

GUIDELINES FOR THE ST. STEPHEN'S PASTORAL COUNCIL

Omaha, Nebraska

Mission Statement: St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic Church is a community for all people to encounter Christ, know Christ and proclaim Christ.

PURPOSE

1. St. Stephen the Martyr's Pastoral Council has its foundation in Vatican II and church norms. The council is a consultative body of parishioners who work with the Pastor for all matters of the parish and as such, is not a decision making or legislative body.
2. The Parish Pastoral Council is responsible to:
 - a. Promote the mission of the parish.
 - b. Provide advice and consultation to the pastor who has decision making responsibility and accountability to the Archbishop and to the parish in matters of pastoral planning and policy.
 - c. Engage in pastoral planning through the development of parish goals and supporting their implementation.
 - d. Attending to the prayer and continuing education necessary for Council action.
 - e. Listen to and represent the wisdom of the many perspectives present in the parish community.
 - f. Ensure mutual communication between the Council and parishioners.
 - g. The ongoing renewal of parish life and calling forth the gifts of individuals and groups in the faith community and cooperate with other parishes and the Archdiocese in the fulfillment of the broader mission of the Church in providing the pastoral vision and direction for the parish.
3. The Parish Pastoral Council will maintain relationships with:
 - a. the Parish Leadership team to promote and support effective leadership of the parish.
 - b. the Finance Council in its role as the consultative committee advising and supporting the Parish Finance and Operations teams.
 - c. the Religious Education Advisory Board in its role as a consultative advising committee supporting the Director of Religious Education and Youth Ministry.
 - d. the School Advisory Board in its role as a consultative board advising and supporting the school principal and assists in the governance of the school.
 - e. the Evangelization Advisory Council in its role as a visionary body to the Director of Evangelization and Catechesis.
 - f. the Social Justice Advisory Council in its role as a visionary body to the Director of Evangelization and Catechesis.
 - g. Staff and volunteers involved in the Seven Dimensions of Parish life to monitor, assist and achieve their visions listed below:
 - Community – To be a welcoming community of faith where all may grow as disciples of Christ who love and serve God and neighbors.

- Worship – Provide a consistent level of excellence in the liturgical experience that enables all to glorify God and grow in holiness.
 - Leadership – To model Christ-centered leadership by developing as disciples, establishing a culture of unity and collaboration, recognizing and engaging the gifts of all, while providing clear direction.
 - Formation – To invite and equip all to become disciples through unified catechetical formation.
 - Stewardship – Create a culture that leads all to an increased understanding and appreciation of the blessings that the Lord has bestowed and a greater desire to share to those blessings.
 - Social Justice – To embrace Catholic teaching to support outreach ministries for all who are in need of love, compassion and the mercy of God.
 - Evangelization – Provide opportunities for all to encounter Christ so they are inspired to proclaim Him.
- h. Other parishes, the deanery and the Archdiocese through the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (APC) and other programs.

MEMBERSHIP

1. Every baptized and confirmed practicing Catholic of the parish currently registered and being 18 years of age or older, and of good reputation in the parish community shall be eligible to be a member of the Council. Paid employees of St. Stephen the Martyr shall not be eligible to be a member of the Council. Individuals rather than couples are eligible for each Council position.
2. There will be nine members selected by the council in a prayerful selection process, with the Pastor giving final approval.
3. The term of membership is an initial three year term with the option to serve a second three year term. The maximum limit is two consecutive 3 year terms. After standing down one year, a member is eligible to renew membership. The term of office of a Council member will end on the thirty-first (31) day of May in the final year of his or her term.
4. Any member of the council may resign by filing a written resignation with the President. At any meeting of the Council, one or more voting members may be removed for just cause. Just cause includes, among other things, missing three meetings within a fiscal year. Any member, whose removal has been proposed, will be given notice of said fact from the President and an opportunity to respond. After this process, if a vote is taken, a majority is required to remove a member.
5. Vacancies which occur during the term of a Council member shall be filled with persons selected by the Council and subsequently approved by the Pastor. These members shall serve only the

unexpired term of the individual they replace. They may then choose to serve the next full three year term as their second term at which time they would be required to stand down for one year to again be eligible for membership.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

1. In a spirit of prayerfulness, each member of the Pastoral Council will:
 - a. Attend and actively participate in the regular meetings of the Council.
 - b. Develop a spirit of enquiry and the ability to listen and understand the issues affecting the lives of parishioners and generate responses to any identified issues.
 - c. Encourage and support the continuing good work of existing groups within the parish.
 - d. Continuously review the parish Strategic Plan goals for the parish community as well as within the framework of diocesan priorities and oversee the implementation of these goals.
 - e. Provide prayerful support and encouragement for other members of the Council.
 - f. Actively participate in the implementation of finalized plans of action.
 - g. Represent the Pastoral Council when required. (i.e. other Parish meetings or diocesan meetings)

SELECTION OF MEMBERS

1. The Council will have a broad membership with a diversity of age, gender and ethnic origin. Each Pastoral Council member is a representative of the whole parish community and not a representative of a specific parish group only.
2. The Council will identify the talents and areas of expertise that are desired for new member to possess at the March meeting. These needs shall be guided by the current and anticipated future needs of the Parish and Pastor. The talents and areas of expertise identified by the Council shall be a prominent part of the Parish communications seeking new Council members.
3. Parish communications seeking new Council members shall commence shortly after the March meeting. The President shall also ask Council members to recruit candidates with the desired talents and areas of expertise from the parish at large to fill anticipated vacancies on the Council. A packet of instructions shall be available to candidates in the Parish Office and on the Parish Website. An information packet that will include a copy of the Pastoral Council Guidelines and information regarding the general responsibilities and expectations of the Council will be provided to candidates.
4. Prior to the May meeting, the Council will review the list of candidates to align current and future needs of the Council. They shall recommend to the Pastor the candidates whom they feel would best address these needs. The Pastor will review the recommendations and make the final selection of the new members.
5. The new members will be announced at the May meeting of the Council.

OFFICERS

1. The officers of the Council shall be President, Vice President and Secretary. All officers will assume the responsibility of their elected office at the June meeting of the Council. The officers will be elected by the Pastoral Council as the first order of business at the first meeting following the Council election and the term for these officers shall be one year. Only those Council members who have served for at least one year will be eligible for election as President of the Council. They may succeed themselves in office one time.
2. Duties of President:
 - a. Organize the agenda for each meeting, incorporating input from all pastoral councilors.
 - b. Arrange distribution of the agenda, minutes and all relevant material one week in advance of that meeting.
 - c. Preside at all regular and special meetings of the Council.
 - d. Provide advance notification to all council members of the time and place of regular and special meetings.
 - e. Be responsible for assuring participation of all members in Council deliberations and decision making.
 - f. Ensure there is regular communication with parishioners to inform them of the work of the Council, including regular updates on important projects.
3. Duties of Vice President:
 - a. Preside at all meetings in the absence of the President.
4. Duties of Secretary:
 - a. Keep an accurate record of all Council correspondence, minutes and other communications.
 - b. Publish a copy of each meeting's minutes to all members no later than one week after the meeting.
 - c. Provide a copy of the minutes to the Parish at large through the parish website.
 - d. Keep an accurate record of all those attending the meetings.

COMMITTEES

1. The Executive Committee of the Pastoral Council will consist of the Pastor, President, Vice-President and Secretary.
2. Each of the parish 7 Dimensions will have at least one Pastoral Council member responsible for reporting progress and concerns back to the Pastoral Council. These groups report the status of that Dimension's Goals and Objectives back to the Council at a minimum quarterly.
3. In addition to the 7 Dimensions, one of the Council members will be assigned to be a liaison to the Finance Committee.
4. The President of the Council serves as a liaison for all subcommittees if needed.

CONSENSUS

1. The consensus approach will be used in the process of contributing towards the making of parish decisions, with each member offering input towards the final outcome.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE PARISH

1. The Pastoral Council will report to the parish community regularly. It will seek the input of parishioners through various means. (i.e. parish consultations, focus meetings, conversations) The Council President is responsible for open communication to the parish.

MEETINGS

1. Regular meetings of the Council shall be held each month at a time and place decided upon by the Council at the first meeting in June. Regular Council meetings are open to all members of the parish, with the exception of executive sessions.
2. Prayer is an integral part of all meetings. Proper time and preparation should be provided for this significant part of the proceedings.
3. Education shall also be a part of all meetings. During this time at each Council meeting, this time shall afford members the opportunity to study issues and documents, such as those of the Second Vatican Council, the bishops' conference, and the local church. This education should aim to assist Council members in making informed decisions regarding the parish and keeping them updated in their own faith.
4. There must be at least 5 members present to conduct a meeting and confirm actions for quorum.

AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS

1. The Pastoral Guidelines will be reviewed annually prior to the new council member selection process. Any changes will be approved by the Council and then submitted to the Chancery for review. The Archbishop is to give final approval to all Guidelines and their revisions or amendments.

These recommended Pastoral Council Guidelines will replace the previous St. Stephen the Martyr Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines and will become effective upon ratification by two-thirds of the members of the Parish Pastoral Council and the approval of the Pastor and the Archbishop of the Omaha Archdiocese. Therefore, encouraged by Vatican II, and reaffirming our loyalty to the Vicar of Christ, the Bishop of Rome and to our own Archbishop of Omaha, we hereby adopt and ratify these Guidelines of the Pastoral Council.

SIGNATURES OF COUNCIL MEMEBERS AND PASTOR

	Signature:	Date:
Dean Baumert	_____	_____
Deena Merten	_____	_____
Trinette Shamburg	_____	_____
Mike Sullivan	_____	_____
Donna Titman	_____	_____
Julie Tylski	_____	_____
Jerry Venner	_____	_____
Michael White	_____	_____
Nancy Williams	_____	_____
Fr. Dave Belt	_____	_____
Archbishop George Lucas	_____	_____

Revisions:

November 1990	April 1999	June 2008	March 2018
April 1994	April 2004	February 2001	July 2019
September 1996	March 2005	June 2016	