

Saint Cecilia Church Pastoral Council

Mission Statement

The St. Cecilia Pastoral Council is an elected and appointed representational body of the Church Community, who meet regularly with the Pastor to discuss openly the Christian life and community activity of the parish to ensure all voices of the parish are heard and considered.

Bylaws
May 1, 2008 (Updated July 2, 2012)

Article I: *Name*

The name of this body shall be the Saint Cecilia Pastoral Council, hereafter referred to as the "Council".

Article II: *Purpose*

Section 1. The purpose of the Council shall be:

- a. To act as a representative voice of all the Parish community – lay, religious, and clerical – and to provide an open and honest forum for communication and dialogue among all those engaged in ministry in our parish.
- b. To assist the Pastor and Parochial Vicars in their effective governing of the parish.
- c. To serve as the primary lay leadership body of the parish, to establish a focus for parish organizations, and to enable programs to be carried out in an atmosphere of mutual cooperation and assistance.
- d. To lead by example, through action and witness, thus stimulating a devout Christian way of life among parishioners.

Section 2. Actions of the Council shall be:

- a. Set priorities and establish long and short term plans.
- b. Assist with existing parish programs and discuss new ones.
- c. Review and discuss plans for the proper maintenance and upkeep of the parish plant.
- d. Carry out functions as required to support the Pastor or Parochial Vicars.

Article III: *Relationship of the Council to the Pastor and Parochial Vicars*

Section 1. The Pastor and Parochial Vicars are the spiritual leaders of the parish and its chief administrators. The Council advises them on matters affecting the life of the parish.

Section 2. The Council shall submit its recommendations to the Pastor or Parochial Vicars as agreed to by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, a majority vote may be submitted, with the dissenting viewpoints clearly stated.

Section 3. If the Pastor or Parochial Vicars cannot in good conscience accept a Council recommendation, he shall fully and frankly communicate his reservations to the Council. The Council may then consider the matter at its next meeting and additional recommendations may be submitted. If the Pastor or Parochial Vicar does not communicate a reservation to the Council by the next scheduled meeting, the Council shall presume the recommendation has been accepted.

Section 4. If any matters are in disagreement between the Pastor or Parochial Vicars and the Council, a special meeting may be called to discuss the issues and to seek guidance in prayer. If serious differences remain as reflected by a vote of at least two-thirds of the council, and no other means of settling the dispute can be found at the parish level, the Council may contact the Bishop or his representative for assistance in resolving the matter.

Article IV: Membership

Section 1. The council will consist of three types of members: nine elected, six representing various ethnic groups, and ex-officio.

- a. Elected members are chosen by the parish at large as described in Article V. There are nine elected members who serve for **four** year terms.
- b. The representative members are chosen from the elected councils of the Vietnamese, Filipino and Hispanic communities. Each community may name up to two members from their own council to serve on the Pastoral Council. **The Pastor will appoint 1 representative from each of these community councils to serve on the Pastoral Council.**
- c. Ex-Officio members hold office by virtue of their position in the parish. These members include: 1) all priests and deacons officially assigned to the parish and 2) all members of the parish staff.

Section 2. All members of the Pastoral Council have the right to be notified of and attend all Council meetings, both open and closed, and to participate fully in all Council deliberations. Each elected member shall have one vote. **Ex-officio members shall also have one vote.**

Section 3. All elected members shall take office at the first regular meeting of the Council following their election and shall serve until their successors are elected and take office. Ex-officio members shall serve during their tenure in office.

Section 4. If more than three positions need to be filled, a staggering of terms shall take place. The number of votes received by each candidate shall determine terms. The longest term shall be given to the person with the highest vote count.

Section 5. Married couples may jointly fill a single Council membership position. The couple will have only one vote in Council decisions.

Article V: Nominations and Elections

Section 1. Registered members of the Parish who have attained the age of eighteen years are eligible for election and are eligible to vote.

Section 2. In **January** the Pastoral Council shall appoint a Nominating Committee of three current members. The Chair of this committee shall be the Parliamentarian. This committee will consider any parishioners eligible to serve and obtain their consent to stand for election. The Nominating Committee may adopt procedures for selecting prospective candidates. The process must be open to as many parishioners as possible.

Section 3. **Elections shall be held during the third or fourth weekend of March.** Ballots will be available after all Masses. The ballots shall be completed by the Parishioner and placed in the ballot box. At the conclusion of the last Mass on the day assigned for the election, the Parliamentarian and at least two Council Members shall meet to count the ballots.

The three persons or married couples as described in Article IV receiving the highest number of votes on the returned ballots shall be declared to be elected. In the event of a tie, the Council shall vote among themselves breaking the tie.

Section 4. Elected members shall serve for a term of **four** years, with one-**fourth** of the Council being elected each year. No parishioner will be eligible to serve two consecutive elective terms on the Council. In the event, more than **four** positions need to be filled, a staggering of terms shall take place. The number of votes received by each candidate shall determine terms. The longest terms shall be given to the person with the highest vote count.

Section 5. Terms shall run from the day of the **March/April** Council meeting to the day preceding the April meeting of the third term year.

Section 6. The Pastor shall act in an advisory capacity to the Nominating Committee.

Section 7. All information regarding an election, i.e. time, place and manner of voting, shall be disseminated to the members of the Community in the parish bulletin in the appropriate languages of each community.

Article VI. Resignation, Removal, and Vacancies

Section 1. Any member of the Pastoral Council may resign by filing a written resignation with the President and Pastor.

Section 2. A member may be removed from the Council for just cause by a two-thirds vote of all members. "Just Cause" shall include missing three consecutive meetings without an acceptable excuse, physical or mental incapacity, moving from the parish, or performing an action which is considered detrimental to the best interest of the parish. A member to be removed shall be given an opportunity to meet with the Pastor and the Council in a closed session prior to a vote being taken.

Section 3. Notification of intent to be absent from a regular scheduled meeting must be made by a Council Member to the President and/or the Secretary.

Section 4. Vacancies among the nine elected Council members shall be filled by a majority vote of the Council.

Article VII: Officers

Section 1. The officers of the Pastoral Council shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and Parliamentarian. Only the **twelve elected** members of the Council are eligible to serve as officers.

Section 2. Election of officers will be held at the first business meeting following the annual election. All eligible voting members present at this meeting are qualified to vote by written ballot according to Article IV, Section 2. Each office shall be voted on individually, thus permitting candidates to run and vote for more than one office.

Section 3. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Council and shall have the authority to call special meetings as required. The President will contact the Pastor and all Council Members for agenda items prior to each meeting. The President is responsible for setting each meeting agenda. He/She may be an ex-officio member of all Standing Committees. He / she is accountable to the Pastor and parish for Council activities. The term shall be **two** years.

Section 4. The Vice-President shall carry out the President's duties in the event that he or she cannot, for any reason, perform them. The term shall be **two** years.

Section 5. The Secretary shall take minutes of all Council meetings, and maintain a permanent record of the minutes. The Secretary shall electronically mail the minutes to the Pastor and President for approval. Once approved, he/she will disseminate the minutes to each council member prior to the following meeting. The term shall be **two** years.

Section 6. The Parliamentarian shall chair the Nominating Committee and oversee the yearly election of Pastoral Council members. He or she shall be referred to in matters of parliamentary procedure and undertake such other duties as may be assigned by the President. The term shall be **two** years.

Section 7. In the event of a vacancy to any office except the President, the Council shall elect an eligible replacement at its next meeting. If there is a vacancy in the office of President, the Vice-President will succeed and a new Vice-President will be elected.

Section 8. If only three positions are open to complete the nine elected members and there are only three persons who apply for these positions then these three persons may

be nominated after careful consideration to fill the vacancies and shall be approved by the Pastor or Parochial Vicar for a **four**-year term.

Article VIII: Committees

Section 1. The Executive Committee is made up of the Pastor, the Council President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Parliamentarian. Its purpose is to provide leadership for the Council as a whole. It will plan Council meeting by approving the agenda and will otherwise carry out the wishes of the full Council.

An Executive Committee Meeting may be called as circumstances dictate.

Article IX: Meetings

Section 1. The Pastoral Council shall have a regular meeting on the **fourth** Tuesday of each month. Regular meetings may be skipped during the months of July and August.

Section 2. Special meetings may be called by the President, the Pastor, or by request of at least three members. At least seventy-two hours notice must be given of a special meeting, except in the event of an emergency.

Section 3. Regular Council meetings are open to all parishioners as observers. Observers have no voice in Council proceedings unless they are recognized by the President. Observers may not vote. Special Council meetings may be closed at the discretion of the Executive Committee, the Pastor, or with the approval of the majority of the members.

Section 4. A majority of the voting members present during a meeting constitutes a quorum.

Article X: Conduct of Meetings

Section 1. Because the Pastoral Council is the expression of our Catholic community, its members must be committed to respect the opinions of one another and to defer to one another out of love. For this reason, decision-making by consensus rather than by majority rule is the goal. If all members cannot agree to a course of action, the majority shall rule.

Section 2. Prayer is an integral part of each Council meeting.

Article XI: Ratification and Amendment

Section 1. These bylaws must be ratified by a majority vote of the Council.

Section 2. The Council currently serving shall continue in office under the provisions of these bylaws unless changes have been approved.

Section 3. These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Pastoral Council by a majority vote as long as any proposed amendment has been provided in advance to each voting member in writing.

As approved: **September 25, 2012**, these Bylaws replace all previous revisions.