

Our Lady of the Assumption
Pastoral Council Terms of Reference¹
May 2018

The Pastoral Council is a consultative and guiding body within a parish that enables lay people to work closely with their pastor in carrying out the mission of Christ in the Church. Through reflection, planning, coordination, animation and action, the Pastoral Council will see to it that all of the different aspects of parish life are considered and integrated into the overall pastoral development of the parish. The Pastoral Council must carefully consider the needs of the people and assess the gifts and talents needed to respond to those needs and for the growth of the parish community. Examples of pastoral activities include:

- leadership in building a dynamic Christian Community
- continuous assessment of the pastoral needs of the parish
- priority setting in the implementation of programs aimed at meeting those needs
- identifying, supporting, and enabling the gifts and talents of all the members of the parish and providing needed training for lay ministries
- establishing committees needed to ensure that required projects are carried out
- providing direction to enable parishioners to share responsibility for parish life
- involving families/parishioners in planning for parish ministry
- making available programs in faith development and spiritual formation.

It is highly recommended that ongoing education and formation be an integral part of Pastoral Council activities.

MEMBERSHIP

A. Selection

1. *Elections*: candidates would be proposed by parishioners, by the Council, or by parish organizations; or,
2. *Appointment*: by joint consultation of the pastor and the Pastoral Council. To be used only when the Council is not adequately representative.

No two members of the same household shall sit on the Council during the same term.

If members belong to specific interest groups, they are present on the Council as members of the parish community and not as representatives of any particular group.

The Pastoral Council shall not exceed 10 members.

¹ Source: Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines for the Diocese of Charlottetown

B. Formation of New members

The Council is to provide a session of formation for new members within one month of their becoming part of the Council. All members are to be encouraged to attend this formation session.

C. Absenteeism

Members, who miss more than three consecutive meetings without explanation or reason for their absence, shall be considered for replacement on the Council after consultation between the pastor, the chairperson, and the person in question.

D. Length of Mandate

Mandate is for three years, renewable once.

To maintain stability and efficiency, no more than one-third of the members should be replaced in any given year.

E. Roles

President: The person who has been mandated by the bishop to provide pastoral care for the parish: the pastor/administrator/pastoral associate.

Chairperson: It is recommended that a person have one full year of service on the Council before assuming the position of chairperson.

Secretary: This person records and circulates the minutes from each Pastoral Council meeting.

Property and Finance Committee Liaison: This person is responsible to ensure information is shared between the Pastoral Council and the Property and Finance Committee.

PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Pastoral Council meets at regular intervals during the year, usually monthly, from September to June.

The president and chair are responsible for drawing up the agenda, which will be made available to members at least 48 hours before the meeting.

At the end of each year, no later than mid-June, the Council will give a full account of its activities to the parish.

The Council, as a faith community, is encouraged to strive for consensus in decision-making.

The Council, via the liaison role, will advise the Property and Finance Committee of its pastoral priorities and request financial support for these initiatives.

The Council will foster communication between committees and parishioners.

MEETINGS

The regularly scheduled meeting should not exceed two hours.

Pastoral Council meeting format:

- prayer/formation/faith-sharing
- committee reports or ongoing assessment of activities previously undertaken
- ongoing planning and visioning
- evaluation of present programs and ministries
- review of goals
- future issues evolving from this ongoing review of goals
- broader issues: diocese/justice
- agenda for next meeting