

Pastoral Council Bylaws

St. Joachim Parish, Plainview

- **Authority:** Council Bylaws follow the norm of the *Code of Canon Law* and Particular Law of the Diocese of Winona (see “Statutes for Parish Pastoral Councils in the Diocese of Winona,” in *Parish Pastoral Councils and Parish Finance Councils*, Diocese of Winona, August 15, 1991). These norms supply the council with a consultative voice in the life of the parish. Although the Pastor is not bound by council recommendations, he should provide written notice of reasons for a contrary decision.
- **Deliberation:** The council meets monthly or at least quarterly, and strives to reach decisions by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, a voting procedure may be followed. Council recommendations shall be recorded in the minutes, along with topics discussed. Excepting matters reserved for executive session, meetings are open and publicized beforehand in the parish bulletin. Observers may be invited to address the council as appropriate.
- **Membership:** The council consists of eight voting members, including four elected from the parish at large, two appointed by the pastor (including one parish trustee when suitable), and one chosen ex officio from the liturgy and faith formation committees respectively. Ex-officio, non-voting members include the Pastor and, at his discretion, other parish pastoral staff (such as a deacon or pastoral associate). Non-voting, outside advisors may be appointed by the pastor ad hoc when appropriate.
- **Terms:** Members shall serve a term of three years, and are eligible for a voluntary second term. Former members are eligible to serve again after a one-year absence. All members shall be practicing Catholics registered in the parish, confirmed and actively involved in parish life. The council year shall follow the parish fiscal year (July to June) for purposes of terms of office. Staggered terms shall be coordinated by the executive committee when appropriate.
- **Elections:** Each spring nominations shall be received from parishioners for prospective elected members. The Pastor shall verify their eligibility and meet to educate them on council roles and responsibilities. Members shall then be elected by lottery at a council meeting. The Council may set additional election guidelines as occasion demands, subject to the Pastor’s approval.
- **Officers:** Any voting member is eligible to serve as an officer. The Pastor serves as presider, the chair steers the agenda and discussion, the vice-chair supplies in the chair’s absence, and the secretary records council action. These four officers comprise the council’s executive committee in order to plan its agenda. Officers serve a term of one year beginning in the autumn, and are eligible for a voluntary second term.
- **Vacancies:** The council shall address vacant seats due to resignation or removal as soon as feasible, by itself selecting a new member to serve the remaining unexpired term. Unless the Pastor determines otherwise, the period during which a vacancy has been filled is considered the equivalent of a three-year period with respect to re-election. The Pastor may remove a member for a grave cause, or unexcused absence from three consecutive meetings, after hearing the council in executive session.
- **Committees:** The Council may establish standing or ad hoc committees. It shall elect the chair of each, who then freely selects committee members.
- **Amendments:** These Bylaws may be amended by consensus of the council members, or a voting majority, and the Pastor’s approval.



Approved, May 1, 2012