

SAINT THOMAS MORE PASTORAL COUNCIL BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I – PURPOSE

The purpose of these by-laws is to promote a clearer understanding of the Constitution by describing specific guidelines and procedures to be followed by the Saint Thomas More (STM) Pastoral Council.

ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP

The primary value for membership is that the Council be a true reflection of the parish community. Insofar as possible, the Council should reflect parish membership, inclusive of the demographic realities of the community.

The discernment process shall be adopted in choosing prospective members of the Pastoral Council. Discernment leads us to gather to pray, to listen to our hearts, and to be in the company of faithful people. Our goal is to discern who of those nominated would best serve the STM Parish community on the Council or a Commission.

The Pastoral Council shall announce its vacancies and request nominations for candidates in the Sunday bulletin at least two times in March/April. In addition, at least one call from the pulpit inviting parishioners to nominate either their self or another parishioner will be made. Any member of the Parish may nominate candidates. Parishioners must be at least 18 years of age to be considered for Pastoral Council membership.

The president of the Pastoral Council shall approve a Discernment Committee chosen amongst the members of the Pastoral Council.

A letter shall be sent to all of the nominees inviting them to an informational meeting in May hosted by the Pastoral Council and may include other Commissions. The letter shall include reflective questions to consider prior to the meeting.

The meeting shall provide data and information to the nominees outlying expectations and commitments, purpose, guidelines, current parish goals, the parish Commission structure, and other materials relevant to the discernment process. The nominees will be asked to reflect on this input individually and as a group. Those who do not feel called will withdraw from further consideration but may remain and participate in the continuing discussion. The Pastoral Council will then invite those candidates wishing to continue with the discernment process to a second meeting one to two weeks later.

Prayer and a deeper explanation of the discernment process shall guide the second meeting. If there are more candidates than are vacancies, an effort should be made to encourage these candidates to serve on a Commission of their choice, become an alternate, and to apply for the Council the following year. Since the goal is not to merely fill positions but discern who is being called to serve, the Council may discern that some of the nominees are not being called. These positions may be filled later by special appointment by the Pastor.

The president of the Pastoral Council will notify each candidate of his/her selection to the Council, or of the opportunities for other or future services.

ARTICLE III – MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

All members are expected to accept their responsibilities to the Council and Parish community seriously. As a minimum, each member should:

- (a) Attend all regular and special Council meetings; *[Members should contact a member of the Executive Committee or the parish office if they will be absent from a meeting.]*
- (b) Be prepared for all meetings by reviewing minutes, agendas, and other appropriate information prior to the meetings;
- (c) Keep informed about what is happening in the parish, be a source of information to others, represent the Council at all parish events, and be receptive to others' viewpoints;
- (d) Serve as a liaison between the Council and a selected Commission. *[Liaisons for each Commission will be chosen by the Executive Committee before the last meeting to ensure continuing communication with the Commission throughout the summer.]*

LIAISON RESPONSIBILITIES

The Pastoral Council Liaison is intended to be the vehicle of achieving communication and coordination between the Pastoral Council and a selected Commission by:

- Attending all Commission meetings

Take notes (to compose a brief written report) concerning the main topics of discussion, especially any items directed to or requiring the attention of the Pastoral Council and maintain a binder or folder containing all documents associated with the Commission.

If unable to attend the commission meeting, obtain information/minutes about the meeting in order to report to Pastoral Council.

- Reporting monthly to the Pastoral Council

E-mail a brief written report to Pastoral Council members two days before the meeting; highlight main points at the next Pastoral Council meeting.

If unable to attend the Pastoral Council meeting, notify a member of the Pastoral Council Executive Committee and relay important information.

- Assisting in effectively carrying out the guidelines and directions given by the Pastoral Council

Contact the appropriate executive member of the Commission in order to be placed on the agenda when there is a special need to address the Commission.

Once the Commission has established their yearly goals and objectives, bring that information to the Pastoral Council.

- Providing resources such as budget preparation assistance, goal setting, objective setting, evaluation, communication, retreats, discernment process, etc.

- Attending the Finance budget hearing meeting with the Commission representative in preparation for the joint Pastoral Council/Finance Council budget meeting

- Assisting in setting priorities to encourage the Commission's development and implementation of its goals and objectives

- Providing continuous avenues of communication

Share personal contact information with Commission executive members in order to keep abreast of important items or changes in meeting dates & times.

Promptly respond to special requests of the Commission.

- Building a strong relationship with the executive members of the Commission

Arrive at the Commission meeting early to discuss the agenda and help setup for the meeting.

Whenever possible, talk to Commission executive members after the meeting to be sure important information and concerns are being relayed to the Pastoral Council.

ARTICLE IV – TERMS OF OFFICE

Newly selected members assume their positions effective the first Council meeting following July 1st and shall serve a three-year term. Members may serve up to two consecutive terms. At the expiration of their first term, members wishing to serve a second term shall be subject to selection through the discernment process, without priority.

In the event of a vacancy created during the year, an alternate chosen by the Council will serve the remainder of the term so as to maintain the proper rotation of members. If an alternate is not available, the Pastor may choose to appoint a successor from the names of candidates discerned from Pastoral Council members. Only the Pastor has the authority to appoint Council members. Any successor serving less than two years of an unexpired term shall remain eligible to serve an additional term, subject to discernment. All vacancies shall be filled within ninety (90) days.

There shall be three officers of the Pastoral Council: President, Vice-President, and Secretary, and together with the Pastor, comprise the **Executive Committee**. Officers shall be elected by the voting members at the second to last organizational meeting of the current term. Officers shall serve a one-year term, commencing July 1. Officers cannot serve more than two consecutive terms in the same position.

The Council will hold a meeting to nominate the presiding officers from within the Council in April. The nominated members shall then discern whether they accept the offices to which they were nominated prior to the May meeting at which time Council members present will vote on those nominated.

ARTICLE V – MEETINGS

Regular Council meetings shall be held once a month except for the month of July, usually on the fourth Thursday. These meetings shall be open to all members of the Parish, unless determined a closed session by the Executive Committee. Presentation by non-council members must have the approval of the Executive Committee a week prior to the meeting. Commission representatives shall be invited to speak on matters pertaining to their Commission at the Council's discretion to further communication between the various Commissions and the Pastoral Council.

A recording secretary will record the minutes at all regular meetings and furnish them to the Council members prior to the next regular meeting.

The Executive Committee will meet at least ten days prior to the regular meeting for the purpose of drawing up an agenda. This agenda will be published and furnished to Council members at least seven days prior to each Council meeting.

The Pastor or president, at the request of three members of the Council, may call a special meeting at any time.

A quorum at all Council meetings will be a simple majority of Council members present.

ARTICLE VI – COMMISSIONS

Commissions have been formed for the purpose of establishing committees that are delegated from the recommendations within their commission regarding policy making and budgetary matters. Each established Commission should select a representative who will speak for them at a Pastoral Council meeting upon the request of the Council. A Pastoral Council member will also be a liaison to each one of the Commissions of Saint Thomas More Parish.

The Committees are the channels through which the people of the Parish and the different branches of organizations and sub-committees make requests and operations known to their respective Commissions. They work together under the guidance of the goals and objectives set forth by their Commissions. Any parishioners, committee, organization, or subcommittee wishing to initiate a project shall prepare a written proposal and submit this to the proper committee under that Commission. The Commissions may present their proposal to the Pastoral Council liaison or directly to the Council at their meeting. The Pastoral Council must review and have final approval on matters involving, but not limited to, policy, by-laws, goals and objectives, budgetary matters, etc.

The Commissions for the Parish are presented in an organization chart. The purpose is to give a visual overview of the many branches that represent the Parish as a whole. This chart is subject to change depending on the needs of the Parish.

School Commission

Adopted on May 10, 1995, this Commission is consultative board that advises and supports the Pastor and school principle in the formation of a strategic plan specific to Saint Thomas More School. In addition, the Commission recommends school policies within the context of parish priorities and goals. Commission responsibilities include establishing a mission statement for the school, developing long range goals for the school, developing means to finance the school (including tuition structures, financial development, and fund raising), promoting communications and public relations, and evaluating the schools' goals and plans. The commission is subject to the policies and regulations that proceed from the Archdiocese of Seattle.

Faith Formation Commission

This Commission is responsible for bringing the Christian dimension in all human relationships and focusing on the needs of the diverse families of the Parish through the many committees under its' wings.

Stewardship Commission

The mission of the Saint Thomas More Stewardship Commission is to assist our Parish community in living out their baptismal call to discipleship by fostering stewardship of time, talent, and treasure toward building the Kingdom of God.

Spiritual Life and Worship Commission

This Commission has the responsibility for assessing the spiritual needs of the people of the parish and recommending to the Pastor sacramental policies and practices consistent with the norms established by the Archdiocese and the universal Church. Growth in faith through music, church environment, liturgical ceremonies, worship and religious commitment is a lifelong task. This commission recommends to the Pastor methods for spiritual and liturgical renewal.

Activities Commission

The purpose of this Commission is to raise the level of fellowship amongst the members of the STM Parish community through various activities held throughout the year. It also helps boost the financial needs of the Parish through fund raising activities.

Facilities and Maintenance Commission

This Commission is a policy making body for the Parish Administrative Maintenance Program. Their role is to evaluate problems, prioritize the needs of the existing structures and recommend solutions.

Outreach Commission

One of the largest commissions of the Parish, it has the sole purpose to promote and raise the level of awareness of the parish community to social programs that take place within and outside of the parish, through the Archdiocese and other agencies.

ARTICLE V – AMENDMENTS

These by-laws shall be reviewed each year after the seating of a new Council, and may be amended at any regular meeting of the Council by a simple majority of voting members present provided written notice of the proposed change(s) were presented at the preceding regular meeting.