

**BY-LAWS**  
**IMMACUALTE CONCEPTION PARISH**  
**PASTORAL COUNCIL**

**ARTICLE I: PURPOSE OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL**

The Pastoral Council exists to facilitate the sharing of talents by all members of the faith community. This occurs by means of dialogue within the community; opening up opportunities for both clergy and laity to fully participate in the life of the parish.

The nature of the Pastoral Council is both spiritual and temporal. The Council sets broad goals and policies for the growth and development of the parish, emphasis however is on the spiritual, keeping as a goal the “universal call to holiness.”

The Pastoral Council is a planning board. It does not manage the parish on a day-to-day basis.

**ARTICLE II: PASTORAL COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

The Objectives of the Pastoral Council of Immaculate Conception Parish are:

1. To advise and assist the Pastor and to share in the guidance of the Parish community.
2. To enable each member of the Parish community to minister, thus living out his or her Gospel call.
3. To implement renewal and spiritual growth.
4. To assess the needs of the Parish and to ensure the development of plans to meet those needs.
5. To facilitate communication within the community.
6. Foremost, to strengthen the Parish community’s experience of faith, thus developing its vision and participation in the Mission of the Church.

**ARTICLE III: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL**

The responsibilities of the Pastoral Council are as follows:

1. To become involved in the life and spirit of the Parish, especially in the programs of renewal and spiritual growth; to be first and foremost an example of discipleship.
2. To advise the Pastor on Parish needs and assist in establishing Parish priorities and goals.
3. To encourage parishioner involvement/stewardship in all aspects of Parish life and ministry.

#### **ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP**

The Pastor, Parochial Vicar, Deacon(s,) and the Trustees shall serve as members of the Pastoral Council by virtue of their office, and shall have full voting rights.

There shall normally be nine (9) lay members of the Pastoral Council, in addition to the above members who serve by virtue of their office. These members shall have three (3) year terms. A selected lay-member may serve two three-year terms. At the end of the second three-year term, he or she must take a sabbatical of at least one year, before being eligible for selection again.

In addition, the Pastor may appoint up to three (3) additional members, if in his sole judgment and discretion additional membership is appropriate. Such appointed members shall have such terms as the Pastor shall prescribe, up to a maximum term length of six years.

#### **ARTICLE V: SELECTION OF MEMBERS**

Approximately two weeks before Pentecost each year, the members of the Parish shall be asked to submit the names of any persons, whom they wish to nominate for Pastoral Council membership. Appropriate time shall be given after the homily for this purpose.

The Pastor shall review all the names submitted. The Pastor has the right to remove the name of any individual that he deems inappropriate, based upon prior participation in the faith life of the Parish and adherence to the doctrines and teachings of the Church. The remaining individuals shall be contacted by the Pastor and asked if they are willing to serve, if selected. If a parishioner expresses an unwillingness to serve, his or her name shall be removed from the list.

Prior to Pentecost Sunday, those individuals that are willing to serve will be required to notify the Parish office. Those that are interested in serving will be announced in the bulletin and placed in the pool of nominees for possible selection.

On Pentecost Sunday, the names of all the remaining nominees shall be placed in a suitable container and, after solemnly invoking the guidance of the Holy Spirit in prayer, the Pastor or a parishioner whom the Pastor designates shall draw three (3) names from the container at the weekend Mass. The three (3) names drawn shall be the newly selected members for the three-year terms.

In the event that a vacancy occurs, due to death, incapacity or resignation, the Pastor has the option, at his sole discretion, of leaving the seat vacant, or filling it by appointment, until the next Pentecost. In either event, at the next Pentecost, a person shall be chosen in the above-prescribed manner to fill the remaining term of the seat which became vacant.

## **ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS**

The Pastoral Council shall normally meet monthly with the exception of July and August, typically in the evening of the first Monday of the month. When this meeting schedule is not possible, the Pastoral Council shall meet on a day and time to be designated by the Pastor. A quorum for the conducting of business shall consist of simple majority (greater than 50%) of Council members. A written agenda shall be prepared for each meeting and shall be available to the Pastoral Council members prior to the meeting.

The President of the Pastoral Council shall preside over the meetings. There shall be an executive committee consisting of the Pastor, the President, Vice President and Secretary which shall have the power to set the agenda for the regular meetings and to conduct emergency business of the Pastoral Council, between regular meetings.

## **ARTICLE VII: OFFICERS**

The Pastor shall be the Chairman of the Pastoral Council. There shall also be three (3) elected officers: a President, Vice President and Secretary. Annually at the first meeting following the selection of new Council members on Pentecost Sunday, new officers will be elected by majority vote of the entire Pastoral Council.

The President shall normally preside over Pastoral Council meetings. In his or her absence, the Vice President shall normally preside, and in the absence of both the President and Vice President, the Secretary shall preside.

## **ARTICLE VII: ATTENDANCE**

Pastoral Council members are expected to attend all regularly scheduled meetings.

If a member is unable to attend a scheduled meeting, he or she should contact the Pastor or President, in advance and request an excused absence. Any Pastoral Council member, who has three (3) or more unexcused absences in a twelve (12) month period, will be asked by the Council President to resign from the Pastoral Council.

## **ARTICLE IX: VOTING**

Each member of the Pastoral Council, including clergy, trustee and staff, who serve by virtue of their office, shall have the right to vote on any matter coming before the Pastoral Council.

Decisions of the Pastoral Council shall be reached by consensus. Consensus does not mean unanimous vote but it does mean that discussion on any matter shall continue so long as members express strong reservations about the matter, and action shall not be taken until all members indicate that they can at least live with the decision. With this in mind, members should sincerely attempt in fraternal charity, to accommodate each other's views and insights.

If, despite the foregoing, the Pastoral Council is unable to reach consensus on a matter after it has been discussed at two (2) consecutive meetings, then a vote shall be taken. Two-thirds vote is necessary for passage of such action item.

## **ARTICLE X: COMMITTEES**

The Pastoral Council shall consist of four standing committees:

1. Prayer and Worship;
2. Ministry;
3. Outreach;
4. Strategic Planning

Each committee will be composed predominantly of Council members and such other individuals as the committee members deem appropriate.

Each committee shall meet regularly throughout the Council year.

The Pastor may, at any time, appoint Ad Hoc Committees as he deems appropriate.

It is the responsibility of each committee to coordinate within each Parish activity within its sphere of responsibility.

## **ARTICLE XI: AMENDMENTS**

These By-Laws may, from time to time, be amended. Any proposed amendment(s) shall be presented to the Council at one meeting and voted upon at the next Council meeting. Any amendment must be approved by a vote of two-thirds of the membership with the approval of the Pastor.

(Updated 3/2/15)