

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS
Diocese of Harrisburg
Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish
Hanover, PA 17331
Revised November 2006

PREAMBLE: The Sacred Heart Parish Pastoral Council bases its existence on the principles set forth in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of the Second Vatican Council (Art. 37).

“A great many wonderful things are to be hoped for from this familiar dialogue between the laity and their pastors: in the laity, a strengthened sense of personal responsibility, a renewed enthusiasm, a more ready application of their talents to the projects of their pastors. The latter, for their part, aided by the experience of the laity, can more clearly and suitably come to decisions regarding spiritual and temporal matters. In this way, the whole Church, strengthened by each one of its members, can more effectively fulfill its mission for the life of the world.”

ARTICLE I: This organization shall be known as Sacred Heart Parish Pastoral Council, hereinafter referred to as the Pastoral Council.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE AND GOALS

The Pastoral Council is concerned, in general, with implementing, at the parish level, the mission of the Diocese of Harrisburg: "To share the experience of salvation received from Jesus Christ in the living Catholic tradition of Word and Sacrament, drawing all persons into a believing, hoping, loving, and serving community which, empowered by the Spirit, gives glory to the Father through Jesus, Lord and Savior."

More specifically the pastoral council also strives to fulfill the parish mission statement. “We are a historically rooted Catholic community that is alive, vibrant, and thankful for our birthright. We are the first community in the United States dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus living out the faith instilled by our ancestors. We feel called to be stewards of our traditions and keep them alive through future generations. Enhanced by our dedication to and love of the gospel, we are challenged to become a wonderful witness to the constant faith, courage, and optimism of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.”

The primary goal of the Pastoral Council is total and continual parish spiritual renewal and outreach.

The Pastoral Council will discover and listen to the needs of the Parish, and set parish direction by prayerful reflection.

The Pastoral Council serves as a connecting link between the Diocese of Harrisburg and Sacred Heart Parish, communicating and supporting the policy and programs of the Bishop to the people, and also making full use of diocesan resources to meet the needs of the parish community.

The Pastor is solely and completely responsible to the Bishop of Harrisburg for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the parish. The Parish Pastoral Council does not directly share this responsibility, but exercises its consultative role in support of the Pastor's responsibility.

ARTICLE III: DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

SECTION I: COOPERATION

In union with the Pastor, who is the presiding officer of the Pastoral Council, the Pastoral Council is the primary decision-making body, which shares the responsibility for the life and welfare of the parish.

The Pastoral Council recognizes the canonical authority of the Bishop and the Pastor and will not assume any legal or canonical responsibility or authority. The Pastor and the Pastoral Council shall work together to discern the Spirit and will not set policy independently of each other.

SECTION II: PASTOR'S AUTHORITY

The Pastor is canonically responsible for the Parish; therefore, he retains veto power on all Pastoral Council decisions.

SECTION III: CONCILIATION

Whenever the Pastor cannot accept or implement an action, policy, or program approved by the Pastoral Council, he may appeal to the Secretary for Parish and Special Ministries in the Diocese of Harrisburg for conciliation of the issue.

Whenever the Pastor chooses (for reasons other than conflict with Church doctrine, Church law, or diocesan policy) not to implement an action, policy, or program approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the Pastoral Council, this same majority may appeal to the Secretariat for Parish and Special Ministries in the Diocese of Harrisburg for conciliation of the issue.

SECTION IV: PARISH ORGANIZATIONS

The Pastoral Council must support and encourage planning, creativity, and accountability in the parish organizations, committees and boards.

The Pastoral Council will evaluate their activities, recommend changes, and encourage the undertaking of new programs, which are responsive to the needs of Sacred Heart.

The Pastoral Council will encourage and invite parish administrative committees and staff to regularly share with council the status of ongoing projects. e.g. Building and Grounds and the Finance Committee

The Pastoral Council should offer opportunities for parishioners to become involved in every phase of parish life.

SECTION V: ONE MISSION

The Pastoral Council is preeminently responsible for the advancement of the pastoral mission of the parish as previously stated in Article II.

SECTION VI: POLICY AND ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION

The Pastoral Council must respect the distinction between policy and administrative decisions. The day-to-day operation of the Sacred Heart Parish is clearly the responsibility of the Pastor and the Staff.

The role of the Pastoral Council is to establish broad policies and to set priorities for the Christian community which it serves.

A policy decision is a guiding principle, often with long-term consequences (e. g., deciding that the parish will support, on a continuing basis, a poor mission in a Third World Country).

An administrative decision is concerned with day-to-day operation of Sacred Heart (e.g., security of property, access to buildings, hours of parish staff)

SECTION VI: GIFTS OF OTHERS

As the chief coordinating and unifying structure, the Pastoral Council will seek constantly to draw forth the talents, energies, and insights of all parishioners and channel this "variety of gifts" for the building up of the whole Body of Christ.

SECTION VIII: COMMUNICATION WITH PARISH

The Pastoral Council must communicate regularly with the parish at large. A summary of each Pastoral Council meeting is to be publicized in the bulletin published for the Sunday Masses subsequent to each meeting.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

Members of the Pastoral Council must be practicing Catholics with a deep commitment of faith and concern for the needs of Sacred Heart. They must understand and accept the spiritual and practical commitment required of council.

SECTION I: REPRESENTATION

Pastoral Council members. Since the Pastoral Council is representative of the Sacred Heart community, it should be diverse in thought, but unified in mission.

The Pastoral Council members must be practicing Catholics, at least seventeen years of age, and members of Sacred Heart Parish.

Because of the possibility of a conflict of interest, paid employees' immediate family members may not serve on the Pastoral Council.

SECTION II: MEMBERS

The Pastoral Council will consist of ex officio members, elected members, and appointed members.

Ex officio, non-voting members will include the Pastor, other clergy assigned to Sacred Heart Church & School, the Principal of the school, and a representative of the Sacred Heart Parish Youth Group.

Ex officio, voting member, will be the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of the Finance Council.

Nine voting members will be elected by the Sacred Heart Parishioners as a whole.

Three voting members will be appointed by the Pastor. Appointed members will be designated by the Pastor to provide a talent or to fill a specific need within the Pastoral Council after the ex officio and elected positions have been filled.

SECTION III: TERMS OF MEMBERSHIP

Elected members shall serve for a term of three years. No elected member may succeed himself or herself. One year must elapse between terms of office. A turnover of one-third of the elected members will be affected each year.

Individuals who serve a partial (less than a three-year term) are eligible to be reelected to one full term.

Appointed members shall serve for a term of one year. Appointed members may not serve for more than three consecutive one-year terms.

SECTION IV: ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

Any member absent without excuse from two consecutive regular meetings will be contacted by the Chairperson regarding the continued fulfillment of that member's commitment. A third unexcused absence will be deemed a resignation. No contact from the member is considered an unexcused absence. The Chairperson or the Pastor determines excused absences.

SECTION V: RESIGNATIONS

Resignations will be of two types:

Voluntary submitted in writing to the Chairperson.

Automatic due to excessive absences (Cf. Article IV, Section IV.)

SECTION VI: REMOVAL

Any action by a member of the Pastoral Council during a meeting or otherwise which is considered, in the judgment of the Pastor, to be detrimental to the best interest of Sacred Heart, shall be cause for removal from the Pastoral Council. The member involved in such an action shall have an opportunity to meet with the Pastor and the Pastoral Council Chairperson to see if reconciliation can be achieved.

SECTION VII: VACANCIES

In the event that a vacancy occurs among the elected membership, the person who had received the next highest number of votes will be asked to complete the remaining term of the vacating member. In the event that she or he declines, the remaining candidates will be similarly invited to complete that term of office. If there be no remaining candidates, council will make a recommendation to fill the vacancy.

In the event of vacancies in the appointed position, the Pastor will appoint an individual to complete the term of appointment.

ARTICLE V: NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

SECTION I: NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee shall consist of the retiring members of the council and the Pastor. The Committee's function is to develop the procedure for securing the names of candidates for election to the Pastoral Council.

SECTION II: NOMINATING COMMITTEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Pastoral Council Nominating Committee's responsibilities are:

1. To inform parishioners of the duties and responsibilities of the Pastoral Council membership before an individual makes a commitment to have his or her name placed on the ballot.
2. To interview each potential candidate. A potential candidate must understand the role of membership on the Pastoral Council, the commitment to service, and the requirements for membership before he or she is accepted for nomination.

3. To prepare a slate of candidates and make each individual's intention known to the Sacred Heart Parish prior to the election.
4. To inform the Parish at least two weeks before election by way of bulletin announcements who is nominated for the Pastoral, Council.
5. To conduct the election by secret ballot:
 - a. during weekend masses
 - b. ballots will not be counted until after the last Mass of the weekend;
 - c. count the ballots and publish the election results in the weekly bulletin;

SECTION III: VOTING ELIGIBILITY

Any confirmed practicing parishioner at least seventeen years of age is eligible to vote in the election.

SECTION IV: ELECTIONS

The Nominating Committee should be appointed in February and present the nominees and their qualifications to the parishioners in April.

The election of the Pastoral Council members should occur during April or May. Newly elected members will be installed in June and take office in July.

In the event that there are only three (3) nominees for Council, the Annual Parish elections shall be dispensed with, and Council shall elect the nominees at its next regular meeting.

ARTICLE VI: OFFICERS

SECTION I: TERMS OF OFFICE

The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary are elected annually by the Pastoral Council members at the June meeting or the last meeting of the fiscal year. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall have completed at least one (1) year as a Council member.

Term of office will be from July 1 through June 30.

No officer may hold the same office for more than two consecutive terms.

SECTION II: ELECTION

Any voting member of the Pastoral Council may participate in the nominating and election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary.

SECTION III: CHAIRPERSON

The Chairperson's major functions will be:

1. To facilitate the Pastoral Council meetings.
 - a. to provide time for prayer and reflection.
 - b. to state the issue or question. The statement is made without indicating what solution is to be reached,
 - c. to maintain order and attention and to regulate who will speak, when, and for how long.
 - d. to develop ideas and express the sentiment of the Pastoral Council by restating, summarizing, or contrasting the various statements of the members.
2. To assure free and open communications between the Pastoral Council and the parishioners. Meeting dates, minutes, and reports of the work of the Pastoral Council committees should be published on a regular basis.

SECTION IV: VICE-CHAIRPERSON

The Vice-Chairperson performs the duties of the Chairperson in the latter's absence and serves as an aide to the Chairperson in conducting the Pastoral Council's work.

SECTION V: SECRETARY

The Recording Secretary documents the business of the Pastoral Council (minutes, reports, etc.), maintaining attendance and other records, and handles all Pastoral Council correspondence. This officer is also responsible for the publication of Council minutes in the parish bulletin.

ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS

SECTION I: REGULAR MEETINGS

The Pastoral Council meetings will be held normally ten times a year (September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April, May and June) or more often as determined by the Pastoral Council on the second Thursday of each month.

SECTION II: SPECIAL MEETINGS

In the event a special meeting is required, the Chairperson and the Pastor will establish the time and place of the meeting and notify all members. Notification should be at least 48 hours before the meeting and should also include the specific subject to be discussed. Special meetings will follow the same general operating rules of order as at a regular meeting.

However, the agenda of the special meeting should be limited to the specific matter at hand.

SECTION III: CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

In the absence of both the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson, the Pastor will chair the meeting. In the absence of the Pastor, the meeting will be either rescheduled or held as planned at the sole discretion of the Pastor.

SECTION IV: QUORUM

Two-thirds of the voting membership of the Pastoral Council shall constitute a quorum for transacting business.

SECTION V: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee shall consist of the Pastor, the Officers of the Pastoral Council, and the Chairperson or the Vice-Chairperson of the Finance Council.

The Executive Committee has the power to act between meetings in a special situation, but the results of that action are to be recorded at the next Pastoral Council meeting.

ARTICLE VIII: OPERATING PROCEDURES

SECTION I: CLIMATE OF PRAYER

The Pastoral Council meetings must open with prayer and time must be allowed for reflection, shared prayer and/or the sharing of faith and values around a spiritual theme. Maintaining a prayerful climate throughout the meeting will provide an optimal atmosphere for the Pastoral Council to fulfill its mission.

SECTION II: PARTICIPATION

1. It shall be the practice that the Pastoral Council members will have the opportunity to express their views on all items covered during the meeting. For the council to be successful it is imperative that all in attendance participate.
2. Visitors may be recognized by the Chairperson to address the Pastoral Council on an agenda item.
3. In the event that a parishioner wishes to address the Pastoral Council concerning a specific subject, that parishioner must notify the Chairperson or the Pastor one week in advance of the Pastoral

SECTION III: EXECUTIVE SESSION

In the event that there arises an issue, which is very sensitive or confidential, the Pastoral Council will go into executive session. This means that only Pastoral Council members may be present, they are to maintain confidentiality, and no voting and no minutes will be taken of that portion of the meeting.

SECTION IV: CONSENSUS PROCESS

Ordinarily, the decisions of the Pastoral Council shall be the result of a process of consensus rather than from, a majority rule used in parliamentary procedure. The process of consensus provides the opportunity for various aspects of an issue to be considered in the hope that a proposal can be formulated which all can support.

Pastor and Council should work together for consensus, but the Pastor's assent is an essential element of any consensus.

In the event of an impasse, time should be taken during the meeting for the entire Council to pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit on the present deliberation. On rare occasions, if the Pastoral Council is unable to reach a consensus, a vote may be taken. If the resolution is passed by a two-thirds majority vote with the support of the Pastor, it is promulgated and then implemented. If less than two-thirds of the Pastoral Council supports the measure, it is considered an unresolved matter.

SECTION V: AGENDA

The monthly Agenda will be put together by the Pastor and the Chairperson prior to the monthly meeting.

ARTICLE IX: MISSIONS

SECTION I: SIX MISSIONS

The Pastoral Council will be responsible for the Missions identified by the Diocese of Harrisburg in its *One Who serves*. Parish Pastoral Council Policy and Guidelines.

1. Mission for Evangelization - Evangelization is the continuous process by which the Church strives to deepen the faith of those who believe and bring the Good News to those, who do not believe.

Evangelization is the primary goal of the Pastoral Council.

Examples of this in our parish are Divine Mercy Devotion, Parish Retreats/Mission, Prayer Line, May Devotions, Children's Worship Service and RCIA.

As stated in "One Who Serves":

The Mission for Evangelization must be filled with the creativity of the spirit, constantly seeking new ways to reach out to others with the message of God's love. This mission must work closely with the other Parish Pastoral Council Areas of Mission and parish organizations. It should provide the spark by which the entire faith community becomes a bearer of the Good News.

2. Mission for Education/Herald - The Church teaches in order to prepare its members to accept and proclaim the Gospel message and to translate this message into action.

The Mission for Education ensures that the parish provides its members with religious education opportunities aimed at fostering a personal faith and expressing that faith through service.

The Board or Committee for the parish school and the Religious Education program (CCD), as well as Continuing Catholic Education, and Bible Study are all part of this Mission for Education.

3. Mission for Pastoral Ministry - The Mission for Pastoral Ministry encompasses all the programs and activities of a parish that strengthen our sense of being a Christian Community, members in a family of believers.

As a mission of the council, the pastoral ministry element includes but is not limited to the following activities:

The Sacred Heart Club	Basilica Club 200
Home & School Association	Annual Picnic
Athletic Association	Yearly publication of
Social Activities/Parish Hall	Parish Handbook
Parish Web Page	Alumni Committee
Marriage Preparation	Cemetery Board
Development Committee	Golf Tournament

4. Mission for Liturgy - This mission must be constantly evaluating

the parish liturgical celebrations. The Mission for Liturgy also coordinates the efforts of all those who contribute to the Liturgy, such as ushers, lectors, special ministers of the Eucharist, choir, altar servers, etc. Altar Flowers, Holy Communion for the homebound, Offertory Processions and Vocation/lay ministry training are also responsibilities of this mission.

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5. Mission for Social Justice and Social Welfare - This Mission must consider those issues which demand our concern as believers in the universal Fatherhood of God over' all people. This Mission involves itself in issues, such as projects for world hunger, rights of all individuals, respect life, etc.

As a mission of the council, the social justice & welfare includes but is not limited to the following activities

Community Action

Health Care Ministry – (Care for the elderly, poor, sick, handicapped, assisted living residence, hospitals)

Social Justice Committee

Catholic Services – (World Missions, Diocesan Lenten Appeal)

Angel Tree

Manna Bags / Food Bank

Gabriel Project

6. Mission for Ecumenism - The Mission for Ecumenism encourages unity and understanding within the Christian family, and also reaches out to non-Christians who share with us faith in God the Father.

The Mission may sponsor inter-faith worship services and encourage both individual and common prayer for the unity, which Jesus wills for His Church.

“One Who Serves” calls out the following three bullets:

- ◆ Cooperative ventures with other denominations to address community problems
- ◆ Discussion groups and parish programs designed for Ecumenical and Interfaith Marriages
- ◆ Ecumenical Services for Christian Unity

SECTION II: RELATIONSHIP OF ORGANIZATIONS TO MISSIONS

The Missions operate with the support provided them by the various programs in the Sacred Heart Parish. Standing committees, parish organizations, and other Mission units of the Parish are all to be subsumed organizationally under a given Mission. The Pastoral Council will determine the relationship of a given activity or organization to its parish mission.

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SECTION III: ASSIGNMENT OF PASTORAL COUNCIL MEMBERS

The Pastoral Council Chairperson, with consultation with and the concurrence of the Pastor, shall name Pastoral Council members as representatives for each of these six Missions.

ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENTS

This Pastoral Council Constitution and By Laws may be amended by a consensus of the Pastoral Council or by two-thirds vote of the membership of the Council, provided the amendment has been recorded and been presented at two Pastoral Council meetings. Any amendment must meet with the approval of the Diocesan Secretariat for Parish and Special Ministries before it is implemented.