

The Catholic Community of St. Francis of Assisi

Pastoral Council Bylaws

ARTICLE I – Name and Purpose

1. The Catholic Community of St. Francis of Assisi, a Catholic Parish of the Diocese of Raleigh, consists of all who are registered in the Parish, those who conduct ministry, whether as employees or as volunteers, under the auspices of the Parish, and all properties legally belonging to the Parish. This includes The Franciscan School, the St. Francis Preschool, and the Columbarium. Hereafter, any reference to “Parish” includes all people and properties noted above.
2. In the Diocese of Raleigh, each Parish is to have such a Pastoral Council that meets with some regularity over the course of a fiscal year.
3. The Pastoral Council of the Catholic Community of St. Francis of Assisi, hereafter referred to as “Council,” is a representative group of parishioners who, functioning on the principle of consensus, serve as an advisory consultative body to the Pastor and is accountable to him. It is not a legislative body. Its primary role is to investigate pastoral issues requested by the Pastor and propose practical recommendations to him. It also serves as a strategic visioning group that fosters the implementation of the Parish Mission Statement.
4. The Parish’s mission is: Engage with a community that supports you. Encounter the God who loves you. Serve and transform the world that needs you.

ARTICLE II – Membership, Selection, and Term of Office

Section A: Membership and Selection

1. The Pastor appoints all voting members of the Council as discerned by him or recommended to him by members of the Parish or staff.
2. Councilors are engaged, active, and registered parishioners. They have an enthusiasm about the Parish’s future direction and are known for their spiritual maturity, love of Christ, and love of the Church appropriate to their age. They desire to offer their time, wisdom, and insights in Christian service to assist the Pastor with the spiritual growth of the faith community.
3. Potential members are identified and vetted in the spring of each year by the Pastor in consultation with the Council Chair and others who possess knowledge that would be helpful in selecting parishioners who would represent the diversity of the parish and possess the qualities beneficial for service on the Council.

4. Council composition will include as voting members a representative of The Franciscan School, a representative of the St. Francis of Assisi Preschool, and between six to nine at-large representatives. Two additional members shall be appointed to represent the Young Adult community in consultation with the Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry. Two additional teen members shall be appointed after input from the Youth Advisory Council. The Council should reflect, to the extent possible, the diversity of the Parish.
5. Voting members shall not be paid employees of any Parish entity or family members of paid Parish employees. This requirement does not preclude the participation of Parish employees as consultants to the Council when their contribution in a specific area is desirable.
6. Ex officio non-voting members will consist of the Parochial Vicar(s), the Director of Pastoral Ministries, and the Chair of the Parish Finance Council. They should be present for all meetings unless previously excused.
7. Only one member of a registered household may serve on the Council at a given time.
8. The Pastor reserves the right to remove any Councilor who is acting in a manner that hinders the work of the group. This action may be taken only after the Councilor has received a written notification of concern by the Pastor, has been granted 30 days to resolve the concern to the Pastor's satisfaction, and has failed to do so.

Section B: Length of Term

1. Appointed adult members, except the Preschool Councilor, shall serve a term of three years. The terms of these Councilors will be staggered to ensure continuity so that no more than one-third of existing adult voting Councilors will conclude their terms at any given time. New adult members should normally be appointed to begin their term around the first meeting of the new fiscal year.
2. The Preschool Councilor shall serve a term of two years. At the conclusion of the second year and upon the recommendation of the Preschool Director, the Councilor may be reappointed for an additional year if the Councilor still has a child in the Preschool.
3. No adult member may serve for more than two consecutive terms and may be appointed for one additional term after a one-year break. Adult members may serve a maximum of three terms.
4. Youth voting members serve a one-year term and may be reappointed for up to two additional one-year terms upon the recommendation of the Youth Advisory Council and provided they have not graduated from high school or reached the age of 18 at the time of their appointment or reappointment.
5. When a vacancy occurs which brings the at-large adult voting members below six, the vacancy will be filled as soon as possible using the process noted in Article II, A, 1-4. The new councilor's first term concludes at the end of the current term being filled.

ARTICLE III – Council Responsibilities and Procedures

1. Councilors address important strategic pastoral questions posed by the Pastor. The Council will research the questions, ponder them, and discern and recommend action.
2. Councilors identify, seek out, and work collaboratively with the appropriate stakeholders while researching these questions.
3. Councilors involve the Pastor throughout the process so that recommendations will take into consideration his wisdom and judgment.
4. Councilors present their findings to the Pastor and Pastoral Council for discussion and possible action. These views are to be communicated to the Pastor and the Council when the Council is in session or to the Pastor upon request.
5. A Councilor speaks on behalf of the entire Council or takes any actions on behalf of the Council only when authorized by the Pastor.
6. Any Councilor or registered member of the Parish may request the introduction of an agenda item for consideration by the Council and be granted time for discussion with the Council by making prior arrangements with the Pastor and receiving his approval.
7. The Parish Pastoral Council proposes and recommends the initiation of any long-term Parish pastoral plan after consultation with and approval by the Pastor. When approved by the Pastor, he then selects members for a Pastoral Plan Committee from those registered in the Parish. At least one member must come from the Pastoral Council, the Finance Council, The Franciscan School, and the St. Francis Preschool. This Committee develops and presents a draft plan for review by all collegial bodies of the Parish, inclusive of the Pastoral Council. Upon the endorsement of the plan by the collegial bodies (i.e., Pastoral Council, Finance Council, School Advisory Council, Preschool Advisory Council, and Youth Advisory Council) and after consultation with the Parish Directors, the Pastor reviews and approves the Pastoral Plan. Included in the final plan are details for implementation.

An annual review of the progression of the plan occurs each year at the Council's February meeting while the plan is in effect. Facilitating this review is the responsibility of the Pastoral Plan Steering Committee comprised of two representatives of the Pastoral Plan Committee selected by the Committee, the lay members of the Board of Directors of the St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Parish of Raleigh (i.e., the Chair of the Pastoral Council, the Chair of the Finance Council, and the Principal of The Franciscan School), the Director of Pastoral Ministries (should there be one), the Director of Finance and Planning, and the Pastor. The Steering Committee is also responsible for communicating the progression of the plan to the other collegial bodies and the parishioners-at-large each year the plan is in effect.

8. Councilors are expected to attend all regularly scheduled committee meetings.
9. Councilors must observe strict confidentiality concerning matters discussed at Council meetings that are provided to them in confidence.

ARTICLE IV – Council Officers and Council Roles

Section A: Officers

The Council shall have the following officers whose roles are as follows:

1. **Presider:** In his role as presider of the Pastoral Council, the Pastor leads the process of discernment, expression, and fulfillment of the Parish's mission. The Pastor does not facilitate the meetings. He oversees, participates, and actively listens to Council deliberations. He also sheds light on Church teachings and Parish or Diocesan background and guidelines.
2. **Chair:** The Chair assists the Pastor and facilitates all meetings. In consultation with the Pastor, the Chair is responsible for selecting the dates, time, and location of meetings, preparing the meeting agenda, and effecting any other duties assigned by the Pastor.

The Chair enables open discussion in a non-judgmental manner, manages the time for all agenda items, and monitors the work of Councilors between meetings.

The Chair is also responsible for reserving a room for all meetings of the Council and for making the necessary practical preparations to ensure an environment conducive for the meeting.

The Chair serves as an ex-officio member of the Parish Finance Council as well as a Director on the Board of the parish corporate entity.

3. **Secretary:** The secretary keeps a record of basic information, decisions, and assignments of the Council. The secretary provides a copy of the meeting minutes within a week after the meeting for review by the Pastor and Chair and forwards it to the Councilors no less than one full week before the next meeting. The Secretary is also responsible for disseminating the upcoming meeting agenda and meeting reminders before each meeting.
4. **Selection of Officers:** Aside from the Pastor, who is always the Presider, any Councilor of majority age is eligible to fill the other offices. Officers are appointed for a one-year term. The Chair is identified and vetted by the Pastor and the Secretary is identified and vetted by the Chair. Both offices are renewable indefinitely upon agreement between the Pastor and the Councilor.

ARTICLE V - Meetings

1. Regular meetings will be held on a schedule as determined by the Pastor in consultation with the Chair.
2. No meeting may take place in the absence of the Pastor.
3. Special meetings may be held at the request of the Pastor or, with the Pastor's approval, any Council membership.

ARTICLE VI - Committees

The Council may assemble sub-committees to address certain subjects as deemed appropriate and with the approval of the Pastor.

ARTICLE VII - Amendments

Amendments to the bylaws may be proposed and incorporated by consensus of the Council with the approval of the Pastor.