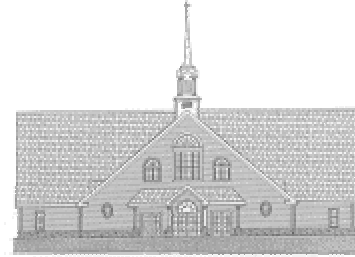


**St. Francis of Assisi Pastoral Council
By-Laws
Belchertown, MA 01007**



Parish Mission Statement

St. Francis of Assisi Parish is a Roman Catholic Community of Faith centered on the active celebration of the Eucharist. We are dedicated to meeting the needs of our growing community. We strive to educate our membership in the faith and to respond to the needs of others, particularly the hungry, both spiritually and physically. We seek to be a unified parish family, bearing witness, in all we say and do, to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. Name.

1.1 The name of this Executive Organization shall be the St. Francis of Assisi Pastoral Council (hereafter " Pastoral Council").

2. Purpose.

2.1 The primary purpose of the Pastoral Council, in a shared relationship with the Pastor, shall be to establish and administer the Parish By-laws and actively promote the Parish Mission Statement to the Parish members and organizations. The Pastoral Council will assist the pastor in his leadership role of planning, organizing, initiating, promoting, coordinating and reviewing the evangelization, worship, religious education and service activities within the Parish.

3. Authority.

3.1 The Pastoral Council has specific authority to establish and enforce parish policies and procedures, monitor the performance of the Parish Standing Organizations, and work in close collaboration with St. Francis of Assisi's Pastor advising in matters of parish ministry.

4. Objectives.

- 4.1 As an executive body of the parish reporting directly to the Pastor, the Pastoral Council is responsible to establish and implement both short-term and long-term parish goals and objectives which will promote the common good of the parish, within the following framework:
 - 4.1.1 The Pastoral Council shall share and emulate the same parish concerns and ministry as the Pastor.
 - 4.1.2 The Pastoral Council shall provide a medium whereby all members of the parish may express their views on all spiritual and temporal matters of the parish.
 - 4.1.3 The Pastoral Council shall engage its members and Parish Organizations to initiate and evaluate programs and activities, develop and revise policies that promote the general well-being of all the people of the parish, and proclaim the Good News of God's kingdom present among us.
 - 4.1.4 The Pastoral Council shall operate within the broader framework and policies of the Diocese of Springfield.

5. Membership Eligibility.

- 5.1 Membership of the Pastoral Council shall consist of:
 - 5.1.2 Ex-officio members:
 - 5.1.2.1 All members of the parish ministerial staff, in St. Francis of Assisi Church, as deemed appropriate by the Pastor. These members generally would differ from the Pastoral Council in that they would deal with more daily, operational and/or administrative-type issues rather than the overview, visioning and planning concerns of a Pastoral Council. These members would need to inform and be informed by the Pastoral Council's work so as not to be at odds with it. The Pastor/Council Chair would provide the necessary linkage. The Pastoral Council, however, is the required leadership group for the parish.
 - 5.1.2.1.1 These are non-voting members of the Council.
- 5.2 Selected and appointed members with the following qualifications.
 - 5.2.1 Be registered in the parish.

- 5.2.2 Have demonstrated a commitment to the parish community.
 - 5.2.3 Be in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church.
 - 5.2.4 Be 18 years of age or older.
 - 5.2.4.1 The Council reserves the right to call upon the youth of the parish in matters pertaining to them.
 - 5.2.5 Have completed Confirmation or be in the process of preparation for and completion of Confirmation.
 - 5.2.6 Commit themselves to attending and participating in Christian formation as part of the Christian leadership process and understanding the parish role of laity.
 - 5.2.7 Be willing to commit the necessary time and energy to offer effective consultation.
 - 5.2.8 Be determined and discerned by the parish community.
 - 5.2.9 Serve on Pastoral Council only and not simultaneously on the Finance Council.
 - 5.2.10 Serve only on Pastoral Council and not be an employee of the Parish.
 - 5.2.11 The number of appointed members shall not exceed one quarter of the elected membership.
- 5.3 Selection Process.
- 5.3.1 Nominations, selections, and installations will take place in the months of September, October and November.
 - 5.3.2 The process will follow this basic timeline, with adjustments made by one to two weeks as necessary to accommodate other parish events (such as All Saints Day, Advent, etc.):
 - 5.3.2.1 At the September Pastoral Council meeting, the Council Chair and Co-Chair will be nominated and elected from the current council.
 - 5.3.2.2 At a time to be determined, announcement of nominations will be made to the parish.

- 5.3.2.3 After the above time, nomination ballots distributed at all Masses.
- 5.3.2.4 (Deleted)
- 5.3.2.5 (Deleted)
- 5.3.2.6 (Deleted)
- 5.3.2.7 First week of December, at December Pastoral Council meeting, will be an assembly of all accepted Commission members.
- 5.3.2.8 It will be the responsibility of each Commission to elect the Chair and the Co-Chair prior to the January Pastoral Council meeting for commissioning in January.
- 5.3.3 The Pastoral Council Chair, Co-Chair and Secretary will be nominated from the current Council. If there is a single nominee for a position, a voice vote/approval of the nomination will suffice. If there are multiple nominations for a position, then a paper ballot vote should be taken and tallied.
- 5.3.4 Nominations for Commission representatives will be solicited for balloting. After a person has been nominated, a courtesy call will be made to determine if the person wishes to accept the nomination. The Pastor will review the list of nominees to determine their eligibility.
- 5.3.5 Council is comprised of Commission Chairs and Co-chairs to serve a minimum of two years and a maximum of six years. However, if both positions for a single Commission are filled in the same year, then one elected representative will serve two (2) years and the other will serve three (3) years so as to off-set the end date of the two positions.

6. Commissions.

- 6.1 The Pastoral Council shall be comprised of six (6) basic Commissions which will have two (2) elected voting members. Additional Commissions may be added as deemed necessary.
 - 6.1.1 The Chairperson of each commission shall be one of the elected members.

- 6.1.2 In principle, the incoming elected member will begin as co-chair; the continuing elected member will be chair and will be able to serve as mentor.
- 6.1.3 In cases where both elected members are incoming simultaneously, they shall be mutually responsible to determine chair and co-chair roles.
- 6.2 The basic commissions will be Spiritual Life, Family Life, Communications, Hospitality, Vocations, and Marriage Enrichment. Other Commissions may be established as needed. Each Commission may have unlimited members of the parish who have a desire to support and assist. These members will be non-voting members of the Pastoral Council.
- 6.3 Other long-standing Committees and organizations as well as Ad Hoc Committees that attend to short-term situations in the parish need to be connected through information and accountability to the Pastoral Council. Periodically representatives of these committees and organizations should meet with the Pastoral Council both to inform the Council of their work and their concerns and to learn from the Council how each ministry fits into the overall vision of the parish. This kind of meeting could be held once or twice a year to offer all in leadership positions an opportunity what others are doing in and for the parish and the community to carry forth the mission of St. Francis of Assisi Church.
- 6.4 The Spiritual Life Commission seeks to provide direction, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to promote growth and development of the parish faith life in our diverse community. Meaningful and prayerful celebration of the Sacraments will foster the devotional and prayer life of the members of the parish community.
 - 6.4.1 The Spiritual Life Commission is responsible for planning, coordinating and evaluating parish prayer and worship. This commission will promote programs which will enhance the spiritual well being of the parishioners, remembering the Eucharist is the focal point of parish life.
- 6.5 The Marriage Enrichment Commission will seek to provide opportunities for lifelong learning, and to support our parishioners in their journey of faith through marriage enrichment. It is our hope that the parishioners will develop a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ, grow in knowledge and understanding of Catholic teachings, and embrace the mission of the church to spread the good news.
 - 6.5.1 The Marriage Enrichment Commission has the responsibility of addressing the marriage enrichment needs of the parish community. The

commission will seek to promote opportunities for learning and faith enrichment for all couples.

- 6.6 The Family Life Commission recognizes singles and couples, young and old, advantaged, disadvantaged and others as “family” who exist in, and are affected by, the environment of their community, which can encompass the home, parish, and beyond. The commission deals with those activities that may enhance and promote the dignity and well being of the family and its environment.
 - 6.6.1 The Family Life Commission has the responsibility to manage a variety of programs within the parish. These programs include but are not limited to, the food pantry, Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) basketball program, Belchertown Crop Walk, neighborhood gatherings, bereavement program, family to family outreach and Christmas ornaments for the Parish tree.
- 6.7 The Hospitality Commission has the responsibility of overseeing and coordinating parish receptions, potlucks, and other social events, so as to offer the community opportunities to grow together in friendship and support.
- 6.8 The Vocations Commission is responsible for inspiring and assisting the parish community in fulfilling the mission of fostering vocations to the ordained ministry and religious life. This goal is accomplished through promotion of parish awareness, organization of prayer campaigns, direct invitation of interested individuals, and outgoing support of those who have chosen to pursue a religious vocation. This committee works in harmony with the Diocesan Vocation Office. They are also responsible for administration of the Vocation Cross program.
- 6.9 The members of the Communications Commission seek to serve God through service to our community, the Parish of St. Francis of Assisi. The commission service takes the form of ensuring that parish members have access to all information and discussions that are essential for a sense of community and active participation in the parish. With the Holy Spirit’s guidance, the parish is invited to join in our parish’s conversation of faith and growth. The commission will share this experience beyond the parish.
 - 6.9.1 The Communications Commission has the responsibility of keeping the parish informed on all phases of the Council and Parish activities through all available means (display boards, parish website, and local media) It is responsible for facilitating communication between the parish and the wider world, sharing the news of parish activities and achievements. It will maintain the Parish Brochure and Welcome Packet for new parishioners. It will maintain and publish the monthly

activity calendar, create posters and advertisements for publicizing parish events. It will oversee the annual Pastoral Council selections.

- 6.10 The commissions are part of and not independent of the Pastoral Council. Therefore before any recommendation is made to the Pastor, the recommendation, when fully developed, shall be submitted to the Council for discussion and approval.

7. Term and Term Limits.

- 7.1 Each member of the Pastoral Council shall serve for a term of either two (2) or three (3) consecutive years, and may serve a maximum of six (6) consecutive years. After a one year break, they may return to the Pastoral Council. Each year of a term starts on the first Tuesday in January and ends the first Tuesday of January of the following year.
- 7.2 The outgoing Pastoral Council will elect from its members a Chair, Co-Chair, and Secretary in September, who will serve for a minimum of one (1) year and a maximum of three (3) years. The Chair, Co-Chair, and Secretary can be re-elected each year for a maximum of three years in this position or the Council six-year term limit, whichever comes first.
- 7.3 The Pastoral Council meets monthly, except in July and August, as well as when called by the Pastor or council leadership. The Pastoral Council is delegated the task of developing, revising and maintaining its own organizational and functional guidelines.
 - 7.3.1 At times, there may be parish leadership days which the Pastoral Council attends for long range planning and goal setting.
- 7.4 In the event a member is unable to complete their term, the Pastor will appoint a parish member to serve until the next Pastoral Council election.

8. Council Leadership.

- 8.1 The Pastor is the Pastoral Council President.
- 8.2 Chairperson shall have the following responsibilities;
 - 8.2.1 Interacts with the pastor for the purpose of setting the agenda for the meetings.
 - 8.2.2 Distributes the agenda to council members before the meeting.

- 8.2.3 Conducts all council meetings.
- 8.2.4 Offers leadership to the council in discerning and serving the needs of the parish community.
- 8.2.5 Communicates as needed with other parish committee chairs.
- 8.2.6 Ensures that Pastoral Council members make full use of available resources and training programs.
- 8.2.7 Delegates any Council correspondence that is necessary for council business.
- 8.2.8 Communicates with absent Council members to ensure regular attendance at meetings.
- 8.2.9 Delegates any of the above duties as he/she deems necessary.
- 8.3. Co-chairperson shall assume all of the above duties in the absence of the Chair, and shall otherwise assist the Chair as requested.
- 8.4 The Recording Secretary will record and supply, to each Council member, a copy of the meeting minutes within two (2) weeks after the most recent monthly meeting.
 - 8.4.1 The Recording Secretary shall submit to the Pastor and Chairperson the approved minutes of each meeting to become part of Pastoral Council permanent record.
 - 8.4.2 Will keep the permanent record of Pastoral Council meetings.
 - 8.4.3 Will ensure minutes and agendas are posted on the parish website so they are readily available to the parish.

9. Organization.

- 9.1 More than half of the voting Pastoral Council members must be present at a meeting to constitute a quorum and transact official business.
- 9.2 The Pastoral Council shall hold regular monthly meetings. The regular time and place will be the first Tuesday of the month in either the Pine Room or the Tovet Meeting Room. On occasion, a change of regular meeting shall be determined at the previous month's meeting. Pastoral Council does not typically meet in July and August.

- 9.3 Pastoral Council meetings are held in an open forum, unless otherwise specified. Non-Pastoral Council members may attend the meetings. They can ask to be added to the agenda and invited to attend the meeting for a specific purpose and/or presentation. Any such invitation must be specifically included in the meeting agenda.
- 9.4 The Pastor and Pastoral Council Chair should meet at least one week to ten days prior to the meeting to set the agenda. They need to keep in mind 1) what work the Council is presently engaged in, 2) what work needs yet to be addressed, and 3) if anything has come up that needs to be brought before the Council because it may affect their work or it may need to be addressed in the parish planning process. Agenda topics will be listed in the order they will be addressed. Topics will be identified as 1) information and/or 2) discussion and/or 3) decision. Usually when a topic is first introduced, the Council will need to gather information and to discuss implications.
- 9.5 Generally the Pastoral Council decisions are made by consensus. In reaching consensus, a motion will be made and affirmed by a second. Discussion will be allowed as required and a voice vote will then be taken. It shall be become the consensus of the entire council once a decision is made. If the council is evenly divided the Chair can table the decision until a later time.

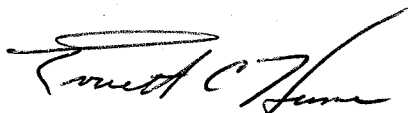
10. Review

- 10.1 These Bylaws will be reviewed and affirmed as needed, but at no time exceed three years.

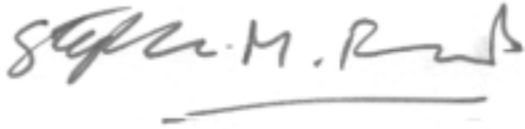
Attested on April 5, 2005:



**Rev. Vernon Decoteau
Pastor**



**Everett Hume
Pastoral Council Chairperson**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephen M. Forrest". The signature is written in dark ink and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

**Affirmed/Revised May 2007 - Stephen Forrest
Pastoral Council Chairperson**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul Pierce". The signature is written in dark ink and ends with a long horizontal flourish.

**Affirmed/Revised May 2010 – Paul Pierce
Pastoral Council Chairperson**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Debra L. Fish". The signature is written in dark ink and is somewhat stylized.

**Amended December 2010 – Debra Fish
Pastoral Council Chairperson**