

CONSTITUTION FOR THE PASTORAL COUNCIL OF SAINT MARGARET PARISH BEL AIR, MARYLAND

VISION

Seeking a world transformed and unified in Christ

MISSION

Saint Margaret Parish of Bel Air, Maryland, is a multi-generational Roman Catholic Community centered in the Eucharist and committed to learning, loving, and living the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We minister to each other and our neighbors, locally and globally by:

- praying and celebrating the Sacraments,
- growing and mentoring in faith,
- fostering relationships that create belonging, and
- serving with compassion and advocating for justice.

ARTICLE I - NAME:

The name of this body shall be the Pastoral Council of Saint Margaret Parish, Bel Air, Maryland, hereinafter referred to as “the Council”. Saint Margaret Parish includes Saint Mary Magdalen Mission. The term “parishioners” includes those who attend Mass at either location.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE:

The purposes of the Council shall be:

1. To share responsibility with the Pastor in a spirit of collegiality for the life and mission of the Church at Saint Margaret Parish.
2. To act as a representative voice of the parishioners to the Pastor.
3. To provide a forum for communication, dialogue, and exchange of information regarding parish matters among the clergy, religious, parish staff, and parishioners.

4. To share responsibility with the Pastor in defining the vision, mission, and strategic plan of the Parish.
5. To collaborate with Parish committees, organizations, and staff in pursuing objectives for the fulfillment of the vision, mission, and strategic plan of the Parish.
6. To actively cooperate and interact with religious organizations in the neighboring communities, as well as civic, business, and professional entities in working for the common good of the community.
7. To participate with the other Parishes in the Harford Region and with the Archdiocese in the overall mission of the Church within the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

ARTICLE III - FUNCTIONS:

In response to the purposes charged to the Council as delineated in Article II and as governed by other sections of this document, the Council shall perform the following functions:

1. Work with the Pastor in reviewing the needs of the Parish and community and in developing policies and directions that are appropriate.
2. Review and make recommendations to the Pastor on the objectives proposed by the staff for the coming ministry/fiscal year.
3. Review and make recommendations to the Pastor on the annual budget as proposed by the Finance Committee.
4. Assure that an Annual Report on the spiritual, material, and financial condition of the Parish is made to all parishioners.
5. Pursue or recommend whatever other action it may deem as appropriate to fulfill the purposes set forth in this document.

ARTICLE IV - OPERATION:

The Council should ordinarily work through consensus. The objective in all matters which the Council considers shall be to listen to various points of view, discuss matters thoroughly, and arrive at a consensus. This process would include all Council members and the Pastor together.

If the Pastor, for whatever reason, finds himself at variance with the conclusion or consensus reached by the Council, he shall communicate his reservations verbally to the assembled Council. The Pastor and Council together shall determine a period of time for individual prayer and deliberation and then for group prayer and deliberation on the matter in question. All efforts should be made again to arrive at consensus.

If, after all efforts to arrive at consensus on a significant matter of Parish life have failed, and the Pastor finds himself at variance with the consensus or conclusion of the Council, the Pastor, or the Pastor and Council president together, should consult the Vicar Bishop assigned by the Archbishop for Saint Margaret Parish. The objective would be to arrive at some consensus and conclusion through this process of consulting the Vicar Bishop.

ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP:

Section I - General Requirements:

1. The Council shall have three types of membership: elective, appointive, and ex officio. Elective and appointive members shall have voting status; ex officio members shall be non-voting.
2. All priests assigned to the Parish shall be ex officio members of the Council and shall have full voice in its deliberations.
3. Nine laypersons who are registered members of the Parish shall be elected to the Council according to the electoral procedures specified in Section II - Elective Members.
4. Three laypersons who are registered members of the Parish shall be appointed to the Council according to the electoral procedures specified in Section III - Appointive Members.
5. Each year four (4) new members shall join the Council replacing four existing members whose terms of office expire on June 30th. Three of the new members shall be elective members and one shall be appointive in accordance with the procedures contained herein.
6. Each new Council member will be welcomed at the June meeting and shall take office on July 1st. They will receive a copy of this constitution at the beginning of their term.

Section II - Elective Members:

1. Any lay person who has reached the age of 18 years by the date of an election, and is a registered member of the parish, shall be eligible for membership on the Council. All persons meeting these same qualifications shall be eligible to vote in such elections.
2. Requests will go out to the Parish asking for volunteers to serve on Council. The Pastor/Assistant Pastor will create a slate of candidates by May of each year.
3. Elections will be held at all Masses on a weekend in June prior to the June council meeting. The three persons receiving the highest number of votes on the returned qualified ballots shall be declared elected. In the event of a tie, the members of the incumbent council shall vote among themselves to select one of the tied candidates.
4. Elective members shall serve a term of three years, or shall serve until their successors are duly elected and take office. The terms of the elective members in office shall commence on July 1st.
5. No parishioner shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive full terms as an elective member.
6. In the event that a vacancy occurs among the elective members during the Council year, the Pastor may nominate a registered parishioner to complete that term. It will be confirmed by simple majority of the Council.

Section III - Appointive Members:

1. Any lay person who has reached the age of 18 by the date of appointment, and is a registered member of the Parish, shall be eligible for membership on the Council.
2. Each year, the Pastor shall name one registered parishioner to be an appointive member.
3. In the event that a vacancy occurs among the appointed membership during the Council year, a new appointive member may be named by the Pastor to complete the term of the vacating member.
4. Appointive members shall serve a term of three years, or shall serve until their successors are duly appointed and take office. The terms of the appointive members shall commence on July 1st.

Article VI - Officers:

1. The officers of the Council shall be President, Vice-President and Secretary. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Council.
2. The members of the incoming Council shall vote among themselves for the three offices specified in item 1 above. Following nominations, voting shall be by secret ballot, unless the nominee is unopposed, and in the event of a tie, balloting shall be continued until a candidate receives a majority. Each office shall be taken individually, thus permitting candidates not elected to be nominated for the next subsequent office. Officers shall be elected for a one-year term but shall not be eligible for more than three consecutive terms in the same office.
3. The Pastor, in consultation with the President and the other members of the Council, shall appoint the chairpersons of all standing and special committees, as well as such members as may be needed or desirable for additional responsibilities.
4. The Vice-President shall assist the President in executing the duties of his office, shall perform such duties as may be delegated by the President, and in the event of absence or disability, shall assume the full duties and responsibilities of the President.
5. The Secretary shall take minutes of all regular and special meetings of the Council, reduce such minutes in writing, preserve them in a permanent record, and send copies of such minutes to all members of the Council via electronic distribution prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting, along with the agenda for that meeting. The Secretary shall prepare and send out all correspondence necessitated by the work of the Council and shall maintain permanent files of such correspondence. He/she shall also prepare notices to appear in the parish bulletin pertaining to the work of the Council, as well as any other publicity material, which it is desired to use in various news media.
6. In the event of a vacancy in any office except that of the President, the Council shall elect someone from among its own members to fill the office until the next regularly scheduled election. In the event of a vacancy in the office of President, the Vice-President shall automatically succeed and complete the unexpired term. An election will then be held among the Council to complete the unexpired Vice-President term.
7. Each officer shall, at the expiration of his/her term of office, turn over to the successor all books, papers, and other record and property pertaining to the office.

ARTICLE VII - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

1. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the officers of the Council and the Pastor ex officio, acting with such powers as may be delegated to it by the full Council.
2. It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Committee to coordinate and prepare a proposed agenda for all regular and special meetings of the Council and to make such proposed agenda available prior to such meetings for distribution by the Secretary.

ARTICLE VIII - COMMITTEES:

1. The Parish Council provides liaisons to the Parish committees and programs. The standing committees and programs shall include, but are not be limited to, the list below. The committees and programs can be added or removed at the discretion of the Pastor.
 1. Development Committee
 2. Faith Formation Program
 3. Youth Ministry/Confirmation
 4. St. Margaret School
 5. Facilities Management Committee
 6. Finance Committee
 7. Liturgy Resource Committee
 8. Worship and Prayer Committee
 9. Outreach Committee
2. Each voting member of the Council, except the officers, shall serve on at least one Committee or program as a liaison and report to the Council any necessary information.
3. The President, in consultation with the Executive Committee, shall have the authority to create special or temporary committees, which may from time to time be deemed necessary, and to designate the members thereof.
4. Each member of the Executive Committee shall be an ex officio member of each standing committee, and may attend and participate at his/her discretion.

ARTICLE IX - MEETINGS:

1. The regular meetings of the Council shall be held monthly as decided by the members of the council. Attendance at all meetings shall be required unless excused by contacting either an Executive Committee member or the Parish office. All other absences shall be considered unexcused. After two (2) unexcused absences within a twelve (12) month period, a member shall be relieved of further Parish Pastoral Council duty.
2. One Annual General Meeting will be held each fiscal year. All members of the Parish shall be invited to attend this meeting by notice in the Bulletin or other appropriate means.
3. Special meetings may be called by the President, or by the Executive Committee, or at the written request of any member of the Council. The purpose of special meetings shall be stated in the call. Except in the cases of emergency, at least five days written notice shall be given to all members of the Council. It shall be left to the discretion of the Executive Committee as to whether any special meetings shall be open.
4. Regular meetings of the Council shall be open to all parishioners as observers, provided they register in advance with the Pastor or Assistant Pastor. The presiding officer shall have the right to place time limits on any comments made by parishioners during open forum. The Executive session of the meeting will be open to Council members only.
5. A majority of the voting members of the Council shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE X - PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE:

1. The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern the Council in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with this constitution and any special rules of order the Council may adopt.
2. The President may at his/her discretion appoint a Parliamentarian who is a current member of the Council, to assist and advise in presiding at all meetings.

ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENTS:

1. This constitution may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the Council. The amended constitution may be ratified by a two-thirds majority of the voting members, provided it is at least 1 month after it was presented to the Council.
2. At the discretion of the Pastor, the newly ratified constitution may be communicated and shared with the Parish by any means the Pastor chooses.

Revised and Ratified January 2014