

**Constitution / By-Laws  
of  
Saint Raphael Pastoral Council  
Raleigh, North Carolina**

**PREAMBLE:**

We, the people of God, called together by God and His Church to form the community of Saint Raphael the Archangel Parish, recognizing the responsibility and obligation that is our serving this community, do, in union with our Pastor, hereby unite to form the Pastoral Council.

**ARTICLE I Name**

The name of this organization shall be the Pastoral Council of Saint Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church, Diocese of Raleigh, North Carolina.

**ARTICLE II Purpose**

**A.** The main purpose of the Pastoral Council is to advise the pastor in ministering to the people of and within the parish. The Council will assist the pastor to guide the community in the discernment, expression, and fulfillment of the Church's mission.

1. To function as a planning, rather than a coordinating group. The Council is supported and assisted by the parish staff.
2. To assess the Pastoral needs of the parish.
3. To help the Pastor implement the parish plan and in union with the Pastor, annually evaluate the parish plan.
4. To report, by means of the parish bulletin, to parishioners periodically, but no less than once a year, on the pastoral aspects of the parish.

**ARTICLE III Membership**

- A.** The Council shall have two types of voting membership: elective and appointed.
- B.** The Council shall consist of twelve (12) elected members and three (3) appointed by the Pastor.
- C.** Ex officio members, who are non-voting, consist of the Pastor, Associate Pastors, incardinated deacon(s) asked by the Pastor to serve in the Parish, and the chairperson of the Finance Committee.
- D.** The salaried staff of the Parish cannot serve as elected or appointed Members but may be asked to serve in an advisory capacity to the Council.

## **ARTICLE IV Elections**

**A.** Candidates for membership to the Pastoral Council shall meet these qualifications:

1. Any parishioner who has been registered for at least a year (as of election date) who is in full communion with the Catholic Church. Given the latter proviso, the Pastor, without need of comment, reserves the right to remove a person from the list of candidates.
2. Anyone who has reached eighteen (18) years of age or older by the date of election.
3. Regularly attends weekend Mass at St. Raphael's and desires to live the mission statement of the parish.

**B.** The elected and appointed members shall serve a three-year term. A member leaving the Council after serving a full three year term shall be eligible to be reelected for only one (1) additional three year term. A one (1) year sabbatical is then required before the member is eligible for election/appointment to the Council again. This does not apply to those who have filled vacancies. If the vacancy was filled for more than 18 months, the replacement member is eligible for only one more 3 year term and then a 1 year sabbatical is required. If the vacancy was filled for less than 18 months, the replacement is eligible for 2 consecutive three (3) year terms before a sabbatical is required.

**C.** Election Process

1. The Election Committee, which is appointed by the Chairperson, should be formed early in the second quarter of the calendar year.
2. Elections are to be held annually – normally the fourth weekend of September – with ballots made available to all adult registered parishioners at all (observed) Sunday masses during the selected weekend.
3. Members of the Election Committee of the Pastoral Council will collect and count the ballots after each Mass and notify the Pastoral Council Chairperson and the Secretary in writing of the election results for each Mass. Ballots shall be secured and kept for six (6) weeks after the election and then discarded by the Executive Committee. The results of the election shall be kept with the Pastoral Council records for a minimum of one (1) year.
4. The Pastoral Council Secretary will verify the results with the Pastoral Council Election Committee and publish the names of the newly elected members in the following Sunday bulletin.
5. Elected terms begin with the October Pastoral Council meeting normally held the second Monday of the month. Appointed terms begin with the Pastoral Council meeting following the appointment by the Pastor for the duration of the term.

## **ARTICLE V Replacement of Council Members**

**A.** If an elected council member's seat is vacated within 3 months of an upcoming pastoral council election, that seat will go unfilled until the next election.

**B.** If an elected Council member seat is vacated with more than 3 months remaining in the term, any current member who was elected to fill a lesser term than the vacated member's term will have first choice to fill the vacated term or the person who had received the next highest votes from the previous election shall be asked to fill out the remaining term of the vacating member until:

1. a person accepts the Council position
2. the list of candidates is exhausted

**C.** If the list of candidates has been exhausted, the Pastoral Council Members can nominate members from the floor. The potential candidates will be contacted within one week to see if they are interested in serving on the Pastoral Council and have until the next Pastoral Council meeting to get any related information to an executive council member for distribution to the Council. A vote will be taken on the potential candidates. The person with the most votes wins, and is expected to attend the next meeting.

**D.** If a council member's seat is an appointed position, the Pastor may appoint someone to fill the position at any time.

## **ARTICLE VI Meetings**

**A.** The Pastoral Council shall meet at least ten (10) times a year for regular meetings. There shall be no meeting in December. The Council has also customarily chosen not to meet in July.

**B.** A quorum of members is needed to conduct a meeting.

1. A quorum is 50% +1 of the Council voting membership and should be established during the first part of the meeting.
2. Proxies are not allowed for a quorum or for transactions of business
3. The Pastor or his designee should be present for a meeting to take place.
4. Meetings should follow a set of approved standing rules (on file).

**C.** Special meetings may be called by the Pastor, Chairpersons, with the agreement of the Pastor, as the need arises. The purpose of any special meeting shall be stated in the call with at least (7) days notice given, except in cases of emergency. Only matters contained in special meeting notice shall be acted upon.

**D.** The regular meetings of the Pastoral Council shall be opened to the Parish and parishioners are invited to attend as observers. The exception is if the Council goes into

executive (closed) session. The Chairperson may call an executive session for purpose of discussing any issues that require confidentiality.

**E.** At least seven days (7) before a scheduled meeting, the minutes from the previous month and the next agenda are sent to the members (mail or e-mail) every regularly scheduled meeting of the council.

**F.** All Pastoral Council members (elected and appointed) are expected to participate in every regularly scheduled meeting of the council. Absences must not exceed three (3) per year.

**G.** A prolonged illness or similar situation can cause the above by-laws to be waived with the approval of the Executive Committee.

**H.** In the event of three (3) absences in one year, the council member will be advised by the Executive Committee, through a phone call and letter sent, of the remaining scheduled meetings for the year. Failure to attend will result in their being removed from the council.

### **ARTICLE VII Operation**

**A.** The Council shall submit its recommendations to the Pastor in writing, in the form of conclusions consisting of duly made, seconded and passed by a majority vote. A copy of the minutes submitted to the Pastor satisfies the written requirement.

**B.** The Pastor will take the recommendations, per Article II, under advisement and report back to the Council.

### **ARTICLE VIII Officers**

**A.** The officers of the Pastoral Council shall consist of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary.

**B.** These officers will be elected annually within the total Council membership of elected and appointed members. The election will take place at the next meeting following the election and the officers will serve for a term of one (1) year. It should be the norm that eligible members make themselves available for election to office.

**C.** New members are not eligible to be Chairman in their first year.

**D.** An officer can serve no more than two (2) consecutive years in an office.

**E.** The election consists of nominations and secret ballots unless there is only one person for a position.

**F.** Each office shall be voted on individually - in the order of Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary - thus permitting candidates not elected to be nominated to another office.

**G.** The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Council, and shall have the authority to call such special meetings, with the approval of the Pastor. He/she shall appoint the chairpersons of all committees.

**H.** The Vice-Chairperson, in the absence of the Chairperson or in the event of the latter's inability for any reason to carry out the functions of his/her office, shall assume, during such absences or disability, the duties of the Chairperson. He/she shall perform such other duties as may be delegated to him/her by the Chairperson.

**I.** The Secretary shall take minutes of all regular and special meetings of the Council, reduce such minutes to writing; preserve them in a permanent record, and send copies of such minutes to all the Council at least one (1) week prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting, along with the agenda for that meeting. He/she shall prepare and send out all correspondence. He/she shall also prepare notices to appear in the Parish bulletin pertaining to the work of the Council.

**J.** In the event of a vacancy in the office of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall automatically succeed and fill out the unexpired portion of the term. In the event of a vacancy in any office except that of the Chairperson, the Council shall elect someone among its own members to fill the office until the next regularly scheduled election.

**K.** Each officer shall, at the expiration of his/her term of office, turn over to his successor all books, papers, and other records and property pertaining to his/her office no later than ten (10) days after said expiration.

#### **ARTICLE IX Committees**

**A.** The council has no official committee structure, other than the Executive Committee.

**B.** The Chairperson may appoint ad hoc committees to help conduct the business of the Council. All Council members are expected to be actively involved in subcommittee assignments.

**C.** The Executive Committee shall be composed of the officers of the Council acting with such powers as may be delegated to it by the full Council. It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Committee to coordinate and prepare the agenda in consultation with the Pastor for all regular meetings of the Council, and to make such agenda available to the Secretary for inclusion with the previous month's minutes when sent to the council members prior to the next meeting.

**D.** A report of the regular work of the ad hoc committees and recorded minutes of their meetings will be submitted at regular meetings of the Council.

#### **ARTICLE X Parliamentary Authority**

**A.** The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the Council in all cases in which they are applicable and in which they are consistent with this constitution and any special rules of order the Council may adopt.

**B.** The Chairperson may at his/her discretion appoint a parliamentarian, who need not be a member of the Pastoral Council, to assist and advise him/her in presiding at all meetings.

## **ARTICLE XI Ratifications and Amendments**

**A.** This constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Council by a three-fourths majority vote (of the sitting Council) as long as any proposed amendment has been provided to each voting member in writing at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting.

**B.** Any such amendment must be approved by the Pastor.