

**St James Roman Catholic Church
Pastoral Council Operating Guidelines**

Pastoral Council Mission Statement

As the Pastoral Council of St. James Church we are committed to represent, guide and support our Pastoral Vision to grow and unify our Parish family in Christ. Led by our Pastor and in community with the parishioners, we share the responsibility to accomplish the goals of the Pastoral Plan and parish ministries by prayerfully engaging with parishioners, staff, and ministry leaders in common reflection so that we connect as one body of Christ in mutual service and faith.

1. Name.

1.1 The name of the organization is the Pastoral Council of St. James Church (hereafter the "Council").

2. Vision/Purpose of the Council.

2.1 The Council strives to identify and represent the needs, hopes, and concerns of the St. James Community. The Council will encourage, support and evaluate the progress of our Pastoral Plan, programs and ministries at St. James, as we continue to invite all our parishioners to become more visible disciples in our community and beyond.

3. Core Values of the Council.

3.1 **Unity:** We are united in our commitment to our Vision and Mission.

3.2 **Respect:** We approach others in a way that demonstrates we value each individual and their contributions. We remain aware of our own limitations of experience and value others perspective and wisdom.

3.3 **Integrity:** We are honest and ethical in all that we do. In making decisions, we aim to do what's best for the broader good.

3.4 **Collaboration:** We seek the wisdom and consensus of the group in meeting our Council goals.

3.5 **Accountability:** We are responsible for fulfilling the Council's purpose and

sharing the responsibility to accomplishing the goals of the Pastoral Plan.

3.6 **Spirituality:** We commit to keeping our efforts and activities centered in Christ.

4. Key Responsibilities/Priorities of the Council.

- 4.1 The key responsibilities and priorities of the Council shall include, but are not limited to the following:
 - 4.1.1 Supporting the Pastor and providing the necessary governance and guidance to ensure the successful implementation of the Pastoral Plan on an on-going basis.
 - 4.1.2 Supporting and helping to facilitate all of the ministries and activities in the parish.
 - 4.1.3 Working with the Finance Council to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the parish.
 - 4.1.4 Formalizing the Council and related leadership structure and protocols to sustain the viability of the Council.
 - 4.1.5 Building a communication model and approach to effectively improve the communication of parish activities.
- 4.2 In the performance of its duties hereunder, the Pastoral Council and its members shall adhere to the following norms:
 - 4.2.1 Maintain the spirit of Christ in all that we do;
 - 4.2.2 Listen openly to others;
 - 4.2.3 Address issues, not people;
 - 4.2.4 Participate fully as a Council member;
 - 4.2.5 Support the Vision and Mission of the Council; and
 - 4.2.6 Seek to build consensus.

5. Objectives.

- 5.1 As an executive body of the parish reporting directly to the Pastor, the Council is responsible for establishing and implementing both short-term and long-term parish goals and objectives which will promote the common good of the parish, within the following framework:

- 5.1.1 The Council shall share and emulate the same parish concerns and ministry as the Pastor.
- 5.1.2 The Council shall provide a medium whereby all members of the parish may express their views on all spiritual and temporal matters of the parish.
- 5.1.3 The Council shall engage its members and the Parish Teams to initiate and evaluate programs and activities, develop and revise policies that promote the general well-being of all the people of the parish, and proclaim the Good News of God's kingdom present among us.
- 5.1.4 The Council shall operate within the broader framework and policies of the Diocese of Trenton.

6. Membership.

6.1 The membership of the Council shall consist of:

- 6.1.1 The Pastor;
- 6.1.2 The six (6) individuals who have been elected or chosen to serve as chairs of the following Parish Teams: (i) the Leadership and Stewardship Team; (ii) the Faith Formation Team; (iii) the Worship and Prayer Team; (iv) the Fellowship and Evangelization Team; (v) the Communications Team; and (vi) the Environment and Facilities Team.
- 6.1.3 Four (4) members of the parish at-large who are nominated by the Leadership and Stewardship Team and appointed by the Pastor in his sole discretion.

6.2 Responsibilities of Council Members.

- 6.2.1 All members are expected to be visible and active in parish life primarily by participating in Saturday/Sunday liturgy and in other activities that bring the parish together.
- 6.2.2 All members are expected to expend the necessary effort toward creating a united Council.
- 6.2.3 All members are expected to work for the good of the parish by listening to the parishioners and reaching consensus through shared dialogue.
- 6.2.4 All members are expected to arrive at Council meetings ready to participate, having read all materials in advance.

- 6.2.5 All members are expected to accept accountability for applicable action items.
- 6.2.6 Members who are Team Chairs shall be responsible for providing Team updates as requested.
- 6.2.7 Members are expected to maintain confidentiality as requested by the Council and/or the Pastor for: (i) Council discussions which occur in executive session during a meeting which is held either in person or telephonically and (ii) written or electronic correspondence between members of the Council which is marked by the sender as “confidential” in the correspondence.
- 6.2.8 Each member is expected to follow and adhere to these Operating Guidelines.
- 6.2.9 All members are expected to participate in the Annual Council Pastoral Planning Meeting and the Council meetings scheduled throughout the year.

7. Terms of Membership, Removal, and Vacancies.

- 7.1 Each member of the Council shall serve for a term of either two (2) or three (3) consecutive years, and may serve a maximum of six (6) consecutive years. These terms may annually be extended for one (1) year with the approval of the Council and affirmation of the Pastor so long as such member’s service does not exceed six (6) consecutive years. After a one (1) year break, a former member who previously served six (6) consecutive years may return to the Council. Each year of a term starts on the first Tuesday in September and ends the first Tuesday of September of the following year.
- 7.2 Two (2) of the parish at-large positions and three (3) of the Team Chair positions on the Council shall be designated as having two (2) year terms by the Pastor. The remaining positions on the Council shall have a term of three (3) years.
- 7.3 In the event a member of the Council who is in a Parish Team Chair position cannot serve, or ceases to serve, the Co-Chair of said Team shall replace the member in question with approval from the Pastor and serve the remainder of such member’s term.
- 7.4 In the event a member of the Council who is in a parish at-large position cannot serve, or ceases to serve, the Leadership and Stewardship Committee shall

nominate a replacement member. Pastor shall appoint, in his sole discretion, another member of the parish at-large to serve the remainder of such member's term.

- 7.5 The Council may recommend to remove a Council member, for any reason, by a two-thirds (2/3) supermajority vote of all voting Council members and approval by the Pastor.

8. The Role of the Pastor

- 8.1 The Pastor shall preside over the Council much like when he presides at the Eucharist, where he leads the community in its expression of the essence of parish life. As presider of the Council, he will not facilitate the meetings but, rather, oversee and participate in all Council deliberations. He will shed light on Church teaching and diocesan/parish guidelines.
- 8.2 The Pastor shall attend all Council meetings and participate in the discussion and decision-making process. Prior to the Council's coming to a consensus, the Pastor is obligated to raise questions or objections relating to issues that could affect the outcome of a decision.
- 8.3 The Pastor shall see that the Council performs its duties, shall give direction and assistance, and shall ultimately be responsible for the quality of the Council decisions. The Pastor shall also see to the ongoing spiritual development of Council members.

9. Officers and Duties of Officers

- 9.1 The Council members shall recommend with approval from the Pastor three (3) officers from among their membership on a yearly basis. These officers shall be the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary.
- 9.2 The Chair shall facilitate Council discussions, making sure everyone has an opportunity to speak and be heard. The Chair shall also monitor the work of the Council between regular meetings. Further, the Chair shall set the agenda for each meeting of the Council in consultation with the Pastor.
- 9.3 The Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair and facilitate Council meetings in the absence of the Chairman. The Vice-Chair may assist the Chair in setting the meeting agenda.
- 9.4 The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the Council meetings and send the agenda and supporting documents to each Council member at least one (1) week

prior to every meeting. The Secretary shall also take charge of all documents belonging to the Council and perform other related duties as requested. A member of the Council shall be chosen to record the minutes of a meeting if the Secretary is unable to attend.

10. Decisions by Consensus

- 10.1 Consensus is a group process by which all members agree to support a decision by the majority of the Council. Consensus is built on prayer, seeks the will of God and not any individual, is based on mutual trust, and honors the teachings of Sacred Scripture and the Church.
- 10.2 When consensus occurs, the Pastor shall review and approve/disapprove the decision. If consensus does not occur, it is the responsibility of the Pastor to make the final decision after considering all input from Council members.
- 10.3 In order to give each Council member an opportunity to be heard, there may be times when an actual vote is necessary to address an issue, in which case each Council member shall be entitled to one (1) vote. In the event of a tie vote, the issue shall be referred to the Pastor for resolution.

11. Meeting

- 11.1 More than half of the voting Council members must be present at a meeting to constitute a quorum and transact official business.
- 11.2 The Council shall hold regular monthly meetings. The regular time and place will be the first Wednesday of the month at location designated by the Chair in consultation with the Pastor. On occasion, a special meeting may be necessary, and there needs to be a minimum of five (5) business days advance notice prior to such meeting. The Council shall not typically meet in July and August.
- 11.3 Attendance at Council meetings is reserved for Council members, unless otherwise specified. Non-Council members can request and/or be invited to speak and/or present at a Council meeting. Request by non-council members should be made to the Council chairs at least five (5) business days prior to the meeting and specify the purpose and/or nature of the presentation. The Chairs will respond to the request within two (2) days. Invitations of this nature must be included in the meeting agenda.
- 11.4 The Pastor and Pastoral Council Chair should meet at least one (1) week to ten (10) days prior to the meeting to set the agenda. They need to keep in mind (1) what work the Council is presently engaged in, (2) what work needs yet to be addressed, and (3) if anything has come up that needs to be brought before the

Council because it may affect their work or it may need to be addressed in the parish planning process. Agenda topics will be listed in the order they will be addressed. Topics will be identified as (1) information and/or (2) discussion and/or (3) decision. Usually when a topic is first introduced, the Council will need to gather information and to discuss implications.

11.5 The Council shall open each meeting with a prayer.

12. Communication Protocols:

12.1 Pertinent issues will be communicated in a timely manner to appropriate council members, staff, or ministry leaders.

12.2 All internal and external communications to the parish will be discussed and reviewed by the Council Chair and approved by the Pastor.

12.3 External communications to the parish will be reviewed with the Communications Team prior to distribution to the parish community.

12.4 The Communications Team will coordinate all Council Communications.

12.5 The schedule and minutes for all Council and Parish Team meetings will be published on the parish website.

13. Amendment

13.1 These Operating Guidelines may be amended from time to time by either a two-thirds (2/3) supermajority vote of the Council or an act of the Pastor in his sole discretion.