

ST. MARY'S PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL – CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

PREAMBLE: St. Mary's Parish, Kutztown, is a welcoming Roman Catholic faith community nourished by the Word and the Eucharist. We are the Catholic presence in Northeast Berks County, called to deepen, strengthen, and share our faith in a loving God while reaching out in service, generosity, and hospitality to our local community and beyond as disciples of Jesus Christ. We support the building of the Kingdom of God on earth by sharing our time, talent and treasure. We accomplish this through liturgical, spiritual, educational and social ministries.

PURPOSE: The purpose and general goal of the Council is to engage every member of St. Mary's faith community to use their gifts to fulfill our mission.

RESPONSIBILITIES: Our role is to reach out, listen to and communicate with the parish community in a transparent open way. We acknowledge the pastor as the shepherd of the parish and presider of the Parish Pastoral Council. Our responsibility is to advise and support the pastor in a consultative manner in order to grow in faith, size, and strength as a parish using the talents and gifts in the parish community to accomplish our goals. We do this through existing ministries as well as the initiation of others.

MEMBERSHIP: There will be 12-15 members in the Parish Pastoral Council serving all the demographics of the parish. A member must be a Catholic in good standing with the Roman Catholic Church. If a member is unable to attend most of the meetings, no longer wishes to serve, or is unable to fulfill the responsibilities, then a replacement will be appointed by the Pastor to fill the vacancy. New members will be provided with resources and will be mentored by the officers in order to participate fully in the Council. Ongoing development will be provided for all members so that we will be most effective in our work with the pastor and the parish community.

TERMS: All council members will serve a three year term except the staff. After which, one-third of the non-staff members will rotate off by drawing lots. After the initial rotation, every year one-third of the non-staff members will rotate off at the annual meeting held in October.

SELECTING COUNCIL MEMBERS: A sub-committee of the Parish Pastoral Council together with the Pastor will seek future members that will enrich the work of the Council and provide a representative balance to the Council.

A staff member cannot be an officer of the Council.

After three years, the pastor may reappoint a member for the good of the Council.

The Pastor, after consultation with the Chair, will appoint new officers as vacancies occur.

FUNCTION OF OFFICERS:

Pastor as President of Council: presides by using his pastoral authority to form members, recommends pastoral concerns for consideration by the Council, builds community of faith and trust in the Council & guides the Council in reflecting the entire pastoral mission of the Church.

Chair: facilitates the Parish Pastoral Council, provides time for prayer and reflection, with collaboration of the pastor, presents agenda items for discussion, maintains flow of the meeting ensuring all members having an opportunity for input.

Vice-Chair: performs duties of Chair if Chair is absent and serves as an aide to Chair in conducting Council work.

Secretary: documents business of the Council esp. records the minutes at the meeting and prepares communications as required.

MEETINGS: are held the third Monday of October, November, January, March, May and June, 7 p.m. at the Parish for 1-1/2 hours. If needed, another meeting can be scheduled. In addition, sub-committees of 3-5 members may meet at another time to work on a specific task to be reported to the entire Council.

The previous month's minutes are e mailed to members before the meeting in case corrections or additions are needed. Then the minutes are officially approved at the next meeting.

In major decisions, it is expected that each member voice their opinion.

All decisions are approved by the Pastor.

AREAS OF MISSION

Areas of Mission are categories used to group parish related activities together.

The basic functions of Areas of Mission are to investigate the needs of the area and make recommendations to the Council, communicate with all organizations in the area of mission & keep the Council updated and collaborate in implementing the priorities of the Council.

MISSION OF EVANGELIZATION – strives to deepen the faith of those who believe and bring the Good News to those who do not-spiritual renewal and outreach.

Main Groups and Activities in this area: RCIA, RCIC, Pro Life Committee, Prayer Shawl Ministry, Faith Sharing Groups, Social Media, Baptism Wkp., Marriage and Funeral Ministry, Welcome Committee, Ministry to Young Families, Pastoral Council.

MISSION OF EDUCATION – directed to formation of all children, youth and adults.

Main Groups and Activities: all religious education of children Pre-5, Jr. and Sr. High Ministry, Family centered Program, Adult Education, Sacramental Preparation.

MISSION OF PASTORAL MINISTRY – fosters a sense of belonging and supports and strengthens the parish as a community of faith.

Main Groups & Activities: Finance Committee, Building Committee, Ladies Auxiliary, Men of St. Mary's, Coffee and Donut Committee, Monthly Breakfast, Easter Egg Hunt, Parish Directory, Ministry to the Sick

MISSION FOR LITURGY – nourishes and gives direction to the liturgical and worship element of the Parish.

Main Groups and Activities: Liturgy Committee, Children's Liturgy of the Word, Altar Servers, Adult Choir, Children's Choir, Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, Lectors, Ushers, Hospitality Ministry, Environment

MISSION FOR SOCIAL CONCERN AND OUTREACH – cultivates concern and activities that foster Catholic social justice principles.

Main Groups and Activities: Faith and Justice Committee, St. Vincent DePaul Society, Parish Partnership, Soup Kitchen, outreach by Ladies Auxiliary and Men of St. Mary's.

MISSION FOR ECUMENISM AND INTERFAITH CONCERN – encourages understanding and unity within the Christian Family and reaches out to all who share a belief in God.

Main Groups and Activities: participation in local Ministeriums, partnership with Kutztown University, outreach by the Faith and Justice Committee, Ladies Auxiliary, Men of St. Mary's and the Religious Education Program in joint service projects.

OPERATING RULES-COMMUNICATION: The operation of the Council and decisions will be transparent. Open communications with the parish community and parish organizations will be encouraged through meetings, website, e mail and or bulletin. Meetings will be open to the parish community. The secretary will provide a synopsis of the minutes for approval to the Council before making it available on social media.

AMENDMENTS: If Council recognizes an amendment is needed then a subcommittee of 3-5 members will be formed to work on it and present it to the Council. After discussion, it will be approved by the Council.