

Saint Stephen's Parish Council

Bylaws

ARTICLE I

NOMINATION AND SELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Section 1. At each annual selection, one-third of the members shall be selected for a term of three years to fill the vacancies caused by the members whose terms are due to expire.

Section 2. At least sixty (60) days prior to each annual selection of new members, the chairperson shall appoint a selection committee of at least four (4) members, two (2) of whom are council members. The Selection Committee's responsibility is to manage all aspects of the selection process including:

- a. Education of Parishioners: Parishioners are educated through bulletin and pulpit announcements about the council and the selection process for at least two (2) weeks. They are asked to give prayerful consideration to nominating parishioners or themselves for the Council.
- b. Nomination: Nomination forms are distributed at all liturgies on a designated weekend. Parishioners are invited to write down the names of persons they feel have the essential characteristics of a Council member.
- c. Notification: Persons whose names are submitted by parishioners are contacted by the Selection Committee members to inform them of their nomination and of the required orientation. At least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the selection, the Selection Committee publishes in the parish bulletin the names of those who have agreed to continue in the nomination process. Additional nominations are acceptable if submitted in writing to the Selection Committee within ten (10) days after this publication.
- d. Orientation: The Selection Committee plans the local orientation process and requires nominees' attendance at local and archdiocesan orientation.
- e. Acceptance: Those who feel called to serve as Council members accept nomination and participate on the final slate of nominees. The Selection Committee ensures that the slate of nominees is representative of the parish community and nominates at least two (2) people for each position to be filled. In the event that the Selection Committee cannot secure at least two (2) people for each position, the Council can decide to extend the terms of the seated members with archdiocesan approval. The selection process begins again with a longer, more thorough education for the entire parish. In no event shall any person be deemed nominated unless the Selection Committee receives an expression of willingness to serve. If a member of the Selection Committee becomes a nominee, that person ceases to be a member of the Selection Committee.
- f. Final Slate of Nominees: The slate shall be published in the parish bulletin at least two (2) weeks prior to the discernment.
- g. Facilitation: The Selection Committee facilitates the actual selection process and informs the parish of the results.

Section 3. The selection of the new members of the Council shall be by discernment. In the context of prayer and with the help of a facilitator, the nominees who are best suited to serve on the Council at this time are discerned.

ARTICLE II

VACANCIES AND REMOVALS

Section 1. Any member of the Council may resign by filing a written resignation with the chairperson.

Section 2. At any meeting of the Council, any at-large member may be removed for good cause through Council consensus or by an affirmative vote of a three-fourths majority of those Council members present. Any member whose removal has been proposed shall be given an opportunity to be heard at the meeting. Good cause includes:

- a. Missing two (2) consecutive meetings without good reason.
- b. Physical or mental incapacity.
- c. Failure to perform the duties of a council member.

Section 3. The Council shall fill a vacancy among the at-large members for the unexpired term by appointment by the chairperson, subject to approval by the Council. Consideration should be given to previous nominees. (Technically, this is considered an appointment. This parishioner would still be eligible to fill two (2) consecutive three (3) year terms.

ARTICLE III

OFFICERS

Section 1. Selection of the officers of the Council shall be by discernment from, among, and by the Council members present at the annual transition meeting. Offices shall be filled in the following order: chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary.

Section 2. No Council officer may serve more than three (3) consecutive terms in any one office.

Section 3. The Chairperson:

- a. is aware of the tasks and responsibilities of the Council and communicates these to the Council, the committees and the parish community.
- b. organizes and coordinates activities and processes of the Council; develops and maintains an annual Council calendar consistent with the parish calendar.
- c. prepares the meeting agendas in consultation with the pastor and other Council members for publication in the parish bulletin the weekend before the meeting; submits the agenda to the Council members and committee chairpersons at least three (3) days prior the meeting.
- d. provides formation/education for Council members utilizing the parish staff and offerings at the district and archdiocesan levels.
- e. conducts meetings by assisting Council members to work together effectively and arrive at appropriate decisions through consensus; also conducts parish meetings.
- f. facilitates the task of determining priorities and setting goals for programs and services to be developed within parish guidelines and archdiocesan structures and goals.

- g. monitors implementation of all Council decisions.
- h. ensures that a Council budget is established and communicates budget information to the Administrative Services Committee.
- i. establishes *ad hoc* committees and appoints their chairpersons; assigns specific tasks to individuals; delegates responsibilities and encourages cooperation.
- j. is an *ex officio* member of all standing and *ad hoc* committees of the Council.
- k. assists the next chairperson in understanding the history, responsibilities and resources of the Council; transfers all Council materials to the new chairperson.
- l. performs duties consistent with the office as the Council may direct.

Section 4. The Vice-Chairperson:

- a. conducts meetings in the absence of the chairperson.
- b. becomes chairperson in the event of a vacancy.
- c. chairs the Selection Committee.
- d. invites all committee chairpersons to attend one Council meeting each year to report on their committee's activities.
- e. performs duties consistent with the office as the chairperson or the Council may direct.

Section 5. The Secretary:

- a. oversees the accurate recording of the minutes of each meeting and sees to it that the minutes and the agenda are made available to the Council members, committee chairpersons, and the parish; sees to it that a condensed report of the meeting is prepared for publication in the parish bulletin.
- b. takes attendance at the meetings and records absences.
- c. maintains the official list of all Council members and officers and their terms, along with standing committee officers and all *ad hoc* committee chairpersons; keeps these lists current with regard to addresses and phone numbers; completes the archdiocesan registry form following each annual selection and keeps this list current by informing the archdiocese of all changes.
- d. reports to the Council all communications; handles correspondence for the Council including agendas, minutes, notification of all regular and special meetings, notes of thanks, etc.
- e. performs such duties consistent with the office as the chairperson or Council may direct.

ARTICLE IV

MEETINGS

Section 1. Regular meetings of the Council shall be held at such time, place and date as the Council may designate.

Section 2. The agenda shall be decided upon in advance of the meeting, based on written committee requests received from each standing committee and on an understanding of the ongoing needs and concerns of the parish. Parishioners may submit items for consideration.

Section 3. Notice of special meetings shall be given to all members within a reasonable time prior to the meeting stating its' time, place and purpose. No other business than that stated as the purpose shall be conducted at that meeting.

Section 4. Advance notice of the time and place of meetings of the Council shall be published in the parish bulletin and all members of the parish shall be entitled and welcomed to attend as observers. The Council may open any meeting to discussion by parish members on such subjects and under such rules as the Council may announce.

ARTICLE V

STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1. Purpose: Each standing committee implements the Council's priorities and goals in its' own areas of responsibility in a collaborative spirit to accomplish the parish's mission. All committee work leads to building a faith community, proclaiming the Word of God, calling people to prayer, and motivating people to serve others.

Section 2. Scope: All committees are accountable to the Council. Committees make decisions in their areas of responsibility following the principle of subsidiarity, which means making decisions at the most appropriate level in the parish committee structure.

Section 3. Function:

- a. Identify needs of the parish within its area of responsibility and in keeping with the parish mission.
- b. Establish priorities among the needs and communicate these needs to the Council, discerning with them which needs can realistically be addressed and where inter-committee collaboration might be effective.
- c. Formulate long term goals and short-term goals and objectives.
- d. Research and investigate options to implement goals.
- e. Submit the proposed programs to the Council for support.
- f. Communicate with the pastor and the pastoral staff about the implementation.
- g. Maintain communication with the parish concerning programs, encouraging active support and involvement.
- h. Maintain communication with the respective archdiocesan offices and agencies for guidelines and resources.
- i. Provide ongoing formation of committee members in its areas of responsibility through workshops, study, spiritual formation, etc.
- j. Determine budget priorities in the areas of the committee's responsibility and make recommendations to the Council through the Administrative Services Committee.
- k. Periodically evaluate existing programs and activities.

Section 4. The descriptions of the individual standing committees of the Council are:

PRAYER AND WORSHIP

The role of this standing committee is to nourish and give direction to the liturgical aspect of the parish life by ensuring that parishioners are provided with opportunities to deepen their faith through a variety of prayer experiences and liturgical celebrations.

CHRISTIAN FORMATION

The role of this standing committee is to develop within the parish awareness that the parish community has the responsibility for promoting the educational/formational aspect of the Church's Mission. Christian formation is a lifelong process aimed at personal conversion and growth in faith. This committee is advisory to educational administrators in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the total Christian educational/formational programs in the parish, which includes: sacramental preparation, adult and family ministry, youth ministry and child ministry.

Further, this committee is to provide for a comprehensive approach to Christian education/formation by acting as the overall coordinating and integrating body regarding all aspects of Christian education/formation in the parish. The approach may be accomplished according to Christian Formation programs, according to functions, or a combination. This committee respects the roles and responsibilities of the parish employees as defined in their job descriptions.

HUMAN CONCERNS

The role of this standing committee is to discern the needs of persons in the parish and wider community, especially the poor, and identifies resources to meet those needs enlisting the active cooperation of the parish members. The committee fulfills the justice dimensions of Scripture and our Church Tradition acknowledging that every Christian is called to service and to work for justice, including respect for life efforts. The committee's scope of responsibility is twofold: First, is to meet the immediate needs; Second, to work for changes in the structures of society which are oppressive. Committee members are not responsible to actually *do* all of the committee's work, but rather to *INVOLVE OTHERS* in actively accepting the responsibility of their Baptism. The committee supports those in the parish who are already involved in service, advocacy, justice education, and empowerment of people. The committee works with community groups and other parishes to help solve related problems. They keep parishioners aware of issues relating to justice, peace, hunger, and the homeless on the local, national, and international levels so that appropriate Christian action on such issues can be determined.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

The role of this standing committee is to make recommendations to the Council concerning all aspects of parish financial and budget matters, personnel, stewardship of resources, church support, and fundraising coordination. The activities and recommendations of this committee are firmly rooted in the biblical concept of stewardship. This committee works closely with the Council and is supportive of all other committees. This committee does not decide priorities for the parish -- that is the responsibility of the Council. The pastor, trustee-treasurer, and trustee-secretary are *ex officio* members of this committee.

FAMILY LIFE

The role of this standing committee is to nurture the family life of the parish as well as provide services for the families of the area. Its mission is to encourage the empowerment of families towards advocacy for themselves and to provide resources and support in collaboration with other community agencies to this end. The committee is ecumenical at its base with the Family Life Committee being an advisory group representative of the population which is served.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

The role of this standing committee involves the physical condition of the parish property; its maintenance and upkeep. The committee identifies and articulates the needs of the parish in this area and makes recommendations to the Council. These responsibilities include the periodic inspection and evaluation of all parish properties in the areas of safety, security, necessary repairs, remodeling and new construction. To this end, the committee shall maintain a complete set of all architectural plans, drawings, designs and specifications for all parish properties. They shall write specifications for all desired and necessary repairs and have contractors submit bids for needed goods and services. They shall recommend purchases of equipment and qualified maintenance services for Council approval. They shall prepare guidelines for the use of parish facilities making certain that any rental or lease agreements conform to the laws of the State and archdiocesan norms and policies. They shall, in conjunction with the Stewardship Committee, prepare and maintain a list of parishioners who will donate their time and talents for necessary work around the parish.

STEWARDSHIP

The role of this standing committee is to be responsible for the ongoing stewardship educational efforts of the parish. Members of the committee are faith-filled individuals who understand and promote the biblical concept of stewardship to all parishioners and parish groups and are committed to building a community of prayer and hospitality that welcomes and affirms all gifts. To these ends, the committee shall prepare a Time and Talent List or Catalog of Parish Ministries/Committees and be responsible for keeping it current and available to all other committees and the Council. They shall oversee the efforts of Stewardship Education in the parish including the annual commitment or re-commitment of parishioner gifts, insuring that all who come forth to offer their gifts are contacted, recorded and thanked. They shall develop a Welcoming program that helps new parishioners feel embraced by the community. They shall provide materials that highlight parish life and encourage participation by all. They shall be responsible for educating parishioners about stewardship through various parish communications vehicles and collaborate with the Prayer and Worship Committee to incorporate stewardship opportunities in homilies, intercessions, and reflections that take place during the Mass. They shall oversee the implementation of various stewardship efforts such as home visits, capital campaigns, planned giving, and the annual stewardship drive. They shall provide in-service and continuing education to their members to improve their skills and outreach. Finally, they shall be responsible for an evaluation of the Stewardship Program on an annual basis, providing comprehensive reports that reflect the generosity of the parish to both the Council and the parish at large.

Section 5. All standing and *ad hoc* committees will operate under a set of common Standing Committee Guidelines established by the Council and reviewed by the Council every five (5) years. Each committee chairperson shall be invited to meet with the Council at least once a year to report on their committee's activities. A committee is able to make decisions only if a quorum is present, which means a majority of its members. There may be majority and minority reports presented to the Council if agreement cannot be achieved.

Section 6. Other standing committees may be added by the Council through the amendment process described in Article X of the Parish Council Constitution. Adding a standing committee is a major decision for the Council since it affects the entire parish structure. Before amending the Constitution, the committee's purpose and areas of responsibility have to be defined in writing, and be based on clear evidence of the need for such a committee.

In fact, it is a good practice to allow a potential standing committee to function for a year or more as an *ad hoc* committee. During this time, the committee's functions and responsibilities can be refined and its effectiveness evaluated. Once the committee is operating to the Council's satisfaction, the Council can decide if its scope and purpose are suitable to a permanent position within the committee structure -- thus becoming a standing committee.

Section 7. The term of service on standing committees is one year, renewable annually.

Section 8. The chairperson of each committee shall be discerned by the committee from among its members and shall be chosen on the basis of competence, leadership ability, and knowledge of the committee's area of ministry. The term of office for the chairperson is one year. Consecutive terms shall be decided through committee consensus or by an affirmative vote of a three-fourths majority of the committee members present. Neither an employee of the parish nor an *ex officio* member of the Council shall be eligible to be a chairperson.

ARTICLE VI

Amendments to the Bylaws

Section 1. The Council may amend the bylaws by consensus at two (2) successive regular meetings of the Council.

Date of approval by the Parish Council-----June 8, 2006
Date of approval by the Archdiocese-----
Date of most recent Amendment-----
Date of next full review-----June 2010