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John fisher
chapel

UNIVERSITY PARISH

Parish Council
Constitution and Guidelines

Updated May 3, 2018

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The purpose of Parish Council is to ...

Listen to the Spirit always present and active in the members of the community and its ministry.

Ensure that the we remain faithful to our Values and Mission.

Promote the SJF vision and parish activities.

Practice the discernment process* when communicating.

Converse with other parish council members to relay the communities concerns and ideas.

Methods of Communication ...

At Parish Council meetings:

Participate in orientation/training to understand procedures, methods of communication and responsibilities of PC.

Learn and understand organizational structures of SJF (which includes leadership, administration, commissions, and support programs, see org chart) and Pontiac Area Vicariate.

Participate in ongoing evaluation of parish goals and objectives using input from Pastor and Pastoral Team.

Report information learned from Commissions/community.

Fulfill meeting assignments.

Contribute in the ongoing group discernment process.*

As Parish Council Members, we...

Attend Commission meetings and be in touch with leader.

Learn commission's intent **and support** their goals.

Share Parish Council information with the commission.

With parish community:

Attend and promote as many parish activities as possible.

Seek opportunities to improve communications to/from the community.

**See Discernment Process on next page.*

Discernment ...

is a **process** by which we try to discover God and God's will through the day-to-day experience of the community. It is based on the belief that God's revelation is an on-going process found through human experiences. Proper discernment will bring peace of mind, unity of the community, acceptance of the diversity, and real love.

Four fundamental components of discernment:

Trusting attitude: Trusting that our personal experience as well as others' experiences are "places of God's revelation."

Listening Posture: Listening to one another without judging and condemning one another, listening to diversity not as a threat to our own opinion but as a richness of understanding another's point of view.

Sharing Disposition: Sharing and being open so that there is no "private agenda," no hidden "political maneuvering."

Integrity: Integrity requires that the Council Leadership look for all available information in its discernment process.

Recognize that discernment requires:

- Time and patience.
- Humility that we do not "own" the truth.
- Good group participation so everyone can be involved.

Differences of opinion are good, and are welcome, if they take place in the context of trusting, listening, and sharing.

Membership

Members at large:

11 - 14 people plus Pastor:

- 4 - 6 At Large members
- Up to two from Oakland University
- One from the Youth Group

Includes officers: two Co-Chairs and two Vice Chairs.

Term: 3 years.

If a member resigns, the position will be filled by a nominee from the list, if still willing to serve.

Member Nominations (*gathered January - April*) through:

- Self nomination
- Parish Council solicitation
- Passion to Action Survey

Selection process in August. See Selection Process on page 7.

Member Orientation:

In September the new parish Council will hold an orientation and training to acquaint all PC members with the councils:

- Duties and responsibilities
- Technology that will be used to communicate during term.
- Goals, objectives and special projects

**See Role of Officers on next page.*

Membership - continued

Meetings:

Frequency: Once a month from September through May, or more often if special needs require it.

Attendance: Please attend every meeting. If absent, make every effort to get informed of the results from the missed meeting.

Behavior: maintain a high level of openness, receptivity and non-judgmental attitudes. Respect confidentiality of comments.

Role of Officers (Co-Chairs or Vice Chairs):

- Elected by Parish Council Officers and Pastor.
- Are rotated every year.
- Are liaisons to the pastor.
- Prepare the meeting Agendas.
- Take minutes and distribute after each meeting.
- Invite guests such as members of the Pastoral Team or Commissions when appropriate.
- Facilitation the meetings.
- Manage the SJF “suggestion box” and PC emails.

Selection Process:

Nomination

Occurs during March and April

Before the nomination process begins, information / communication needs to take place at large, to ensure that the community and potential candidates understand the purpose of the Council as well as its function. Specific information regarding the roles and responsibilities of Council members should be communicated at this time.

Nominations can be made by:

- Invitation to parish members to attend an informational session to listen to a presentation on the role of Parish Council.
- Self-nomination and nomination by other community members after an explanation of the role of Parish Council.
- Nomination by Parish Council member, based on discernment of a specific need.

Selection Process

- A selection committee comprised of three PC members and two Pastoral Team members will determine a final slate of nominees to move to the confirmation committee.
- A confirmation committee comprised of the two PC co-chairs and the Pastor will make the final selection of PC members who will serve a three year term beginning in September.
- An orientation dinner will be held in September.
- All PC meetings will begin at 11:30am and be concluded by 1:30pm.
- A simple snack ex. Bagels, fruit, or cheese and crackers etc. will be provided.
- Selected PC members will be announced to the community at Pentecost.

Vision / Values / Mission

Vision

St. John Fisher Chapel University Parish, dedicated to becoming missionary disciples through encounter, growth, and witness in Christ.

Values

St. John Fisher Chapel University Parish values:

- Our Catholic Faith
- Community and fellowship
- Faith formation/education for all ages
- Inclusion and diversity
- Campus and young adult ministry
- Service and social justice
- Pastoral and lay leadership
- Stewardship of creation
- Financial and fiscal responsibility

Mission

St. John Fisher Chapel University Parish builds relationships by:

- Providing a spiritual home for worship and meaningful growth in our Catholic faith
- Connecting our faith to our everyday life (Servants' Entrance)
- Building bridges between generations especially with young adults
- Expanding roles in lay leadership
- Listening to and supporting people of diverse backgrounds and needs
- Supporting ecumenical and interfaith collaboration