

**Constitution**  
**of the Pastoral Council of**  
**Holy Family Catholic Community of Middletown**  
**Middletown, Maryland**  
**Revised November, 2012**

## **PREAMBLE**

### **MISSION:**

At Holy Family we believe the Spirit is building a family of families, centered around Eucharist. We strive to be a place of welcome, to live the gospel in service to all, united with the Universal Church.

## **ARTICLE I: NAME**

### **Section 1:**

This Pastoral Council will be known as the Holy Family Catholic Community Pastoral Council, Middletown, Maryland.

### **Section 2:**

The principal address of the council will be:

Holy Family Catholic Community  
7321 Burkittsville Road,  
Middletown, Maryland, 21769

## **ARTICLE II: ROLE**

### **Section 1:**

The role of Holy Family Catholic Community Pastoral Council is to represent our families and serve as a collaborative and consultative body in support of our Pastor. With the Pastor, the Council should define and measure the life and mission of the Church in the Parish as follows:

1. To provide and promote an open and honest forum of communication and dialogue regarding parish affairs among pastor, Pastoral Council, staff, ministry chairs, and parishioners;
2. To consult with and make recommendations to the Pastor regarding issues and pending decisions that significantly affect how the Mission and Vision of the Parish are carried out in areas such as liturgy, outreach, faith formation, education, stewardship, finance and administration;
3. To develop, implement and periodically (at least once every two years) assess and update a Parish Strategic Plan that has as its purpose implementation of the Mission and Vision of the Parish in areas such as liturgy, outreach, faith formation, education, stewardship, finance and administration;
4. To review periodically the appropriateness and applicability of the Mission and Vision Statements to address changes in the constituency and needs of the Parish and the surrounding community;
5. To review annually the activities of the parish, evaluate how those activities fulfill the mission statement, and present the results to the parish;

6. To consult with and make recommendations to the Pastor in setting broad policy directions for the Parish, while the pastor is encouraged to keep the Pastoral Council informed of pending policy changes;
7. To encourage actively vigorous and effective volunteerism and participation in the life of the Parish. The Council will encourage committees to develop participatory committee organizational models that promote successful participation and leadership by committee members;
8. To collaborate and communicate with other religious and civic groups in working for the common good of the community.

#### **Section 2:**

The responsibilities and commitment of council members will be as follows:

1. Represent the parish and communicate parishioner concerns to the Pastoral Council through active listening and presence at parish functions.
2. Participate in consultative role to the pastor through active study and preparation;
3. Participate in planning and execution of, attend and assist as needed with parish events;
4. Attend weekly mass on a regular basis;
5. Attend all council meetings and workshops;

## **ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Section 1:**

The Pastoral Council will consist of the Pastor and 13 members. Six are elected from the parish at large; six are appointed by the pastor and the Youth Representative is appointed by the pastor after consultation with the Coordinator of Youth Ministry.

#### **Section 2:**

Appointed members of the Pastoral Council, with the exception of the Youth Representative, shall be appointed for a three year term by the Pastor. These appointments will be reviewed annually can be rescinded at any time at the discretion of the pastor. These appointments will be coordinated with the timing of parish Pastoral Council elections. Appointees may be reappointed once. The Youth Representative will be a member of the junior class in high school who will be appointed to start in December of his or her Junior year to serve for one calendar year (until the end December of his or her Senior year).

#### **Section 3:**

Parish Representatives are to be elected by the parish at large for a term of three years, with their term beginning at the first Pastoral Council meeting of the new calendar year following their election. Elections will be held annually. (See Article VI: Elections). The elected Parish Representatives may serve a second consecutive term if re-elected. The Pastor may determine that elections need to be held on a schedule outside of the process described above and will determine the terms of elected members to achieve the intent of the “normal cycle” of parish elections.

#### **Section 4:**

The members of the Parish Council as of the date of adoption shall remain in place until the newly appointed and elected members are sworn in.

#### **Section 5:**

All members of the Council, whether elected or appointed, shall have an equal voice in Council discussions, deliberations, and development of recommendations. To promote equal participation, all

members of the Pastoral Council will be provided with copies of all written materials related to the Council deliberations and discussions.

**Section 6:**

Should the Pastor determine that a Council member has developed a lack of interest and commitment, as demonstrated, for example, by many missed meetings without explanation, the Pastor may excuse the member. The Pastor may appoint a new member to fill the remainder of the term of the excused member.

**Section 7:**

Any member who chooses to resign may do so by submitting a letter of resignation to the Pastor. The Pastor may appoint a new member to fill the remaining term of the resigned member.

## **ARTICLE IV: LEADERSHIP**

**Section 1:**

The Pastoral Council shall have an Executive Committee composed of the Pastor, Pastoral Council Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. The purpose of the Executive Committee is to plan and create agendas, coordinating information for the Pastoral Council meetings, and other tasks intended to facilitate the work of the Pastoral Council. Executive Committee meetings are not to be a substitute for Pastoral Council meetings.

**Section 2:**

The Pastor shall appoint the Council Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary prior to the Council's first meeting after an election. The term of the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary is one year and can be renewed for one year by the Pastor.

**Section 3:**

The Council Chair will prepare agendas for and conduct meetings of the Executive Committee and the Council, represents the Parish and Council as necessary and appropriate, and implements the directives of the Council.

**Section 4:**

The Council Vice-Chair will assist the Chair in the execution of his/her duties; perform the duties of the Chair in the Chair's absence; and if necessary, assume the office of Chair should it become vacant.

**Section 5:**

Duties of the Secretary shall consist of the administrative needs of the Pastoral Council (e.g.; take minutes, draft and disperse minutes, meeting notices, agendas and related meeting materials to Council members, draft reports to the Parish concerning Council meetings and business (subject to the approval of the pastor and the Council Chair), maintain the records of the Council and Executive Committees, including, but not limited to, minutes, agendas, committee reports, resource materials, etc.). The Secretary shall attend to other administrative tasks as may be necessary. The Secretary shall have the support of church office staff as necessary to carry out these duties.

**Section 6:**

Should the office of the Chair become vacant, the Vice-Chair will move to the Chair position. Should the office of the Vice-Chair become vacant at any time, the Pastor will appoint another Vice-Chair. The Pastor shall define the terms of appointments to these leadership positions that are made out of the normal sequence.

## **ARTICLE V: MEETINGS**

### **Section 1:**

Regular Council meetings will be held the first Tuesday of each month and begin at 7:30 p.m. and end by 9:00 p.m. Additional Council meetings may be called by the Pastor and/or by the Executive Committee based on their assessment of need for additional meetings that may include, but not limited to: the Pastor's desire to consult with the Council, significant needs or issues arising that impact the parish, or other pastoral needs that may arise.

### **Section 2:**

The Secretary will be responsible to ensure notice of Pastoral Council regular and special meetings are published in the Sunday bulletin at least one weekend prior to the meeting itself. The intent of publishing the dates and times of the Council meetings is to promote interest and involvement among the parish community.

### **Section 3:**

At least one member of the Executive Committee must be present to hold a Council meeting.

### **Section 4:**

Any parishioner of Holy Family Catholic Community may attend a Council meeting to raise an issue. This will be limited to the first 15 minutes of the scheduled meeting. Anyone wishing to do so must:

1. Contact the Council Chair at [pastoralcouncil@hfccmd.org](mailto:pastoralcouncil@hfccmd.org) or (301)473-4800 one week prior to the meeting to discuss the purpose for their attendance;
2. The Council Chair and the parishioner seeking to address the Council shall come to a mutual agreement regarding how to present the issue of concern at the meeting.

### **Section 5:**

If it becomes necessary to discuss confidential or sensitive topics, any member of the Pastoral Council can request a closed session. The Chair will move the meeting into closed session after all other business is completed. At this time, any guests will be asked to leave.

### **Section 6:**

Pastoral Council recommendations to the pastor shall be made after full discussion of the issue(s). All members of the Council will be urged to express his or her views regarding an issue under discussion, and all shall be encouraged to come to a consensus decision. If consensus is not achieved, a majority and minority position shall be conveyed to the Pastor for his consideration.

### **Section 7:**

Since the purpose of the Pastoral Council is consultative to the pastor, those participating in the deliberations should seek to achieve consensus keeping in mind that the Council is a collaborative, collegial, and pastoral body serving the entire parish.

## **ARTICLE VI: ELECTIONS**

### **Section 1:**

Any registered member of Holy Family Catholic Community in good standing, who is Catholic, and has received the Sacrament of Confirmation will be eligible for election to the Pastoral Council.

### **Section 2:**

Any registered and confirmed member of the Parish will be eligible to vote in such elections.

**Section 3:**

Parish elections will held annually in November. New members, either elected or appointed will gather with outgoing members in December prior to beginning their terms. Exceptions to this prescribed schedule of elections may be made by the Pastor, as need arises (see Article 3: Membership.)

**Section 4:**

The Pastoral Council shall appoint an ad-hoc Election Committee three months prior to each parish election. The purpose of the Election committee is to:

- Publicize the upcoming election in the Sunday bulletin, posters, etc.,
- Identify prospective candidates,
- Coordinate candidate nominations by the parishioners,
- Collect candidate information,
- Develop a format for candidate summaries and ensure that summaries are placed in the bulletin one week prior to the election,
- Conduct the election, and
- Inform the Executive Committee of the election results.

The Election Committee shall cease to exist upon completion of its responsibilities.

**Section 5:**

Those candidates receiving the highest number of votes from the parish at large will be elected Parish Representatives.

**Section 6:**

The Council Chair, after being informed of the election results shall:

- Contact the candidates and inform them of the election results.
- Inform the newly elected representatives of details for upcoming meetings and provide them with appropriate background materials (schedules, meeting minutes, etc.).
- Ensure that the names of the newly elected Pastoral Council members are published in the church bulletin the weekend following the election.

**Section 7:**

Elected Parish Representatives shall serve for three years and may seek re-election once for a total of two consecutive terms (six years). A former Elected Representative that has served two terms may run for office again after leaving the Council for three years.

**Section 8:**

Should a Parish Representative leave office prior to expiration of their term for which they were elected, the Pastor will make an appointment of an eligible parishioner to fill the remainder of the term.

**Section 9:**

The Pastor is encouraged to recognize and introduce the Pastoral Council each January at a designated Mass.

## **ARTICLE VII: MINISTRY COORDINATION**

### **Section 1:**

The standing committees or the Pastoral Council shall be:

- (1) Liturgy/Worship,
- (2) Evangelization /Catechesis,
- (3) Outreach and Social Justice,
- (4) Parish Development and Support

All committees and ministries are accountable to the Council. Each of the Standing Committees shall have a chairperson and a parish staff contact. Parish Staff shall not serve as chairperson for any committee.

## **ARTICLE VIII: THE CHARTER OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL**

### **Section 1:**

This Constitution will become effective immediately upon adoption by the Pastor and the members of the council.

### **Section 2:**

Once the Constitution is adopted, any amendment must be submitted to a regular meeting of the Pastoral Council in writing. It will be placed on the agenda for discussion at the next regular meeting of the Council. A recommendation will be made to the Pastor as to the acceptability of the amendment. If the Pastor and Pastoral Council both accept the amendment, it shall be added to the Constitution. The Secretary shall provide copies of the revised/ updated Constitution to all Council members.