

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

**PASTORAL COUNCIL BYLAWS**

February 2006  
Revised May 2015  
Revised November 2020  
Revised March 2022  
Amended April 2022  
Revised April 2026

*Parish remains a set of persons; it means a community in which and with which Jesus reconfirms the presence of God. The parish is a living part of the people of God.*  
- POPE JOHN PAUL II

## PREFACE

These bylaws are the rules of order under which the Pastoral Council of St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic congregation conducts its business.

### I. Mission Statement

To celebrate the joy in loving/following Christ by welcoming and loving all, so that all are inspired to put faith into action and respond to the call to serve others.

### II. PURPOSE OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL:

The St. John the Evangelist Pastoral Council is an advisory body to the Pastor<sup>1</sup>. 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. The purpose of the Council is to further the mission of the parish seeking God's will for the parish by:

- representing the needs and interests of the parishioners of St. John's,
- providing a channel of communication between the parishioners and the Pastor,
- facilitating and creating a parish mission statement,
- developing; revising; and facilitating and monitoring implementation of the parish pastoral plan.

### III. PASTORAL COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

A. The Pastoral Council shall consist of the following Members:

- Pastoral Council Members:
  - o Members are nominated from within the parish community, by the Staff or by

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<sup>1</sup> Canon law 536s2

- current Council members.
  - Members are selected using a Discernment Process as outlined in the Standing Rules Section III.
  - The council consists of a minimum of 9 adult members and a maximum of 16 members including 2 youth members.
- Each Member has 1 vote.
- The Pastor, Associate Pastors, and Deacons shall be ex-officio members of the Pastoral Council and are non-voting members
- The Pastoral Council shall provide a forum for Parishoners to share and discuss ideas and/or concerns.

#### B. Qualifications for Pastoral Council membership:

- Adult members must meet the following qualifications:
  - 18 years of age and confirmed
  - Registered member of the parish.
  - At least 1 year of active participation in the parish community – for example, participation in a Parish Ministry or Committee, supported planning or execution of a Parish event or activity.
- Youth members must meet the following qualifications:
  - At least 15 years of age and confirmed
  - A member of the parish, i.e., a family member of a registered family

#### C. Terms of Service:

- Adult Council Members:
  - Shall serve a 3-year term beginning with the June meeting immediately following their selection
  - May serve 2 consecutive terms for a total of 6 years running
  - A parishioner, who was a previous member of the council, may be nominated after a minimum of 1 year
- Youth Council Members
  - May serve a maximum of 3 years.
- If a council member is unable to fulfil their term, their resignation should be processed in accordance with the procedures found in the Standing Rules.

#### D. Vacancies:

- If a vacancy occurs on the Pastoral Council which results in less than 9 Members, the Pastor shall fill the position in consultation with the Pastoral Council.
- 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.

## IV. PASTORAL COUNCIL GOVERNANCE

### A. Officers:

- There are 3 officers on the Pastoral Council: President, Vice President and Secretary.
- The officers shall be chosen by the majority of council members in the June meeting beginning the next Pastoral Council session
- Officers must be Adult Council Members who have served at least 1 year on the Pastoral Council
- Officer terms of service shall be 1 year; however, each officer may serve in the same office for a maximum of 2 years if selected to do so.
- Duties of the President:
  - o Preside at all Pastoral Council meetings;
  - o Establish other Council committees as required;
  - o Consult with the Pastor prior to all meetings to set the agenda;
  - o Inform the Pastoral Council Members of emergent issues of concern in a timely manner; and
  - o Represent the Pastoral Council at outside functions.
- Duties of the Vice President:
  - o Functions in the absence of the President;
  - o Consult with the Pastor and President to set the agenda prior to all meetings; and
  - o Ascends to the role of President if a vacancy in the office of President occurs.
- Duties of the Secretary
  - o Maintain the minutes of all regular and special meetings of the Council;
  - o Distribute copies of such minutes, along with the agenda for the next meeting, to all members of the Council at least one week prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting;
  - o Deliver approved minutes and attachments from Pastoral Council meetings to the parish secretary and parish manager;
  - o Send out all correspondence necessitated by the work of the Council and shall maintain permanent files of such correspondence;
  - o Participate in preparation of notes to appear in the parish bulletin pertaining to the work of the Council, as well as any other publicity material that is desired for use in various media; and
  - o Shall be assured of support and assistance from the parish staff in carrying out these duties.
- With the verbal consent of the Pastor, the President and Vice President may realign the duties listed above to efficiently lead the Pastoral Council and support the needs of the parish.

### B. Meetings:

- While the Pastoral Council session is June to June, the Pastoral Council will routinely meet monthly from September to June.
- The Pastoral Council may be compelled to meet at other times as requested by the Pastor or President.

- Meetings may be cancelled at the discretion of the Pastor or President. Every effort will be made to notify the Council at least 24 hours in advance .
- Meetings will be held in person at the Wilde Lake Interfaith Center. If needed, provisions for alternate arrangements to conduct meetings are detailed in the Standing Rules.
- The presence of at least half of the voting membership of the Pastoral Council shall constitute a quorum.

#### C. Procedural Authorities:

- The juridical authority of the Pastor<sup>2</sup> is acknowledged in these Bylaws.
- As the highest collegial body in the parish, the Pastoral Council always has the prerogative of recourse to the Vicar Bishop.
- The Pastoral Council shall provide a forum for Parishioners to share and discuss ideas and/or concerns regarding any operational or liturgical concern with the Parish. This forum will be flexible based on the issues and concerns raised. The Pastoral Council shall consider grievance issues for individuals and or committees within the parish. The mandate of the Pastoral Council is to provide a forum through which the conflict can be resolved. If resolution of the grievance is not possible, the Pastoral Council shall defer to the Pastor or to the Vicar Bishop.

## V. AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended using the following process:

- A proposed amendment must be submitted at a regular meeting of the Pastoral Council for consideration and deliberation.
- The amendment proposal must be recorded in and attached to the meeting minutes.
- A motion to amend shall be made no earlier than the next regular Pastoral Council meeting
- If two-thirds of eligible voting Pastoral Council Members vote in the affirmative, the amendment shall become part of these Bylaws.

## VI. IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation and execution of the provisions of these Bylaws shall be written into the Pastoral Council Standing Rules.

## VII. EMERGENCY AUTHORITY

If emergency conditions exist that disrupt the implementation of the Bylaws or Standing Rules, the President or Vice President, in consultation with the Pastor, may exercise an emergency authority to adjust any portion of the Bylaws or 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. Within 48 hours of an agreement to adjust the Bylaws or Standing Rules, the President and Vice President shall communicate any adjustments to the Bylaws and Standing Rules to the Pastor and the rest of the Pastoral Council.

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<sup>2</sup> Code of Canon Law, can. 519