

## **BY-LAWS OF ST STEPHEN THE FIRST MARTYR PASTORAL COUNCIL**

This organization, located in Lee County, City of Sanford, North Carolina will be known as the St. Stephen the First Martyr Pastoral Council.

### **ARTICLE I – PREAMBLE**

St. Stephen the First Martyr Parish is a Catholic faith-community called to the ministries of word, worship, and service.

Through the Word of God we strive to promote growth and understanding through education and evangelization. We offer a broad range of faith formation programs, liturgies and devotional opportunities for community worship.

We serve Christ by providing for the spiritual and material needs of our parish and our larger community.

As the People of God, under the leadership of the Pastor, we responsibly fulfill the mission of the parish by participating with the shared ministry utilizing the human and spiritual gifts and talents with which each parish member is endowed.

St. Stephen the First Martyr Parish, in order to accomplish its mission, will continue to develop its sense of being a family community and maintain an inviting appropriate physical presence as a sign of its mission.

### **PARISH MISSION STATEMENT**

We, the parishioners of Saint Stephen the First Martyr, served by the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette, a welcoming Roman Catholic community of faith, spirit-filled and empowered by our Baptism, are called to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ by sharing His reconciling love and keeping his commandments. United by our worship, our commitment to continued faith development and our love for one another, we live our Catholic faith by dedicating ourselves to the enrichment of our community and to the greater glory of God.

### **ARTICLE II – PURPOSE**

The Parish Pastoral Council is a consultative body (Canon 536. n.2) by which the Christian faithful of a parish, together with those who have pastoral authority in the parish, "give their help in fostering pastoral activity" (Canon 536, n.1). Its work is to be informed and inspired by the vision of the Church, exemplified in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

The ways by which the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC), hereafter referred to as the Council, fulfills its shared responsibility are as follows:

1. The spiritual enrichment and growth of PPC members as well as the parishioners.
2. The study of the Christian life of the People of God with special attention to their Christian vision, needs, and hopes.

3. The discernment of the relationship of the pastoral activity of the parish to the legitimate needs and hopes of the parish community.
4. The help in establishing priorities among the various aspects of the pastoral activity of the parish.
5. The formation of policy and the development of programs of pastoral activity.
6. The clear distinction between policy formation (the proper work of the Council) and administration (the proper work of the Pastor and parish staff) should be maintained. At the same time, members of the parish staff should offer to the Council their knowledge and judgment regarding questions under discussion.
7. To set goals annually in fulfillment of the mission and to formulate plans to meet them.
8. To monitor the execution of Parish plans and programs and to evaluate their effectiveness.

The Council, working with the Pastor, shall be responsible for representing the members of the Parish and for guiding the Pastor in making decisions in the area of parish life. It does this by:

1. Communicating the values of the parish community through prayer and spiritual actions.
2. Involving the laity and staff in setting goals for the parish, and cooperatively planning and organizing actions to achieve those goals.

The Council has responsibility for:

1. Giving counsel to the Pastor regarding pastoral activity in the parish.
2. Assisting the Pastor in his pastoral role.
3. Fostering the pastoral life and ministry in the parish.

### **Relationship to the Pastor:**

The Council shall consider matters brought to its attention by the Pastor, and by the members of the Council, the committees of the Parish, other members of the Parish community, or by others as seems appropriate to the Council. The deliberative process is based on the philosophy of consensus building. Under Canon Law the ultimate decision-making authority in the Parish rests with its Pastor.

By virtue of his office, the Pastor guides the deliberations of the Council and is involved completely in the planning and policy development. The Pastor is responsible for the final approval of Council recommendations concerning Pastoral plans and policies as well as for the implementation by Parish Staff and other groups.

The Pastor must see to it that the Council does not endorse proposals which would be contrary to the universal law of the Church, diocesan statutes and civil law. The Pastor consults the Council on major pastoral concerns which affect the life and mission of the parish: namely, to proclaim the Word, to build up the community, to celebrate liturgy, and to serve all God's people.

The Council strives to achieve consensual agreement upon recommendations which affect future directions for spiritual growth and pastoral activity. While the Pastor may preside, canonically, over the Council, it is recommended that the President of the Council conducts the meetings.

### **ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP AND ELECTIONS**

#### **Section 1:**

The Council shall consist of the Pastor assisted by twelve lay persons from the parish, including three appointed members by the Pastor. Ex-officio members may include associate pastors and Finance Council chair.

#### **Section 2:**

Elected membership to the Pastoral Council will be open to any fully initiated Catholic, except the staff members, who is a registered and active member of the parish of St. Stephen and at least eighteen (18) years of age.

#### **Considerations and Development Process for Names of Nominees to the Council:**

1. Persons interested in serving in the ministry of parish leadership on the Council should have the ability to pray, study matters, and to reflect upon them thoroughly so as to make sound recommendations to the Pastor.

2. Persons should be fully initiated registered Catholic parishioners, active participants in the Eucharistic life of the parish, and contribute time, talent and treasure.

3. Persons should have the following characteristics: desire for spiritual growth; enthusiasm about the future direction of our parish; willingness to listen, speak honestly, and work to consensus; ability to inspire and empower others; flexibility and openness.

#### **Section 3:**

The election of members shall take place in the following manner:

- A. The Nominating Committee may consist of the entirety of the Council.
- B. The Nominating Committee may solicit new members through the parish bulletin, announcements during Mass, and by personal contact with parishioners/ candidates.
  - a. Every effort should be made to identify those persons that have the abilities, drive and qualifications needed for service on the Council.
  - b. The consent of the individual being considered is necessary before being placed on the ballot.
  - c. One fourth (three members) of the Pastoral Council will be elected each year for a three-year term. At that time the candidates will complete a Pastoral Council Questionnaire detailing past parish service. This will be followed by a question-and-answer period from the Council members. The candidates will then retire to another room while the Council proceeds with the voting. The Secretary will announce each candidate's name and number of votes received starting with the person with the highest number of votes.

- d. The names of the candidates not selected will, with the permission of the candidate, be placed on a standby list and be used for replacement of Council members that leave the Council before the end of their term. This list will be in effect until the next regularly scheduled election.
- e. Full-term vacancies (three (3) years) will be filled first from those elected to the Council. This will be followed by partial term replacements.
- f. Candidates for the Pastoral Council should be collected in March and April.
- g. The regular Pastoral Council election will take place at the regularly scheduled meeting in May.
- h. The continuing and the outgoing Council members will vote for candidates.
- i. The Secretary will prepare in advance a paper ballot for the election.
- j. The persons receiving the highest number of votes will be considered elected. Tie votes will be decided by another ballot. If on the second ballot to break a tie the vote remains tied the Pastor will cast a deciding vote. The Pastor does not vote otherwise in any election.

**Section 4:**

The term of office for elected members will be three (3) years. No member may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.

**Section 5:**

Should any Pastoral Council member remove their name from the parish register or become visibly and knowingly inactive in the parish their name will be stricken from the Pastoral Council rolls.

**Section 6:**

Membership to the Pastoral Council requires attendance at all regularly scheduled meetings of the Council. Any member absent from two (2) consecutive Council meetings without having notified the President in advance and having a valid reason will forfeit membership on the Pastoral Council. If a member cannot regularly attend meetings even though they have legitimate excuses, they should consider handing in their resignation so that another active Parishioner can replace them.

**ARTICLE IV -GOVERNMENT**

**Section 1:**

The government of the Pastoral Council shall be vested in the elected and ex-officio members.

**Section 2:**

All elected members of the Pastoral Council shall be entitled to one (1) vote and may hold office.

**Section 3:**

Ex-officio members shall have full participation in all matters under discussion by the Pastoral Council but are not permitted to vote.

## **ARTICLE V - OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **Section 1:**

The officers for the Pastoral Council shall be the President, Vice President and Secretary. Together as a group they form the Executive Committee that is responsible for the smooth functioning and ordered structure of the Council. They shall be elected by ballot or voice vote annually from the elected members of the Pastoral Council. Three-fourths (3/4) of the elected members to the Council must be present for the election of officers. Should no person receive an absolute majority of the votes cast in the first ballot, the two persons receiving the most votes shall then be voted on in a second ballot.

### **Section 2:**

The election of officers should take place at the May meeting of the Pastoral Council after the new members have been elected and installed. The newly elected officers will take possession of their offices at the July meeting.

### **Section 3:**

In case of a vacancy in any office for any cause, the members of the Pastoral Council, by the election procedures previously stated, will elect a successor to the unexpired term of the office.

### **Section 4:**

**The President** of the Pastoral Council will have the following duties:

- a. To preside at all meetings of the Pastoral Council.
- b. To prepare the agenda for meetings in consultation with the Pastor.
- c. To appoint, with a majority vote of the Council, members of any special committees.
- d. To convene special meetings with the approval from the Pastor
- e. To perform such other duties as are usually attached to this office.

**The Vice-President** shall have the following duties and powers:

- a. To perform the duties of the President in his/her absence or incapacity.
- b. To preside over the meeting when the President desires to speak for or against a motion or to second a motion.
- c. To serve as the President's representative in coordinating the activities of the Council committees and to perform such duties as the President shall designate.
- d. To perform such other duties as are usually attached to this office.

**The Secretary** shall have the following duties and powers;

- a. To record the minutes of the meetings of the Pastoral Council.
- b. To receive items from the members of the Pastoral Council that desire the items included in the agenda for the next scheduled meeting. This can be done no later than ten (10) days prior to the meeting.
- c. To write the correspondence in the name of the Pastoral Council and report to the Council thereon.

- d. To notify all Council members of special meetings at least five (5) days in advance of all meetings
- e. To transcribe the notes taken at the Council meetings into an official report containing all necessary details so that the report is complete and accurate.
- f. To transmit via e-mail the minutes of the previous meeting and a copy of the agenda for the next scheduled meeting at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting.
- g. To reserve the room for the PPC meetings.

## **ARTICLE VI: COMMITTEES**

### **Section 1:**

a. All established Committees (including other Councils and Boards) shall have a member of the Pastoral Council who shall serve as the liaison between the Council and the Committee. This person is responsible to serve on the Committee as a regular member but not as Chairperson and or officer and to be the medium for information and policy between the Council and Committee.

The Standing Committees of the parish are determined by the Pastor in consultation with his staff and with the Pastoral Council as needed. The following list serves as a general guideline for the establishment of parish committees and other governing bodies:

- i. Finance Council (Mandatory by Canon and Diocesan law)
- ii. Liturgy/ Environment
- iii. Hospitality and Welcoming
- iv. Cemetery
- v. Hispanic Ministries
- vi. Facilities Committee
- vii. Faith Formation Board

b. The relationship of the Committees and Council is one of subsidiarity. The Council and Committees are responsible to cooperate in their unique and separate roles and responsibilities. The Committees are to observe and guide the activity of the subject group to determine if they are operating to a degree where they are an effective force in the parish. The Committees are empowered to make necessary decisions in conjunction with the Pastor or their pastoral liaison that affect their area of responsibility. They are to refer to the Pastoral Council issues which have an effect on the wider parish or are beyond the specific realm of the Committee. If assistance is asked for or needed, the Pastoral Council can take the necessary steps to assist the Committee in their proper functions. The Committees are always to act in conformity with all Pastoral policies, plans and programs established by the Council.

c. The Council liaison members will submit a written report of any important issues or decisions made by the committees or groups for which they are responsible. These reports are normally tabled. If any major issue, conflict or decision has to be brought before the Council this will be submitted in advance and placed on the agenda of the appropriate meeting by the Executive Committee.

d. The Finance Council has separate responsibilities and authority and is a co-equal partner with the Pastoral Council in the governance of the Parish. Each Council has its specific areas of responsibility and should be respectful of these limits and boundaries. Any conflicts between the two Councils will be settled by the Pastor or through a joint meeting of the Executive Committees of each body or if necessary at a joint meeting. The Pastor may take items to either or both Councils for their advice as he deems appropriate.

## **ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS**

### **Section 1:**

The Pastoral Council's year will start in July and end in June. Meetings will normally be held once in two months, preferably the third Wednesday of every other month.

### **Section 2:**

The Secretary of the Pastoral Council will give at least a five (5) day notice to Council members, if at all possible, when there is to be an extraordinary meeting.

### **Section 3:**

With the approval of the Pastor, the Pastoral Council President may convene a special meeting upon the request of at least one third of the Pastoral Council members. The Pastor or the President may convene the Pastoral Council at any time for due cause.

### **Section 4:**

In the absence of the Pastor, no Pastoral Council meeting will be held without the Pastor's prior approval.

### **Section 5:**

The regularly scheduled meetings of the Pastoral Council will be publicized one (1) week in advance in the Sunday announcements, in the parish bulletin and on MyParish app in order to provide the opportunity to the parishioners to forward their suggestions, requests, recommendations etc.

### **Section 6:**

The Order of Business at meetings will be as follows:

- a. Call to order by the President
- b. Opening Prayer
- c. Roll call (done in silence by the Secretary)
- d. Approval of the minutes for the previous meeting by the Secretary
- e. Communications sent to the council
- f. Items arising out of Committee reports
- g. Old Business
- h. Finance Report
- i. Pastor's Report
- j. New Business
- k. Adjournment
- l. Closing Prayer

## **Section 7: Attendance by Non-Members**

- a. With the advance approval from the Pastor any member of the Parish, who is not a member of the Council, may attend any regular meeting of the Council and may make a brief oral presentation to the Council, and may leave the meeting after his/her presentation and discussions with the Council and do not vote on any matter.
- b. If the non-member desires to present an item to be voted upon by the Council, such item must be submitted in writing to the Pastor or President of the Council at least 10 days prior to the scheduled date of the meeting and that proposal shall be forwarded to the members of the Council along with the minutes of the previous meeting.
- c. In the event the Council determines that action should be taken on the proposal, such action may be taken at that meeting or at a future meeting, as the Council determines to be appropriate.
- d. Members of the Parish who are not members of the Council shall have no right to attend or address any special meeting of the Council.
- e. Members of the Pastoral Staff who attend a Council meeting with the prior permission from the Pastor to present specific items may leave the meeting after his/her presentation and discussions with the Council and do not vote on any matter.

## **Section 8:**

Robert's Rules of Order (Parliamentary Procedure) will govern the meetings of the Pastoral Council.

## **ARTICLE VIII: QUORUM**

An absolute majority of members of the Pastoral Council will constitute a quorum for all meetings. No issue requiring a vote may be decided in the absence of a quorum of voting members or in absence of the Pastor. If a quorum is absent the members present can with the permission of the President and Pastor meet as a working group to further the tasks and agendas of the Council but must defer all votes to a future meeting.

## **Section 1:**

All questions that need to be brought to a vote will be decided by an absolute majority of votes unless otherwise specified. The Council may determine by a majority vote that a specific question is of such importance that a two-thirds (2/3) vote would be required for approval by the Pastoral Council. The Pastor may also determine that a matter is of such importance that it will require a two-thirds (2/3) vote.

## **Section 2:**

In every case the absolute majority is calculated on the number of votes validly cast, no account being taken of invalid ballots. Blank ballots are considered abstentions and are valid. However, invalid votes are to be subtracted from the total. The following are considered invalid votes:

- Those which bear more names than the number of candidates to be elected.



- Those which leave a doubt either as to the candidate intended or as to the meaning of the vote.

**Section 3:**

The Pastor is expected to give due consideration to the advice and recommendations of the Parish Pastoral Council and not act contrary to such advice without a reasonable and justifiable cause. The Pastor will state his reason(s) to the Pastoral Council at the same time as his rejection.

**Section 4:**

The Pastor does, however, have the authority to veto any act of the Pastoral Council.

**ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENTS**

**Section 1 – Amendments to the By-Laws**

Amendments to the By-Laws of the Pastoral Council of St. Stephen the First Martyr Parish may be submitted in writing by a member of the Pastoral Council. Such proposed amendments must be submitted in writing to the Pastor at least 10 days prior to the scheduled date of a regular meeting of the Council and shall be placed on the agenda of that meeting for a first reading. Such written proposals shall be forwarded to the members of the Council along with the minutes of the previous meeting. The proposed amendments shall be voted on after a second reading at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Council and shall be passed upon a simple majority vote of a quorum of the members then present and voting.

**Section 2 – Review**

The By-Laws shall be reviewed every five years by a sub-committee appointed by the Pastor.

Adopted July 1, 2023