

**BY-LAWS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
SAINT JUDE THADDEUS CHURCH
MIFFLINTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA**

PREAMBLE

We, St. Jude's Parish, a congregation of Catholic Christians, bound together by our faith, support each other in our spiritual growth and temporal well-being as a family of God. As a visible sign of Christ's Church, we reach out to our community in love, sharing our faith in Catholic witness and striving to strengthen the community in which we live through the sharing of God's love given to all through His Son, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE 1 – Purpose

The task for the Parish Pastoral Council is to assist the Pastor in continually striving to fulfill the objectives of the Mission Statement.

ARTICLE 2 – Powers

The Parish Pastoral Council (henceforth referred to as the “Council”):

- ✧ is consultative to the Pastor
- ✧ works to aid the Pastor by setting objectives and general policies which govern the day to day life of the parish
- ✧ seeks to support the work and ministries of all parish organizations
- ✧ respects the authority of the Pastor who, as the appointed shepherd, is responsible to uphold the Canon Law of the Universal Church and established Diocesan Policy
- ✧ operates on the principal of subsidiarity, allowing parish organizations to make their own decisions in how each group will strive to achieve established objectives and policies.

ARTICLE 3 – Membership

Makeup of Council & Eligibility:

- ✧ There shall be six (6) members elected by the parish at large and three (3) members appointed by the pastor. Members of the Council shall be 14 years of age or older.
- ✧ All members (elected or appointed) hold voting privileges.
- ✧ Ex-Officio members of the Council include all clergy and religious assigned or hired by the parish. It shall also include any others that the Pastor and/or Council decides to appoint.
- ✧ Training and continuing development shall be provided to all members of the Council through the cooperation of the Pastor and the Diocesan Office for Catholic Life and Evangelization.
- ✧ To be eligible to serve on the Council a parishioner must:
 - ☞ be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church.
 - ☞ be a registered parishioner of the parish.
 - ☞ possess a willingness to grow in an understanding of Church by taking advantage of opportunities for continuing education in Church doctrine and documents.
 - ☞ be able to work with others in a spirit of openness and trust.
 - ☞ understand that membership on Council is one of service to the People of God.
 - ☞ agree to uphold the teachings of the Church and the norms established by the Diocese for Parish Pastoral Councils.

Vacancies:

- ✍ Any vacancies on the Council shall be filled at the discretion of the Pastor after consultation with the Council. That person will complete the remainder of the term. Upon completion of the term, that person is eligible for their own terms.

Removal of Members:

- ✍ A member of the Council may be removed from office in one of the following ways:
 - ☞ three (3) unexcused absences would indicate the desire of the member to resign from the Council and would be regarded as such.
 - ☞ removal from office for just cause shall be approved by a majority vote consisting of two-thirds (2/3) of the Council members.

Resignation:

- ✍ A Council member has the right to resign for reasonable cause. A letter of resignation should be submitted to the Council.

Terms:

- ✍ Each member, elected or appointed, serves a three (3) year term.
- ✍ No member may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.
- ✍ Upon serving two (2) consecutive terms, a parishioner is eligible to run again after a period of one year.

Nominations:

- ✍ Each year, at the March meeting, a nomination committee and/or Council gathers a slate of candidates.
- ✍ In April there will be a “special meeting” called by the Chairperson and pastor at which the slate of candidates shall be reviewed and a ballot established.
- ✍ To allow for the continuity of the council, each year two members shall be elected and one appointed by the pastor (unless resignation or removal requires otherwise).
- ✍ Each year, on the first Sunday of May, the names of Council candidates shall be published to the parish at large and the candidates presented to the parish.
- ✍ On the second Sunday of May, the election shall be held.
- ✍ All registered members of the parish, 14 years of age or older, are eligible.

Officers:

The Pastor, by virtue of his office, presides over the Council. At the first meeting of each new Council year (July), there shall be an election for the positions of chairperson and vice-chairperson. A secretary is appointed from outside the members of the Council.

- ✍ **Pastor:** Presides at meetings using his authority, by virtue of his appointment, to:
 - ☞ make certain that members have the proper formation for serving the Council
 - ☞ clarify points of Church law of Diocesan Policy as necessary
 - ☞ build a community of faith and an atmosphere of trust among Council members
 - ☞ make certain that the scope of the Council's concerns reflects the entire pastoral mission of the Church
 - ☞ share in consensus for the formation of parish priorities
 - ☞ serve as chief administrative officer of the parish
 - ☞ assist in formulating the Council's agenda
- ✍ **Chairperson:**

- ☞ Is elected to a one (1) year term during the July meeting by a majority vote of the Council. The chairperson shall not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.
- ☞ Facilitates and calls the Council meetings to order by:
 - | announcing the beginning and conclusion of each meeting
 - | providing time for prayer and reflection
 - | presenting the agenda items for discussion (This presentation is made without indicating what solution is to be reached or any personal bias the chairperson may have with regard to the topic)
 - | maintaining order and attention, regulating who will speak (when and how long)
 - | developing ideas and expressing the sentiments of the Council by restating, summarizing or contrasting them
 - | acting as monitor, reminding members and guests of time limits and procedural rules by which the Council operates
 - | making certain that everyone's input has been received in the consensus process
- ☞ Schedules open forums:
 - | since the Council strives to reflect the needs and desires of the total parish and as in the best interest of all parishioners, opportunities for council members to meet with the parishioners should be made available. The meetings should be designed to elicit the concerns and opinions of parishioners in general or on specific issues, and to inform parishioners about council plans and programs at a time other than a regularly scheduled Council meeting
 - | calls "special meetings" as needed, with the consultation of the pastor
- ☞ Ensures communications between the Council and the parishioners:
 - | meeting dates, agendas, Council minutes and reports on the work of the Council committees serve to keep open the channels of communication between the Council and the parishioners and should be published and reported on a regular basis

☞ **Vice-chairperson:**

- ☞ Is elected to a one (1) year term during the July meeting by a majority vote of the Council. The vice-chairperson shall not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.
- ☞ Performs the duties of the chairperson in his/her absence and serves as an aide to the chairperson in conduction on the Council's work.

☞ **Secretary:**

- ☞ Is normally the parish secretary or, if needed, is appointed by the pastor
- ☞ Documents the business of the Council (minutes, reports, etc.)
- ☞ Supplies members with information
- ☞ Maintains attendance and other records
- ☞ Handles all Council correspondence
- ☞ Is not a member of the Council and has a non-voting status

Vacancies in the chairperson or vice-chairperson of the Council shall be filled by an election from within the Council members at the next scheduled meeting. A vacancy in the office of secretary shall be appointed by the Pastor.

ARTICLE 4 – Meetings

- ☞ Regular meetings are held on the second (2nd) Wednesday of every other month at the appointed time.

- ✘ A “special meeting” is held each April to review and approve the slate of candidates. The time for this meeting will be announced by the chairperson.
- ✘ Other “special meetings” may be called by the chairperson, after consultation with the pastor.
- ✘ Six (6) members of the Council constitutes a quorum.
- ✘ All meetings should open with prayer (i.e. Inspirational readings, quiet periods of reflection, spontaneous and shared prayer, sharing of faith and values around a specific spiritual theme) and conclude with a prayer and the pastor's blessing.
- ✘ Are open to any member of the parish who may wish to attend.
- ✘ All members shall have the opportunity to voice his/her opinion to each issue.
- ✘ Parishioners may also express opinions and bring items to the Council for discussion.
- ✘ If the pastor is unable to attend, the meeting shall be declared by the chairperson to be an “informational meeting.”
- ✘ No decisions can be made without a quorum of the members present. Should there be no quorum, the meeting shall be an “informational meeting.”

ARTICLE 5 – Areas of Mission (See Addendum/Appendix A)

ARTICLE 6 – Operating Rules

- ✘ The chairperson, in consultation with the pastor, prepares a written agenda for each meeting.
- ✘ Decisions are made, after prayerful discernment and full discussion of the issues, by consensus (a “vote” for or against is to be avoided), however when necessary a majority vote two-thirds (2/3) shall be necessary for adoption.
- ✘ While meetings are in prayerful climate, *Robert's Rules of Order* and other generally accepted parliamentary procedure shall govern the meeting.
- ✘ The format for each meeting shall be:
 - ☞ Opening Prayer
 - ☞ Review and approval of minutes
 - ☞ Introduction of guests, if any, and any business they may have to discuss
 - ☞ Parish organization reports given by committee representatives serving on Council (this would include a finance report and pastoral report)
 - ☞ Old Business
 - ☞ New Business
 - ☞ Closing prayer and blessing
- ✘ The Council reserves the right to enter into an executive session to discuss any sensitive matters.
- ✘ The standing committees of the Council are:
 - ☞ Executive committee:
 - ! Pastor, Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary.
 - ☞ Finance committee:
 - ! Pastor, Finance Chair, other finance members.
 - ☞ Ad Hoc committee:
 - ! This committee will be formed on an as needed basis consisting of the necessary people.

ARTICLE 7 – Amendments

- ✘ Amendments to the By-Laws may occur through this process:
 - ☞ Submit the amendment in writing to the chairperson and Pastor to be included in the agenda for the upcoming Council meeting.

- ☞ Review and discuss the amendment during the Council meeting.
- ☞ At the next Council meeting, review and discuss any revisions made since the previous meeting. Finalize the document.
- ☞ At the next Council meeting, a vote will take place to adopt the amendment into the By-Laws. The vote must be a two-thirds (2/3) majority.

Ratified and accepted by St. Jude Thaddeus Parish Pastoral Council on July 18, 2007 by a majority vote of the Council members.