

St. Matthias Church

Pastoral Council

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Bylaws

Who We Are

St. Matthias Church is a Catholic Christian community nestled in the Emerald Hills area of Redwood City. In 2014, we began an exciting pastoral planning process which resulted in the development of a long range plan for the parish community called, *Shaping Our Future*. This plan focused on seven areas of parish life and engaged parishioners to evaluate these areas and reflect on goals and strategies that we want to implement over the next five to ten years.

Our parish community includes about 1,000 registered families, a vibrant Justice and Charity Commission which is engaged in a variety of local organizations and activities. We feature an intergenerational and family-based faith formation program which includes all ages and all walks of life in our monthly Generations in Faith Together (GIFT) gatherings. We also have a full-day, year round, Catholic Preschool whose enrollment is about 75 children. We are included in Deanery 11 – Southern San Mateo County and are part of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

Mission Statement

St. Matthias is a Roman Catholic Community striving to respond to the call of Jesus through worship and sacraments, faith formation, service, and social opportunities.

Under the guidance of the pastor and pastoral staff, we seek to strengthen current lay leadership and develop and empower new leadership.

Although a small parish, we commit ourselves and parish programs to hospitality, generosity to those in need, and outreach to all those seeking a faith community.

As Catholics, we recognize the many challenges facing the Church, but we trust in the Holy Spirit to guide us into the future.

[The above Parish Mission Statement was formulated by several members of the parish staff and parish council shortly before we began the Pastoral Planning Process. It may be subject to review as we move forward with the Plan.]

Why Pastoral Councils?

The pastor and his staff attend to the daily administration of the parish, often concerned with mundane, necessary details that absorb both attention and energy. In this context, there is a genuine need for a pastoral council to be a “keeper of the vision”, a guardian of the larger picture.

The pastor can read what experts have to say in theory, but needs to listen to what a parish council recommends as best to him for this specific parish.

Parishioners wish to serve on pastoral councils because they desire to advise the pastor and his staff wisely and prudently. They believe that the parish community possesses the gifts of the Holy Spirit and wish to help the pastor/administrator discern what the Holy Spirit is saying within the parish, Archdiocese, Universal Church. They wish to participate in the governance of their parish and have the satisfaction of doing an important task that contributes to the well-being and growth of their parish. ¹

1. Name

- 1.1. The name of this parish ministry shall be the SAINT MATTHIAS PASTORAL COUNCIL.

What’s In a Name?

The parish council is called “pastoral” not only because of its focus on pastoral concerns, but because of its unique relationship to the pastor/administrator, who initiates and establishes the council, who convenes its meetings and presides at them, and who seeks the good of his people by interacting with the council.²

2. Mission Statement

- 2.1. The Pastoral Council is a group of parishioners called by the parish community to share responsibility and leadership with the pastor and the Pastoral Team.
- 2.2. The Pastoral Council will strive to develop the Christian commitment of the parishioners and to foster the ongoing renewal of the parish.

Purpose and Function

Pope Paul VI has described the purpose of a pastoral council: “to examine and consider all that relates to pastoral work and to offer practical conclusions on these matters, so that the life and activity of the People of God may be brought into greater conformity with the Gospel.”ⁱ In this description, we find three tasks assigned to the pastoral council: to examine, to consider, and to recommend.³

3. Purpose

- 3.1. To promote the close, caring community of faith that is special to Saint Matthias.
- 3.2. To ensure that the parishioners have the opportunity to participate in the rich and varied ministries of the parish.
- 3.3. To collaborate with the Pastoral Team and the various ministries to ensure that the needs of the parishioners are served.
- 3.4. To help implement the goals and strategies identified in our pastoral plan, *Shaping Our Future*.
- 3.5. To develop strategies, plans and programs to help the parish's ministries meet specific objectives.
- 3.6. To evaluate the effectiveness of the parish's ministries.
- 3.7. To establish a liaison with the Archdiocese and other parishes in the local deanery.

ⁱ Paul VI, *Ecclesiae Sanctae*, no. 16, in Flannery, editor, *The Documents of Vatican II*, p. 601.
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Membership

Canon Law speaks in general terms about who should be selected for membership on the Council. They are chosen, it says, to reflect the wisdom of the entire People of God.ⁱⁱ

To fulfill the tasks the council is to perform, members need specific gifts: the ability to study, investigate and examine pastoral issues thoroughly. They need further to reflect widely and to ponder deeply, to listen to differing opinions, synthesize various points of view, and to discern what is best for the parish.ⁱⁱⁱ

Members should be Catholics in good standing who celebrate liturgy with the parish and are committed to a life of prayer, the mission and ministries of the parish, and to the Church's understanding of consultation as reflected in these guidelines. They must be willing to participate in ongoing education and the council's group process. In a word, they must be genuine collaborators.⁴

4. Membership

4.1. COMPOSITION AND QUALIFICATIONS:

- 4.1.1. The council shall consist of nine (9) adult members and at least one (1) youth representative.
- 4.1.2. The members shall be selected through a discernment process.
- 4.1.3. The pastor/administrator, after consultation with the Council and chairperson, shall appoint members to vacant positions on the Council.
- 4.1.4. The pastor/administrator, pastoral associate and deacon shall be ex-officio, non-voting members of the council.
- 4.1.5. The members will be registered and active members of Saint Matthias Parish.

ⁱⁱ John Paul II, Code of Canon Law, Canon 512, par. 2

ⁱⁱⁱ Vatican II, "Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church," no. 27, in Flannery, editor, The Documents of Vatican II, p. 580

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4.2. TERMS:

4.2.1. Each member will serve a three (3) year term, each year's term beginning in July and going through June.

4.2.2. A member selected to fill a vacancy on the Council will complete the remainder of the term of this person s/he replaces.

4.3. MAXIMUMS:

4.3.1. No member can serve more than two full consecutive terms.

4.3.2. Partial terms served while completing the term of another shall not be considered for this purpose.

4.4. SELECTION OF MEMBERS:

4.4.1. On the first Saturday in March, parishioners will be invited to apply or nominate other parishioners for the Council positions.

4.4.2. The first Sunday in April will be the deadline for applications and nominations, and the names of all qualified applicants will be distributed to the Pastoral Council.

4.4.3. The discernment process will take place at the April Pastoral Council meeting.

4.4.4. The discernment process is a prayerful process during which new members will be selected based on the skills of the applicant or nominee and the needs of the Council.

4.4.5. The newly appointed members will be invited to attend the June meeting and be installed into office at a special liturgy in June.

4.4.6. Youth members will be invited to serve on the Pastoral Council during Confirmation Interviews which are conducted during the spring. Existing youth representatives can invite prospective youth representatives.

4.5. VACANCIES:

- 4.5.1. A member who wishes to resign may do so by giving one month's notice to the chairperson.
- 4.5.2. A member who misses three (3) consecutive meetings without a legitimate excuse loses membership in the Pastoral Council and shall be informed in writing by the secretary.
- 4.5.3. A member may be removed by a majority vote of the Pastoral Council members for cause.
- 4.5.4. Any vacancy in the Pastoral Council will be filled by an appointment of the pastor/administrator, with approval of the Council.
- 4.5.5. The Council, by majority vote, may postpone any or all selection deadlines by no more than 60 days.

5. Responsibilities & Duties

5.1. OFFICERS:

- 5.1.1. The officers of the Pastoral Council shall consist of a chairperson, a vice chairperson and a secretary. These three officers together with the Pastor/Administrator, Pastoral Associate and Deacon shall comprise the Executive Board.
- 5.1.2. It is preferred that the chairperson will have served at least one year on the Pastoral Council prior to being elected.
- 5.1.3. Each officer will serve a one (1) year term from July through the following June.

5.2. NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

- 5.2.1. An election of officers shall take place each year at the June meeting.

5.2.2.A Nominating Committee will be formed to administer the election of officers. The Vice Chair along with two volunteers will serve as the Nominating Committee.

5.2.3.Nominations of qualified applicants for the offices of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary shall be made by all members of the new council present. Individuals may be nominated for more than one office.

5.2.4.An election by closed ballot will immediately follow the close of nominations for each individual office. Each member of the new Council present shall be entitled to one vote for each office. A Chairperson will be elected first, followed by the Vice Chairperson and then the Secretary. The Nominating Committee will be responsible for counting the ballots to determine the elected member of each office.

5.3. CHAIRPERSON:

5.3.1.The chairperson will preside over the General, Special and Executive meetings.

5.3.2.The chairperson will establish ad hoc committees and appoint chairpersons to these committees.

5.3.3.The chairperson will oversee the responsibilities of the vice chairperson and the secretary.

5.3.4.The chairperson will call special meetings.

5.4. VICE CHAIRPERSON:

5.4.1.The vice chairperson will perform all duties of the chairperson in the absence thereof.

5.4.2.The vice chairperson will act as the chairperson of the Nominating Committee together with two volunteers.

5.4.3.The vice chairperson will be responsible for the election and nomination proceedings.

5.5. SECRETARY:

5.5.1. The secretary records and distributes the minutes of the meetings.

5.5.2. The secretary keeps attendance records and rosters.

5.5.3. The secretary maintains records of all previous meetings.

5.5.4. The secretary maintains a list of active parish ministries, Council committees and chairpersons.

5.5.5. The secretary maintains files of correspondence and responds to such correspondence as needed.

5.6. EXECUTIVE BOARD:

5.6.1. The Executive Board will prepare and prioritize agenda items for the next meeting.

5.6.2. The Executive Board will prepare an Annual Report to the parish. The outgoing board will hand over the completed Annual Report to the new board at the June meeting. This report will be made available for all parishioners in September each year.

6. Meetings

6.1. GENERAL MEETINGS:

6.1.1. The general meeting is defined as the regular monthly meeting of the Pastoral Council, and is open to all parishioners and members of the pastoral team.

6.1.2. The general meeting will be held on a monthly basis, August through June.

6.1.3. In April, the new Pastoral Council will be discerned. This new Pastoral Council will hold its first meeting in August.

6.1.4. The committee chairpersons must inform one of the officers of any difficulties prior to the Executive Board meeting so time may be allotted to deal with the situation at the General Meeting

6.1.5. Six Pastoral Council members shall constitute a quorum.

6.1.6. Decisions will be reached by a consensus of the Pastoral Council.

6.2. EXECUTIVE BOARD:

6.2.1. The Executive Board meeting will be held one week prior to the regularly scheduled monthly meeting.

6.2.2. The purpose of the Executive Board meeting is to formulate an agenda for the General Meeting.

7. Amendments

7.1. These ByLaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the entire Pastoral Council.

¹ From *Chapter I: Introduction of Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils*: Archdiocese of San Francisco, Department of Pastoral Ministry: May 2000

² From *Chapter II: the Nature and Foundations of the Parish Pastoral Council*

³ From *Chapter III: Purpose and Function*

⁴ From *Chapter V: The Council and the Parish*