

*Sacred Heart Church*  
*PARISH COUNCIL BYLAWS*

**ARTICLE I**

The name of the parish council shall be Sacred Heart Parish Council.

**ARTICLE II: PURPOSE AND FUNCTION**

Article II: Section 1

The Parish Council is a consultative body that represents the voice of the Parish, working with the Pastor who is the administrator of the Parish and, as such, is responsible to the Bishop. The Council and the Pastor define the vision of what the Parish is called to become.

Article II: Section 2

The Parish Council is called to work in a consultative role with the Pastor:

- a. in developing and maintaining a pastoral plan;
- b. in promoting and implementing this pastoral plan; and
- c. in evaluating the pastoral plan in a timely fashion.

Article II: Section 3

The Parish Council shall assist the Pastor in assessing the spiritual and temporal needs of the Parish. In doing this, the Parish Council must be mindful of the parish's relationship with the Diocese and the community at large, and set forth policies and objectives aimed at those needs. Once a pastoral plan has been developed, then the Parish Council should assist annually in establishing goals and objectives aimed at fulfilling the plan.

Article II: Section 4

The Parish Council's distinctive function is to participate in the planning process and in the establishment of policy for the parish. It shall not in any way interfere with the internal administration of the Parish, or the function of any organization within the Parish.

Article II: Section 5

The Parish Council shall serve as a permanent, yet flexible, structure for constructive dialogue among the laity, Pastor & other clergy, and religious of the parish in order to cooperate as a Christian community and fulfill Christ's saving mission. Consensus through dialogue is the desired process for decision-making with a Parish Council. To be most effective, the process requires that:

- a. the consultation process should be accepted by all participants;
- b. the dialogue involves listening as well as speaking on the part of all; and
- c. the pastoral staff may actively participate in the discussion process leading to consensus.

Article II: Section 6

The Parish Council shall enable the people of this community of God to express their dreams, needs, and opinions. Once the dialogue has been completed and consensus on an issue has been formed, it then becomes a recommendation to the Pastor. In the majority of cases, experience indicates, the Pastor accepts Parish Council recommendations. When a Pastor does not accept a particular recommendation, he should give his reason(s) to the Council.

In case(s) of unresolved issues, Parish Council would proceed according to Guidelines for Parish Councils, published by the Diocese of Springfield Cape-Girardeau.

### **ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP**

#### Article III: Section 1

The Parish Council shall consist of fifteen (15) voting members: ten (10) at-large members selected by parishioners and five (5) appointed by the Pastor. A Council member shall represent the Council on each of the standing committees (See Article VII: Section 1).

The associate Pastor, paid religious, school principal, parish minister(s), director/coordinator of religious education, and any paid staff shall be ex-officio non-voting members. The Pastor does not vote because the Council is consultative to him.

#### Article III: Section 2

Term of Office is three (3) years for all elected members beginning in the elected member's first meeting in August. Appointed members shall have a one-year term with option for renewal.

#### Article III: Section 3

An elected member shall serve no more than two consecutive terms, except that members appointed to complete a term may serve out the remainder of that term and be eligible to serve only one more term.

#### Article III: Section 4

In the event of a vacancy of an appointed member, the Pastor shall appoint a replacement. In the event of a vacancy of a selected member, the next in line from the previous selection process should be consulted as to desire and willingness to serve. If so, then they will be appointed to serve until the end of that term. If that person is unable to serve, then the next person in line is consulted.

#### Article III: Section 5

Members completing two three-year terms are eligible for election or appointment after one year's absence.

#### Article III: Section 6

Council membership shall be declared vacant if the member dies, removes self from or becomes inactive in the parish or is absent, without prior notice of the contemplated absence to the Pastor or Chairperson, from two consecutive Council meetings, or any three (3) meetings during a twelve (12) month period. The enforcement of this by-law is the responsibility of the Officers of the Parish Council in consultation with the Pastor.

**ARTICLE IV: NOMINATIONS AND SELECTION PROCEDURES**

Article IV: Section 1

The Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Parish Council Chairperson. This committee shall be responsible for executing the process of nominations and selection as defined by the Parish Council By-Laws. The Pastor shall be a member of the Nominating Committee.

Article IV: Section 2

Nominations will be submitted by the Nominating Committee. Nominations shall reflect true representation of all segments and viewpoints of the parish. The Pastor shall be a member of the nominating committee. To be eligible for selection to the Council, one must be:

- a. An active Catholic, registered in the Parish.
- b. Age 18 or over, except for the youth representative.

A list of minimum qualifications, allowing for flexible interpretation, follows:

- a. believing, praying Christians committed to building a spirit of unity within the parish;
- b. persons having adequate knowledge about the parish;
- c. persons willing and able to serve and accept responsibility;
- d. persons with a desire to serve the Church;
- e. persons who participate in promoting the teachings of Vatican II; and
- f. a minimal understanding of the English language is necessary to facilitate the meeting process because the council meetings are conducted in English.

Article IV: Section 3

The selection process shall include:

- a. educating the parish on the selection process,
- b. nominating suitable candidates,
- c. publishing information about the candidates,
- d. selecting new members of the Council,
- e. yearly public installation of the all members.

Article IV: Section 4

The selection of the new Council members shall be concluded by June, preferably in May. New members shall be installed and officers elected no later than October 31.

**ARTICLE V: OFFICERS – TERMS AND DUTIES**

Article V: Section 1

The Council shall elect from among its elected members a Vice-Chairperson with the understanding

that the Vice-Chairperson will then serve as the Chairperson the following year on the council. A secret ballot may be helpful in the process. A Secretary may be selected in the same manner or, if preferred, may be a non-member of the Council. (In the latter case, the Secretary shall not be eligible in the decision-making of the Council.)

The Vice-Chairperson and Secretary shall be elected annually. No officer shall serve more than two consecutive full years in the same position.

#### Article V: Section 2

The Chairperson shall:

- a. Work with the Pastor in preparing an agenda for each meeting.
- b. Insure that the Council functions according to its by-laws.
- c. See that goals set by previous Councils are carried out in a way which provides continuity from one Council to the next.
- d. Be eligible to participate as an ex-officio member of any subcommittee of the Parish.
- e. Call special meetings when necessary.

The Vice-Chairperson shall perform the duties of the Chairperson in the Chair's absence and perform such duties as may be delegated by the Chairperson.

#### Article V: Section 3

The Secretary is responsible for:

- a. Keeping accurate and detailed minutes of all meetings, to be approved by the Council at the next meeting.
- b. Preparing minutes or a summary of the minutes for the Pastor to share with parishioners.
- c. Maintaining and preserving the official minutes of the Parish Council as part of the permanent records of the Parish.

### **ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS**

#### Article VI: Section 1

The Parish Council shall meet on a regular basis, the day and time decided on at the first regular meeting of Parish Council in October.

In addition to the regular meetings, the Chairperson shall see to it that a minimum of one meeting per year shall be held for the purpose of spiritual growth of Council members.

Meetings shall be carefully planned and executed. Meetings should begin and conclude on time. (Two hours is a recommended maximum length of time for regular meetings.)

Council members should be informed of issues to be addressed at the next meeting and shall receive a copy of the minutes of the previous meeting, committee reports and other appropriate material by at least the Sunday prior to that meeting.

According to Diocesan Guidelines, each meeting could include:

- a. **PRAYER** – an opportunity to share faith together. Meetings open and close with prayer.
- b. **LEARNING** – time spent listening to a discussion concerning the current teachings of the Church and

topics related to the spiritual growth of all Council members.

c. **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES** – time spent putting the pastoral plan into concrete form.

d. **REPORTS** – listening to how the committees are implementing the pastoral plan.

e. **OLD AND NEW BUSINESS** – the current situation and needs of the parish community.

#### Article VI: Section 2

The Parish Council can be called into special session by the Council’s Chairperson.

#### Article VI: Section 3

A simple majority of the Parish Council membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

### **ARTICLE VII: COMMITTEES**

#### Article VII: Section 1

- a. At the meeting in which the new officers are chosen, the Parish Council shall review the previous year’s standing and temporary committees and recommend to the Pastor which of them should continue or be established for the next 12 months.
- b. To encourage increased communication, one or more Parish Council members shall serve as a contact(s) between each of the parish committees or groups and the parish council.
- c. In addition to the standing committees, the Parish Council may, from time to time, authorize the establishment of ad-hoc (temporary) committees to handle particular issues, responsibilities, or duties. These committees will be directly responsible to the Parish Council.
- d. The list of all committees, along with their summary of purpose, their chairpersons and parish council contacts, shall be maintained by the Parish Council Secretary and updated at least once each year.

#### Article VII: Section 2

##### Guidelines for Standing Committees:

- a. Each committee shall set its own meeting date with approval from the Pastor.
- b. Each chair of a standing committee shall choose committee members from the congregation. A list of current members shall be recorded with the Council.
- c. All committees shall be prepared to report to the Council as scheduled by the parish council executive committee. Reports should be written and presented to the Parish Council Secretary or Chairperson prior to the scheduled meeting that the report is to be given so as to become part of the Council minutes. These reports should represent all ministries of the standing committees.
- d. Proposed committee actions shall not be undertaken until reviewed by the Parish Council and approved by the Pastor or his designated representatives. In the case of proposals involving expenditure of parish funds, the Finance Council shall also provide its counsel during the review process.

Article VII: Section 3

Relationship of the Parish Council to the Parish Finance Council.

- a. The Parish Council shall evaluate the pastoral plan and continue its implementation in consultation with the pastor as the annual budget is developed. The Finance Council, in turn, collaborates with the pastor, parish council and various parish staff members and other appropriate parties for the development of the annual parish budget.
- b. Ordinarily, since the Finance and Parish councils are separate and distinct, a person should not serve on both councils simultaneously unless the small size of a parish warrants it. In some cases, a pastor may feel it would be of benefit to the parish to assign a person to both Councils when such action fosters better communication.
- c. The Finance Council, together with the pastor, makes available to the Parish Council regular and adequate financial reports, noting any major factors or trends that could have a budgetary impact.
- d. The Finance Council is not responsible for fund-raising but may recommend appropriate means for this to the Parish Council and should collaborate in the parish's stewardship efforts.

**ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS**

Article VIII: Section 1

Amendments:

This method of operation and these guidelines may be amended by the Council. Any amendment proposed shall be submitted in writing and read at a regular Council meeting. The vote on said amendment shall be at the next regular Council meeting and in order to be adopted, it shall require support of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Council at that meeting.

*Revised and amended by-laws as of April 12, 2016*