

**SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST ROMAN CATHOLIC CONGREGATION
COLUMBIA, MARYLAND**

PASTORAL COUNCIL STANDING RULES

June 2006

Revised June 2015

Revised November 2020

Revised March 2022

Amended April 2022

PREFACE

These Standing Rules of the Pastoral Council serve as the successor to the Policies and Procedures of 2002. The purpose of the Standing Rules is to implement the provisions of the Pastoral Council Bylaws (revised November 2020 and March 2022) and to both document the practices and standardize the operations of the Pastoral Council.

I. PASTORAL COUNCIL

The St. John the Evangelist Pastoral Council is an advisory body in the context of the code of Canon Law. The purpose of the Council is to represent the needs and interests of the members of St. John's and to provide a channel of communication between the members and the Pastor. Using established rules of order, including agenda, and recorded minutes, the Council evaluates, deliberates, and advises on issues affecting the life and work of the Parish and makes recommendations to the Pastor.

A. Membership

1. Membership and qualifications for the Pastoral Council shall be in accordance with Pastoral Council Bylaws (Sections II.A and II.B, respectively).
2. Youth Representatives
 - With the Pastor's approval, up to 2 of the Appointed Members of the Pastoral Council may be between the ages of 15 and 18, or in high school and considered as Youth Representatives.
 - Potential Youth Representatives will be identified by the Parish Youth Minister.
3. Procedures for filling a Pastoral Council vacancy shall be in accordance with Pastoral Council Bylaws (Section II.D) and are detailed in Section II.E.3 of these Standing Rules.

B. Terms of Service

1. The Pastoral Council shall be Appointed in accordance with the Pastoral Council Bylaws (Section II.A.) and there shall be between 10 - 14 Members of the Pastoral Council.
2. Members of the Pastoral Council serve a 3-year term beginning with the June meeting following their appointment.
3. If a vacancy occurs on the Pastoral Council which results in less than 10 Members, the Pastor shall fill the position in consultation with the Pastoral Council.
4. An appointment to fill a vacancy shall be considered a full term if there is more

than a year and a half remaining in the vacant council Member's term.

C. Officers

1. The President and Vice President are chosen at the annual June meeting by majority vote of all eligible Pastoral Council members. President and Vice President candidates must be adult members and have served at least one year on the Pastoral Council.
2. The term of office for officers shall be one year. Officers may serve in the same office for a maximum of two Pastoral Council sessions.
3. Election of Officers:
 - Officers are elected at the June meeting each year by majority vote of all eligible Members of the Pastoral Council.
 - Nominations for President are made publicly within the meeting and must be accepted by the potential candidate.
 - A nomination may be declined if the potential candidate chooses not to be considered.
 - Once nominations are complete, a private ballot is cast by each member of the Pastoral Council.
 - If there are more than 2 candidates, and none receives a majority of the votes, the person with the fewest votes shall be removed from candidacy.
 - The private ballot voting process is repeated until a single candidate receives a majority of the votes.
 - Once a candidate receives a majority of the votes, that candidate is elected as President and the candidate receiving the second highest number of votes is elected as the Vice President.
4. Duties of the President:
 - Preside at all Pastoral Council meetings
 - Establish other Council Committees as required
 - Consult with the Pastor prior to all meetings to set the agenda
 - Inform the Pastoral Council members of emergent issues of concern in a timely manner
 - Represent the Council at outside functions
 - Deliver approved minutes and attachments from Pastoral Council meetings to the Parish Secretary (may be delegated to the Vice President)
5. Duties of the Vice President:
 - Functions in the absence of the President
 - Consult with the Pastor and President prior to all meetings to set the agenda
 - Ascend to the role of President if a vacancy occurs

D. Pastoral Council Member Roles and Responsibilities

- Attend monthly scheduled standing Pastoral Council meetings September to June
- Attend additional Pastoral Council meetings, as able to do so.
- Be active in Pastoral Council activities outside of standing meetings (e.g. serve on a Pastoral Council Committee, lead an activity, or support a Pastoral Council task, like taking meeting minutes)

E. Vacancies:

1. President:
 - A vacancy in the office of President is immediately filled by the Vice President
 - The new President will serve in that office for the remainder of the Pastoral Council session, through the June meeting.
 - If the Vice President declines, or is unable, to fill the Presidential vacancy, a new election shall be held in accordance with the process described in Section I.C.3 above.
2. Vice President:
 - A vacancy in the office of Vice President with more than 3 months remaining in the Pastoral Council session shall be filled in accordance with the process described in Section I.C.3 for the Vice President office only.
 - If there are 3 months or less remaining in the Pastoral Council session, the Pastoral Council shall have the option of not filling the vacancy in the office of the Vice President.
3. Filled Vacancy impact on Terms of Service (ref: Section I.C.2.):
 - If more than 6 months remain in the Pastoral Council session, then the new officer shall be considered to have served a full term and shall only be able to serve 1 additional consecutive term in the new office.
 - If fewer than 6 months remain in the Pastoral Council session, then the new officer shall not be considered to have served a full term and shall be eligible to serve in that office for 2 additional consecutive years.

II. PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

A. Meeting Schedule:

1. The Pastoral Council will meet monthly from September to June.
2. The Pastoral Council may be compelled to meet at other times and frequency as requested by the Pastor or President.
3. The President may direct minor changes in the routine schedule of meetings based on the Pastor's request, conflicts with Parish events, facility availability, weather emergencies, and other reasonable requests made by the Pastor or Pastoral Council Members.
4. Pastoral Council Members may request special meetings to address a specific topic which is not part of the typical agenda items or has a time-relevant urgency and cannot be addressed at the next scheduled meeting.
 - The Pastoral Council member(s) must submit a written request to the President which details the purpose and topic for the special meeting.
 - No business except that specified in the request may be transacted at a special meeting without the unanimous consent of Pastoral Council Members in attendance.
 - The requesting Pastoral Council member(s) will recommend an agenda for the special meeting to the President at least 1 week prior to the meeting.
 - As schedule and conditions permit, the President will notify the Pastoral Council of the need and purpose for the special meeting as

soon as possible. The goal is that notification occur at least 10 days prior to the proposed date of the meeting.

5. If the Governor of Maryland or the Howard County Executive direct the closing of facilities or restrict the number of attendees in a gathering for any reason, the President may reschedule meetings or move to alternate facilities or modes as described below.
6. If Howard County Public Schools are closed for any reason, the President may reschedule meetings or move to alternate facilities or modes as described below.
7. The President will notify Pastoral Council Members of additional meetings or changes in schedule, facility, or mode as soon as possible with a goal of 5 days advance notice.

B. Meeting Location:

1. Meetings will be held in person at the Wilde Lake Interfaith Center or the Oakland Mills Interfaith Center.
2. If conditions prohibit the use of the Interfaith Center, meetings may be held at an alternate facility or via telephone, online meeting or collaboration software (e.g. Zoom).
3. Pastoral Council Members may attend any meeting via telephone, online meeting or collaboration software if extenuating circumstances prevent them from attending in person.

C. Meeting Attendance:

1. Pastoral Council Members are expected to prioritize attendance at scheduled meetings.
2. Newly Appointed Members shall attend the orientation meeting, if scheduled, by the President
3. Newly Appointed Pastoral Council Members shall attend an orientation meeting prior to discernment, or in June to begin their terms of service.
4. Outgoing Members shall attend their final meeting in June at the end of their terms of service.
5. The outgoing President shall preside at the June meeting.

D. Meeting Agenda and Duration:

1. As schedules and conditions allow, the President and Vice President shall consult with the Pastor to establish the specific agenda for the upcoming meeting. The goal is to have this agenda planning meeting at least 1 week prior to the scheduled meeting.
2. Pastoral Council Members and members of the congregation may propose items for consideration prior to the planning meeting between the Pastor, President, and Vice President.
3. As schedules and conditions permit, the President shall provide the agenda and pertinent documentation (e.g. text of resolutions, Pastor communications, Committee Reports, etc.) to Pastoral Council Members as soon as they are available. The goal is to provide these documents at least five (5) days in advance of the scheduled meeting
4. The monthly agenda will change depending on the Liturgical season and Pastoral Council session requirements. However, there will be common

parts of the agenda (order may be adjusted by President or Vice President as required):

- Opening prayer by Pastoral Council member
 - Approval of minutes from previous meeting (if required)
 - Pastor's Report by Pastor or Associate Pastors
 - Ministry Report (if scheduled)
 - Pastoral Council Committee Reports (as necessary)
 - Hispanic Community Report
 - Open Forum for new topics of discussion by the Pastoral Council which reflect issues about the life of the Parish and considers possible future agenda items
 - Closing prayer by Pastor, Associate Pastors or Pastoral Council member
5. Each Pastoral Council member shall have an opportunity to address an agenda item, if desired.
 6. The President may set time allotment for each agenda item, taking into consideration the priority of each item and the anticipated need for presentation and discussion. The goal is to complete normally scheduled meetings in 90 minutes. Unless there is an emergency topic under discussion, meetings shall be completed in no more than two (2) hours.
 7. The President may terminate discussion of any item as needed to ensure all topics are addressed within the allotted time for the meeting.

E. Meeting Minutes:

1. Minutes shall be recorded for all Pastoral Council meetings.
2. There is no Secretary for the Pastoral Council, so minutes may be taken by a designated individual member, a team of several Pastoral Council Members, or by rotation of Pastoral Council Members. The Pastoral Council shall decide how the minutes will be taken for the session at its September meeting.
3. A template may be used to ensure consistency in format and readability of minutes throughout the Pastoral Council session.
4. The recorder of minutes shall prepare the minutes for distribution to Pastoral Council Members within 2 weeks after a meeting.
5. Pastoral Council Members are expected to review and may then suggest additions and corrections to the proposed minutes.
6. The President may submit revised sets of minutes up to 3 days prior to the following meeting.
7. Minutes shall be approved by Council Members at the following month's regular meeting. However, the President may request prior approval of the minutes via telephone, text, or email response by the Pastoral Council Members in order to reduce the time required for the upcoming scheduled meeting.
8. The President shall distribute the approved minutes to Council Members and the Parish Manager and Parish Secretary in a timely manner.

F. Pastoral Council Committees and Reports:

1. The President may establish Pastoral Council Committees as needed with a requirement for at least 1 Pastoral Council member serving as a member of

- the Committee. The president is an ex-officio member of all Council committees.
2. All Committees shall be open to Members of the Parish community.
 3. The Pastoral Council member does not have to be the Chairperson of the Committee but is responsible for keeping the Pastoral Council aware of progress or areas of concern, through verbal reports during scheduled monthly meetings.
 4. Committees shall be established for 1 year and can be renewed on a yearly basis.

III. PASTORAL COUNCIL DISCERNMENT PROCESS

This section details the process and timelines to nominate and appoint Pastoral Council Members.

In general, the Pastor anticipates Pastoral Council members exhibit the following attributes:

- Have knowledge of St. John's history and tradition
- Embrace the congregation's diversity and St. John's role in the Interfaith Centers and community
- Have a vision of what St. John's can become consistent with its mission
- Support the implementation of the Pastoral Plan
- Lead a spiritual life of prayer
- Be willing and excited to serve St. John's and the extended community
- Be committed to the Roman Catholic Church

The timeline presented below assumes normal operations with no restrictions or extenuating circumstances (such as the date of Easter) which may require adjustments by the Pastor or President.

The Discernment Process Timeline:

- Publicity: March
 - Announcement of the upcoming Pastoral Council nomination process shall be made at all Masses and distributed through written and online communications. The announcement shall include at least the following information:
 - The number of new Members to be appointed
 - Explanation of the Discernment process
 - The Council will establish specific contacts within the process to provide additional information/advice to interested parishioners.
- Nominations: April
 - All Parishioners are encouraged to submit names for potential new Pastoral Council members (or self-nominate) at a Sunday Liturgy using "in pew" forms, online forms or contacting the Parish office over a two-week period, ending NLT April 15.
 - Invitations are sent to nominees to attend the Information Night before they make the personal decision to enter the Discernment process.

- Information Night: Early May
 - The meeting will include a presentation on the roles and duties of Pastoral Council members, and time for Nominees to ask questions.
 - Nominees leave to pray over what they have heard, and if they still feel called, to come to the Discernment Night.
 - Nominees who plan to move forward review the Archdiocesan Guidelines for Pastoral Councils and St. John's Pastoral Council Bylaws and Standing Rules.

- Discernment Night: May
 - 1-2 weeks after the Information Night, the Pastor, Associate Pastors, current Pastoral Council members and Nominees gather to discern new Pastoral Council membership in the context of prayer.
 - Nominees answer a series of questions, and listen to the answers to the same questions provided by others. All participants then come to consensus on who they wish to join the Council based on current Parish needs. Council Members and Nominees who are present will participate by identifying several individuals whose gifts would contribute to the council, and explain briefly the reasons for their choice. This input will result in a recommendation to the pastor.
 - The Pastor and Associate Pastor(s) will consider the recommendations and make the decision to accept, or amend, within 48 hours.
 - New members receive formal invitation from the Pastor to join the Council within 48 hours. At the same time, those not selected will be notified.
 - Announcement of the new Pastoral Council Members shall be made at weekend Masses and on the St. John's website not later than the first weekend in June.
 - The President may convene an orientation meeting with the new Pastoral Council Members if time and schedules permit, prior to the scheduled June Pastoral Council meeting.
 - All Pastoral Council Members, current and new, are to attend the scheduled June Pastoral Council meeting.

- Commissioning of New Members: within 2 weeks of Discernment
 - Commissioning of new members occurs at Mass within two weeks after completing Discernment.
 - Departing Members are also recognized at the same Mass, to include words from the Pastor (or his delegate) to recognize accomplishments of Council Members and emphasize the appreciation of the Parish.

IV. Communications

Consistent communications between the Pastor, Officers, and all Pastoral Council Members are critical to the effectiveness of the Pastoral Council's ability to serve the St. John's community. Electronic communications are preferred and are acceptable as written or oral correspondence for both internal and external communications described below.

A. Internal Communications:

1. Any new version of the Pastoral Council Bylaws will be made available to all Council members upon approval by the Council.
2. An electronic version of the Pastoral Council Bylaws and these Standing Rules shall be provided to each Member upon their appointment
3. Pastoral Council Roster:
 - A telephone and email roster will be made available to all Pastoral Council Members and the Parish staff
 - This roster will not be released to the broader congregation to preserve the privacy of the Pastoral Council Membership.
4. Official Correspondence:
 - Pastoral Council official correspondence shall take the form of written documents (e.g. reports, minutes, letters, or presentations)
 - As determined by the President or Vice President, official correspondence may be released to the general public via the St. John's website or via social media applications.
 - Electronic versions of official correspondence shall suffice as official record of Pastoral Council activities, decisions, or recommendations.
 - The Pastoral Council may use email or other collaboration software to acquire formal votes and motions to support the efficient operations of the Pastoral Council.
5. Official Meetings:
 - As conditions permit, official meetings shall be held in-person
 - Online collaboration software shall be available for all official meetings
 - Pastoral Council Members are encouraged to attend in person but may attend by telephone or collaboration software.
 - Electronic versions of meeting minutes, once approved, will serve as the historical record and be provided to the Parish Secretary

V. Amendments

Any proposed amendment to these Standing Rules shall be presented as an agenda item at a regular meeting in accordance with Section II.D. If a quorum is established and a majority of all Pastoral Council voting Members cast the vote in the affirmative, the proposed amendment shall be incorporated into these Standing Rules.

VI. Emergency Authority

If emergency conditions exist that disrupt the implementation of these Standing Rules, the President or Vice President, in consultation with the Pastor, may exercise an Emergency Authority to adjust any portion of these Standing Rules in order to maintain the effectiveness of the Pastoral Council's actions in support of the Pastor and in service to the congregation of St. John's.