gifts of the Holy Spirit, uniquely granted at baptism, and necessary to accomplish the mission of the Church.
- Section 2.** The Council formulates parish policy, fosters good communication, and provides leadership by clarifying parish vision, establishing goals and witnessing the gospel message in the larger community and the world.
- Section 3.** The Council shall cooperate with other parishes and with archdiocesan offices and agencies, to carry out its work. The Council shall contribute to the formation of archdiocesan goals and policies.

Form 2

- Section 1.** The Council shall be a vehicle for fulfilling the pastoral mission of the parish. It does this by fostering growth within the parish family and the sharing of spiritual gifts and talents; by encouraging positive relationships among all members of the parish, and by collaborating with other parishes and the wider community.
- Section 2.** The Council shall be involved in planning to meet the needs of the parish, the archdiocese and the broader community, with a vision for the future and a strong basis in stewardship.

Section 3. The Council, after prayerful discernment, shall advise the pastor and develop policies to support those activities and programs which foster the spiritual, intellectual, moral and temporal well-being of the parish, and shall make a contribution to archdiocesan goals and policies.

Form 3

Section 1. The Council shall strive to unite all members of the parish in a community of prayer, leadership, service and pastoral action.

Section 2. The Council shall develop and maintain a parish mission statement, which embraces the total life and mission of the parish: word, worship, service and community.

Section 3. The Council shall engage in a continuous process of pastoral planning which takes into consideration the needs of its own parishioners and the needs of the archdiocese, the broader community and the world.

ARTICLE III: SCOPE

(Article III must be adopted exactly as stated here since it encompasses Norms 4 and 7.)

Section 1. The Council shall be the planning, consultative and policy formulating body in all matters of the parish, including but not limited to spiritual, educational, social and financial concerns, except to the extent limited by faith and morals, church or civil law or archdiocesan policy/norms.

Section 2. In any case where any member of the Council interprets an action of the Council or any of its committees to be outside the limits set forth in Section 1, such member shall present such interpretation no later than the next meeting of the Council and ask for reconsideration. Pending consideration, the effect of the action shall be suspended.

Section 3. In any case where reconsideration has failed to resolve the matter, any Council member may then take the matter to the Office of the Archbishop or one appointed by him, for clarification or arbitration. Any decision resulting from such an appeal shall be final. In the meantime, the effect of the action shall remain suspended.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

(Insert the total number of members in the blank.)

Section 1. The Council shall be comprised of _____ members, all of whom must be baptized, practicing Catholics, at least 18 years old, registered members of the parish, and participants in the parish worship life, especially Mass and the sacraments.

(Ex officio members are defined in Article IV,2. The archdiocese requires that the number of ex officio members not exceed 1/3 of the total Council membership. Delete the words "the associate pastor" if not applicable.)

Section 2. The Council shall have the following ex officio members: the pastor, the associate pastor, and the two lay trustees. Ex officio members participate fully and equally in all Council decisions.

(The archdiocese requires that 2/3 of the Council be comprised of at-large members. Bylaws Article I must state whether the selection of at-large members is by discernment or election.)

Section 3. _____ at-large members shall be selected from and by the membership of the parish 18 years of age or older.

(July 1 is the suggested date for new terms to begin since the parish fiscal year begins on that date. The annual transition meeting is defined in Article VI,3.)

Section 4. The term for selected members shall be three years and shall be limited to two consecutive terms. The new members shall begin their terms with the conclusion of the annual transition meeting.

(Youth membership is optional.)

Section 5. One youth representative who is at least 14 years of age but not yet 18 shall be selected annually from and by the youth members of the parish.

ARTICLE V: OFFICERS

Section 1. The officers of the Council shall be a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and a secretary. They shall be selected by and from the Council at the annual transition meeting. They shall serve for a one-year term beginning with the conclusion of the transition meeting. Ex officio members of the Council are ineligible to serve as Council officers or committee chairpersons.

Section 2. The Council chairperson shall serve as the parish representative to the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council district meetings. The Council vice-chairperson or secretary may be delegated to perform this function.

ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS

(Monthly meetings are recommended in order to build community among members and to conduct normal Council business.)

Section 1. Regular Parish Council meetings shall be held monthly.

Section 2. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson, pastor, or a quorum. A quorum consists of two-thirds of the total membership and includes the pastor.

(Both out-going and in-coming Council members attend the transition meeting and participate equally in selecting new leadership. Liaisons to standing committees are selected at this meeting. See Article IX.)

Section 3. A transition meeting shall be held at the next regular Council meeting following the annual selection of Parish Council members. At this meeting the newly selected members shall join the existing Council for the purpose of selecting Council officers for the following year.

ARTICLE VII: RELATIONSHIP OF PASTOR TO COUNCIL

(Article VII is based entirely on Norm 7 and must be adopted exactly as set forth here.)

Section 1. The pastor is the parish council president. He presides at the Council by:

- A. Attending all council meetings;
- B. Making certain that the scope of the council's concerns reflects the entire mission of the Church;
- C. Enabling the council to build a community of faith and an atmosphere of trust among Council members;
- D. Making certain that parish council members have adequate training;
- E. Assisting in formulating the Council agenda;
- F. Sharing in the dialogue that leads to the formulation of policy;
- G. Serving as chief administrative officer of the parish; and
- H. Executing the policies formulated by the Council.

If the pastor judges that a decision is contrary to Church teaching or discipline, or violates a diocesan norm, the pastor may withhold implementation, giving to the Council the reasons. In such case the Council may appeal to the Office of the Archbishop or one appointed by him for clarification or arbitration. Any decision resulting from such an appeal shall be final. In the meantime, the effect of the action shall remain suspended.

Section 2. The pastor does not chair Council meetings.

Section 3. Before requesting a proxy from the archbishop, the pastor will consult with the council. The consensus of the council shall be represented in the request for proxy.

ARTICLE VIII: MANNER OF OPERATION

(Consensus is the decision-making process of choice for all parish-related groups.)

The Council's manner of decision-making shall be communal discernment which includes prayerful reflection, gathering of information, dialogue and sharing of conclusions. The usual method of reaching conclusions shall be consensus.

ARTICLE IX: PARISH COMMITTEES

Section 1. The Parish shall have the following standing committees:

- Prayer and Worship
- Christian Formation
- Human Concerns
- Finance/Administrative Services.

To comply with canon law, please add the word FINANCE with Administrative Services.

Section 2. The council may establish other standing or ad hoc committees.

Other possible standing committees are: Planning, Stewardship, Evangelization, Parish Life, etc. Committees listed in the constitution need to be consistent with those described in the bylaws. For more information about committees refer to the Parish Committee Resource Book available from the Office for Parish Councils & Planning.

(Include the following if the Parish Council has a liaison to each standing committee.)

Section 3. Council Committee Liaison

The Council shall select from its at-large members a liaison to each of its standing committees at the annual transition meeting following the selection of new officers. Liaisons shall serve for a one-year term beginning with the conclusion of the transition meeting. Ex officio members and officers of the Council are ineligible to serve as liaisons.

ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended at any regular or special meeting by consensus or a two-thirds vote of the Council and thereafter by approval of a majority of the parishioners participating in the parish approval process.

Date of Approval by the Archdiocese: _____

Date of Parish Ratification: _____

Date of Most Recent Amendment: _____

Date of Next Full Review: _____

PARISH COUNCIL BYLAWS

SAMPLE

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I: NOMINATION AND SELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Section 1. At each annual selection, one-third of the members shall be selected for a term of three years to fill the vacancies caused by the members whose terms are due to expire.

Section 2. The council may establish other standing or ad hoc committees.

(This method of choosing Council members implies that the total number of selected members is evenly divided by three, with each member having a staggered three-year term. This traditional selection method ensures that there is constant stability of membership on the Council and at the same time provides for systematic turnover of members.)

Section 3. *(Since the end of the archdiocesan fiscal year is June 30, it is highly recommended that Parish Councils schedule annual selection of new members in April or May, with new Council members taking office by July 1. The Selection Committee Guide, Called to Serve, is available from the Office for Parish Councils & Planning.)*

At least 60 days prior to each annual selection of new members, the chairperson shall appoint a Selection Committee of a least four members, two of whom are Council members. The Selection Committee's responsibility is to manage all aspects of the selection process including:

- a) **Education of Parishioners:** Parishioners are educated through bulletin and pulpit announcements about the Council and the selection process for at least two weeks. They are asked to give prayerful consideration to nominating parishioners or themselves for the Council.
- b) **Nomination:** Nomination forms are distributed at all liturgies on a designated weekend. Parishioners are invited to write down the names of persons they feel have the essential characteristics of a Council member.
- c) **Notification:** Persons whose names were submitted by parishioners are contacted by Selection Committee members to inform them of their nomination and of the required orientation. At least 30 days before the date of selection, the Selection Committee publishes in the parish bulletin, the names of those who have agreed to continue in the nomination process. Additional nominations are acceptable if submitted in writing to the Selection Committee within ten days after this publication. *(Notification should include information about responsibilities of Council members and an invitation to attend the next Council meeting.)*
- d) **Orientation:** The Selection Committee plans the local orientation session and requires nominees' attendance at a local and/or archdiocesan orientation. *(Norm 8 states: "All Council members (ex officio and at-large) are to be adequately prepared for their roles as Christian leaders." The archdiocese provides orientation sessions for Council nominees throughout the archdiocese every spring.)*

- e) Acceptance:** Those who feel called to serve as Council members accept nomination and participate on the final slate of nominees. The Selection Committee ensures that the slate of nominees is representative of the parish community. In no event shall any persons be deemed nominated unless the Selection Committee receives an expression of willingness to serve. If a member of the Selection Committee becomes a nominee, that person ceases to be a Selection Committee member.
- f) Final Slate of Nominees:** Nominees submit biographical information and their statement of parish vision to the Selection Committee for publication in the parish bulletin at least two weeks prior to the selection of new members.
- g) Facilitation:** The Selection Committee facilitates the actual selection process and informs the parish of the results.

Section 3. The selection of new members of the Council shall be by _____.
(Fill in the blank with either discernment or election.)

If discernment, add: In the context of prayer and with the help of a facilitator, the nominees who are best suited to serve on the Council at this time are discerned.

If election, add: The Selection Committee provides ballots for all parishioners. The Selection Committee administers, supervises, tabulates and keeps records of the selection. A tie vote is resolved by lot.

(Eliminate Section 4 if the Council does not have a youth representative.)

Section 4. For the youth representative, the same selection procedure shall be followed. Only eligible youth shall participate in this process.

ARTICLE II: VACANCIES AND REMOVALS

Section 1. Any member of the Council may resign by filing a written resignation with the pastor, with a copy to the chairperson.

Section 2. At any meeting of the Council, any at-large member may be removed for good cause by consensus or by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the Council. Any member whose removal has been proposed shall be given an opportunity to be heard at the meeting. Good cause includes missing two consecutive meetings without good reason, physical or mental incapacity, or failure to perform duties as a Council member.

Section 3. A vacancy among the at-large members shall be filled by one appointed to serve the remainder of the term. The chairperson will make appointment, with approval of the Council. Consideration should be given to previous nominees.

ARTICLE III: OFFICERS

Section 1. Selection of officers of the Council shall be by _____ from among and by the Council members present at the annual transition meeting. Offices shall be filled in the following order: chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary.

(Fill-in the blank with either discernment or election. Council officers are not to be selected directly by the parish-at-large. Each duly constituted body has the privilege of selecting its own officers.)

Section 2. At the transition meeting following the annual selection of Council members, newly selected members join the existing Council for the purpose of selecting Council officers for the following year.

Section 3. No Council officer may serve more than three consecutive 1 year terms in any one office.

Section 4. The chairperson:

1. Is aware of the tasks and responsibilities of the Council and communicates these to the Council, committees and parish community.
2. Organizes/coordinates activities and work of the Council. Develops and maintains an annual Council calendar consistent with the parish calendar.
3. Prepares the meeting agendas in consultation with the pastor and other Council officers. Ensures that time is spent in prayer. The agenda is published in the parish bulletin the weekend before the meeting or posted for parishioners to review. Submits the agenda to Council members at least 3 days before the meeting.
4. Provides formation/education for Council members, utilizing the parish staff and offerings at the district and archdiocesan levels.
5. Facilitates Council meetings by helping members work together, participating fully in discussions and decision-making through consensus. Also conducts parish meetings.
6. Monitors implementation of all Council recommendations and decisions.
7. Ensures that a Council budget is established and communicates budget information to the Finance / Administrative Services Committee.
8. If there is no council liaison, is an ex officio member of all standing and ad hoc committees of the Council
9. Assists the next chairperson in understanding the Council's history, responsibilities and resources. Transfers all Council materials to the new chairperson.
10. Serves as the parish representative for the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council district meetings.
11. Performs duties consistent with the office as the Council may direct.

The positions of chair, vice-chairperson are time-consuming. These persons should not be asked to assume other duties on the council or in the parish.

Section 5. The vice-chairperson:

1. Conducts meetings in the absence of the chairperson.
2. Becomes chairperson in the event of vacancy.
3. Performs duties consistent with the office as the chairperson or the Council may direct.

(The vice-chairperson can serve the parish in other capacities, especially in any areas of collaboration.)

Section 6. The secretary:

1. Oversees the accurate recording of the minutes of each meeting and sees to it that the minutes and the agenda are made available to the Council members, committee chairpersons, and the parish. Provides a condensed report of the meeting for publication in the parish bulletin.
2. Takes attendance at meetings and records absences.
3. Maintains the official list of all Council and standing committee officers and members and their terms, the list of all ad hoc committee chairpersons and members and keeps these lists current with regard to addresses and phone numbers.
4. Updates the Archdiocesan Extranet whenever a change in membership on Council occurs. This is done on-line. The Council secretary works with the parish web administrator to keep the archdiocesan registry current.
5. Reports to the Council all communication. Handles correspondence for the Council, including agendas, minutes, notification of regular and special meetings, notes of thanks, etc.
6. Performs such duties consistent with office as the chairperson or Council may direct.

(The Council may designate a non-member as “recorder” of the minutes. However, the responsibility rests with the Council’s secretary. The “recorder” has no rights of membership.)

ARTICLE IV: MEETINGS

- Section 1.** Regular meetings of the Council shall be held at such time, place and date as the Council may designate. Prayer shall be an integral part of the meeting.
- Section 2.** The agenda shall be developed in advance of the meeting by the pastor and council officers based upon the proposals from committees, liaison reports, the parish council annual calendar, strategic plan or mission goals, ongoing needs and concerns of the parish. Parishioners may submit items for consideration to any council member one week before the meeting.
- Section 3.** Advance notice of the time and place of the meetings of the Council shall be published in the parish bulletin, and all members of the parish shall be entitled and welcome to attend as observers. The Council may open any meeting to discussion by parish members on such subjects and under such rules as the Council may announce.
- Section 4** Special Meetings. Notice of special meetings shall be given to all members within a reasonable time before the meeting, stating its time, place and purpose. No other business than that stated, as the purpose shall be conducted at that meeting.
- Section 5.** Closed Session. When a question arises at a Council meeting that relates to a person's right to privacy, the Council may request the absence of visitors for that portion of the meeting. The content of the closed session is not part of the formal minutes of the meeting and is not made public.

RE: Closed Session:

This type of situation should be a rare occurrence. Parish Councils do NOT have executive committees, which make decisions apart from the full Council, nor do Councils make personnel decisions, which are rightfully the responsibility of the pastor who is the chief administrative officer of the parish.

- Section 6.** Absence. Notification of intended absence should be given to the Council Chairperson, Vice-chairperson or Secretary before the meeting.

ARTICLE V: PARISH STANDING COMMITTEES

(For more in-depth information about parish committees, refer to the archdiocesan publication, Parish Committee Resource Book.)

- Section 1. Purpose.** Each standing committee implements parish priorities and goals in its own areas of responsibility in the collaborative spirit of working together to accomplish the parish's stated mission. All committee work leads to building a faith community, proclaiming the Word of God, calling people to prayer and motivating people to serve others.
- Section 2. Scope.** All committees are accountable to the Council. Committees make decisions in their areas of responsibility following the principle of subsidiarity, which means making decisions at the most appropriate level in the parish committee structure.

(All parish groups/organizations should relate to the Council through the standing committees, and be accountable for carrying out their mission work as expressed in the parish mission statement.)

Section 3. Functions. The basic functions of each Council standing committee are to:

1. Identify needs of the parish within its areas of responsibility and in keeping with the parish mission.
2. Establish priorities among the needs and communicate how these needs can realistically be addressed and where inter-committee collaboration might be effective.
3. Formulate long-range and short-term goals and objectives.
4. Research and investigate options to implement goals.
5. Submit the proposed programs to the Council for support.
6. Communicate with the pastor and pastoral staff about the implementation.
7. Maintain communication with the parish concerning programs, encouraging active support and involvement.
8. Maintain communication with the respective archdiocesan offices and agencies for guidelines and resources.
9. Provide on-going formation of committee members in its areas of responsibility through workshops, study, spiritual formation, etc.
10. Determine budget priorities in the area of the committee's responsibility and make recommendations to the Council through the Finance / Administrative Services Committee.
11. Periodically evaluate existing programs and activities.
12. Provide the Council with regular, oral or written reports of the work of their committees.

Section 4. The descriptions of the individual standing committees of the Council are:

(These committee descriptions may be adapted to meet the Council's requirements with respect to committee ministry. Suggested descriptions of all parish committees are available in Parish Committee Resource Book.)

Prayer and Worship: This committee nourishes and gives direction to the liturgical aspect of parish life. They provide opportunities for parishioners to deepen their faith through a variety of prayer experiences and liturgical celebrations. They identify the spiritual needs of parishioners and maintain an on going program of education and training for liturgical ministers.

Christian Formation: The role of this committee is to develop within the parish awareness that the parish community has the responsibility for promoting the educational/formation aspect of the mission of the Church. Christian Formation is a lifelong process aimed at personal conversion and growth in faith. This committee is advisory to educational administration in the design, implementation and evaluation of the total Christian educational/formation programs in the parish, which include: sacramental preparation, adult and family ministry, youth ministry, school ministry and child ministry.

Add one of the following if the parish has a school:

The School Committee along with the priest(s), principal and director of religious education are dedicated to the promotion and welfare of Catholic education. This committee is responsible for identifying and expressing the educational goals and objectives of the parish community.

(If the school committee exists in the parish, it is accountable to the Council directly, or through the Christian Formation Committee.)

If the School Committee is a **SEPARATE STANDING COMMITTEE of the Council**, add:

The School Committee compiles guidelines and operational procedures subject to the approval of the Council.

If the School Committee is a **SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE CHRISTIAN FORMATION COMMITTEE**, add:

The School Committee complies guidelines and operational procedures subject to the approval of the Christian Formation Committee.

Human Concerns: This committee discerns needs of persons in the parish and wider community, especially the poor, and identifies resources to meet those needs enlisting the active cooperation of parish members. This committee fulfills the justice dimensions of scripture and our Church tradition acknowledging that every Christian is called to service and to work for justice, including Respect Life efforts. The committee's scope of responsibility is two-fold:

1) to meet immediate needs; 2) to work for changes in the structures of society, which are oppressive. Committee members are not responsible to do all of the committee's work but rather to involve others in actively accepting the responsibility of their baptism. The committee supports those in the parish who are already involved in service, advocacy, justice education, and empowerment of people. This committee works with community groups and other parishes to help solve related problems. They keep parishioners aware of issues relating to justice, peace, hunger and homeless persons on local, national and international levels so that appropriate Christian action on such issues can be determined.

(Each parish will develop its own areas of special interest based on the needs and concerns of its parishioners and community.)

Finance/Administrative Services: This committee makes recommendations to the Council concerning all aspects of parish stewardship, financial and budget matters, personnel, maintenance of parish facilities and properties, and fundraising for the parish. The activities and recommendations of this committee are firmly rooted in the biblical concept of stewardship. The committee works closely with the Council and is supportive of all other committees. This committee does not decide priorities for the parish — that is the responsibility of the Council. The pastor and trustee-treasurer are ex officio members of the Finance/Administrative Services Committee.

Section 5. All standing committees operate under a set of **common Standing Committee Guidelines** established by the Council and reviewed by the Council every five years. Each committee chairperson shall meet with the Council at least once a year. A committee is able to make decisions only if a quorum is present which means a majority of its members. There may be majority and minority reports presented to the Council if agreement cannot be achieved.

Section 6. Committee Officers. The chairperson of each committee shall be discerned by and from the committee members, based on competence, leadership ability and knowledge of the committee’s area of ministry. The term of office for the chairperson is one year. Other officers determined by the committee, e.g. secretary, are selected in a similar manner. Neither an employee of the parish nor an ex officio member of the Council shall be eligible to be an officer.

ARTICLE VII: AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

The Council may amend the bylaws by consensus or a two-thirds vote of the members at two consecutive meetings of the Council.

Date of Approval by the Archdiocese: _____

Date of Most Recent Amendment: _____

Date of Next Full Review: _____

SAMPLE STANDING COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

These guidelines are a sample format. Each parish will adapt them to fit their own situation. The guidelines are an important resource for the Parish Council and committees, especially the committee chairpersons. They clearly define the committees' responsibilities, manner of operation and expectations. The Committee Guidelines should be reviewed in conjunction with the Parish Council's review of their constitution and bylaws. Committee chairpersons can alert the Parish Council chairperson to any discrepancies or problems in the guidelines.

I. PURPOSE

Each standing committee implements the Parish Council's priorities and goals in its own areas of responsibility, working together to accomplish the parish's stated mission. All committee work leads to building a faith community, proclaiming the Word of God, calling people to prayer and motivating people to serve others.

II. SCOPE

All committees are accountable to the Parish Council. Committees make decisions in their areas of responsibility following the principle of subsidiary, which means making decisions at the most appropriate level in the parish committee structure.

III. FUNCTIONS

The basic functions of each Parish Council standing committee are to:

1. Identify needs of the parish within its areas of responsibility and in keeping with the parish mission.
2. Establish priorities among needs and communicate these needs to the Parish Council, discerning with them which needs can be realistically addressed and where inter-committee or inter-parish collaboration might be effective.
3. Formulate long-range and short-term goals and objectives.
4. Research and investigate options to implement goals.
5. Submit program proposals to the Parish Council for support.
6. Develop and recommend policy in their area of responsibility to the Council.
7. Communicate with the pastor and pastoral staff about the implementation.
8. Maintain communication with the parish concerning programs, encouraging active support and involvement.
9. Maintain communication with the respective archdiocesan offices and agencies for guidelines and resources.

10. Provide on-going formation of committee members in its areas of responsibility through workshops, study, spiritual formation, etc.
11. Determine budget priorities in the areas of the committee's responsibility and make recommendations to the Parish Council through the Finance / Administrative Services Committee.
12. Periodically evaluate existing programs and activities.

In any case where any committee member interprets an action of a committee to be outside the limits of its responsibilities, that member shall present such interpretation to the Parish Council liaison or a council officer, no later than the next parish council meeting and ask for reconsideration by the council. Pending reconsideration, the effect of the committee action shall be suspended.

IV. MEMBERSHIP

1. All committee members must be baptized, practicing Catholics and registered members of the parish. All members participate equally in decision-making.

(The pastor, with the approval of the Council, may appoint a non-Catholic or non-parishioner to serve as an advisor to a committee for a limited time. An advisor gives input to the committee but does not participate in the decision-making task of the committee. However, in the case of the School Education Committee, non-Catholic and/or non-parishioner school parents are eligible for membership on the committee. They participate fully in the decision-making and other work of the committee, according to the School Education Committee bylaws.)
2. Committee members need to be recruited actively and continuously by the committee itself and its subcommittees.
3. The term for committee members shall be one year. Annual membership lists shall be submitted to the parish council secretary.
4. Any committee member may resign by filing a written resignation with the committee chairperson.
5. At any regular meeting a member may be removed for good cause by consensus or by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the committee. Any member whose removal has been proposed shall be given an opportunity to be heard at the meeting. Good cause includes missing two consecutive meetings without a good reason, physical or mental incapacity, or failure to perform duties as a committee member.
6. A vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the committee chairperson. The Parish Council secretary shall be notified of the change.
7. Each new member is to be adequately prepared for membership on the committee by being provided with the opportunities for spiritual growth, appropriate theological foundation and the skills and information required for membership on the committee.

8. Optional: A young person at least 14 years of age but not yet 18 may be recruited annually to serve as a representative of the parish youth to the committee.

V. OFFICERS

The officers of each committee shall be a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and a secretary. Officers are selected annually by and from the committee based on their competence, leadership and knowledge of the committee's responsibilities. Offices are filled in the following order: chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary. Ex Officio members of the committee are ineligible to serve as committee officers.

A. The committee chairperson:

1. Is aware of the tasks and responsibilities of the committee and communicates these to the committee, Parish Council and parish community.
2. Organizes/coordinates the activities of the committee. Develops and maintains an annual committee calendar consistent with the parish council calendar.
3. Prepares the meeting agenda and submits it to committee members at least 3 days before the meeting.
4. Provides formation/education for committee members in its areas of responsibility, utilizing the parish staff and offerings on the district and archdiocesan levels.
5. Conducts meetings by assisting the committee members to work together effectively and arrive at appropriate decisions through consensus.
6. Facilitates the task of determining priorities and setting goals for programs and services to be developed within parish guidelines and archdiocesan structures and goals within the committee's areas of responsibility.
7. Monitors implementation of all committee decisions.
8. Establishes a budget based on committee objectives; and communicates budget information to the Finance / Administrative Services Committee.
9. Forms ad hoc committees when necessary and appoints their chairpersons; makes appointments of subcommittee chairpersons; assigns individuals specific tasks; delegates responsibilities; and encourages cooperation both in and out of meetings.
10. Maintains committee membership roster and notifies the parish council secretary of any changes.
11. Is an ex officio member of all subcommittees of the committee.
12. Oversees recruitment and orientation of new committee members.

13. Assists the next chairperson in understanding the committee's history, responsibilities and resources. Transfers all committee materials to the new chairperson.
14. Performs duties consistent with the office as the parish council or committee may direct.

B. The committee vice-chairperson:

1. Conducts meetings in the absence of the chairperson and is familiar with the parish structures, committee guidelines and activities, and consensus decision-making so as to provide continuity for the group.
2. Becomes chairperson in case of a vacancy.
3. Performs special tasks consistent with the office as assigned by the chairperson or the committee.

C. The committee secretary:

1. Oversees the accurate recording of the minutes of each meeting and sees to it that the minutes and the agenda are made available to the committee members, parish council, other committees and the parish.
2. Takes attendance at meetings and records absences.
3. Maintains the official list of all committee members and their terms, the list of all ad hoc and subcommittee chairpersons and members and keeps these lists current with regard to addresses, phone numbers and e-mail.
4. Handles correspondence for the group, including agendas, minutes, notification of regular and special meetings, notes of thanks, etc.
5. Performs duties consistent with the office as the chairperson or committee may direct.

VI. MEETINGS

1. Regular committee meetings are held at such time, place and date as the parish council may designate. Each meeting consists of prayer/formation, decision-making and planning.

An agenda is prepared before the meeting by the chairperson, after appropriate consultation with other committee members, based on an understanding of the on-going needs and concerns of the parish within the scope of the committee's responsibilities. A written agenda is presented to committee members at least three days before each meeting.

2. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson, parish council chairperson, pastor, or a quorum of the committee. A quorum consists of a majority of the members. Notice of such meetings is given to all committee members within a reasonable time prior to the meeting, indicating its time, place and purpose. No business other than that stated as the purpose is conducted at that meeting.

3. Advance notice of the time and place of committee meetings is published in the parish bulletin, and all members of the parish are entitled and welcome to attend as observers. The committee chairperson may open any meeting to discussion by parish members on such subjects and under such rules as the chairperson may announce.

VII. MANNER OF DECISION-MAKING

Committees' manner of decision-making is communal discernment, which includes gathering of information, prayerful reflection and dialogue, leading to consensus.

VIII. SUBCOMMITTEES

The committee chairperson shall form subcommittees as needed. Each subcommittee shall have a chairperson or representative who speaks for the subcommittee at standing committee meetings. The initial task of each subcommittee is to delineate its responsibilities for review by the standing committee and parish council. Upon approval, the subcommittee must develop its own goals. Guidelines and operating procedures should be established if they are significantly different from the standing committee guidelines.

IX. REVISIONS TO GUIDELINES

The Parish Council may revise these Standing Committee Guidelines by consensus or a two-thirds vote of the parish council.

Date of Approval by Council: _____

Date of Most Recent Revision: _____

Date of Next Full Review: _____

EUCCHARIST WITHOUT WALLS MODEL PARISH COUNCIL AGENDA

WE ASSEMBLE IN GOD’S NAME

1. Opening Prayer

WE CELEBRATE OUR PAST

2. Review and approve minutes
Guest and Visitor Comments
Pastor’s Report

WE PROCLAIM GOD’S WORD

3. Reading from Scripture
Personal and Shared Reflection

WE PRESENT OUR OFFERING

4. Ministry Area Report/Organizational Work
5. New Business, e.g. proposals, information, discussions
6. Old Business, e.g. decisions pending
7. Immediate Planning:
What ministry area will be reviewed at the next meeting? Or what organizational work will we do? Who will make the presentation?
How will we prepare for the meeting?
Looking ahead: What will happen in the parish in the next three months?
Communication: In light of work accomplished at the meeting, what information needs to be shared? With/by whom? How?

WE GIVE THANKS

Closing prayer, blessing and Sign of Peace

WE GO OUT TO LOVE AND SERVE

SAMPLE

NOMINATION FORM FOR PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

(Printed on parish letterhead.)

[Date]

You are invited
to nominate yourself or another parishioner
for membership on the Parish Council of

[Name of Parish]

for a three year term of service.

Eligibility:

Baptized, Catholic

At least 18 years of age

Active member of our parish

Not an employee of the parish

Name of nominee _____

Address of nominee _____

Phone number _____

I make this nomination for the following reasons: _____

PARISH COUNCIL MANUAL

APPENDIX

LIVING THE SPIRIT

TO CONTACT OFFICES OR PERSONNEL OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MILWAUKEE

BY MAIL:

Archbishops Cousins Catholic Center

3501 S. Lake Drive
P.O. Box 070912
Milwaukee WI 53207-0912
414-769-3300
By Fax:414-769-3408

Catholic Charities

Phone414-769-3400
E-mailCatholicCharities@ccmke.org

Chancery

Phone414-769-3340
E-mail.....chancery@archmil.org

Intercultural Ministries

Phone414-769-3398
E-mail.....diaz@archmil.org

African-American Ministry

E-maildiaz@archmil.org

Asian Ministry

E-mail.....diaz@archmil.org

Deaf / Hard of Hearing Ministry

E-maildeafministry@archmil.org

Hispanic Ministry

E-mailbeneventej@archmil.org

Ecumenical and Interfaith

Phone414-769-3483
E-maillongdinj@archmil.org

Development Services:

Catholic Stewardship Appeal

Parish Stewardship

Faith In Our Future Campaign

Phone414-769-3457
E-maildevelopment@archmil.org

John Paul II Center

Phone414-758-2201
E-mailnohrl@archmil.org

Catechesis & Youth Ministry

Phone414-758-2240
E-mailpokornyg@archmil.org

Diaconate Formation

Phone414-758-2202
E-mail.....ebelj@archmil.org

Lay Formation

Phone414-758-2201
E-mailnohrl@archmil.org

Nazareth Project

Phone414-758-2201
E-maillococol@archmil.org

Campus Ministry - UW-Milwaukee

Phone414-964-6640
E-mailnewmancenter.uwm@gmail.com

Campus Ministry - UW-Whitewater

Phone262-473-5555
E-mailcmcuww@sbcglobal.net

Office for Parish Finances

Phone414-769-3377
E-mailparishfinance@archmil.org

Office for Parish Mission

Phone414-769-3378
E-mailparishcouncils@archmil.org

Office for Schools

Phone414-758-2256
E-mailschools@archmil.org

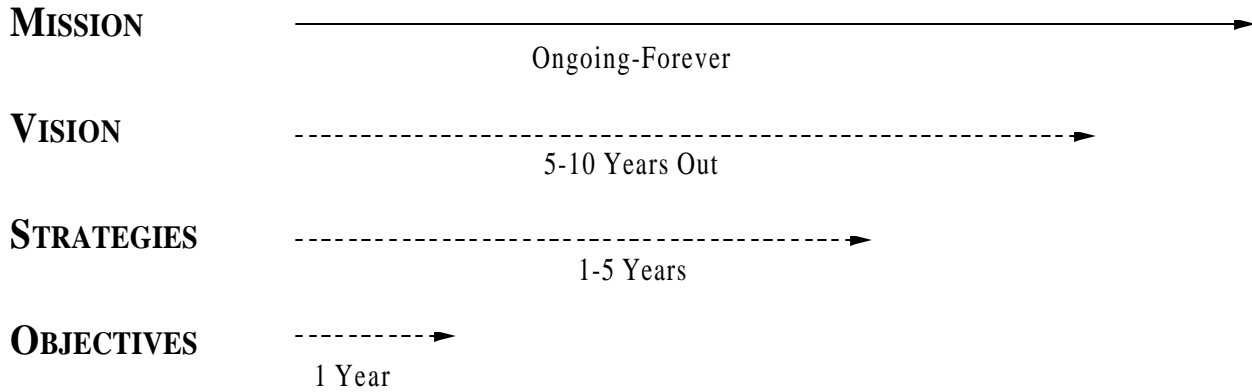
Office for Worship

Phone414-769-3348
E-mail.....oremus@archmil.org

Social Justice Ministry

Phone414-758-2286
E-mailshelledyr@archmil.org

STATEMENTS



- MISSION STATEMENT** is a **broad description of what *we* do, with/for whom we do it, our distinctive competence, and why we do it.**
- VISION STATEMENT** is a **description of how we hope to be perceived, in ideal terms, in the future, 5-10 years.** This includes the results we will be achieving and the characteristics we will need to possess in order to achieve those results. The vision statement provides direction and inspiration for us in goal setting.
- GOAL STATEMENTS** are broad **statements of what we hope to achieve in the next 3-5 years.** Goals focus on outcomes or results and are qualitative in nature.
- STRATEGIES** are **statements of the primary approach or method** (means) for achieving the goals and addressing specific issues.
- OBJECTIVES** are **specific, concrete, measurable statements of what we will do** to achieve goals within a one-year time frame.

** "We" refers to the particular group involved in planning e.g. the parish, a committee, a particular ministry or organization.*

ASSESSING THE PARISH ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

1. Distribute the organizational chart for your parish. Have the pastor or informed people explain how it works. If the parish has no organizational chart, develop one. The following samples may be of help.
2. Seek questions for clarification.
3. Distribute job descriptions (if available) for all identified on the chart.

DISCUSS

- A. How do committees, staff members and organizations within the parish contribute to the overall mission of the parish?
- B. How does each participate in the ministry of leadership?
- C. Are any changes or adjustments needed in the organizational structure of the parish? Are there any formal recommendations to be made to the pastor?

MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS

If needed, include:

- A. Who?
 1. Who is making the recommendation?
 2. Who needs to consider doing something?
- B. Why? What is the motivation for the recommendation?
- C. What? What needs to be done?
- D. By when? Set a reasonable timetable for completion and report back to the pastor.

Sample recommendation

Who: The parish staff (administrators and catechists/teachers) responsible for K-8 Christian Formation programs.

What: Review current religious education series available and select a common series to be used in both school and non-school religious formation programs.

When: The new texts will be selected, budgeted and ready for use in the academic year 200__.

FORMAT FOR COMMITTEE REPORTS

NAME OF COMMITTEE: _____

DATE OF MEETING: _____

Members Present:

1. Topics/Issues/Projects Discussed.

2. Decisions Made

3. Follow-Up Work - Person(s) Responsible

4. Next Meeting: (Date/Major Agenda Items)

To: Parish Council

FYI. No action needed at this time.

Please put us on your next agenda.
See attachment.

We need directions, please. See attachment.

Other:

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS OTHER POLICIES/PRACTICES

1. What is the policy of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee regarding parish employees serving on Parish Council?

The revised parish council manual approved in March, 2003 by Archbishop Dolan states:

Staff members may NOT serve as parish council members of the parish where they are employed. Additionally, to avoid a conflict of interest, we strongly recommend that immediate family members of parish employees NOT serve on council during their time of employment. *(Page 8-14 PC Manual 2003).*

Supporting rationale:

1. Parish councilors are the parishioners duly authorized to represent the whole parish and to advise the pastor/parish director on all its ministries without bias.
2. Parish employees influence parish decision-making through their job/ministry and their staff meetings.
3. At certain times during the year (budget or planning) the individual's position may be under discussion. This would pose a conflict of interest and place undo burden on the other councilors. *(05/03)*

2. May a husband and wife, parent and child, or siblings serve together on the council?

It is not impossible but we **strongly discourage** this for a number of reasons:

- It gives too much responsibility and influence to one family in the parish. Responsibility for leadership should be shared as broadly as possible.
- It limits the breadth of representation desired on the council.
- It may set the stage for a conflict of interest between family members.
- It may introduce unnecessary stress into a family or couple's own relationship!

3. Could a Parish Council meeting be held without the pastor being present?

Rarely. The council exists to advise the pastor. The council exerts its "influence" only when the pastor is present to receive their advice. Therefore, a Parish Council rarely, if ever, meets as a Council unless the pastor is present. If it is necessary to meet without the pastor due to illness or other significant circumstance, the pastor should be aware of the meeting and the agenda. As soon as possible following the meeting the Council chair should meet with the pastor to inform him of the outcomes of the meeting.

Parish Council Bylaws, Article IV Section 2 states:

Special meetings may be called by the chairperson, pastor or a quorum. A quorum consists of two-thirds of the total membership and includes the pastor. *(04/25/03)*

4. Do committee reports have to be "officially approved minutes" before a report is given to the council?

The Parish Council members should receive a report, not the minutes of a committee meeting. Minutes are for the committee members.

The council needs to know that the four mandated parish committees

- Are in place, and adequately staffed
- Are clear about and prepared to do the work expected
- Have the resources (budget and materials) to accomplish their work
- Are organized in the best way to accomplish their goals

What should a committee report include?

1. Members present/absent
2. Current status of committee work
3. Decisions made
4. Budget status
5. Date of next meeting
6. If the committee needs any direction from the council or time on the next council agenda. (04/14/03)

5. Should parish council constitution/bylaws include an Article regarding the liability of council member?

Parish council members do not need to be insured as they are an advisory body. No statement regarding this is included in council bylaws.

However, as officers of the parish corporation, the trustees are covered for liability through the parish insurance. (09/20/02)

6. How is the parish council membership data updated for Archdiocesan records?

The parish council secretary is responsible for making sure the Archdiocesan Extranet is updated whenever a change in membership on council occurs.

The parish council secretary works with the parish web administrator to keep the archdiocesan registry current.

For more information on updating the extranet type in the following address for the internet <http://www.archmil.org/aboutus/ShowResource.asp?ID=995>. (05/02)

PARISH COUNCIL MANUAL

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