

**ST. GERARD PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL
CONSTITUTION AND BY LAWS**

ANNOTATED FOR REVISION

This copy of the Constitution and By Laws has been annotated to identify needed revisions, based on:

- 1) the September, 2017 revision of the *Women of St. Gerard By Laws*,
- 2) the added Recording Secretary duty to maintain a tally of voting members,
- 3) clarification of what constitutes a quorum for decision making meetings
- 4) addition of the requirement of an “affirmative roll call” vote for decisions to amend the By Laws

The **yellow highlighting** identifies text that is proposed to be added or revised.

Steve Buda

PREAMBLE

The St. Gerard Parish Pastoral Council is conceived as the coordinating and unifying structure of its local Christian Community. It is the vehicle for achieving full participation of the whole parish in extending Christ’s mission by giving all in the parish a voice and encouraging, guiding, and directing the various aspects of the community life. The Council shall be composed of laypersons, parish staff and the Pastor- who represents the Bishop.

ARTICLE I – NAME

Section 1 The name of this body shall be “St. Gerard Parish Pastoral Council,” Hereinafter referred to as the “Council”

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The Pastoral Council is a planning council. The purpose of the council is to, in accordance with the mission of the church, develop long and short range goals and priorities and to design those broad procedures and processes by which the pastoral work of the Church is to be accomplished. (*“The Parish and Lay Ministry”*, Bertram Griffin, Chicago Studies, 23 April (1984), p. 58.)

Section1 To meet this purpose the Pastoral Council will:

1. Coordinate, encourage and create a consultative and consensual form of government. It offers opportunity, on a regular basis, for the

parishioners and pastor to make and evaluate plans that contribute to and enhance the life and activity of the people of God.

2. Set parish direction in a process of pastoral planning that will:
 - Define the mission of the parish
 - Discern the needs and concerns of the parish community
 - Develop long and short range goals and priorities that address these needs and concerns.
 - Call all members of the parish to participate in the mission of the parish.
 - Support and encourage pastoral staff, commissions, councils, and organizations in carrying out their respective responsibilities.

ARTICLE III – STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

Section 1 The Pastoral Council shall have the following voting members:

- (a) Nine (9) laypersons to be members-at-large of the parish community in accordance with Article IV. Six (6) members will be selected by lot and three (3) members may be appointed by the pastor
- (b) A member from the Education Commission shall be selected by the Commission in accordance with the Commission's Bylaws.
- (c) A member from the Worship Commission shall be selected by the Commission in accordance with the Commission's Bylaws.
- (d) A member from the Social Ministries Commission shall be selected by the Commission in accordance with the Commission's Bylaws.
- (e) A member from the Spiritual Development Commission shall be selected by the Commission in accordance with the Commission's Bylaws.
- (f) A member from the Activities Commission shall be selected by the Commission in accordance with the Commission's Bylaws.
- (g) A member from the Finance Council shall be selected by the Council in accordance with the Council's Bylaws.

(h) A member from the **Women of St. Gerard** shall be selected by the **Women of St. Gerard** in accordance with the **Women of St. Gerard** Bylaws.

(i) A member from the Youth Group shall be selected by the Director of Youth Ministry.

(j) A member from the senior citizens of the parish to be appointed by the Pastor.

(k) A member from the young adults of the parish to be appointed by the young adult group.

Section 2 The Pastoral Council will have the following ex officio members:
a) The pastor and one member of the Pastoral Staff appointed annually by the Pastor.
b) The recording secretary of the Pastoral Council who is appointed by the Pastoral Council Chairperson.

Section 3 Registered parishioners who are eighteen (18) years of age or older and who have been registered members of the parish for at least six (6) months shall be qualified to be members of the Pastoral Council. The Youth Group member must be at least sixteen (16) years of age.

Section 4 Each voting member of the Pastoral Council has one vote. Proxy votes are not accepted at Pastoral Council meetings.

Section 5 The Executive Committee of the Pastoral Council shall be comprised of the Council Chairperson, the Council Vice Chairperson, Correspondence Secretary, and the Pastor or his authorized representative.

Section 6 The following Commissions are authorized at this time: Education, Social Ministries, Spiritual Development, Worship, and Activities. The Parish Council can authorize new Commissions as the need and resources dictate. Any parish group or organization performing work in the area of any Commission is to be functionally affiliated with and responsible to that Commission.

Section 7 Each Commission and the **Women of St. Gerard** shall operate in accordance with its own Bylaws as approved by the Pastoral Council. Membership on each Commission shall be in accordance with Article III, Section 3.

Section 8 The purpose of each Commission and the **Women of St. Gerard** is to initiate, implement and coordinate policies, programs and activities of the

Pastoral Council.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBER TERMS AND NOMINATIONS

- Section 1 Only one member of any parish family may be a member at large on the parish council at one time. No immediate family member of a full time parish employee may be an at-large member of the Council. No person shall hold an office in more than one Commission and/or the Parish Council at the same time. Participation in activities and programs of more than one Commission is acceptable.
- Section 2 The term of office for Pastoral Council members-at-large shall be determined by a rotation goal of one-third.
- Section 3 The term of office for the at large members of the Pastoral Council, Finance Council, and the Commissions shall be three (3) years. No member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. Council and Commission members seeking to serve a second term must participate in the selection process along with new nominees.
- Section 4 A Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the Council no later than March of each year. The Nominating Committee shall consist of three (3) members, including the Pastor and the Vice Chairperson of the Council serving as the Nominating Committee Chairperson. The Nominating Committee, in consultation with the Commission's chairperson, will determine which vacancies exist on each Commission in order to select candidates for said vacancies. All available positions on the Parish Council and/or Commissions shall be posted in the parish bulletin for a period of not less than two (2) weeks.
- Section 5 The Nominating Committee shall provide information necessary to seek interested and qualified candidates for each available position from the parishioners-at-large. It is the intent to seek self nominations to the vacant positions. If sufficient nominations are not received, the Nominating Committee shall secure the requisite number of nominees. The Nominating Committee shall convey all valid candidates to the Parish Council.
- Section 6 The selection of new members to the Council and Commissions shall be conducted on Pentecost Sunday using the lottery method. New members will take office at the June meeting of the Council or Commission.
- Section 7 Upon the resignation or death of a member-at-large, the Council shall appoint a replacement to serve until the end of the term. First consideration will be given to those who were nominated and not selected in the previous lottery. Any member appointed for more than one and

one-half (1½) years shall, for the purpose of this provision, be considered to have served a completed term.

Section 8 Any person who has remained off the Council for a period of one (1) year shall be eligible to return to the Council.

Section 9 If in the opinion of the Chairperson of a Council or Commission that a member of the Council or Commission displays a complete lack of interest in the business of the Council or Commission or the member has missed two (2) unexcused consecutive business meetings of the Council or Commission in any one session, the Chairperson shall bring the matter to the attention of the Council or Commission. The Council or Commission may then, by majority vote, recommend to the Pastor that the member be replaced in accordance with Article IV, Section 7.

ARTICLE V – MEETINGS

Section 1 Regular meetings shall be held monthly and/or bi-monthly at a regularly scheduled time and place. The June meeting will be considered the annual meeting and include seating of new members.

Section 2 Roberts’s Rules of Order, Revised shall govern the proceedings of all Pastoral Council meetings. The Order of Business shall be as follows:

- I. Call to Order, Prayer, Roll Call of Members.
- II. Approval of Minutes
- III. Parish Speak. Opportunity for parishioners to make a statement. Time limit – 5 minutes each. Pastoral Council will take under advisement any concerns presented. The Parish Council is not required to discuss or act on any statements made by parishioners.
- IV. Written Reports: Pastor, Finance Council, Commissions, Youth Group, Young Adults, Senior Citizens, and Ad/Hoc Committees
- V. Old Business
- VI. New Business
- VII. Correspondence
- VIII. Announcements
- IX. Adjournment and Prayer

Section 3 All regular meetings of the Pastoral Council, Finance Council, and Parish Commissions shall be announced in the bulletin.

Section 4

- a) A quorum shall be a majority of the voting members, as specified in Article III, Section 1.
- b) The number of voting members may change between Council meetings due to unforeseen appointments or vacancies in the voting members.
- c) The Recording Secretary shall maintain a count of the number of voting members to enable the Council to determine what constitutes a quorum for each meeting's quorum.
- d) A regular meeting, as defined in Article V, Section 1 may be convened if a quorum of voting members is present.
- e) If a quorum of voting members is not present to constitute a regular meeting, an informal meeting may convene but no decisions requiring a quorum can be made.

Section 5 Special meetings of the Pastoral Council may be called by the Pastor, the Chairperson or three (3) members of the Council. Special meeting requests shall be directed to the Chairperson who must provide for the meeting. The Chairperson will have the Correspondence Secretary provide a 48-hour notice of special meetings to all Council members. The Correspondence Secretary must confirm notification with the individual members.

Section 6 All Pastoral Council action shall require a majority vote of a quorum at a regular or special meeting of the Council.

Section 7 At the request of the Pastor, the Executive Committee is empowered to act on behalf of the Pastoral Council if a quorum of the full Pastoral Council cannot be convened in a manner timely enough to consider urgent matters. The Executive Committee shall keep the Pastoral Council fully informed of any action taken on behalf of the Pastoral Council.

Section 8 The Pastoral Council may appeal a Pastor's veto to the Bishop or a Diocesan Arbitration Committee appointed by the Bishop. Such an appeal requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority of a quorum at a regular or special meeting of the Pastoral Council.

ARTICLE VI – PROGRAM YEAR

Section 1 The Official Program Year of the Pastoral Council shall commence on June 1 of the current year and end on May 31 of the subsequent year. The terms of office for all members-at-large and/or appointed members of the Pastoral Council shall correspond with this official Program Year. Officers of the Council shall be elected at the first organizational meeting of the new Program Year (i/e/ June) as stated in Article V, Section 1.

ARTICLE VII – DUTIES OF PASTORAL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Section 1 Pastor

- a) Provide guidance and advice in all matters before the Pastoral Council.
- b) Ratify decisions by which he commits himself to the substance of the action. Such ratification cannot take place by his silence alone.
- c) Veto decisions, which the pastor is called upon to exercise, when in his judgment, church law, the teachings of the Church, or the known policy of the bishop is not being followed. When he vetoes, the pastor must present to the Pastoral Council the reasons for his action.
- d) Suspend action on any action before the Pastoral Council, when the pastor believes the matter requires further consideration of a question, by himself or by the whole Pastoral Council. A suspension on action should not ordinarily continue beyond the next meeting of the Council. If the Pastor suspends a matter for more then one meeting the Pastoral Council can call the question on a two-thirds (2/3) majority of a quorum at a regular or special meeting of the Pastoral Council.

Section 2 Chairperson

- a) Annually elected from the members-at-large of the Pastoral Council by a majority vote the members.
- b) Preside at all Pastoral Council meetings.
- c) Prepare the agenda with the support of Executive Committee for each Pastoral Council meeting.
- d) Establish subcommittees and appoint their membership as required by Pastoral Council business.
- e) Ensure maximum participation of all participants at Pastoral Council meetings.
- f) Make physical arrangements as required for the Pastoral Council meetings.

Section 3 Vice Chairperson

- a) Annually elected from the members-at-large of the Parish Council by a majority vote of the members.
- b) Preside in the absence of the Chairperson
- c) Chair the Nominating Committee of the Pastoral Council.

Section 4 Commission/**Women of St. Gerard** Chairperson

- a) Organize the Commission and/ in accordance with their Bylaws.
- b) Each Commission and **Women of St. Gerard** shall operate by its own Bylaws (as approved by the Pastoral Council.
- c) Hold monthly or bi-monthly meetings of the Commission and **Women of St. Gerard** and provide for reports to be given personally or through a representative to the Pastoral Council at each regular meeting.

Section 5 At Large Representatives

- a) Constantly study the operation of the Pastoral Council and the Commissions in the context of overall parish needs then recommend program or action necessary to meet those needs.
- b) Regularly attend and participate in Pastoral Council deliberations.

Section 6 Correspondence Secretary

- a) Provide formal correspondence on behalf of the council.
- b) Annually elected from members-at-large of the Parish Council by a majority vote of the members.
- c) Other duties as assigned by the council.

Section 7 Recording Secretary

- a) Maintain accurate minutes of all Pastoral Council meetings.
- b) Maintain attendance records and brings to the attention of the Chairperson two (2) consecutive absences of any Pastoral Council member.

ARTICLE VIII– FINANCE COUNCIL

Section 1 Purpose

The Finance Council will operate within the guidelines expressed in the Code of Church Laws (#537), the Diocesan Norms and the Bylaws of the Parish Pastoral Council.

More specifically, the Finance Council has three (3) principle areas of responsibility:

1. Serve the Pastor and parish as primary consultants in any matter in accordance with Diocesan Norms.
2. Assist the pastor in making administrative decisions and policies in regards to all of parish finances, including parish budgets and annual reports.
3. Promote the concepts and practices of Stewardship.

Section 2 Membership

The Finance Council shall consist of the pastor and operations manager (ex-officio) and nine (9) to twelve (12) members (two of whom shall also be members-at-large of the Parish Pastoral Council). Other than the two Pastoral Council members, three members may be appointed by the pastor and all remaining shall be selected and serve in accordance with Article IV.

Section 3 Officers

A) The members of the Finance Council shall select or elect from the nominated or appointed membership a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and a Secretary. The selection or election shall occur at the first meeting of each new program year. The Chairperson will be a member other than the two (2) Pastoral Council members.

B) A recording secretary, preferably not a member of the Commission, shall be appointed by the Chairperson. The secretary shall keep the minutes of each meeting of the Commission, shall be the custodian of the records of the Commission, and perform duties as assigned by the Chairperson

Article IX - Education Commission

Section 1: Purpose

The purpose of the Education Commission is to provide a program of education and formation to reach the total membership of the parish. This includes continuous life-long Catholic education for all of the members of the parish, pre-school through adults.

The Education Commission shall carry out the following functions:

- a) When appropriate, seek out the thinking of parishioners to determine the educational needs of the parish. Develop strategies to address these needs.
- b) Evaluate the effectiveness of the total parish educational programs in light of existing needs.
- c) Carry out the priorities, objectives, and recommendations of the Parish Pastoral Council in the area of Catholic education and formation.
- d) Support and promote all parish education programs.
- e) Seek a better understanding and wider support of Catholic education within the local community.
- f) Ensure that diocesan policies on education and catechesis are implemented at the local level and work with administrators in the development of policies that are not covered by the diocesan policies.
- g) Evaluate and recommend uses of educational facilities and equipment. Recommend needed changes.
- h) In consultation with the Pastor and Adult Faith Formation Director, ensure that adults in the parish are provided with programs that meet their catechetical and formational needs. Help foster ongoing evaluation and annual goal setting by program leaders.

Section 2: Membership

- a) Voting members of the Education Commission shall be the pastor, ex-officio, and nine (9) members-at-large. Non-voting administrative members of the Education Commission shall include: School Principal, Religious Education Director, Representative from the Athletic Committee, PTO representative, Youth Ministry Representative, Lansing Catholic Central Representative, and Director of Adult Faith Formation. Employees or members of a full time employee's immediate family are not eligible to serve on the Education Commission.
- b) Each member shall serve a term of three (3) years. No member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. Nominations shall be governed by article IV.
- c) Any voting member of the Commission, other than an ex-officio member, who is absent without previous notification from two (2) consecutive meetings of the Commission shall cease to be a member. Chronic notified absences will be dealt with on an individual basis.

Section 3: Officers

- a) The officers of the Commission shall consist of a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson, and additional officers as the Commission may elect. Officers shall be elected annually at the meeting of the Commission designated for that purpose.
- b) The Chairperson shall appoint all committees unless otherwise specified by the Commission; shall execute on behalf of the Commission all written instruments except as otherwise directed by the Commission; shall be responsible for the agenda to be used at meetings; shall attend all Parish Pastoral Council meetings or provide for a substitute representative; and shall perform all duties of a Chairperson and other duties that are assigned by the Commission.
- c) The Vice Chairperson, at the request of the Chairperson, shall perform the duties and exercise the functions of the Chairperson, when so acting, shall have the power of the Chairperson.
- d) A recording secretary, preferably not a member of the Commission, shall be appointed by the Chairperson. The secretary shall keep the minutes of each meeting of the Commission, shall be the custodian of the records of the Commission, and perform duties as assigned by the Chairperson.

Article X - Worship Commission

Section 1 Purpose

The primary purpose of the Worship Commission is the formation, direction, coordination and promotion of worship for all liturgical services.

Section 2 Program

A) Eligible and interested parishioners may become lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, mass coordinators, altar servers, ushers, greeters, musicians, and choir members.

B) Training sessions shall be held regularly for those wishing to serve in any one of these ministries.

C) Musicians and choir members will be the responsibility of the Director of Music Ministry.

Section 3 Membership

A) Voting members of the Worship Commission shall be the pastor, ex-officio, and nine (9) members-at-large.

B) Each member shall serve a term of three (3) years. No member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. Nominations shall be governed by article IV.

Section 4 Officers

A) The members shall elect a Chairperson and a Secretary at the first meeting of each new Commission year.

B) A recording secretary, preferably not a member of the Commission, shall be appointed by the Chairperson. The secretary shall keep the minutes of each meeting of the Commission, shall be the custodian of the records of the Commission, and perform duties as assigned by the Chairperson.

Article XI - Social Ministries Commission

Section 1 Purpose

The Social Ministries Commission is empowered by the parish to advance the holy Social Teaching in fulfilling the Church's mission of life, justice, freedom and peace by communally responding in an organized way to societal and individual human needs.

Section 2 Principles of Parish Social Ministry

The first four (4) principles set the norm which validates parish social ministry and constitutes its essence.

Principle #1 Parish social ministry builds community.

Principle #2 Parish social ministry nurtures and intensifies the Christian baptismal call to ministry by reflecting on the social, political and institutional experience of individuals and families in light of the gospel values.

Principle #3 Parish social ministry helps parishioners understand Catholic Social Teachings and discern Gospel values, exercise these values in the community and develop lay leadership.

Principle #4 Parish social ministry addresses social and community needs through direct service and action for justice.

The next three (3) principles relate to and flow from the above principles. They point more distinctly to the manner in which parish social ministry is expressed.

Principle #5 Parish social ministry recognizes and respects the distinct gifts, needs, resources and diversity of the local community and its institutions and organizations.

Principle #6 Parish social ministry transcends parochial and provincial issues and limitation by binding with other groups, parishes, churches, organizations, agencies, and all people of good will.

Principle #7 Parish social ministry fosters a preferential option for the poor, lonely, helpless, sick and suffering people. Additionally, parish social ministry adheres to the Gospel of Life teachings of the church.

Section 3 Membership

A) Members of the Social Ministries Commission shall include pastoral staff(s) and nine (9) to twelve (12) members at large. Membership should model inclusivity, solidarity and collaboration to give witness to Gospel values. Members should represent various ethnic, cultural, socio-economic and minority groups present in the Parish community.

B) Each member shall serve a term of three (3) years. No member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. Nominations shall be governed by article IV.

C) If in the opinion of the Chairperson, a member of the Commission displays a complete lack of interest in the business of the Commission or the member has missed two (2) unexcused consecutive business meetings of the Commission, the Commission may then, by majority vote,

recommend to the Pastor that the member be replaced in accordance with Article IV, Section 7.

Section 4 Officers

The members shall elect a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson, a Secretary and an Animator at the first meeting of the Commission year.

Section 5 Officer Duties

Chairperson: The Chairperson shall prepare meeting agendas, preside over meetings, appoint committees and represent the commission at pastoral council meetings.

Vice Chairperson: The Vice Chairperson, at the request of the Chairperson, shall perform the duties and exercise the functions of the Chairperson, when so acting, shall have the power of the Chairperson

Secretary: The secretary shall keep the minutes of each meeting of the Commission, shall be the custodian of the records of the Commission, and perform duties as assigned by the Chairperson.

Animator: The Animator will lead the commission in faith sharing and reflection at the start of each meeting and a closing prayer at the end of each meeting.

Article XII - Spiritual Development Commission

Section 1 Purpose

The mission of the Spiritual Development Commission of St. Gerard Parish is to coordinate, foster, and promote all other spiritual aspects of Catholic, Christian living on a personal, family, and parish level while serving diversified needs in an understanding and charitable way that is in keeping with Official Church Teaching and Tradition, in consideration of our unique Christ-centered parish community. The Spiritual Development Commission shall have the following areas of responsibility to coordinate, foster and promote:

- a) Evangelization
- b) Adult Spiritual Formation
- c) Activities for the Spiritual Growth of the Parish Community
- d) Religious and Priestly Vocations

Section 2 Membership

a) Members of the Spiritual Development Commission shall be the Pastor (ex- officio) with no fewer than nine (9) nor more than twelve (12) members-at-large.

b) Nomination of Spiritual Development Commission members shall be governed by Article IV.

Section 3 Officers

The members shall elect a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson and a Secretary at the first meeting of the Commission year.

Article XIII- Activities Commission

Section 1: Purpose

The purpose of the Activities Commission is to promote participation and engagement throughout the parish through the oversight and support of all parish social activities. The Activities Commission shall carry out the following functions:

- a) Evaluate ongoing activities to ensure that opportunities for fellowship are available to all members of the parish.
- b) Provide support and resources for those individuals and groups willing to organize and sponsor parish events.
- c) Work with all parish groups to maintain a common calendar of parish activities.
- d) Maintain records and reports of social activities and events that will be accessible to those organizing similar events in the future.

Section 2: Membership

- a) Voting members of the Activities Commission shall be the pastor or his appointed pastoral staff representative, and nine (9) members-at-large.
- b) Each member shall serve a term of three (3) years. No member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. Nominations shall be governed by article IV.
- c) Any voting member of the Commission, other than an ex-officio member, who is absent without previous notification from two (2) consecutive meetings of the Commission shall cease to be a member. Chronic notified absences will be dealt with on an individual basis.

- a) The parish Volunteer Coordinator shall sit on the commission as a staff representative and shall have no voting rights.

Section 3: Officers

- a) The officers of the Commission shall consist of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and a Secretary. Officers shall be elected annually at the first meeting of the program year.
- b) The Chairperson shall appoint all committees unless otherwise specified by the Commission; shall execute on behalf of the Commission all written instruments except as otherwise directed by the Commission; shall be responsible for the agenda to be used at meetings; shall attend all Parish Pastoral Council meetings or provide for a substitute representative; and shall perform all duties of a Chairperson and other duties that are assigned by the Commission.
- c) The Vice Chairperson, in the absence of the Chairperson, shall perform the duties and exercise the functions of the Chairperson, when so acting, shall have the power of the Chairperson.
- d) The secretary shall keep the minutes of each meeting of the Commission, shall be the custodian of the records of the Commission, and perform duties as assigned by the Chairperson.

Article XIV - Decision Making

- Section 1 The ultimate goal of the Parish Pastoral Council is to achieve a consensus of the whole parish with its decisions based on discovering how the Spirit is working in the parish. It shall follow the community way of decision making, placing emphasis on person and group growth rather than just getting things done. Although the people and group come first, getting things done shall not be de-emphasized.

Article XV - Amendments and Ratification

- Section 1 Amendments, additions or deletions to these Bylaws may be proposed at a regular meeting of the Pastoral Council. However, the changes may be effected only after seven (7) days written notice to all voting Pastoral Council members and the Parish-At-Large, and then acted upon at the next regular Pastoral Council meeting. Amendments, additions or deletions to the Bylaws shall require a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative roll call vote of the entire voting membership.

Revised: 1988, 1990, 1993, 2008, 2009, 2013, 2014, 2018