

Work of Parish Council Committee - June, 2010  
Courtesy : Jerry Van Handel

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**CONSTITUTION FOR  
THE CONGREGATION OF ST. GABRIEL THE ARCHANGEL  
PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL**

Date of Acceptance \_\_\_\_\_

**PREAMBLE: MISSION STATEMENT**

Since every parish is the church in miniature, St. Gabriel Parish has five areas of focus:

- 1) to pray
- 2) to build community
- 3) to teach
- 4) to be good stewards
- 5) to witness to a kingdom of justice and charity.

More specifically, the areas include these challenges:

- 1) Each member of St. Gabriel community is called to full participation in the liturgy. The Worship Committee will facilitate active participation.
- 2) Our challenge in the St. Gabriel community is to take a large number of diverse people and help them feel at home in the parish family. Part of our task is community-building.
- 3) Like St. Gabriel, we are called to share the Catholic message with people of all ages and needs in our parish. The Total Education Committee coordinates all our education efforts.
- 4) We are called as a parish to empower our people to choose lives of good stewardship in which God's gifts are put to work for the common good in service to the parish and the larger world. The Finance Committee directly concerns the economic strength of the parish and the upkeep of the buildings. Other stewardship programs foster opportunities for others with time and talent to serve the community.
- 5) In the words of our bishops, the Church must not only preach a message of love and justice, the Church must live and practice the message. Working for social justice is an essential part of the Gospel message.

As a parish, we pledge ourselves to these goals.

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **ARTICLE I: NAME**

The name of this body shall be the Parish Pastoral Council of the Congregation of St. Gabriel the Archangel, Neenah, Wisconsin. Hereinafter the phrases used will be: PPC and St. Gabriel Parish.

### **ARTICLE II: PURPOSE**

"The proper role of the PPC is one of consultation." The role of consultation may take shape in some of the following areas:

- A. To develop and maintain a mission statement which embraces the total life and mission of the parish as listed in the Preamble.
- B. To exercise the ministry of leadership within the parish by clarifying parish vision as it strives to achieve its pastoral mission.
- C. To serve as a visible sign of the parish's effort at calling forth the gifts and the talents of its members, engaging in shared responsibility, and using the collegial process.
- D. To serve as the major instrument of planning, evaluation and pastoral renewal of the parish.
- E. To assess systematically the pastoral needs of the parish and to determine the parish's pastoral priorities from year to year.
- F. To formulate parish policies, foster good communication and establish goals that witness to gospel values.
- G. To work jointly with the parish staff and committees to make the parish truly a community of faith.
- H. To be of support to the priests and staff in the leadership of the parish.

### **ARTICLE III: POWERS-RESPONSIBILITY-SCOPE**

"The law of the Church (Canon 536) specifies that the PPC is consultative."

All that pertains to the mission of the parish lies within the scope of the PPC.

- A. The pastor, although a member of the council, bears the final responsibility for the total parish ministry. He cannot abdicate this responsibility and therefore must ratify all actions of the council for them to be effective.
- B. The PPC shall be the policy formulating body in all areas of the parish as listed in the Preamble.
- C. The strength of the PPC emanates from the unity within it; the sharing of gifts, talents and insights of all; the contribution of its members in dialogue; the recommendations to the pastor. **THE PPC MUST BE PREPARED TO ASSUME WHATEVER LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY THAT IS NECESSARY TO SUPPORT THE NEEDS OF THE PARISH AT ANY GIVEN POINT IN TIME.**
- D. Consensus represents the common belief of the PPC. Consensus is not the equivalent of a unanimous vote on a proposal. It is rather the recommendation of a strong majority of the participants that a proposed action be taken. Action by Consensus shall have the same binding effect as a vote.

Even though one or more may disagree with an action, consensus means that one can live gracefully with the action recommended.

- E. The pastor, if he is one with his people and active in the deliberative process, will recognize the recommendation of the PPC to be of great consequence. Only if that recommendation is clearly out of harmony with the spirit of the gospel or in opposition to church legislation, or to the detriment of the people, should he decline the recommendation. Should disagreement on an issue persist between the pastor and the PPC, recourse should be taken to the episcopal vicar. He may advise pursuing the process through the proper diocesan structure.

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

- A. All members of the PPC must be:
  - 1) Confirmed (except for a youth representative), practicing Catholics in good standing with the church
  - 2) Committed to the mission of the church with concern for the good of the whole parish
  - 3) A registered member of the parish
  - 4) 18 years of age (except for a youth representative)
  - 5) Willing to participate in a training program that explains the workings of the PPC and parish committees.
- B. The PPC shall have the following ex officio members:
  - 1) Pastor(s) (non-voting)
  - 2) Associate pastor, deacon or other staff member (non-voting)

- 3) Two lay trustees (see article XI below)
- 4) The chairperson or delegate of the Finance Committee.

C. The PPC shall have ten (10) additional members.

- 1) Three at-large members will function as officers of the PPC: president, vice-president, secretary.
- 2) Liaisons (chairperson or delegate) from the major parish areas not covered in IV, B.
  - 4) immediately above.
    - a) Worship
    - b) Stewardship
    - c) Social Concerns
    - d) Total Education
    - e) Youth
    - f) Buildings and Grounds
    - g) Vicariate representative.

D. The PPC may have a youth representative elected or selected by and from the youth of the Parish for a one-year term.

#### **ARTICLE V: OFFICERS**

A. The officers of the PPC shall be president, vice-president, and secretary. They shall be elected from and by the PPC at the June meeting. They shall serve a one-year term beginning with the new fiscal year. It is strongly recommended that the president have at least one year experience on the Council prior to election.

#### **ARTICLE VI: NOMINATIONS-QUALIFICATIONS-ORIENTATION**

- A. The PPC shall form an ad hoc committee to carry out the entire process of replacing members for the Council.
- B. The committee, with the assistance of the parish, shall find potential candidates to invite to these ministries, as terms are completed.
- C. All prospective candidates shall attend an orientation session well in advance of the May meeting. This session will acquaint the candidates with function, purpose, role and activities of the PPC and the different committees and positions. After this orientation, the candidate shall indicate his/her willingness to continue.
- D. The pastor shall review all names submitted.

- E. Prior to the May meeting, the committee will submit to the pastor and/or his delegate, the names of the candidates and the positions available.
- F. Election/selection as explained in Article VII shall be prior to the May meeting.

### **ARTICLE VII: ELECTIONS/SELECTIONS OR APPOINTMENTS**

- A. Members of the PPC (except *ex-officio*), may be selected from the parish.
- B. Trustees shall be elected by the total membership of the parish to their positions for a two-year term. (State Statute 187.12).
- C. Term of members selected to council shall be for three years. It is recommended that members are limited to two consecutive three-year terms.
- D. Elections/selections are planned and carried out by the nominating committee prior to the May meeting.
- E. Terms of office shall coincide with the fiscal year - July 1 to June 30.

### **ARTICLE VIII: MEETINGS**

- A. All meetings should be conducted in a prayerful, reflective mode seeking to achieve consensus around major recommendations.
- B. The PPC shall ordinarily meet on the fourth Tuesday of the month.
- C. A simple majority of the voting PPC shall constitute a quorum. A simple majority of those present at a meeting in which a quorum is present are empowered to act in the name of the PPC.
- D. Agendas and minutes of prior meetings should reach the membership before the date of the meeting so all can be prepared to participate.
- E. Special meetings of the council may be called by the pastor, Executive Committee, or a majority of the members as need arises. All members must be informed about the meeting.
- F. All meetings should be open to parishioners except when the PPC goes into an executive session.
- G. Councils and committees have a right to go into executive session if discussing sensitive matters, such as personnel or personal matters. Minutes are not taken at an executive session and all members are strictly bound to confidentiality around the subjects

discussed.

H. Members are expected to attend all meetings and carry out the tasks assigned to them.

I. Following of Robert's Rules of Order is recommended.

### **ARTICLE IX: COMMITTEES**

A. Standing committees of the PPC are:

1. Worship
2. Stewardship
3. Social Concerns
4. Total Education
5. Youth
6. Buildings and Grounds
7. Executive committee - Pastor, President, Vice-President, Chairperson of Finance Council.

B. Membership on the standing committees should coincide with the scope of the work and the purpose of the committee.

C. All standing committees are subject to the PPC and should keep channels of communication and dialogue open to the council. Committees should develop their plans in response to the needs of their area as indicated by the people and in line with the calls of the PPC and the focus of the Mission Statement. In light of these plans and programs a budget is developed and presented to the PPC.

### **ARTICLE X: FORMATION OF PARISH BUDGET**

The parish budget process has three phases and areas of responsibility:

A. The Parish Finance Council shall receive, study and compile all budgets into one parish budget.

B. The PPC shall review the budget to examine its compliance with parish goals and priorities and shall make its recommendations to the pastor.

C. The Parish Finance Council makes preliminary recommendations on the proposed plans and budgets.

D. The pastor has the final authority to approve the budget.

## **ARTICLE XI: PARISH CORPORATION**

- A. Under Wisconsin Statutory law, each parish is a legal corporation guided by a five-member Board of Directors; the bishop of the diocese as president, the pastor as vice-president, the two lay members as secretary-trustee, and treasurer-trustee respectively, and the fifth member being the vicar general of the diocese.
- B. The secretary-trustee and the treasurer-trustee are elected for two-year terms in accord with the civil law of the State of Wisconsin and are subject to the approval of the bishop.

## **ARTICLE XII: ECCLESIASTICAL - CIVIL LAW**

PPC decisions shall be in accord with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, Ecclesiastical Law and the Civil Statutes of the State of Wisconsin.

All concerns of Church life shall be resolved, if possible, within the parish using the skills and talents available to address the difficult issues.

In instances of irreconcilable dispute and after varied attempts on the parish level, the parish shall have recourse to the Vicar of the area.

## **ARTICLE XIII: RESIGNATIONS - VACANCIES**

### A. Resignations

Any person desiring to resign from the council shall submit their resignation in writing to the council president at least 10 days prior to the next scheduled meeting; further discussion with the president or pastor is recommended.

### B. Vacancies

The vacant position shall be filled by the Executive Committee by selecting another name from the remaining names in the election/selection process or by recommendation as soon as possible.

## **ARTICLE XIV: PROCEDURE FOR REMOVAL**

Procedure for removal of a member from the council is:

- A. The subject of removal from the council shall be discussed with the affected person by either the pastor or any designated member.
- B. An attempt shall be made, and commitments established, to either rectify the situation, or to effect a voluntary resignation. If this has not occurred to the satisfaction of the council, a

resolution for removal shall be brought to the council by the designated member or pastor, and the council shall consider the matter in executive session.

- C. The remaining members seek to arrive at a recommendation by consensus to aid the pastor in resolving the matter.

#### **ARTICLE XV: REVIEW, EVALUATION, REVISION, AND READOPTION**

Review, evaluation, revision and re-adoption of the constitution shall be the main agenda item at the regularly scheduled August PPC meeting every year.

#### **ARTICLE XVI: AMENDMENTS**

- A. All amendments to be considered shall be presented to the council in writing.
- B. Proposed amendments shall be posted in Church or on the parish web site for parishioners' study and input to council members.
- C. At a following meeting proposed amendments shall be decided upon by a simple majority of the council.

#### **ARTICLE XVII: ADOPTION**

After PPC study, this document shall be made available to the parish membership for study. Following the opportunity for input, this constitution shall be in effect when approved by a consensus of the members of the current PPC.

This document was accepted by the PPC at a regular meeting on \_\_\_\_\_.