



Parish Council Guidelines

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Parish Council to provide vision and direction in promoting the mission of the Parish.

Article I: Name

The name of this body shall be the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church Parish Council; hereinafter referred to as the "Council".

Article II: Purpose

Section 1. The general purpose of the Council shall be to act as a consultative body, providing advice and direction in supporting and promoting the mission of the Parish, to the Pastor. In serious matters, the Council shall ensure the availability of due process for both parishioners and the Pastor.

Section 2: The specific purposes of the Council shall be the following:

1. To promote the vision and mission of the parish.
2. To provide consultation to the Pastor in matters of pastoral planning and policy.
3. To listen and represent the wisdom of the many perspectives present in the parish community.
4. To cooperate with other parishes and the Diocese in the fulfillment of the universal mission of the Church.

Article III: Authority

Section 1. The authority of the Council is derived from the authority of the Pastor.

Section 2. The Council shall operate within the framework of the laws and teachings of the Church, Diocesan regulations and the policies of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Article IV: Membership & Commissions

Section 1. Members of the Council will be appointed by the Pastor.

Section 2. The Council members are to be faithful and active members of the parish who are in full communion with the Catholic Church and who are dedicated to the welfare of the entire parish.

Section 3. The Council shall be comprised of nine (9) to 14 parishioner members.

Section 4. The Council shall include members of the pastor's staff, as he deems necessary.

Section 5. All members shall take office at the first regular meeting of the Council following their appointment.

Section 6. Members may be appointed to the Council as at-large members or to Council Commissions parallel with the four (4) pillars of parish stewardship as follows:

1. Hospitality
2. Prayer & Worship
3. Faith Formation
4. Apostolic Service

Section 7. The Council shall establish committees or task forces to address specific issues or projects, if necessary. The Council, in consultation with the established committees or task forces, shall determine when the work of the group is finished.

Section 8. Members will serve three-year terms as set by the Pastor, with the exception of the Chairperson who will serve a two-year term.

Section 9. Council members are not allowed to serve more than two consecutive terms.

Section 10. For council members wishing to serve a second term, they must be appointed by the pastor for their second term and service must be within a different capacity than the first-term served.

Section 11. Members are expected to attend all meetings. Members shall notify the Council Chairperson or Staff, in advance, if they cannot attend a meeting.

Section 12. Any member of the Council who misses four (4) regularly scheduled meetings within one (1) fiscal year may be removed from the Council. After three (3) missed meetings, written notification of absences will be sent to the said member. After four (4) missed meetings, written notification of removal, including information regarding absences and a copy of this administrative guideline, will be sent to the said member.

Section 13. Any member of the Council may resign by filing a resignation letter with the Pastor. The Pastor will notify the Chairman of the Council upon receiving filed resignations.

Section 14. Any member of the Council may be removed for just cause, by the Pastor.

Section 16. If a vacancy occurs, the Pastor will appoint a person from the parish to fill that vacancy.

Article V: Officers

Section 1. The officers of the Council shall be:

Chairperson

Section 2. The Chairperson shall be appointed by the Pastor prior to the first regular meeting which he/or she attends.

Article VI: Duties of the Officers

Section 1. The responsibilities of the Chairperson shall be to:

1. Conduct all Council meetings and to call special meetings as needed.
2. Be an ex-officio member of each Council committee.
3. Perform other such duties as the Council may direct, consistent with that office.
4. Be responsible for assuring participation of all members in Council deliberations and decision-making.
5. Prepare an agenda, in conjunction with the Pastor or his designate, and distribute it to members no later than one week prior to the regularly scheduled Council meeting.

Article VII: Meetings

Section 1. Regular meetings of the Council shall be held the first Thursday of even number months (August, October, December, February, April and June.), with no fewer than four (4) meetings being held within one (1) fiscal year. The date and time are to be provided to Council members by the Chairperson or staff prior to each meeting.

Section 2. Regular meetings are open to all members of the Parish.

Section 3. Visitors must seek approval and make arrangements with the Pastor or the Council Chair, to attend a meeting and be included on the meeting agenda, at least two weeks prior to the Council meeting he or she wishes to attend.

Visitors are asked not to participate in discussion unless invited.

Section 4. The agenda for regular meetings should include, but not be limited to:

1. Opening prayer
2. Approval of minutes from previous meeting
3. Pastor's report
4. Old business
5. New business
6. Agenda items for next meeting
7. Closing prayer

Section 5. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson or Pastor. The purpose of a special meeting shall be provided in the meeting notification.

Section 6. Issues requiring immediate action or input from the Parish Council may be handled by email.

Section 7. The Council shall meet annually to review the activities of the previous year and engage in planning for the next year, in conjunction with the Stewardship Council.

Article IX: Amendments

Section 1. This document may be amended by the Pastor at any time.

Section 2. Amendments will be dated, properly noted in the article amended and attached to the original Guidelines.

Section 3. Amendments will be forwarded to all Council members and published as deemed necessary.