

Signed
Constitution

ST. MARY OF THE WOODS
PARISH COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I. NAME:

The name of this organization shall be the Parish Council of St. Mary of the Woods Parish, hereafter referred to as the Council.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE AND FUNCTIONS:

This organization shall have the following purpose and functions:

A. PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Council is to represent the people of the parish community in the process of making evaluations and recommendations that will help the pastor and his staff, as the primary administrators of the parish, through advisory recommendations of Council that would improve the quality of parish services and parish life.

Since the pastor and his staff serve the parish community, it is the responsibility of the Council membership to represent to the pastor:

- 1) Evaluations of the services and policies which affect the parish community and
- 2) Recommendations for the improvement of the quality of parish life and the effectiveness of parish services and policies.

The Council is representative in that those who make up its membership, while they are present to voice their own views, are also expected to reflect the opinion and judgment of the people of the parish community. The Council is admittedly not directly representative

of every conceivable point of view, every individual parishioner, or every minority or interest group. The membership of the Council, however, shall make a sincere effort to be in touch with the parish community and to take seriously the Council's responsibility to represent as faithfully as possible the community's collective wisdom.

By church law and episcopal delegation, the pastor has the primary responsibility for the administration of the parish, and he remains superior to the Council. The Council is, therefore, neither a legislative body nor a decision-making body. Nevertheless, the Council exists because of the desire of the pastor to involve a representative body in the decision-making process in matters of policy or major administrative initiatives affecting the parish community. The Council, therefore, has an essential and integral part to play in the decision-making process in matters assigned to it by law or to it by the pastor.

To be part of the decision-making process in a consultative capacity is not to be the decision maker. Rather, it is to play a vital role in helping the decision maker to arrive at an ultimate decision based upon the collective wisdom of those serving and those being served.

B. FUNCTIONS;

It is the role of the Council to perform any or all of the following functions:

1. To present opinions and evaluations as part of initial input to the consultative process.
2. To discuss and analyze any data gathered, e.g., for trends, causes, needs, etc.
3. To discuss the merits of proposals, alternatives, or recommendations.

4. To generate alternatives.
5. To prioritize alternatives or recommendations.
6. To bring up and evaluate matters of concern and pastoral administration as these relate to effective pastoral administration of the parish community.
7. To evaluate effectiveness of programs implemented and their impact on the parish community in relationship to their stated goal.
8. To recommend courses of action on the strength of the information available.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP AND QUALIFICATIONS:

A. Members-At-Large:

All elected members of Council shall be members-at-large; all members-at-large have voting rights.

B. Qualifications:

Council members shall be selected from among parishioners, 18 years of age or older, and possess the following qualifications:

1. A sense of the needs of the parish and an understanding of the meaning of the local and universal church.
2. A familiarity with the major religious and social issues of the day. It is essential that those who serve on Council educate themselves on major social and religious issues of the day. To this end, they are encouraged to attend any adult education classes offered by the parish or the diocese."

3. A willingness to contribute the time necessary for preparation and attendance.
4. A willingness to read all background material and attend closely to all working information provided concerning each issue and policy discussed.
5. A willingness to initiate contact with community members for the purpose of soliciting agenda--relevant input.
6. An ability to rise above factionalism or special interest advocacy.
7. A forthrightness and willingness to express views in the face of possible opposition.
8. A willingness to serve in a consultative capacity.
9. A willingness to set aside, for the duration of your Council term, any judgments arising from any administrative post or program implementing role in the parish so as to preserve objectivity within Council procedure and parish business.

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS AND ATTENDING PERSONNEL

A.1. Chairperson and Vice Chairperson:

The Council's presiding offices of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson are elected by the entire Council from its own membership. They are elected for one-year terms and may be re-elected for another one-year term if their term as Council member permits.

2. Deanery Representative

The Deanery Representative shall be selected annually during the august meeting from among Council members according to appropriate voting

procedures. It is expected that the Representative will attend the deanery meetings and present pertinent information to Council.

B.1. Secretary:

A Recording Secretary shall be appointed by Council from outside its own membership for whatever term the Council decides.

2. Facilitator:

A Group Process Facilitator may be appointed by Council from outside its own membership for whatever term the Council decides. As Facilitator, one makes sure agenda is followed, both in content and in style.

1. Recorder:

A Group Process Recorder may be appointed by Council from outside its own membership for whatever term the Council decides. A Recorder is used in those instances when a special group is formed. The Recorder basically has responsibility to record group process activity.

NOTE: A complete and specific description of both the Group Process Facilitator and the Group Process Recorder will be listed in the appendix.

ARTICLE V. SELECTION PROCEDURE:

There shall be twelve (12) Council seats, each being for a term of three (3) years. One third of the seats shall be filled in May, and take office in June, according to the following method:

A. The congregation is asked to submit names which they prayerfully discern as having the qualifications of Council membership and being called to represent the wisdom of the parish community. (Note: Parishioners may submit their own names and all those selected will be sent a copy of the Constitution for

review and to aid in their determination of availability and willingness to appropriately serve on Parish Council.) From among these the pastor, staff and existing Council prayerfully discern those qualified and willing to serve. There will be no limit on the number remaining, except that it must be at least twice the number to be chosen. The congregation is asked to gather in prayer that the Holy Spirit will work through the selection process. Those selected will be chosen by lot.

B. The names of persons not selected will not be made known and this pool of names will be kept until the next election process begins the following year, at which time they will be discarded. If a vacancy occurs prior to the next regular election, the pool of names, with no additions, will be the base from which the vacancy is filled. These records shall be kept by the Council president in addition to being recorded in the Council's private computerized files.

C. In April of each year, the names of the four (4) Council members whose term of office will expire next will be made known to the Council. If the Council, after prayerful discernment, decides that the parish would be best served if one member (never two or three) had his/her term doubled, then that member shall be asked to agree to this extension. If agreement is received the Council shall vote on this extension at the May meeting; if the vote is favorable, then the seat shall not be declared vacant. This process is not to be repeated for the same person.

D. Vacancy:

Council members are expected to attend all meetings. If a member misses two (2) unexcused meetings in a twelve (12) month period, this shall be made known to the presiding officer. Upon this, the presiding officer shall make the following motion:

"I move that the seat held by

_____ be declared vacant."

After the motion is seconded, the member introducing the motion shall say,

"I ask that the vote on this motion be tabled until the next regular meeting; I also ask that a copy of this motion be sent to _____."

At the next regular meeting, a vote on the tabled motion may be called by any member. If requested to any member, the vote shall be by secret ballot. If the motion passes, the vacated seat shall be filled from the pool of names remaining from the last election. Once willingness to serve is affirmed, a name will be selected by lot, after prayer, at the next meeting.

ARTICLE VI. COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES: PROCESS AND CONTENT

A. COMMISSIONS

1. There shall be consultive parish commissions in the following areas:

- A. Worship
- B. Education
- C. Finance
- D. Buildings and Grounds
- E. Master Plan

2. Each commission's term of office will be two years (except for the Master Plan, which will be for five years) and will run from September to September. It is suggested that the following act as the selection process model:

- A. Council shall appoint an ad hoc committee from within its ranks to recommend the upcoming year's commission members. Said ad hoc committee will choose its own chairperson.
- B. Upon evaluation of the previous records of the commissions, areas of strength and concern may be assessed. (This is particularly

helpful in offering a tangible direction to potential commission members.)

- C. Potential candidates may be culled from current commission members and, in fact, may be current members as commission members may serve unrestricted consecutive terms. In addition, names may be gathered from those forms utilized by the parishioners during the Council selection process. The final roster of candidates should conform to the goals and objectives of each respective commission.
 - D. The ad hoc committee will be formed in June and will process, contact, and select commission members so that the full roster may be announced at the July Council meeting. In August, the new commission members will meet with the old members to promote a smooth transition in addition to assessing needs so that a plan of action, reflecting specific goals, may be presented to Council at the September meeting.
 - E. It is suggested that each commission have no fewer than four members and no larger than eight.
3. Each commission shall perform the following:
- A Both a commission chairperson and a Council representative will be selected (this may be the same person). The Council representative must attend each Council meeting (see Article V, section 4, for attendance requirements).
 - B. Based on Council's suggestions, and through communicative interaction, each commission will annually formulate three attainable and realistic goals (this is above and beyond any other activity done within the commissions). These goals, presented as a plan of action, shall be approved by

Council in a consultative manner.

- C. Each commission representative will make a progress report to parish Council at all meetings and meeting representatives are encouraged to meet with one another on an ongoing basis to facilitate growth and development. These progress reports will be a matter of public record and shall accurately reflect the content of each commission meeting. Each commission representative is responsible for the gathering of applicable information.
 - D. Each commission is expected to meet at least four times a year (or more, as needed to respond to Council and to insure that the tasks are accomplished accurately and completely) with commission members observing the attendance rules of Council members. These meetings should be regularly scheduled and are open to all members of the parish as observers and actual participants when recognized by the chair.
 - E. The commissions' recommendations and reports are to reflect their individual nature and intent in addition to the suggestions of the Council (though a commission may make any suggestions to Council that it feels are feasible, goal-oriented and reflective of the goals of the particular commission).
 - F. Each commission is encouraged to mediate all conflicts within its own ranks; in cases of unreconcilable differences, Council may arbitrate upon request.
4. The commissions shall be subordinate to the Council even though they may undertake and/or perpetuate separate tasks, with the following provisions:
- A. The Education Commission, because

of its supervision of the CCD program, operates on a specified budget to be named each year.

1. Within the framework of this budget, the commission remains autonomous in its distribution based on a sense of fiscal responsibility and accountability to Council.
 2. Other matters, such as large expenditures, substantive program changes and extended budget requests must be approved by Council.
 3. Emergency requests, those cases that cannot wait until the upcoming Council meeting, must be made to both the pastor and the Council president. As a collaborative team, they will determine the validity of such a request and make an appropriate decision. If the request is granted, the committee must present a retroactive rationale at the next regularly scheduled Council meeting.
- B. As other commissions do not have an ongoing budgetary need, their requests for money would be submitted to, and approved by, Council on an "as needs arise" basis emergency requests will be handled as mentioned in #3 above.
5. If a member of a commission shall also hold a service post in the commission's area of assigned scope during his/her tenure as a commission member, then the following shall hold true: The member shall have a willingness to set aside, for the duration of his/her Council term, any judgments arising from any administrative post or program implementing role in the parish so as to preserve objectivity within Council procedure and parish business.

6. Ad hoc committees can be established by Council or by one of the commissions and are subordinate to same for reason of accomplishing specified tasks. Such committees may deal with parish events (i.e. Bingo, Festival et al) or may further the goals and aims of individual commissions.
7. As a general rule and a directional guideline, the structure of the commissions shall be as follows:

The commissions are consultative bodies and, while remaining subordinate to Council, may engage in tasks outside of their assigned responsibilities. These tasks will be reflective of the commission's form and will function independently of Council. Council may ask to be apprised of all these tasks but may only intercede in general emergencies and in the delegation of funds. All projects of an autonomous nature should necessarily be reflective of the parish good and general growth of our peoples. Any commission engaging in projects reflective of special interests and not in the common good may be subject to discipline and disbandment, if such action is justified. The Council should be able to review the commission's work through published reports and any related data should be made available. It is important to realize that, while commissions may have projects outside of Council's scope, the commissions themselves are subordinate to Council and must approach it as the next step in the parish chain of command. While commissions may make recommendations, evaluations, and engage in ongoing, yet related, matters they are accountable to the peoples of the parish via the Council; they are not autonomous pro-active bodies. Conversely, it should be realized that Council's interactions with the commissions be consultative and of a collaborative nature. It will only be through ongoing dialogue and information exchange that the established goals reflect the common good and one that engenders growth for the peoples of St.

Mary of the Woods.

ARTICLE VII. MEETINGS AND ATTENDANCE

- A. Council meetings shall be held monthly, with at least ten (10) regularly scheduled meetings to be held per calendar year. A 2/3 vote is mandated to cancel a meeting and must be made at least one meeting before the one under consideration. In the event of a cancellation due to inclement weather, the Council meetings will be rescheduled.
- B. Any parishioner may attend Council meetings as an observer but may speak only when recognized by the chairperson, with special recognition to members of parish service organizations, who are encouraged to attend.
- C. Meetings will observe the order set forth in Robert's Rules of Order (newly revised) though general meeting items may be easily facilitated by actions reflecting the spirit of Robert's Rules if not the actual content. Council members should apprise themselves of Robert's Rules of Order.
- D. Special meetings of the Council shall be called at the request of any of the following: the pastor, the chairperson, or four (4) Council members. At least four (4) days notice must precede this request.
- E. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority (50% + 1) of the total, fixed number of Council seats. (Note: this does not include the pastor.)
- F. Agenda Process

The agenda for Council meetings shall be set by the pastor (representing the interests of the pastoral administration) in conjunction with the Council chairperson (representing the interests of the Council membership and the parish at large). The secretary shall be present for recording and communication purposes only.

Any member wishing to submit an agenda item must do so at least one week before the agenda is to be sent out. These items should be submitted to both the pastor and the

Council chairperson so they may collaboratively assess the appropriateness of the suggested item. If found so, the item will be made part of the agenda. If not, the item may be brought up at a more appropriate time for agenda consideration or raised at the applicable place within the next Council meeting.

It is suggested that the secretary send out the upcoming agenda and the previous meetings minutes to all Council members, and the pastor, ten (10) days before the Council meeting. This will expedite the meeting process and facilitate understanding and, therefore, discussion of the agenda items.

ARTICLE VIII. POLICY PROCESS AND PROCEDURE

- A. All Council members shall make themselves available to parishioners to listen to any needs, comments and concerns expressed as they are appropriate to the member's role as a parish representative.
- B. A vote by Council is one to recommend and not to decide. After the interactive process, with ongoing dialogue and consultation with the pastor, the decision and implementation may materialize.
- C. The pastor and his staff shall encourage Council in their role and shall assist them in developing ideas and recommendations in a linear and goal-oriented manner.
- D. The pastor and his staff shall carefully and prayerfully weigh all recommendations by Council, especially those backed by a high degree of consensual support within the Council. In particular, recommendations that are reflective of a large amount of parish support should be particularly studied in that it is the pastor's role to assure the growth and continued success of the church and its peoples.
- E. The following possibilities will cover the processes involved in the recommendation and subsequent decision between the Council and the pastor. In all instances, it is vital that every effort be made to achieve the optimum dialogue exchange and to fortify the

talks with the ongoing idea that it is the parish good that is ultimately at stake.

1. The pastor has three (3) options in dealing with every suggestion made by Council:
 - A. Accept
 - B. Accept With Revisions
 - C. Reject (veto)
2. If the pastor accepts Council's proposal, then it is implemented in an applicable manner.
3. If the pastor "accepts with revisions" or rejects Council's proposal, then he will present this decision to Council along with an appropriate rationale.
4. If the Council votes to accept the revised proposal, then it is forwarded to the pastor for acceptance. (See number 2.)
5. If the Council votes to reject the revised proposal, or the original proposal is rejected, then Council votes on a resubmission of the original proposal. (This vote must be passed by a majority of 3/4.) If the vote fails, the proposal is dropped. If the vote passes, then the proposal is resubmitted in its original format. (See number 2.)
6. If the resubmitted proposal is rejected then Council must vote on further action. Inherent in this is the idea that the proposal is a high-consensus one and greatly reflects the parish (and parishioners) needs. The Council then votes on whether to take further action; again a 3/4 majority vote is necessary. If the action is voted down, the proposal is dropped. If the motion to action is passed, then the following will occur:
 - A. Parish Council president will apprise the pastor of Council's intention to take further action. If, at this time, the pastor expresses a willingness to collaborate on a mutually agreed

upon result, a new proposal will be then worked on and submitted to the pastor as a new proposal. If not, then Parish Council president continues further steps.

- B. Parish Council President will contact the Diocesan Chancery, specifically the Bishop's office, and submit a full and detailed report regarding the entire sequence of events leading up to this final action.
 - C. Following the directives of the Bishop, or his office, all necessary steps will be completely followed.
 - D. The decision of the Bishop shall be final and binding.
7. Parish Council and the pastor are actively encouraged to work together in a spirit of harmony and to reach collaborative decisions that would ward off negative consequences within the parish. The above steps are suggested only in extreme and unfortunate cases and incorporate elements of consultation, conflict management in addition to being reflective of Canon Law.
8. The Parish Council of St. Mary of the Woods is a PSO (Parish Service Organization) and its specific existence is sanctioned and mandated by the Archbishop of Cincinnati. As such, only a directive by the Archbishop can disband Council.

ARTICLE IX. REFERENDUM

- 1. A Council decision may be upheld or overridden by a parish referendum initiated by a petition signed by at least five percent (5%) of the parish (based on the most recent census). This will be submitted to the Council president at least one week before the next regularly scheduled meeting, with a copy of said petition going to the

pastor. Council must authorize a vote on the disputed matter with wording of the issue to be decided by an ad hoc committee consisting of three (3) Council members and three (3) signers of the petition. In order to override the Council decision or policy, the total vote must represent at least fifty percent (50%) of the eligible voting members of the parish. The actual voting process will begin with a general announcement of the issue at all masses one week before the actual vote is to occur; mention will also be positioned in the bulletin. At the following week's masses, a ballot representing the issue will be passed out among the congregation; these will be completed, signed and collected before the mass's end. The ad hoc committee will be in charge of counting the ballots, recording the appropriate names to insure accuracy and releasing the final information to both the pastor and Council president. The result will be announced at the following week's masses with a written account of the result published in the parish bulletin.

2. The pastor has veto power over the referendum.

ARTICLE X. IMPLEMENTATION AND AMENDING OF THE CONSTITUTION

With a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the current Council, this Constitution becomes effective and supersedes all other Constitutions and/or guidelines currently in effect. Any and all revisions, changes or amendments to this Constitution can only occur with a three-fourths (3/4) vote of Council.

A.J. Geraci
John B. Vaughey
Charles Sieberich
James Schwatmer
Samuel J. J. J. J.
Dennis J. Warnock
Florence Tuerst

This document was approved by Parish Council 3/2/89
 Date

Signatures of Present Council:

Jack E. Beneschlein
[Signature]
Joanne Macey
Thelma E. Johnson

2/5/91

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

COMMITTEE: Fred Lange, Dottie Grogan, Dan Niese

The committee gives the following choices:

This constitution can be amended by:

- 1. A motion to strike "9" under "B" of Article III, "Membership and Qualifications" and inserting

C. RESTRICTIONS

A parishioner who holds an administrative, staff or project implementing position in the parish, paid or volunteer, is not eligible to serve as a member of Parish Council.

If a member of Council should take one of the above positions after he/she has been installed as a Council member, he/she may serve, in an emergency situation only, for one month, during which time, he/she will be replaced from the pool of names held from the previous drawing.

- 2. A motion to strike "administrative post or" from "9." under "B" of Article III, "Membership and Qualifications" and inserting

C. RESTRICTIONS

(as given above but striking "or project implementing")

- 3. Adding Article XI which would state:

This amendment was presented to Council and passed by a 2/3 vote, and will take effect as of, _____.

RESTRICTIONS TO MEMBERSHIP

A parishioner who holds an administrative or staff position in the parish, paid or volunteer, is not eligible to serve as a member of Parish Council.

If a member of Council should take one of the above positions after he/she has been installed as a Council member, he/she may serve, in an emergency situation only, for one month, during which time, he/she will be replaced from the pool of names held from the previous drawing.

The committee recommends the adoption of "3."

Copies to P.C. members 3/1/91