

**St. Polycarp Church
Smyrna, DE 19977**

Constitution and Bylaws of the Pastoral Council

Mission Statement

The mission of the St. Polycarp Church Pastoral Council is to advise our Pastor in those matters affecting and fulfilling the Parish Mission while providing vision and strategic planning to the committees and the parish community. We work to improve the community spirit and faith life of our Parish by being sensitive to and responding to the needs and desires of all in a spirit of prayer, commitment and action. Energized by the Holy Spirit and in communion with the Holy Father and the Universal Catholic Church, we hope to promote a sense of welcoming, belonging and harmony among our parishioners by connecting and including them in the pastoral life of the Parish.

Article I – Name

The name of this body shall be St. Polycarp Pastoral Council, hereafter referred to as “the Council”.

Article II – Purpose

Section 1: The purposes of the Council shall be:

- To discern, evaluate and implement, with the authorization of the Pastor, a set of pastoral goals for the parish. These should be developed and evaluated yearly, after research, reflection, discussion and prayer and should meet the need of God’s people, in accordance with the Parish Mission Statement.
- To evaluate existing programs and policies for their pastoral effectiveness.
- To form a community within itself as a sign and witness of unity for the larger parish community.
- To promote communication and understanding among parish organizations and between the parish, the diocese, the community and the universal Church.

- To advise and counsel the Pastor on other pastoral matters that he brings to the Council. These matters include major parish undertakings, such as the inauguration of new ministries in the parish, the creation of new staff positions, building and renovation projects, capital campaigns, etc.

Section 2: The Council shall act in a collegial manner with the Parish Finance Council, both providing and accepting a liaison to assist the Pastor in his role as parish administrator and financial steward.

- The Council shall provide input during the budgeting process regarding the budgets of all offices and ministries subsidized by parish funds.
- The Council shall review the annual budget submitted by the Parish Finance Council and make recommendations to the Pastor, whose responsibility it is to approve the budget.
- The Council shall prepare a Yearly Council Budget and submit the budget, to the Finance Council, for integration into the total Parish Budget.

Section 3: The Council shall render to all parishioners, from time to time, but not less often than annually, a full report of its work.

Article III – Operation

Section 1: In ordinary matters, the Council shall submit its recommendations to the Pastor in the form of conclusions of motions duly made, seconded and passed by a majority vote. In more serious pastoral and spiritual matters, the Council shall attempt to reach a consensus through study, discussion and prayer.

Section 2: While not a voting member, the Pastor shall take an active part in the work of the Council. The Pastor must authorize the Council's recommendations before they become parish policy.

Section 3: If the Pastor, for serious reasons of fidelity to the Gospel, obedience to Church or Civil Law, or other serious financial, administrative, or pastoral considerations, feels that the Council's recommendations are not in the best interest of the parish, he shall fully and honestly discuss his reservations with the Council.

Section 4: If, after hearing the reservations of the Pastor, the Council remains in serious disagreement with him, or if the Council is unable to attain consensus, the Executive Committee shall pursue a resolution through parish, Deanery, and Diocesan levels.

Article IV – Membership

Section 1: Membership in the Council is open to registered members of St. Polycarp Parish, 16 years or older.

Section 2: The Council shall consist of not more than 18, but not less than twelve members of the parish including elected members, appointed members, and ex-officio members as appropriate. The Pastor, after consultation with the Council, may name up to five lay persons as appointed members. The appointment of lay members shall achieve a full representation of the parish community on the Council.

Section 3: Any associate Pastor, a representative of the deacons, the Director of Religious Education and other appropriate Pastoral Staff members of the parish shall be automatic ex-officio members of the Council. They shall have full voice in the deliberations of the Council, as well as full voting rights.

Section 4: Elected members shall serve for three years, while appointed members are renewable but made on an annual basis. Elected members are to be elected according to the procedures specified in Article VII – “Elections”.

Section 5: In the event the seat of any Council member becomes vacant for any reason, the person receiving the next highest votes in the previous election shall fill the vacancy for the un-expired term.

Section 6: All persons meeting the same qualifications listed in Article VII, Section 1, shall be eligible for appointment to the Council.

Article V – Officers

Section 1: There shall be at least four officers, the President, the Executive Officer, the Secretary and at least 1 at – large member. There shall be an election for an Executive Officer, Secretary and at – Large member(s) who are to be lay persons to be held at the first meeting after Council elections. A written ballot will be used when more than one candidate is nominated for any elected position. Each office shall be voted upon individually, thus permitting candidates not elected to be nominated for another office. In the event of a tie, balloting shall continue until a candidate receives simple majority.

Section 2: The officers are elected for a term of one year and shall serve until their successors are duly elected. They may succeed themselves for only 1 term.

Section 3: The President, who by Canon Law is the Pastor, may chair the Council meetings or may delegate this role to the Executive Officer. The President may call special meetings as needed for the good of the parish.

Section 4: The Executive Officer shall assist in coordinating the ministry of the Council. This includes, but is not limited to, preparing for meetings, ensuring that the parish community is informed of the work of the Council, and following up on the activities of the Council.

Section 5: The Secretary shall take minutes at all regular and special meetings of the Council and shall communicate these minutes to the Council members sufficiently prior to the next meeting. The Secretary shall work with the parish office to ensure that the minutes are maintained as a permanent record.

Section 6: A Corresponding Secretary may be elected by the Council and be responsible for Council correspondence and act as liaison to the publicist of each committee and coordinate parish publicity as needed.

Section 7: The at-large member(s) of the Executive Committee shall share in guiding the vision and agenda for the Council. In the absence of the President and the Executive Officer, an at-large member shall chair the Council meetings.

Section 8: In the event of a vacancy in any office, other than the President, the Council shall elect from its own membership to fill the office until the next regularly scheduled election. Before assuming office, the elect must be approved by the Pastor.

Section 9: Officers shall turn over to their successors, in a timely manner, all information, records, papers and property pertaining to the office and assist their successor in transitioning into the office as appropriate.

Article VI – Internal Functions of the Council

Section 1: The Executive Committee shall be composed of the Pastor, the officers of the Council and at least one member of the Council, elected by the Council annually, and approved by the Pastor. It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Committee to assist the Pastor in preparing the Council agenda, and to conduct that business which is assigned to it. The Executive Committee shall meet monthly, within a week before the scheduled Council meeting. The agenda developed by the Executive Committee shall be made available to Council members by the Sunday prior to the Council meeting.

Section 2: A Nomination/Election Committee shall be comprised of four members of the Council chosen by the Council annually by the September meeting. The Council is to designate a chairperson for the committee. It shall be the responsibility of the Nomination/Election Committee to plan and implement the election process. The Committee will surface possible candidates for election, and will educate the parish community about the ministry of serving on the Council. The Committee will inform the parish community of the candidates and their desire to serve on the Council. The Committee also has the responsibility of assisting in the orientation of new Council members.

Section 3: The Council understands that it has a responsibility to engage in regular prayer and faith formation at each meeting.

Article VII – Elections

Section 1: Any lay person who is fully initiated, or in the process of becoming fully initiated, and participating member of the Roman Catholic Church, and free of any Canonical impediment affecting full participation in the life of the Church, and who has attained the age of 16 years by the date of elections, and who is a registered member of the parish is eligible for election and voting.

Section 2: One-third of the Council members and any unfilled positions or temporarily filled positions shall be elected annually, at Mass, no later than the last weekend in May. They shall be elected by secret ballot, which shall be distributed to all persons attending Mass the weekend of the election. Ballots shall be counted after the last Mass of the election weekend, by all members of the Nomination/Election committee, so that the election results can be certified as official and legal. If a committee member cannot be present, the committee chairperson should be notified so that a substitute can be present. This substitute must be a member of the Pastoral Council. Member of the Nomination/Election Committee whose names appear on the ballot must excuse themselves from counting ballots. Substitution for that member's absence will be filled using the method outlined above. The number of persons necessary to fill the elective seats of the Pastoral Council and receiving the highest number of votes on the returned, qualified ballots shall be declared elected. A qualified ballot is one that does not include more votes than there are elective seats. In the event of a tie, the members of the Nomination/Election Committee shall immediately vote by secret ballot among themselves to break the tie. The entire Council will be installed at a special Mass.

Section 3: The Nomination/Election Committee shall consider qualified parishioners and obtain their consent to run in the annual election. The number of candidates should be at least equal to twice the number of elective seats to be filled on the Council. The candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected for a three-year term. In the event that a vacancy occurs among the elected membership during the Council year, the person who had received the next highest number of votes shall be asked to fill out the remaining term of the vacating member; and in the event that he/she declines, the remaining candidates shall be asked in order of the number of votes which each received.

Section 4: No Council member may serve more than two consecutive full terms (i.e. full three year terms)

Section 5: The number of persons elected to the Council and the process of election shall provide for staggered terms of office to preserve continuity for the Council.

Article VIII – Committees

Section 1: The Standing Committees of the Council shall be Liturgy, Christian Formation, Parish and Family Life, Social Concerns, and Building and Maintenance. All Standing Committees shall always act in accordance with the provisions of Civil and Canon law. Other committees may be formed on an ad hoc basis to meet the needs of the parish. These may be short term or more lengthy in nature (such as Building Design Committee during a phased construction project). Such ad hoc committees share in the responsibility of standing committees. Basic duties of the committees are as follows:

- The Liturgy Committee shall be responsible to provide for the dignified and reverent celebration of the Sacred Liturgy. It shall implement and specify specific programs directed toward the improvement of the Sacred Liturgy. The committee shall sponsor training sessions for all of the ministers of the altar.
- The Christian Formation Committee shall be responsible for the faith formation and educational needs of the total parish, including the specific needs of each age group.
- The Parish and Family Life Committee shall meet and welcome new people in the parish, and foster a sense of community among the people enabling them to draw strength from each other as they witness to the faith in our time and culture.

- The Social Concerns Committee shall be responsible for assessing and meeting the temporal needs of people in the parish and community. The committee is involved with Pro-Life activities, the needs of transients and migrants, peace and justice issues, and the provision of immediate services to persons with financial and social problems. They have the responsibility of developing the proper Christian attitudes among the parishioners toward such human rights issues.
- The Building Maintenance Committee shall be responsible for proper maintenance of parish buildings and property. They shall undertake any improvements or additions to the property, which are deemed necessary.

Section 2: Each committee of the Council shall have a chairperson, a secretary, and a liaison to the Council. Each committee shall keep a record of its meetings, and make a summary available to the Secretary of the Council, so they can be incorporated into the record of the Council. The liaison shall be responsible for communicating appropriate activities of the committee to the parish membership and to the community at large.

Section 3: The President, upon recommendation of the particular committee, shall approve a chairperson for each committee. This appointment shall be made annually on the occasion of the first meeting after the Council elections. The chairperson shall have authority to call committee meetings as often and at such times as may be necessary, but not less than once a month.

Section 4: Liaison must be established between the Council and each committee, and between the Council and the Finance Council. A member of the Council shall be designated as liaison to Finance Council and each committee. If no Council member volunteers to be liaison, the Executive Committee will appoint a Council member liaison. Each committee shall have an ex-officio member in the person of the Pastor or another staff person appointed by him.

Section 5: The President, in consultation with the Executive Committee, shall have authority to create any special or temporary committees and to designate the members thereof.

Section 6: Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised) shall govern the proceedings of all Standing Committees in cases where they are not inconsistent with any special rules of order that the Standing Committee may adopt.

Article IX – Meetings

Section 1: Regular monthly meetings will be held during the year. The day of the month for regular meetings should be determined at the June meeting each year, for the following Council year.

Section 2: All members of the Council shall be notified of the time and place of Council meetings through the parish bulletin and other appropriate means.

Section 3: Additional meetings may be called by the president or at the request of one-third of the Council members. Adequate notice of such meeting shall be given to each member. The purpose of any special meeting shall be stated in the call.

Section 4: Regular meetings of the Council shall be open to all parishioners as observers. These may address the Council if recognized by the President or Executive Officer. It shall be left to the discretion of the Executive Committee to decide whether any special meetings shall be open.

Section 5: The minutes of the Council meetings, as well as the general work of the Council shall be made available in summary form at the Parish Office in a binder accessible to staff or parishioners. A summary of issues dealt with at Council meetings shall be presented monthly in the parish bulletin.

Section 6: Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised) shall govern the proceedings of the Council in cases where they are not inconsistent with any special rules of order that the Council may adopt.

Section 7: A majority of the members of the Council shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at regular meetings.

Section 8: The President may appoint a parliamentarian, who need not be a member of the Council, to assist and advise at all meetings.

Section 9: if a Council member misses 3 consecutive meetings or has a consistent attendance problem, he/she may be removed from the Council by the Executive Committee.

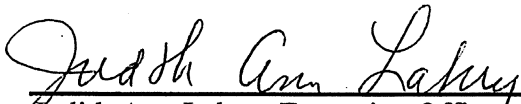
Article X – Ratification and Amendments

Section 1: This Constitution shall be effective upon its approval by the Episcopal Vicar of Administration.

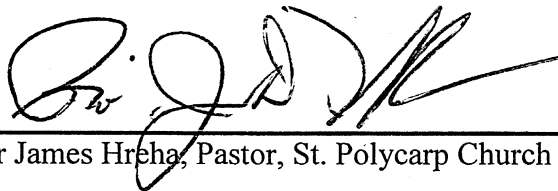
Section 2: This Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Council at which a majority of voting member is in attendance. Proposed amendments must be presented and discussed a month before a vote is taken, also at a meeting attended by a majority of voting members. Amendments must be approved by a two-thirds vote of those in attendance, and do not become effective until approved by the Episcopal Vicar for Administration.

Adopted 13 July 2016

Signed and dated this 27 day of July, 2016, by:



Judith Ann Lahey, Executive Office



Father James Hreha, Pastor, St. Polycarp Church