

St. Michael Catholic Community (Sterling Heights, MI)

Parish Pastoral Council – Operational Procedures

Effective Date: September 1, 2015

Version #:1.0

Mission Statement:

St. Michael Catholic Community is a welcoming parish where people come together to worship, learn and grow in faith. Through our actions, we demonstrate our beliefs in fellowship, service and generous tithing of time, talent and treasure. We care for one another and receive comfort and support in our own time of need. All are encouraged to participate in the journey to live by Christ's example and build the Kingdom of God.

Purpose and Responsibilities of the Parish Pastoral Council

The Parish Pastoral Council (Pastoral Council) is a leadership body serving in communion with God, the Church, and the pastor to carry out the mission of the Church. The Pastoral Council works in cooperation with the pastor, Parish Finance Council and total parish to set policy, and establish goals, objectives and action plans. The Pastoral Council will put forth its best efforts to discover and utilize the talents and abilities of parishioners for the benefit of the Parish Community.

A. The first responsibility of the Pastoral Council is to actively engage in ongoing renewal through prayer, study, listening, and dialogue. We are a leadership body engaged with our pastor in discerning the ways God is speaking to this community in this time and place. For our actions to be guided with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, they must begin with prayer and enrichment, followed by listening to one another in faith and love and listening to the larger community of parishioners in similar faith and love, and end again in prayer.

B. Pastoral Council, acting in the interest of the entire parish, shall set the goals and direction of the parish, both for the short term and long term. The objectives of the Commissions, the views of the people, the needs of the community, and the policies of the Archdiocese of Detroit (AOD) shall be given due consideration when establishing these goals.

C. Pastoral Council shall provide appropriate support to the Commissions as they strive to achieve their objectives.

D. The work and decisions of the Commissions shall be honored. If differences

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arise between the Pastoral Council and a Commission, the final decision should be reached through recommendations and full discussion, rather than through the arbitrary action of the Pastoral Council. The Pastoral Council should act in the spirit of service and, by its example and leadership, foster the growth of faith and love in the entire Community.

E. Pastoral Council will interact with and support the Vicariate Pastoral Council by appointing a representative to serve as a liaison.

Structure of the Parish Pastoral Council

Eligibility

Pastoral Council members should meet the following criteria:

- Fully initiated, active, practicing Catholic in good standing and a parish member for not less than one (1) year.
- Equipped with the gifts or charisms necessary for serving in this capacity, with a reputation for integrity.
- Able to work in groups.
- Prayerful with an awareness of God being active in one's life.
- Open to the Spirit, to spiritual growth, and being formed in the evangelizing mission of the Church.
- Capable of relating to people from varied social, economic and ethnic backgrounds, with an ability to listen to the needs of the people.
- Not a member of parish staff (with the exception of priests, deacons and lay Pastoral Associate).

If necessary, the following situations must be addressed:

- If a potential council member is related to the pastor, associate pastor(s), assigned parish deacon(s) or parish staff, this information is to be publically acknowledged and discussed by the current Pastoral Council membership before selection/election/appointment takes place.
- Potential members serving on the same council or commission should not be related by blood or marriage, if so, this information is to be publically acknowledged and discussed by the current Pastoral Council membership before selection/election/appointment takes place.

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Finally, before individuals are commissioned for the Pastoral Council, they must experience an orientation to the role of the Pastoral Council, have an understanding of the parish mission statement, and be open to ongoing formation.

Membership

The size of the Pastoral Council should be between 20 - 25 members, consisting of:

- The pastor and associate pastor(s)
- A parish deacon and lay Pastoral Associate
- Twelve members nominated from the selection/election process (from the parish at-large).
- A spokesperson from each commission (Christian Service, Education, Stewardship and Worship) and the Evangelization Committee
- A Vicariate Pastoral Council representative appointed by the pastor
- A youth representative appointed by the Youth Minister. There is no minimum age requirement for this position; however, the person must be fully initiated.

Terms of Membership

- Selected members will serve a three (3) year term.
- Term of office begins on July 1 of the calendar year and ends on June 30 of the next calendar year.
- The pastor and associate pastor(s) assigned to the parish serve for the duration of their diocesan appointment(s). The deacon serves at the discretion of the pastor.
- Full-time staff members will serve as a resource for the duration of employment by the parish.
- No parishioner may serve more than one (1) full term as a Pastoral Council member in any capacity, but may serve again after a period of three (3) years.

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Selection of Parish Pastoral Council Members

- Pastoral Council is responsible for executing the Pastoral Council Selection Process to the Parish-at-large. See Appendix A for Pastoral Council Communication and Selection Process.
- Parish-at-large shall be responsible for nominations forty-five (45) days prior to selection of members. The Pastoral Council leadership shall contact nominees to validate acceptance of their nomination and prepare names to be chosen by lot on Pentecost Sunday.
- Selected members will be commissioned following their selection and orientation.

Attendance

- Members of the Pastoral Council are expected to attend all regular and special meetings.
- Members of the Pastoral Council are expected to attend parish functions where Pastoral Council presence is required, as determined by the Pastoral Council.
- If a member is absent from three regular meetings in a year (July 1 through June 30), the Pastoral Council officers will approach that member about his/her intention and ability to serve. If the Pastoral Council cannot receive assurances pertaining to regular attendance, the Pastoral Council will declare that a vacancy is automatically created.
- In the case of behavior that results in public scandal, the pastor may remove a member.

Vacancies

- A vacancy on the Pastoral Council of an at-large member shall be filled by a special election only if at-large membership falls below nine members. Such person shall serve the remainder of the unexpired term of the person who is replaced and shall be eligible to seek re-nomination at the end of the term.
- Whenever a vacancy exists, the Pastoral Council vice-chairperson will contact the remaining candidates who were not selected from the last selection draw, in order of their finish, to determine if that person is still eligible, willing and qualified to fill the Pastoral Council vacancy and if so,

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- that person will be appointed by the Pastoral Council to fill the remainder of the term of the vacant seat on the Pastoral Council.
- If none of the remaining candidates are eligible or willing to act, then, as the first order of business at the next regular meeting, the Pastoral Council will accept nominations to serve out the unexpired term. Pastoral Council will then select the new member from the nominations by lot.
 - If the vacancy concerns a commission representative, the appropriate commission is to designate the replacement.
 - If a Pastoral Council officer vacancy occurs, the Pastoral Council shall elect a new officer from the current membership at the next meeting following the vacancy.

Ending Membership

- Every effort should be made to resolve conflicts in a manner that shows respect and consideration for all concerned. In the unlikely event that such efforts meet with failure, a full consensus of the Pastoral Council is required to remove any member or officer of the Pastoral Council, or any commission or committee. The person is to be given an opportunity to be heard, if they so desire.
- A member loses his or her seat on the Pastoral Council by resignation in writing, withdrawing from parish membership, by incurring an ecclesiastical censure or penalty, or committing a civil offense, which necessitates the loss of membership.

Leadership of the Parish Pastoral Council

- The Pastoral Council will elect from among its members the following:
 - Chairperson
 - Vice-Chairperson
 - Secretary
- The choice of the chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary is to be done in a spirit of prayer so as to discern the persons with the gifts needed to carry out the responsibilities of each role.
- Election of officers shall be held at the first regularly scheduled meeting following the annual at-large member selection. Separate nominations and elections shall be held for the positions of Vice-Chair and Secretary, with nominations to be made from the floor and election by secret ballot.

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- Failure to be elected to one office shall not bar a member from being nominated for another office. A simple majority is required for election.
- The Vice-Chair of the Pastoral Council shall be elected by the Pastoral Council members at the first Pastoral Council meeting following the annual at-large member selection. Only the at-large members serving their second year on the Pastoral Council shall be eligible for this office. The term of office shall be for one year, after which the Vice-Chair shall become the Chairperson.
 - The Secretary of the Pastoral Council shall be elected by the Pastoral Council members at the first Pastoral Council meeting following the annual at-large member selection. All at-large members are eligible to hold this position. The term of office shall be for one year, beginning July 1 through June 30 of the subsequent year. The same member may be elected Secretary each year of his/her term.

Responsibilities of the Parish Pastoral Leadership

Chairperson:

- The Chairperson will work with the pastor to enliven the Pastoral Council and assist Pastoral Council members to actively collaborate for the mission of the Church. The Chairperson tends to the organizational aspects of the Pastoral Council and facilitates all meetings of the Pastoral Council. The Chairperson needs to have an understanding of group process and have facilitating skills in order to fulfill this role. The suggested duties may include:
 - Provide significant time for prayer and reflection to ground each meeting in a climate of faith.
 - Preside at the Agenda Setting Committee meeting.
 - Preside at all regular and special Pastoral Council meetings.
 - Monitor the timeframe for each agenda item.
 - Encourage all Pastoral Council members to participate actively and express ideas freely.
 - Assist discussion by restating, summarizing, contrasting ideas and sentiments expressed by Pastoral Council members.
 - Clarify Pastoral Council procedures.
 - Schedule periodic parish surveys or assessments in order to update parish plan and vision, minimally every five to six years and after a new pastor is assigned.

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- Establish processes for evaluation of Pastoral Council's and parish's effectiveness in meeting of goals and objectives formulated from parish assessment.
- Encourage and support communications between the Pastoral Council and the parishioners, such as publishing short notes in the bulletin on the activities of the Pastoral Council and commissions, publishing the names of Pastoral Council members in the bulletin, etc.
- Encourage and support communications between the Pastoral Council and the commissions and their committees.

Vice-Chairperson:

- The Vice-Chairperson performs the duties of the Chairperson in the latter's absence, and serves as an aide to the Chairperson in conducting the Pastoral Council's work.
- The Vice-Chairperson serves on the Agenda Setting Committee.
- The Vice-Chairperson will succeed to the office of Chairperson should the Chairperson be unable to continue in office or if the office becomes vacant. In the event this occurs, a new Vice-Chairperson will then be elected for the remainder of the term.

Secretary:

- Provide a record of the minutes of the regular and special meetings. (Recording of minutes during the meeting may limit the secretary's ability to participate in discussion. Therefore, a person who is not a Pastoral Council member may be requested to perform this service for the Pastoral Council).
- Maintain a roster of the members and records of attendance.
- Notify the Chairperson of those members with chronic absenteeism (ex: missing three regular meetings in a 12-month period).
- Arrange for the necessary physical requirements (halls, rooms, tables, chairs, etc.) for the regular and special meetings, and activities of the Pastoral Council.
- Update Pastoral Council documents.
- Distribute information and correspondence to Pastoral Council members as directed and care for the necessary correspondence in the following manner:
 - Receive and file all Pastoral Council business correspondence.

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- Make known all Pastoral Council correspondence under the proper meeting procedure.
- Attend to correspondence as delegated by the Pastoral Council Chairperson.
- Keep on file careful records of the Pastoral Council's history, development, minutes, decisions, and names of leaders
- Maintaining a permanent record of all proposals presented to the Pastoral Council, and recording the ultimate disposal of such proposals.
- Ensuring that the records of Pastoral Council activities are maintained on file in the Parish Offices.
- Being responsible for maintaining a current copy of the Parish Pastoral Council Operational Procedures.

Meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council

- Pastoral Council meetings will occur monthly, but no less than eight times per year, on the first Tuesday of the month. A thoughtfully prepared agenda should facilitate the ongoing formation of the Pastoral Council through prayer, study/reflection, sharing, business, and evaluation. Meetings should not exceed two hours.
- The Pastoral Council shall meet September through June of each calendar year, with the exception of the month of January.
- Meetings cancelled due to weather or unforeseen circumstances shall be rescheduled within that month. No more than one meeting per calendar year can be cancelled and not rescheduled.
- Pastoral Council meetings are open to all parishioners, at the discretion of the Pastor.
- Notices of all meetings, including agenda, shall be published in the parish paper one week in advance.
- A report of all regular Pastoral Council meetings shall be published on the parish website or printed copies available upon request.
- Special meetings of the Pastoral Council may be called by the Chairperson or the pastor on three (3) days' notice to each Pastoral Council member, given personally or by mail, telephone or email, in which the notice shall state the time, place, and purpose of the meeting.
- The Pastoral Council should discern by way of consensus. Members strive to reach substantial, though not necessarily unanimous, agreement on all matters of direction and policy. A consensus exists when there is a clear

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- alternative to which most members can subscribe and if those who oppose it have had their chance to influence the discussion.
- Pastoral Council members or parishioners wishing to submit items for the Pastoral Council agenda should contact the Pastoral Council Secretary, who will present the request at the Agenda Setting Committee meeting. The deadline for submitting items to the Pastoral Council Secretary is two weeks prior to the scheduled Pastoral Council meeting.
 - All decisions of the Pastoral Council shall be reached by consensus of the quorum present. A simple majority of the Pastoral Council members shall constitute a quorum.
 - Decisions of the Pastoral Council will be final, only by consent and approval of the pastor.
 - An Agenda Setting Committee will prepare the agenda for each Pastoral Council meeting. This committee consists of the pastor and the Pastoral Council Chairperson, Vice-chairperson and Secretary, who prepare the Pastoral Council agenda, plan the meeting and prepare processes to accomplish the agenda. The Agenda Setting Committee shall meet and complete the agenda one week prior to the Pastoral Council meeting date. See Appendix B for agenda guidelines.
 - Required Pastoral Council Agenda items: Every meeting should include time for prayer and formation, focusing on Church teachings, Scripture, or articles that pertain to the work of the Pastoral Council. These two elements, prayer and formation, are key to successful ministry. The prayer and formation segment of the meeting should be at least 15 minutes in length to allow adequate time for reflection, processing and discussion.

Commissions

Names:

The following Commissions and Committees will exist to accomplish the goals set forth by the Pastoral Council:

Christian Education Commission
Christian Service Commission
Stewardship Commission
Worship Commission
Evangelization Committee

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The overall work of the Commissions is to:

- Develop concrete objectives flowing from the parish mission statement and any goals established by the Parish Pastoral Council.
- Integrate the work of evangelization into all of its activities.
- Ascertain and implement policies of the Archdiocese.
- Participate in formation opportunities both within its own meetings and those offered at the vicariate, regional and Archdiocesan levels.
- Establish ways to gain feedback from parish members, in order to investigate the needs of their own areas of concern in parish life and to make recommendations to the Pastoral Council on meeting these needs.
- Report regularly, and provide annual evaluations on objectives, to the Parish Pastoral Council.

Commissions are encouraged to establish committees to help carry out their work and as a way to involve more members of the parish community in the work of the commission.

Committee members do not have to be members of the commission. Both ad hoc and standing committees can be useful. Ad hoc committees can be of any size, are focused on a specific task, and usually have a definite completion date. Standing committees can have more stable membership and take on some of the larger, ongoing tasks of commissions.

Functions

The vision of the Pastoral Council is integrated into the parish's ongoing activities through key areas of parish life. The Commissions and Committees reflect those key areas. Each Commission and Committee has a specific purpose/function as described below.

- The **Christian Education Commission** assists, promotes and supports parishioners in understanding that the entire parish communion has responsibility for participating in the evangelization and teaching mission of Jesus entrusted to the Church. The commission's responsibilities include developing, promoting and evaluating programs that address all aspects of education and evangelization, in cooperation with archdiocesan and parish staffs. The Christian Education Commission is responsible for seeing that the parish communion's teaching mission is addressed in

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- ways that assist each individual to grow in faith throughout their life. Through the commission's committees, it determines programs that promote and support total parish education and formation. The commission supports the parish professional staff in working toward that goal.
- The **Christian Service Commission** exists as a model and resource of Catholic social teaching to enable the entire parish communion to put the social teaching of the Church into action. The Commission empowers the members of the parish to fulfill the Church's mission of love, justice, freedom and peace under the mantle of evangelization by communally responding, in an organized way, to societal and individual needs. The commission creates and/or promotes programs that strive to address human needs and achieve justice whether locally or in the broader communities of vicariate, region, Archdiocese, state, nation and world. The Christian Service Commission actualizes the social teaching of the Church by fulfilling specific, educational and ministerial, administrative responsibilities.
 - The **Stewardship Commission** is concerned with the promotion of Christian stewardship as a way of life, and how living out our call to discipleship in service to the Church and her members provides a living example by which the spirit of evangelization is witnessed. The Stewardship Commissions functions include:
 - Foster a parish environment in which Christian stewardship as a way of life is understood, accepted and practiced.
 - Develop programs that allow parishioners to discern their God-given skills and talents and how they may be put to use in the ministries of the Church.
 - Develop family finance study programs based on Scripture and The Catechism of the Catholic Church.
 - Encourage parishioners' endowment gifts through distribution of planned giving newsletters, wills awareness seminars and other materials.
 - The **Worship Commission** is responsible for guiding the continuing liturgical renewal of the parish, which is a communion centered on the Eucharist. It serves the parish by providing opportunities for liturgical education, by preparing the liturgical celebrations, and through

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mystagogical reflection evaluating these celebrations. The Worship Commission participates in the call for evangelization by its witness of sharing Christ with others through liturgical worship. In addition, it serves as the liaison for relations with other Christian and non-Christian churches and religious bodies. Since the liturgy is the “source and summit” (SC 11) of Christian life, the Worship Commission needs to be actively and directly connected and concerned with all aspects of parish life, including ecumenism. The Worship Commission collaborates with the Parish Pastoral Council, other parish commissions, the Vicariate Worship Commission, and the Archdiocesan Office for Christian Worship. It develops and establishes objectives to realize and accomplish parish and Archdiocesan goals and ecclesiastical norms in the area of liturgy and parish worship. It proposes and submits its priorities and budget to the Parish Pastoral Council and develops and oversees a program of evaluation of its own work as well as that of parish liturgical life. The primary task of the Worship Commission is in the areas of liturgy and ecumenism. This work includes educational, worship and administrative responsibilities.

- The **Evangelization Committee** serves as a catalyst for the total evangelizing effort in the parish. The committee works directly with the pastor, pastoral staff, Parish Pastoral Council, and the parish commissions to ensure that evangelization is the parish priority and is integrated into all areas of parish life. Please see the AOD Parish, Vicariate and Archdiocesan Councils Handbook, Chapter 5 for detailed information on this Committee’s Purpose, Function and Structure.

Eligibility

Commission members should meet the following criteria:

- Fully initiated, active, practicing Catholic in good standing and a parish member.
- Equipped with the gifts or charisms necessary for serving in this capacity, with a reputation for integrity.
- Able to work in groups.
- Prayerful with an awareness of God being active in one’s life.
- Open to the Spirit, to spiritual growth, and being formed in the evangelizing mission of the Church.

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- Capable of relating to people from varied social, economic and ethnic backgrounds, with an ability to listen to the needs of the people.

Membership of Commissions

Commission Membership

- The pastor and Pastoral Council Chairperson or their appointed delegates shall be ex-officio members of all Commissions.
- The appropriate pastoral staff are to be resources to the commissions and, as necessary or helpful, its committees; staff members may not function as commission or committee chairpersons.
- The commission will choose one member to represent that commission on the Pastoral Council. It is further suggested under this model, that the representative be someone other than the commission chairperson so as not to overwork the chairperson and thus prevent burn out and stagnation. More importantly, this will empower others by creating more opportunities for leadership.
- Each Commission shall select/elect its Pastoral Council representative to a one (1) year term with eligibility for re-selection/election, provided that such members may not serve on the Pastoral Council for more than two (2) consecutive years. A representative may serve again after a period of three (3) years has elapsed.

Terms of Membership on the Commissions

- The pastor or his delegate will serve for the duration of their diocesan appointment(s).
- Full-time staff members will serve for the duration of employment by the parish.
- The individual Commissions will adopt written operating procedures regarding conduct of meetings, length of terms members will serve, reporting responsibilities and similar matters necessary for efficient operation, provided that no provisions within those procedures are inconsistent with this Pastoral Council Operating Procedures.

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Leadership

- Each Commission shall annually select/elect a:
 - chairperson,
 - other necessary officers,
 - one representative to the Pastoral Council.
- Commissions shall notify the Pastoral Council Secretary by June 30 annually with the name of their representative.

Meetings of the Commissions

- The Commissions shall hold regular meetings as determined by their Operating Procedures.
- A Commission report is to be provided monthly to the Pastoral Council. The report is to be submitted to the Pastoral Council Secretary electronically (via email)
- Copies of minutes of all Commission meetings shall be available to the Pastoral Council.

Special Committees

The Pastoral Council may appoint special committees as the need arises, as long as they do not conflict with the roles of other Commissions.

Amendments

- Amendments can be proposed at an annual review of this document.
- At times other than the annual review, changes in the AOD, Parish or environment may require amendments to this document.
- Any member of the Pastoral Council may propose an amendment.
- A proposed amendment(s) shall be in writing and submitted to the Pastoral Council and shall be placed on the agenda for the next regular meeting.
- Voting will be held at the Pastoral Council meeting following the session at which it was first proposed. A two-thirds vote of the total Pastoral Council membership will be necessary to approve the proposed amendment.

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Document Retention

This operational procedure will be retained in accordance with St. Michael Catholic Community parish records retention policy.

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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Periodic Review Due: Annually

VERSION HISTORY

<i>Log of Changes</i>			
<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Change Tracking (New, Errata, Revised)</i>
1.0	8/18/15	Initial procedure created from the former SMCC Parish Council Constitution and Bylaws document.	New

APPROVALS

<i>Review & Approval</i>				
<i>Pastoral Council Approval "Signoff"</i>	<i>Name</i>		<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>
/s/ Fr. Michael Quaine	Fr. Michael Quaine		1.0	10/06/2015

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APPENDIX A – PASTORAL COUNCIL COMMUNICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

This Appendix addresses the process that is used to communicate with the Parish regarding the Pastoral Council nomination and selection process. Some things to consider:

Six weeks prior to Pentecost, publish an article in the Messenger to communicate what the purpose of the Pastoral Council is and what the nomination process consists of. Encourage participation by all in the nomination process.

Pastoral Council leadership is responsible for placing the Pastoral Council Nomination Boxes at each gathering space with a supply of index cards and pens. Boxes will be stored in the parish offices.

Pastoral Council leadership collects the names each week.

Pastoral Council leadership calls each nominee to ascertain their willingness to accept the nomination.

Once nominations are accepted, Pastoral Council Secretary emails a copy of the Operational Procedures to each person who accepts nomination.

Draw names at the 11:30 a.m. Pentecost Mass. The Presiding Priest shall ask a member of the assembly to pull the name. A Pastoral Council leadership team member shall record each name as it is pulled. The first four names pulled will be members of the Pastoral Council. Three additional names will be pulled and recorded in case of unexpected vacancy. Recording of names shall be included in the permanent records of the Pastoral Council.

New Pastoral Council members attend a full orientation held by Pastoral Council leadership, prior to the September meeting. Pastoral Council leadership obtains name badges and distributes them to the new members at this meeting.

New Pastoral Council members are commissioned and introduced to the Parish at the Festival of Ministries weekend in September.

Please see the AOD Parish, Vicariate and Archdiocesan Councils Handbook, Chapter 1 for detailed information on Methods for Selecting Members.

APPENDIX B – AGENDA GUIDELINES

Certain topics should always be included in each agenda:

- Reading of the Mission Statement
- Opening Prayer
- Enrichment/Formation
- Vicariate or Archdiocesan Pastoral Council Report
- Commission Reports
- Old Business
- New Business
- Event Promotion
- Assessment
- Closing Prayer

Please see the AOD Parish, Vicariate and Archdiocesan Councils Handbook, Chapter 2 for a sample agenda format.

There are certain agenda items that must be addressed at specific meetings throughout the year. Some examples are:

- Introduction of New Members which would always occur immediately following the Pentecost election weekend meeting.
- Identify functions requiring Pastoral Council presence. Utilize the Parish Activities Calendar. This should be done at the June or September meeting, depending on the timing of selection of new members at-large.
- Plan for Formation for the year – will one person be responsible, share responsibility, sign-up, etc.
- Snack and Prayer Sign-up should be done at the June or September meeting, depending on the timing of selection of new members at-large.
- Election of Officers is done at the May meeting.
- TBD.

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**APPENDIX C – OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR PASTORAL
COUNCIL LEADERSHIP ROLES**

(TBD)