

THE CONSTITUTION and BY-LAWS of the PARISH COUNCIL of ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH in SPEARVILLE, KS

Approved 9/4/2025

PREAMBLE

Mission Statement of St. John the Baptist Parish of Spearville, Kansas
under the leadership of the Bishop of Dodge City, and the Guidance of our Pastor:

As a faith community, we recognize Jesus as the true vine and ourselves as the branches. (John 15:1-2) We further recognize that without God the Father as the vine grower, we can do nothing. With the love of God, we set forth on Christ's mission.

We call together and welcome all people to worship with us, and to celebrate the life of the vine, Jesus. We are challenged to develop our faith and nourish it through continued Catholic education for all ages.

May we be the voices in the world of Christ's compassion and be aware of our neighbor's suffering. We are God's people, called to serve and not to be served. We follow the example of Jesus, the servant.

Joining together then, as one faith community, we seek the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as we dedicate our time, talents, and hearts to this Parish Community, a place to become family and call home.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I – Purpose of Parish Council

Section 1

The Parish Council is a group of parishioners elected to serve the parish as visionaries who set goals and call forth people to achieve them. They strive to empower councils and commission members, as well as all parishioners, to envision dreams and actualize the goals that should be part of every life-giving and growing parish family.

Section 2

The Parish Council is the primary consultative and decision-making body in the parish to the Pastor. It is central to the life, ministry, and mission therein. The Council shall recognize the Pastor as the Authoritative Representative of the Bishop of the parish.

Section 3

The Parish Council shall assist the Pastor in the formulation and development of the parish in the mission of Christ.

Section 4

The Parish Council shall assist the parish groups, commissions, and Pastor in the preparation and presentation of budgets to the Parish Finance Council.

ARTICLE II – Powers of Parish Council

Section 1

The Parish Council shall have the power to approve, advise, or veto the proposals of any parish commission.

Section 2

The Parish Council shall call for a financial statement of the Parish each year. At the first meeting of the fiscal year, the Parish Council shall appoint the President and one other person to co-sign checks in the absence of the Pastor of St. John's Parish.

Section 3

The Parish Council shall have power to determine that all constitutions and/or standing rules of any commission or organization of the parish shall be in accordance with the Parish Council constitution, except the Finance Council, which is mandated by Canon Law.

ARTICLE III – Structure

Section 1

The Parish Council shall be composed of the chairperson and co-chairperson of each commission and Finance Council, and in addition, shall include the Pastor of St. John's Parish.

Section 2

There shall be the following commissions: Church and Community Affairs Commission, Faith Formation Commission, Liturgical Commission, Property Commission, and Youth Commission. Further commissions may be established or eliminated by the Parish Council as necessary.

Section 3

Each Parish Commission and the Finance Council shall be complete with six members. It shall, within its commissions, elect a chairperson and co-chairperson that will serve on the Parish Council.

Section 4

The term length for commission members is two years, beginning and ending in the month of June. Terms are fulfilled on a rotating basis: three commission members' terms will expire at the same time, while the other three will remain until the next year. If a commission is unable to find 3 new members, commission members may return for a new term, committing to two more years.

Section 5

The chairperson of each commission shall ideally be selected from those members serving the second year of their term, while ideally the co-chairperson shall be selected from those members serving their first year.

Section 6

Should a vacancy occur within the commission of their representative to the Parish Council, the members of the respective commission shall elect, from its own members, a new representative to fill the vacated seat.

Section 7

No Parish Council member should serve more than two successive terms, not exceeding 4 consecutive years.

Section 8

Loss of parish membership or commission membership shall constitute forfeiture of Parish Council membership.

Section 9

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the officers of the Parish Council and the Pastor. The Chairperson shall be the Pastor.

Section 10

Should a vacancy for the Parish Council Executive Committee occur, the Parish Council shall, after its own membership is complete, elect a member to fill that office.

Section 11

Standing committees may be appointed by the commissions to help their work and functions.

ARTICLE IV – Membership

Section 1

Those serving on a Parish Commission shall be no less than 18 years of age, must be confirmed, and must be a member of St. John's Parish.

Section 2

The Parish Council membership shall consist of voting and non-voting members:

- a. The voting members are: The chairperson and co-chairperson of each parish commission, or proxy representative should the chairperson or co-chairperson of a commission be unable to attend.
- b. The non-voting members can be: The pastor of St. John's Parish, any special committee (Pro Tem) chairperson set up by the Parish Council, the Parish Secretary, Director of Religious Education, and Accountant of the Parish.

Section 3

In the event of Pastoral change, the new pastor can call for a new council, if he chooses not to reconvene the former council. The normal rule is the new pastor will reconvene the old council.

ARTICLE V – Executive Officers of Parish Council

Section 1 – Election of Officers

Commissions shall have new members selected and chairpersons and co-chairpersons selected and attending during the June meeting. Executive Officers, including President, Vice-President, and Council Secretary should be nominated and elected during the June Meeting. Voting members for these elections shall be the incoming Parish Council.

Section 2 – Duties of Officers

- a. Chairman: The Pastor of St. John's Parish can, as chairman, request the president to call special meetings of the Parish Council, and has the power to sign checks. He shall preside over the Executive Committee and shall sign the annual financial and parish reports.
- b. President: The President shall preside at all meetings of Parish Council, call a special meeting when requested by either the Chairman or a majority of the Council members, prepare monthly meeting agendas with the Pastor, and shall carry out the business of the council. He/She shall co-sign checks in the absence of the Pastor of St. John's Parish. He/She shall appoint six people, one from each commission to the Commission Recruitment Committee.
- c. Vice-President: The Vice-President shall assume all of the duties of the President when the President is unable to serve. He/She shall also serve as the Chairman of the Commission Recruitment Committee.
- d. Secretary: The Secretary shall read the prior meeting's minutes for approval or corrections. He/She shall take all notes and minutes of executive sessions and Executive Committee meetings. In the absence of the Parish Secretary, the Council Secretary shall keep complete and correct minutes of Parish Council meetings. This is under the assumption that a Parish Secretary has assumed the job of notifying Parish Council members of meetings, making previous minutes available, and keeping complete and accurate minutes during council meetings.

ARTICLE VI – Meetings

Section 1

The commissions shall hold their first meeting of the new term during the month of June. They shall elect their chairpersons and co-chairpersons, review their commission's expenses from the prior year, and make goals for the next year.

Section 2

The Parish Council shall generally hold monthly meetings. The usual date is to be the first Thursday of each month, unless otherwise determined by the Council and the Pastor.

Section 3

Commissions should meet between regular Parish Council meetings and as often as necessary to conduct their business.

Section 4

Neither the Parish Council meetings, nor any commission meeting shall last longer than two hours under ordinary circumstances.

Section 5

A quorum for voting for the Parish Council shall be a simple majority.

Section 6

When a person on a commission or council misses three consecutive meetings without cause, they will be contacted by the Pastor.

ARTICLE VII – Scope of Commissions

Section 1 – Church and Community Affairs Commission

Promote activities and participation in community life within our parish, the Community of Parishes, and the Spearville community. Promote all ecumenical activities. Provide a forum of involvement for the men and women of the parish. Help in community appeals.

Communicate supply needs for the Parish Center with the Parish Secretary. Determine the parish policies for funeral dinners. Keep up-to-date records for the parish directory and guild lists. Conduct parish surveys. Review expenses and programs yearly and create new goals.

Section 2 – Faith Formation Commission

Provide a program of education reaching the total membership of the parish. Assist the Director of Religious Education in recruiting teachers and personnel for the religious education programs. Maintain a parish pamphlet rack and library with educational materials. Make religious articles available. Publicize and encourage attendance at Diocesan workshops and programs. Review expenses and programs yearly and create new goals.

Section 3 – Liturgy Commission

Promote liturgical development, participation and planning for weekend Masses, seasonal celebrations, and all liturgical or para-liturgical celebrations. If needed, help the liturgy coordinator prepare the themes and prayers of the faithful for various celebrations. Help recruit new Mass ministers and work with the pastor to set up trainings. If asked, advise the pastor in determining the best schedule for liturgical celebrations. Study and implement recommendations of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission. Prepare and decorate the church to reflect the various liturgical seasons and celebrations. Provide for the care of the church, sanctuary, and all liturgical supplies. Review expenses and programs yearly and create new goals.

Section 4 – Property Commission

Provide for an ongoing inspection of all parish property for necessary repairs, improvements, or special projects. Maintain equipment and advise on purchases for the facilities or grounds. Confirm that insurance policies are adequately covering all property and the contents within. Review expenses yearly and create new goals.

Section 5 – Youth Commission

Keep the Parish Council advised of special needs of the youth of the parish and community. Promote parish and community volunteer programs. Promote and assist in inter-parish community programs for the youth, including retreats, youth Masses, conferences, etc. Promote activities to bridge the youth-adult age gap. Assist in projects of the youth to help reduce expenses for activities. Review expenses and programs yearly and create new goals.

ARTICLE VIII – Pro Tem Committees

Section 1

In order to fulfill effectively the purposes of Parish Council, specific but additional projects will require study, discussion, and preparation. This can be done by a committee, which will function only for the time required to fulfill its project, and shall be called the Pro Tem Committee.

Section 2

The Parish Council shall appoint the Pro Tem Committee Chairperson. The Pro Tem Committee Chairperson shall not have a vote on Parish Council.

Section 3

The Commission Recruitment Committee will be asked annually to review Guild lists and create a list of potential candidates to fill Parish Commissions.

ARTICLE IX – Jurisdiction

Section 1

This constitution and its by-laws shall be studied and reviewed by the commissions and the Parish Council during the first meeting of each fiscal year.

Section 2

With two weeks' written notice via the bulletin, these by-laws can be amended by a two-thirds majority vote, equaling 8 of 12 voting members of the Parish Council, present in person, at any regular meeting.