

**Constitution of the Parish Pastoral Council of  
The Church of St. William  
Fridley, MN  
2006**

**Introduction**

**The Parish Pastoral Council of the Church of St. William** is a visionary body, devoted to fulfilling the mission of the parish through prayerful reflection, study and planning. It is consulted by the Pastor and is dependent upon him for its identity and purpose. The primary role of the Council is to reflect upon the ever-changing pastoral needs of the parish and help create a vision that will strengthen our mission.

The Council provides a major channel for the Pastor to understand the needs and desires of the parish. It leads the parish to new life through its focus on planning ways in which we can grow in faith and in love, through prayerfully studying, reflecting, and guiding change. The Council brings forth the practical wisdom of the parishioners themselves, as the parish deepens its commitment to the Gospel message. It constantly asks, “What does God want us to do?”

This document outlines the purpose and procedures for the Parish Pastoral Council of The Church of St. William. It is written after prayerful discernment by a representative body of the parish leadership. This brings forth the collective wisdom, vision and understanding of the leadership, in unity with the Pastor.

**Article I: Name of the Organization**

The formal name of the Parish Pastoral Council shall be the Parish Pastoral Council of The Church of St. William. This will be referenced hereinafter as “the Council”.

**Article II: Purpose, Mission and Function**

The purpose of the Council is to build community as it studies, reflects and plans through carrying out the following functions:

- Fulfilling the mission statement while adapting to the Parish’s ever changing needs
- Calling forth the combined gifts and experiences, of those who are baptized and those who are ordained, to act for the common good of our faith community
- Growing our faith community through worship, education, and outreach
- Providing practical advice and counsel to the Pastor or Pastoral Leader

In carrying out its purpose, the Council will open the way for the entire parish to fulfill its mission.

## **The Mission of the Church of St. William**

*We, the members of the Church of St. William, accept responsibility for this Catholic parish by calling one another to live in a spirit of community and share the gifts of the community as a sign of our faith. As witnesses of God's presence in the world, we dedicate ourselves to:*

Centering our lives on the Eucharist and prayer so that all we do finds its source and fulfillment in the worship of God;

Reaching out to welcome others regardless of faith, race or diversity of lifestyle;

Making formation in God's saving word and the vision of the church a lifelong journey;

Modeling for our youth and children the core teachings of Christ in our lives and actions;

Ministering to all those in need of comfort and support that they might find in our care the healing love of Jesus Christ;

Promoting the causes of justice, peace and unity in cooperating with other denominations and across civic boundaries.

### **Article III: Membership**

#### **Desirable Gifts of Council Members**

Members of the Council are confirmed parishioners who feel called to serve God, the Parish and each other.

Important gifts for those serving in this ministry include:

- A desire to support and live out the mission of St. William's Catholic Church.
- Having a relationship with God that is evident, strong in faith and integrity, and with the desire to continually grow.
- Commitment to the gift of service to others.
- Good communication and social skills.

*(See Appendix A – Desirable Characteristics of a Parish Pastoral Council Member.)*

## Nomination & Selection of Pastoral Council Members

- A Discernment Committee is formed as a subcommittee of the Council to initiate and oversee the process of selecting new Council members. Potential members are identified by this committee and recommended to the Pastor. Embedded in the Discernment Committee's role is to help make the nomination and selection process welcoming for all involved. "I have called you each by name."

### The Nomination Process

- There will be a maximum of nine Council Members in addition to the Pastor. The lay trustees of the parish also serve as *ex officio* members of the Council. Parish staff members may not sit on the Council, but may be asked to participate in the Council activities as warranted.
- Council Members will serve 3-year terms, which will be staggered so that no more than three members will be leaving/starting at a time. Council Members may serve up to 2 terms, if nominated for the second term.
- Starting in October, nominations of new members to the Parish Pastoral Council may be submitted to the Discernment Committee in one of four ways:
  - By the parish at large
  - Self-nomination
  - By the Pastor
  - By current Parish Pastoral Council Members.
- It is important that those nominated are invited in a personal way to consider being a candidate for the Parish Pastoral Council. Once again - - "I have called you each by name."
- An informational meeting, including a shared meal will be conducted so that candidates may understand what it means to be a member of the Parish Pastoral Council. This allows a welcoming atmosphere as well as an informal time for questions. The Discernment Committee will conduct this meeting with the help of the Pastor.
- At the end of the informational meeting, the candidates are asked to each pray and discern whether God is calling him/her to serve as a Council Member at this time.
- After the names of those nominated have been submitted and identified, the community prays for them at Mass.
- Members of the Discernment Committee follow up with the candidates to determine if they remain interested in continuing the selection process.

## **The Discernment Process**

- The Discernment Committee works with nominees individually to help them determine their readiness to serve. Issues to consider in this process include, but are not limited to the following:
  - What do you like most about our parish?
  - What do you consider to be the two biggest issues facing our parish?
  - Why do you want to become a member of the Parish Pastoral Council?
- The Discernment Committee discusses the candidates' answers and prayerfully discerns, with the Pastor, the selection of those best suited to serve on the Council for the following three years, beginning the next January. If a vacancy on the Council occurs, the Pastor may fill the vacancy from any remaining candidates or the parish at large.

### **Article IV: Officers**

The Pastor presides over the Council. To allow the Pastor to fully participate in Council meetings without the responsibility of conducting the meeting, officers of the Council are established.

The officers of the Council will consist of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary. These officers will be selected by the Pastor for terms of one year.

Chairperson: The chairperson has the role of working with the pastor to set the agenda for the upcoming meeting, to conduct the meetings, to assure that minutes are taken and distributed to all members of the Council in a timely fashion and to call any special meetings as deemed necessary by the pastor. The Chairperson's duty is to facilitate the Council in carrying out its work, and to maintain a strong sense of community amongst Council members.

Vice-Chairperson: The Vice Chairperson will perform the duties of the Chairperson in request, absence, or incapacity of the Chairperson.

Secretary: The Secretary will take minutes at each meeting and ensure that they are distributed in a timely fashion.

### **Article V: Meetings**

The full Council meets a minimum of six times per year. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor. Ad hoc committees meet as needed outside of regularly scheduled Council meetings.

## **Article VI: Committees**

The Council will have an Executive Committee, consisting of the Pastor, Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. It will meet as needed to set the agenda for the monthly meeting, or if the need for a special meeting arises.

Other ad hoc committees may be formed to address areas of concern or need, at the discretion of the Pastor, or with the recommendation of the Council. These committees disband after the work is accomplished.

## **Article VII: Amendments**

Amendments may be made to the constitution as needed to adapt to the changing circumstances of the parish. The Council will draft the appropriate language and make a recommendation to the Pastor, who will determine if the amendment should be adopted.

## **Article VIII**

The Council may develop by-laws as needed.

## Appendix A

### Desirable Characteristics of a Pastoral Council Member

- Must have the parish's best interest in mind – in the “big picture.”
  - Must be a team player, able to listen to differing opinions, integrate various points of view, and discern with others what is best for the parish.
- Must be visionary.
  - This requires the flexibility to recognize and respond to short-term problems and/or opportunities, but also to have the vision for the long term (several years) as requirements, culture and demographics change.
- Commitment and dedication to the parish.
  - To meet this requirement all members of the Council must be currently registered and fully initiated members of the parish family. This should include, if possible, a cross section of the cultures and ages of the members.
- Approachable.
  - To be approachable, it is desirable to be known by the parishioners and be both accessible and available to them. The Council Member's visibility is the key to building parish awareness and good communication.
- Open-minded.
  - Should be open to a variety of viewpoints and able to present those viewpoints to the decision making group. This provides the potential for the discernment of the wisest direction for the parish.
- Problem solving.
  - Should have the ability to study, investigate and examine pastoral matters thoroughly. This requires the capacity to reflect widely and patience to ponder deeply, in order to reach the best possible conclusions and decisions.
- Team player.
  - Should have the ability to relate to people and work as a cooperative team member. Should have knowledge and competence that are widely recognized and the willingness to respond to various viewpoints.
- Decision maker.
  - Should have the ability to study, reflect and integrate the viewpoints of others and propose practical conclusions about pastoral matters.

- Representative of Different Backgrounds.
  - Awareness of the diverse communities, social conditions and professions of parishioners that should be recognized, will help guide the choice of Council Members. This magnifies the importance of participation by the entire parish community in the discernment of Council Members.
  
- Compassionate.
  - Should be able to reach out, embrace and give service to those in need.
  
- To be a good listener.
  - Seek the input of parishioners and listen carefully to their concerns in order to help establish the direction of the parish. If parishioners know their voices are being heard and acted upon, they will offer their views more willingly to Council Members and some will then offer their own gifts to the parish. The Council will use the parish bulletin and pulpit announcements to maintain visibility and ongoing communication. Names and phone numbers of Council Members will be published. Council Members should be people who are open to a variety of viewpoints and can represent those viewpoints to the decision making group.
  
- Active, energetic and motivated.
  - These are all traits that any Council Member should have. We all have our “ups and downs,” but in general, all members should be anxious to participate and give their best whenever possible.
  
- Prayerful.
  - Council Member’s vision must be formed by prayerful reflection. Members need to pray both individually and collectively about their decisions for the parish. As spiritual leaders they should provide a good example of Christian living. Their character should be an example of proven faith and sound morals.
  
- Creative.
  - This means “creative” in problem solving. It does not mean creating new subjects to disrupt the main agenda for a particular meeting. Usually the time line for the meeting’s agenda is limited and there is little extra time to diverge.
  
- Change agents.
  - As the primary “direction setting” group of the parish, Council Members need the attitude that “things can always be improved.” They need the ability to discern where change is appropriate and have the courage to recommend changes to make the vision a reality.
  
- Servant leaders.
  - Council Members should offer their gifts of time and talents, not from a sense of power and control, but with an attitude of shared responsibility.