

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton  
Church

Pastoral Council

Bylaws

Approved  
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## **ARTICLE I – MISSION STATEMENT**

As members of the Pastoral Council of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, we are committed to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our actions and our words. We commit ourselves to discern and use our spiritual gifts to help meet the spiritual and material needs of SEAS and our larger communities. We welcome, nurture, and celebrate all those who worship and minister with us. We listen for the Holy Spirit in those around us, and we challenge ourselves to grow in faith, and to share the joys of our growing. We value education, service, and community, and we are mindful of God's unconditional love for each of us. We accept humbly yet enthusiastically our responsibility as representatives of all parishioners at SEAS.

For the upcoming year, we pledge to focus particular efforts on accomplishing the Pastoral Council Goal for **2020-2021**.

- The Pastoral Council will plan accordingly for a return to normal as COVID-19 restrictions improve or adjust if they tighten; and for a potential transition to becoming part of a cluster parish, by the May 2021 Pastoral Council meeting.

## **ARTICLE II – PURPOSE AND FUNCTION**

The Pastoral Council of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish unites all the people of the parish in the deliberative forum necessary to facilitate the mutual sharing of the gifts of the Spirit. The Pastoral Leader(s) and the Pastoral Council do not act independently of one another; rather, they exercise their leadership to arrive at decisions which concretely apply the Gospel to the parish.

- A. **PURPOSE** – The Pastoral Council is a consultative and policy-determining body in which the exchange of information and ideas concerning all phases of parish life may be freely expressed, and goals and direction for the parish can be determined through consensus.
1. Consensus is reached when everyone on the Pastoral Council is willing to support a decision. Consensus calls members to scrutinize their own views and listen to others with care. It also teaches members what it means to be a body which must act together or not at all. Consensus does not deny or ignore differences or conflict, but uses either for creative purposes. Consensus may take some time to reach.
- B. **FUNCTION** - The Pastoral Council provides direction and establishes policies, rather than engaging in day-to-day administration, in the following areas:
1. Word – To continually assess pastoral programs and establish goals in total religious education, sacramental preparation, and family life; to continually reach out to the unchurched and promote the values of the Kingdom of God by registering truth and justice in a public forum.
  2. Worship – To form and maintain a worshiping community which is centered around the Holy Eucharist.
  3. Service and Advocacy for Justice – To advocate and maintain a service that heals society.

## **ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP**

### **A. QUALIFICATIONS**

1. Parishioners nominated for, or serving on, the Pastoral Council shall be duly registered members of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, where “duly registered” means to be listed on a census card in the Parish Office.
2. The minimum age for candidacy to the Pastoral Council shall be 18 years at the time of selection, except the Youth Member at-Large, whose minimum age is 13 or going into the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

3. A member of the Pastoral Council may not hold more than one office on the Council.
4. Names of candidates for membership on the Pastoral Council shall be reviewed by the Pastoral Leader.
5. Candidates for membership on the Pastoral Council shall be willing to serve, and to share their time, talent and gifts, for the purpose of bringing Christ to people and people to Christ.

## **B. COMPOSITION**

1. The Pastoral Council shall be composed of the following voting members:
  - a. the Pastoral Leader
  - b. a Staff Liaison
  - c. Selected Members at-Large who make up a majority of the Council
  - d. one Youth Member at-Large
  - e. a Chair or other representative of each standing committee
  - f. two Trustees from the parish community at-large (to be recommended by the Finance Council and elected by Council)
  - g. a representative of the NW Regional Planning Group

## **C. RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. All Pastoral Council Members shall:
  - a. Participate fully and actively in all Pastoral Council meetings. Any member absent from three (3) regular meetings without having notified an Officer in advance of the meeting shall be considered for termination.
  - b. Be willing to share views honestly and charitably, and to listen attentively to others at Pastoral Council meetings.
  - c. Represent, to the best of their ability, the interests of all parishioners in all matters presented before the Pastoral Council.
  - d. Present, if appropriate, any suggestions, grievances or other matters to the Pastoral Council that are brought to them by any parishioner.

- e. Perform duties as directed by the Chairperson of the Pastoral Council and act as liaisons to the Standing Committees, as appointed by the Council Chairperson.

## **ARTICLE IV – MEMBERS AT-LARGE**

### **A. NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCESS**

1. A Selection committee will be appointed by the Pastoral Council Chairperson. At least three (3) persons shall be identified at the February meeting (usually the outgoing Members at-Large whose terms will be filled by new members), and one person shall be identified as the Selection Committee Chairperson.
2. Duties of the Selection Committee are as follows:
  - a. Provide bulletin notices regarding the upcoming Selection process.
  - b. Announce the date of the next Selection (Pentecost)
  - c. On a given weekend in the springtime, distribute nominating forms in Church at all Masses/Services to each registered member of the parish in attendance, minimum age 13 or going into the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Each individual may nominate up to five adult candidates (minimum age 18 years and older), and five youth (minimum age 13 or going into the 8<sup>th</sup> grade). These forms will be collated by the Selection Committee.
  - d. Compile a list of nominees to determine eligibility and willingness to serve a 3-year term if selected, or, if not selected, determine willingness to be available for one year (until the next Selection is held) in the event that a Member at-Large is unable to complete a term.
  - e. Invite the nominees to a Pastoral Council meeting.
  - f. Ensure that the Selection process takes place at the last Mass on Pentecost Sunday.
  - g. Notify all candidates of the Selection results.
  - h. Invite newly selected Members at-Large to attend the last official Pastoral Council meeting of the year (June).
3. Installation of the new Pastoral Council should be performed at Mass(es) in September or October.
4. Election of Council Officers shall take place at the first meeting of the fiscal year (July).

## **B. TERMS OF OFFICE**

1. A term of office commences on July 1<sup>st</sup> and terminates at the end of three years on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Except the Youth Member whose term of office commences on July 1<sup>st</sup> and terminates at the end of one year on June 30<sup>th</sup>.
2. Selected Members at-Large shall serve for a full term; replacements to a vacated position shall serve for the remainder of that term of office.
3. Selected Members at-Large may succeed themselves for one (1) full term of office.

## **C. VACANCIES**

1. Vacancies shall be filled by selecting another parishioner from a list of alternates whose names were drawn at the most recent Selection, to serve out the term of the Council Member at-Large being replaced.
2. Replacements for vacated selected Members at-Large positions may succeed themselves for two (2) full terms of office.

## **ARTICLE V – OFFICERS**

### **A. COMPOSITION**

Officers of the Pastoral Council shall consist of the following:

1. Elected by the Council:
  - a. Chairperson
  - b. Vice-Chairperson
  - c. Secretary
2. Ex Officio:
  - a. Pastoral Leader

### **B. ELECTION**

1. Officers shall be elected from among all members of the Pastoral Council in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order, Revised, at the first meeting in July, following the annual Pastoral Council Selection of new Members at-Large. Nominations need not be in writing. Elections shall be by secret written ballot if more than one (1) member is nominated. The nominee receiving the majority of votes for each position is elected.
2. Should a vacancy occur in the office of Vice-Chairperson or Secretary, the Pastoral Council shall elect a replacement to fill the unexpired term at its next regularly scheduled meeting. If the Chairperson vacates his/her position, the Vice-Chairperson assumes that office.
3. The Pastoral Leader shall serve for the duration of his/her assignment to SEAS parish.

### **C. RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. The Pastoral Council Chairperson shall:
  - a. Preside at all Pastoral Council meetings, as well as General Parish meetings.
  - b. Appoint Special Committee Chairpersons as needed.
  - c. Preside at Executive Committee meetings, at which time the Agenda for the next Council meeting will be established.
  - d. Direct activities toward achieving the objectives of SEAS Pastoral Council.
  - e. Perform other duties requested by the Pastoral Council.
2. The Pastoral Council Vice-Chairperson shall:
  - a. Perform all duties of the Chairperson during the Chairperson's absence.
  - b. Attend Executive Committee meetings and assist in establishing the Agenda for Council meetings.
  - c. Assume responsibilities delegated by the Chairperson.
  - d. Perform other duties requested by the Pastoral Council.
3. The Pastoral Council Secretary shall:
  - a. Assure that Council minutes and attendance records are accurately kept and copied by the Recording Secretary,



and assure that Executive Committee Minutes and General Parish Meeting minutes are accurately kept.

- b. Collect and distribute Pastoral Council meeting minutes along with Executive Committee minutes and Council Agenda to Council Members. Office staff may assist when asked.
  - c. Be responsible for all Council correspondence and communications.
  - d. Attend Executive Committee meetings and assist in establishing and posting the Agenda for Council meetings. The Agenda should be typed and posted in the church narthex prior to the Saturday evening Mass on the weekend before the Pastoral Council meeting.
  - e. Distribute a copy of the Agenda to each Council member by e-mail or by placing it in the mail slots outside the Pastoral Office. A copy of each proposal is also to be distributed to each member prior to the meeting.
  - f. Provide a very brief summary of the Pastoral Council meeting to the Bulletin Editor by two (2) weekends prior to the next scheduled meeting. This summary will be published in the parish bulletin, and may be handwritten.
  - g. Maintain and distribute an up-to-date list of names and contact information for all members and Officers of the Pastoral Council.
  - h. Assure that an up-to-date list of all members, positions and terms be maintained.
  - i. Perform other duties as requested by the Pastoral Council.
4. The Pastoral Leader is the spiritual leader of the Pastoral Council and shall:
- a. Attend the Executive Committee meetings and assist in establishing the Agenda for Council meetings.
  - b. Call the Pastoral Council Members to pause and reflect on the challenging Christian implications of the policies and directions being considered.
  - c. Preside at the first annual Pastoral Council meeting (July) at which Officers are elected.

## **ARTICLE VI – STANDING COMMITTEES**

The Pastoral Council shall designate Standing Committees as needed.

### **A. COMPOSITION**

1. All Standing Committees should have at least three members and should meet at least 10 times each year. Meetings may consist of a gathering of members in one location, or may take place electronically, via conference telephone calls or e-mail.
2. Standing Committee Chairs or representatives shall be selected by their Committees to the Pastoral Council for a term of two (2) years, after which time they become eligible again for the Selection process in the same Committee for one more consecutive term. Chairs or representatives may serve more than two terms if the committee is unable to name a new chair or representative.
3. If a Standing Committee chair or representative is unable to attend a Council meeting for a temporary but serious reason, s/he should inform the Council Secretary and submit the name of a proxy, who will assume all voting rights and responsibilities of the chair or representative for up to 5 meetings.

### **B. STANDING COMMITTEES AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

1. Communication – works to increase communication between the Pastoral Council and the parish, and to facilitate the outreach ministries and inter-parish events as described in the NW Regional Plan.
2. Facilities – coordinates and oversees general maintenance and upkeep of all parish property, providing for snow removal and grass cutting, acting as consultants for modifications and upgrades, and supervising volunteers. The goal is to provide for the safety and comfort of the community.
3. Faith Formation – seeks to offer opportunities and information to all parishioners and members of the community to grow in their faith and

understanding of God's love, giving them the ability to share that faith with others.

4. Finance Council – provides the parish family, as well as its Pastoral Council, Standing Committees, and staff, with the pertinent financial data for joint administrative decisions necessary to the present and future parish operations and goals.
5. Liturgy – assists the parish community in developing and implementing meaningful liturgical celebrations in accordance with the directives of Vatican II. The mission of our Liturgy Committee is to help the parish find its unique way of making the prayer of the church its own.
6. Parish Life - promotes the social life and sense of community within the SEAS parish family. This is done under the guidelines of the Pastoral Council. Breakfast Club is currently a primary function of this committee. The parish Life Committee also sponsors special events (such as retirements) which do not fall under other standing committees.
7. Social Ministry – works to promote an awareness of the social teachings of the Gospel. The Committee enables parishioners to respond to the Gospel challenges of justice, peace and compassion. This may take place through special events, consciousness-raising activities, or by providing information to advocate on contemporary issues when there is a need for a prophetic and active Christian response from the parish. Committee members determine what social justice issues and outreach efforts will be pursued and supported at SEAS.
8. Time, Talent & Treasure – coordinates and oversees the Time, talent, and Treasure process and takes the lead in bringing the concept of stewardship of life in our parish.
9. Youth – seeks to respond to the needs of young people and share the unique gifts of youth with the larger community.
10. The Executive Committee -The Executive Committee shall consist of the Officers of the Pastoral Council and the Pastoral Leader. This committee shall have the authority to make a decision in an extraordinary circumstance on behalf of the Pastoral Council

## **C. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PASTORAL COUNCIL AND STANDING COMMITTEES**

1. Responsibilities of the Standing Committees to the Pastoral Council:

- a. Each Committee shall prepare a Statement of Purpose.
- b. Each Committee shall prepare goals and programs in support of Pastoral Council goals and present at the June Pastoral Council meeting
- c. Each Committee shall submit an itemized budget to the Finance Council for review by the end of March. It is the responsibility of each Committee to stay within that budget. If additional funds are necessary, appeals may be made to the Finance Council and the Pastoral Council.
- d. Standing Committees are empowered to make decisions. However, they require the approval of the Pastoral Council to make commitments which affect the life of the parish, or on any issue they present to Pastoral Council.
- e. No Standing Committee shall be entitled to obligate the parish either financially or in matters of policy, other than those stated herein, without approval of the Pastoral Council.
- f. Standing Committee representatives shall provide written minutes of monthly committee meetings prior to Council meetings; provide brief verbal reports of committee activities and discussions at Council meetings; and bring all major recommendations to the Pastoral Council for approval.
- g. All communication regarding these responsibilities will be communicated by the Standing Committee Representative to the Pastoral Council.

2. Responsibilities of the Pastoral Council to Standing Committees:

- a. Council will ensure good communication between the Standing Committees and the Pastoral Council.
- b. Council will be supportive of all Standing Committees.
- c. Council will call for accountability from the Standing Committees on their goals and programs by the May meeting of the Pastoral Council.
- d. Council will, at the April meeting, adopt its annual goals.

**ARTICLE VII – OTHER COMMITTEES**

**A. AD HOC COMMITTEES:** The Pastoral Council shall designate Ad Hoc and other committees as needed. Ad Hoc Committees may be appointed by the Chairperson upon the approval of the Pastoral Council. The Pastoral Council Chairperson shall appoint the chairperson of any Ad Hoc Committee. Upon completion of its work, the Ad Hoc Committee will be dissolved.

## ARTICLE VIII – TRUSTEES

1. Two (2) Trustees shall be named by the Council following ordinary council election procedures at the last meeting of the year, both from among duly registered parishioners. Both Trustees shall vote on matters before the Council, and shall be considered Members at-Large.
  - a. Trustees shall be at least twenty-one (21) years of age and fully –initiated, practicing Catholics with active membership in the Parish.
2. Each Trustee, once elected, shall serve a one (1) year term beginning on July 1<sup>st</sup>, renewable up to five (5) consecutive one year terms.
3. Vacancies for Trustees which occur during the year shall be filled by majority vote of the Pastoral Council. Those elected to fill such vacancies shall complete the term of the office of that position.
4. Both Trustees shall be members of the Finance Council.
5. Trustees’ duties and responsibilities shall be as prescribed by the laws of New York State and, in particular, the Articles of Religious Corporation law vested in such office.

## ARTICLE IX – MEETING AND VOTING

### **A. MEETINGS – The Pastoral Council shall have Regular, Special, Executive and General Meetings.**

1. Regular Meetings shall be held at least ten (10) times annually at a mutually agreed upon time and place, to be determined at the July meeting.

- a. All Regular Meetings shall be open to the parish community.
  - b. A quorum (at least one more than half of ALL of the voting members) must be present in order to conduct business.
  - c. The Agenda shall be available and made public prior to all meetings. An Open Forum shall be part of every meeting. Visitors' comments should be limited to three (3) minutes. Addresses in excess of three (3) minutes should be referred to the Executive Committee.
  - d. In addition to presenting meeting minutes to all members prior to the council meeting each month, each Standing Committee Chairperson or representative will respond to questions and/or comments from other members or visitors regarding his/her committee's meeting minutes or other relevant issues. Minutes of all standing committees will be accepted by the Council by consensus.
  - e. While Council welcomes questions, comment, and suggestions from members of the parish and community, Council may or may not immediately respond to or deliberate on issues received during Open Forum.
  - f. Minutes of all Regular Meetings shall be available prior to the next Regular Meeting.
  - g. Meeting minutes will be taken by a Recording Secretary, who is not necessarily a member of the Pastoral Council.
  - h. Minutes must be submitted to the Officers prior to the Executive Committee Meetings.
  - i. The spirit of Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, shall govern, except where they conflict with the Bylaw. In all cases, the Bylaws shall take precedence.
2. Special Meetings may be called by the Chairperson or Pastoral Leader(s), or at the request of five (5) Council members by a written request to the Chairperson. Notice of such meetings shall be given at least three (3) days before the time set for the meeting.
  3. Executive Meetings shall be held nine (9) times each year preceding the Pastoral Council meeting (except in July). The Executive Committee functions as a clearinghouse for matters to be presented to Pastoral Council, and sets the Agenda for Pastoral Council.
  4. General Meetings may be called at the request of the Pastoral Council.

## B. VOTING

1. A quorum (at least one more than half of ALL of the voting members), must be present in order to conduct business.
2. The Council's preferred method of approval of all proposals, issues and decisions is by consensus whenever possible, wherein each member of the Pastoral Council agrees that the course of action is appropriate and is willing to commit themselves to the resolutions sought at the meetings, shall be the ordinary decision-making process. **Consensus** is reached when everyone on the Pastoral council is willing to support a decision. (Please refer to Article II, Section A1.)
3. If consensus cannot be reached:
  - a. Each member of the Pastoral Council shall have one vote.
  - b. Resolutions or motions shall be adopted by majority vote.
4. When the Pastoral Council has come to a general agreement (consensus or vote) on an issue, it is recorded in the minutes as such. The decision should not be reversed without consulting the Pastoral Council.
5. When, in the Pastoral Leader's judgment, Church Law, the teachings of the Church, or known policies of the Rochester Diocese are in conflict with a decision made by the Council, the Pastoral Leader may take exception to and possibly veto the decision. When this occurs, the Pastoral Leader must give his/her reasons. Pastoral Council members should seriously consider again all the important aspects of the issue. If, after such consideration, there is no consensus, at least a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Council is needed to override the Pastoral Leader's veto. With this override, the matter is then appealed by the Chairperson, on behalf of the Council, to the Bishop, using the process for handling such questions (Council of Conciliation and board of Arbitration.)

## ARTICLE X – PROPOSALS

- A. A proposal is a recommendation for a new program, policy, action or event submitted by a member of the Council or the parish for the Council's consideration.



1. Any or all proposals shall be submitted to the Pastoral Council Chairperson.
  2. The proposal must be received by the Chairperson no later than the day of the Executive Committee meeting for consideration at the next scheduled Pastoral Council meeting.
  3. The Proposal Form (available at the Parish Office) must be filled out entirely and signed by the person or representative of the group submitting the proposal.
- B. Executive committee will act at its Executive Committee meeting on all proposals submitted.
- C. Upon receipt of a proposal, the Executive Committee reviews the proposal and recommends deposition to the Pastoral Council.

## **ARTICLE XI – AMENDMENTS**

Amendments may be proposed by any member of the Pastoral Council. Such Amendments must be submitted in writing to the Pastoral Council at least one month prior to voting. Approval must be by two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Pastoral Council.