

COVENANT OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL OF ST. MARTIN DE PORRES (Revised 11/9/21)

As members of the Pastoral Council of the Roman Catholic Community of St. Martin de Porres Parish, comprised of the three worship sites of St. Columba, St. Mary of the Assumption, and St. Vincent de Paul, we make this Covenant with our Pastor to guide our parish. This Covenant, therefore, is intended to create a Pastoral Council whose responsibilities and purposes shall be as set forth in this Covenant.

Definitions

Parish: A community of the Christian faithful stably constituted whose pastoral care is entrusted to a Pastor under the authority of the diocese bishop. In this document the word “parish” refers to St. Martin de Porres Parish, comprised of the merged worship sites of St. Columba, St. Mary of the Assumption, and St. Vincent de Paul.

Pastor: In this document refers to whomever the Diocese has appointed as the legal head of the Parish.

Council: In this document refers to the Pastoral Council of St. Martin de Porres Parish.

Worship Sites: The location where the Christian faithful gather to worship God through the celebration of the sacraments and other ways of prayer. In this document the phrase “worship sites” refers to the three communities of St. Columba in Caledonia, St. Mary of the Assumption in Scottsville, and St. Vincent de Paul in Churchville.

Article I. Roles & Responsibilities of Council

Section 1.01 Role of Council

1. Work with the Pastor in a consultative capacity.
2. Advance the mission of the Parish while maintaining the vitality and solvency of each worship site.
3. Recognize the unique responsibilities and obligations of each worship site.
4. Share its collective wisdom with the Pastor, the pastoral staff, and the parishioners.

Section 1.02 Role of Council Members

Council members shall be responsible for advising and assisting the Pastor in the following areas:

1. Determining the goals and objectives for the Parish by providing recommendations for Parish priorities, directions, and policies through pastoral planning.

2. Reviewing and evaluating programs in light of the Parish's goals and objectives.
3. Providing a means for all members of the individual worship sites to express opinions and to provide input concerning decisions that affect the life of the Parish and the parishioners.
4. Providing an appropriate supportive role to the Pastor in carrying out the mission of the Church.
5. Encouraging communication among parishioners, pastoral staff, Council, and Pastor.

Section 1.03 Responsibilities of Council Members

To be effective in fulfilling their role, Council members pledge:

1. To be prayerfully rooted in Christ with a desire for spiritual growth.
2. To be responsible, accountable, and committed.
3. To have an eagerness to set vision and direction.
4. To be committed to the development of the Parish.
5. To be willing to listen, study, and reflect before making decisions and to enter as fully as possible into all discussions.
6. To participate in the process of consensus building.
7. To attend all regularly scheduled meetings of Council and notify the chairperson in advance if unable to attend.
8. To serve as committee liaison or as member of working groups of Council as the need arises.
9. To be both supportive of the parish staff and accountable to the parish communities
10. To act in a professional and appropriate manner with the information learned as a result of participation on the Council.
11. To be aware that we are a part of the Roman Catholic Church, and thus not an independent congregation, but one with ties and responsibilities to other parishes, the local Diocese and the Universal Church.

Article II. Composition of Council

Section 2.01 Parish Representatives

1. Twelve members, two from each of three worship sites, and six members at large from the Parish with four from three sites preferred.
2. Up to three youth members, at large from the Parish.

Section 2.02 Ex-officio Members

1. The two lay trustees from the corporation shall be ex officio and non-voting members of Council.

Section 2.03 Pastor

1. The Pastor is not a member of Council but rather presides over the entire body in order to provide direction and ensure continuing dialogue.

Article III. Terms of Membership

Section 3.01 Adult Positions

1. Twelve members, two from each of three worship sites, and six at large members with 4 from each of the three worship sites preferred will be seated for three-year terms from July 1 to June 30 with staggered retirement dates to facilitate continuity.
2. Adult members may serve for two terms. Selection for a second term is through the regular member selection process (Section 5.01). They may serve for additional terms but must stand down for at least one year between terms.

Section 3.02 Youth positions

1. Youth members, at large from the Parish, will be seated for one-year terms, annually renewable, up to three terms.

Article IV. Eligibility

Section 4.01 Adult members shall be:

1. 18 years or older.
2. Fully initiated Roman Catholics in good standing with the Church.
3. Registered members of the Parish.
4. Participants in the life of the Church and the Parish.

Section 4.02 Youth members shall be:

1. 14 to 18 years old.
2. Not yet graduated from high school.
3. Meet the other requirements of adult members. (See Section 4.01).

Article V. Selection, Removal, and Replacement of Council Members

Section 5.01 Process for Recruitment, Discernment, and Selection

1. A membership committee responsible for organizing and implementing the process for the selection of new council members shall be formed at the January council meeting. The Vice Chairperson shall lead this committee with one member from each worship site in cooperation with the Pastor.
2. Annually nominations will be sought for adult and youth candidates to fill open positions. Self-nominations and recruitment should begin after Epiphany and before Palm Sunday so that the election and confirmation of nominees can be finalized before the May meeting. If an insufficient number of nominees have accepted, the Pastoral Council will return to the worship sites for additional nominations and selection may be delayed.

3. Members of the membership committee will personally contact every person recommended for Council membership to (a) discuss the purpose and operating principles of the Council and responsibilities of Council membership and (b) ascertain their willingness to serve.
4. All potential Pastoral Council nominees will be invited to attend the May Council meeting which will begin with prayer and discernment and provide prospective members with an opportunity to experience an actual Council meeting.
5. The usual time for the selection of new adult and youth Council members will be the last weekend in May after Mass at each worship site. After the community seeks the help of the Holy Spirit, the names of the new Pastoral Council members will be drawn at random from containers at each parish. Results will be announced in the Parish bulletin and on the website.
6. The council will request that the nominees not selected agree to be alternates, serving as the need occurs.

Section 5.02 Removal of Members

1. Removal from membership due to excess absences.

After two unexcused absences, the Chairperson shall contact the absentee council member. Should circumstances prevail in which a council member cannot attend meetings and be an active part of the Pastoral Council, a satisfactory solution shall be discussed and evaluated among the council member, Chairperson, and Pastor. After a third unexcused absence he/she will relinquish membership on the Council.

2. Removal from membership for reasons other than failure to attend meetings.

The removal of any member of the Council should be an extremely rare circumstance. When it appears from his/her acts or omissions that a Council member is not committed to the betterment of the Parish and after efforts by the Pastor and/or other Council members have been exhausted, action would be taken by the Pastor in conjunction with the Executive Committee.

Section 5.03 Replacement of Members

1. In the event of a vacancy during the year, regardless of cause, the vice chair with the Pastor will choose a replacement member to serve the remainder of the vacated position from among those parishioners who showed interest during the most recent selection process but were not selected. If none of these are available or interested, a volunteer will be solicited by the membership committee in consultation with Pastor. The replacement will come from the same worship site as the person who vacated their membership.

Article VI. Officers and their Responsibilities

Section 6.01 Officer Titles

1. Chairperson
2. Vice-Chairperson
3. Secretary

Section 6.02 Officer Selection

1. The chairperson and vice-chairperson shall be from different worship sites.
2. Council members who have had at least one year of current service may hold the office of chair, vice-chair, or secretary. Exceptions may be made for good reason at the discretion of the Council.
3. The officers shall be elected by a majority of those Council members present at the May meeting.
4. Prior to the May meeting, the outgoing officers together with the Pastor shall review the slate of nominees for officers. Other nominations may be made from the floor. Upon the consent of each candidate to be nominated for a given office, elections will be held in this order: chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary.
5. Terms of office shall be one year (from July 1st through June 30th).
6. The vice-chairperson will ordinarily become the chairperson the following year.

Section 6.03 Officer Duties

1. The chairperson shall:
 - A. Facilitate at all Council meetings.
 - B. Prepare, in consultation with the Pastor, and distribute an agenda at least seven days in advance of each meeting.
 - C. Provide a calendar of meeting dates and minutes for posting on the parish website.
2. The vice-chairperson shall:
 - A. Facilitate in the absence of the chairperson.
 - B. Prepare and distribute minutes in the absence of the secretary.
 - C. Accept responsibilities which the chairperson delegates.
 - D. Organize and implement the process for the selection of new council members and officers, who shall be selected and confirmed by the May Council meeting.
3. The secretary shall:
 - A. Record discussions, action items, and significant content of Council meetings.
 - B. Prepare and distribute the minutes of each meeting at least seven days in advance of the next meeting.
 - C. Provide agendas and minutes to be posted on the Parish website, inviting questions or comments.
 - D. Inform parishioners of the activities and plans of Council through a variety of mechanisms as appropriate.
 - E. Record attendance at monthly meetings

Section 6.04 Officer Vacancies

1. A vacancy in the chairperson's office shall be filled by the vice-chairperson.
2. A vacancy in the vice-chairperson's office shall be filled (by election) from eligible Council members.
3. A vacancy in the secretary's office shall be filled (by election) from eligible Council members.

Article VII. Committees

Section 7.01 Executive Committee

1. Executive Committee Composition
 - A. Pastor
 - B. Current officers
2. Executive Committee Duties
 - A. Develop an overall working plan for the year
 - B. Oversee internal and external communications and liaisons among parishioners, pastoral staff, committees, Council, and Pastor

Section 7.02 Membership Committee

1. Membership Committee Composition
 - A. Vice-chairperson
 - B. Three other Council members, one from each worship site
 - C. The Pastor

Section 7.03 Relationships with Parish Committees

1. The Council recognizes all parish Standing Committees and shall have a working relationship with them.
2. To enhance communication between committees and Council, each standing committee shall be invited, at least once a year, to share with the Council its current work and goals. This may be in writing or in person, as deemed appropriate by the Council.
3. The Pastoral Council and Finance Council will share minutes.

Section 7.04 Ad Hoc Committees

1. Ad Hoc committees may be formed as needed. The function and direction of ad hoc committees will be determined by the Council, following the recommendation of the executive committee. Officers shall not be expected to participate in ad hoc committees. These committees shall be dissolved when their work is completed.

Article VIII. Meetings of Council

Section 8.01 Schedule, Frequency, and Location

1. Council shall meet monthly a minimum of nine times per year. An effort will be made to schedule meetings at all three worship sites an equitable number of times during the year.
2. At the first meeting of the year, the chairperson shall announce the date, time, and location of each scheduled meeting for the year.
3. Additional meetings may be called at any time by the Pastor, in conjunction with the chairperson, with at least three days' notice.
4. A retreat for the Pastoral Council will be held annually to help shape the faith and thought of its members as they work toward fulfilling the Parish mission.

Section 8.02 Quorum

1. A quorum is defined as a simple majority of the regular membership of Council.
2. A quorum is necessary for any meeting to occur.
3. The Pastor or a person designated by the Pastor must be in attendance.

Section 8.03 Conduct of Council Meetings

1. General Council Meetings.
 - A. Will be opened and closed with prayer.
 - B. All general Council meetings (excluding executive sessions) will be open to any parishioners of the Parish who wish to attend. Attendees are welcome as observers.
 - C. Business of the Council will be conducted through a consultative process as follows:
 - 1) Council members are given an opportunity to speak in turn about a particular topic or question.
 - 2) The Pastor will consider all views in arriving at a decision.
 - 3) If an explicit decision is desired by the Pastor or chairperson, members will strive to achieve a consensus, preferably without necessity of a vote.
 - 4) If a vote is deemed necessary by the Pastor or chairperson, a non-binding vote by those in attendance shall be recorded in the pastoral council minutes.
 - 5) There will be occasions when the Pastor needs to seek the full and diverse wisdom of Council members as part of a consultative process, and each Council member will be asked to speak in turn about a particular topic or question. The Pastor will use these views in arriving at a particular decision.
2. Executive Session
 - A. At the request of the Pastor or Council chairperson, or upon advisement of a majority of Council members, Council deliberations may be conducted in executive session during which time only Council members and the Pastor will be present.
3. Town Meetings
 - A. At least one meeting to be held annually, open to all members of the Parish and specially focused on communication. Notice of the meeting shall appear in the parish bulletin and on the parish website one month in advance. All parishioners are invited to attend.

- B. The format of the meeting shall be determined by the Council and may take the form of a "Town Hall" style meeting.
- C. A summary of major Council business, past and future, is shared with those in attendance.
- D. Reports from standing committees or working groups of the Parish may be given, at the request of Council.
- E. Parishioners are encouraged to submit questions in writing in advance.
- F. The Council shall provide an appropriate amount of time to review and address questions and issues submitted in writing and other questions raised at the meeting.

Article IX. Communication within the Parish

- 1. At least once a year, Council will communicate to parishioners that they may voice any concerns or comments regarding the Parish by contacting the Council chairperson or any Council member.
- 2. Throughout the year, Council will inform parishioners of the activities and plans of Council.

Article X. Review and Amendments

Section 10.01 Annual Review

- 1. The Council will review this covenant annually.

Section 10.02 Method of Proposing Amendments

- 1. An amendment to this Covenant may be proposed in written form by any member of the Council and placed on the agenda for the following meeting.
- 2. Discussion of proposed amendments will only occur if already on the meeting agenda.

Section 10.03 Approval of Amendments

- 1. A decision cannot be made at the meeting at which the amendment is first introduced.
- 2. Consensus among the Pastor and Council members is required for an amendment to be adopted.