

CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN NEUMANN PARISH COUNCIL

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

The Church of Saint John Neumann is a religious family, in which each member has a part to play in making our Parish a more vital and meaningful community. To facilitate this purpose, a Parish Council is hereby established for the Church of Saint John Neumann .

The Parish Council is a leadership group devoted to faith and service, whose primary purpose is to support the Pastor and the Parish Community in its journey through Christian life. The goal of the Council is to encourage all members of the Parish Community to share their talents in the growth and development of the Church's mission of service to all people and to assist and advise the Pastor in the functions of the Parish.

To aid in its purpose, the Parish Council requires a flexible structure and set of procedures to facilitate its effective functioning. As a means for achieving this important goal, this Constitution and these By-Laws are established.

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this body shall be Saint John Neumann Parish Council, in Mount Laurel , New Jersey, hereafter referred to as “the Council.”

ARTICLE II. PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS

A. Purposes

1. To serve as a visible sign of the Parish’s efforts to share the responsibility of meeting its mission among all Parishioners.
2. To serve as a Christian leadership body through which all members of the Parish may serve in the ministries of the Church.
3. To encourage, assist and support the people and various ministries of the Parish.
4. To represent all the families of the Parish.
5. To encourage, assist and support the Pastor in doing God’s work.

B. Functions

1. To provide a climate in which Parishioners can grow in a deeper relationship to God and each other and to minister to the total well-being of Parish members.
2. To advise and assist the Pastor, Clergy and the Trustees.
3. To study and assess the needs of the Parish Community.
4. To identify goals and to establish both annual and long term (five and ten year) programs to achieve those goals.
5. To assist the activities of existing and future organizations and ministries.
6. To evaluate the effectiveness of on-going programs.
7. To establish and support ministries as needed.
8. To encourage Parish members to participate more fully in the life of the Parish Community
9. To foster meaningful communication between the clergy and lay members.

ARTICLE III. AUTHORITY

- A. The Council possesses a consultation role only and may share responsibility by cooperation with and providing advice to the Pastor, Clergy, Trustees, and the various ministries.
- B. The Pastor is the legitimate and canonical authority in the Parish and has the final decisions on all matters relating to Parish life.
- C. The Parish Council shall be given the information necessary to carry out its mission.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

- A. The Council shall initially have nine (9) adult Members, 19 years old and over; one Youth Member, between age 15 and 19, and the two (2) Trustees. Six (6) of the adult Members shall be elected from the Parish at large; three (3) shall be appointed by the Pastor and Trustees; and the Youth Member shall be elected by the youth of the Parish. There shall also be an Alternate Youth Member, who shall be permitted to act in the absence of the Youth Member, including the right to participate in discussions and vote on matters before the Council.
- B. Ex Officio Member will be the Pastor, who will not have a general vote. In the event that a vote is taken and is an even vote, the Pastor will cast the deciding vote.

ARTICLE V. OFFICERS

Officers will be elected from within the Parish Council members. The Council's presiding officer shall be the Chairperson. The other Council officers shall be Vice Chairperson and Secretary.

ARTICLE VI. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

- A. Nominees must be practicing Catholics registered in the Parish. Any member of the Parish may nominate himself/herself, or any other member of the Parish, for election to the Parish Council. After the initial Council election, elections shall be conducted during the month of February of each year.
- B. Terms of Membership
1. Any registered Youth Member of the Parish, between age 15 and 19, shall be eligible for nomination and election by the youth. The Youth Member shall serve two (2) years. No Youth Member may serve more than one term as the Youth Member.
 2. At the first election, a full Council shall be established, and the terms shall be staggered as follows:
 - The two (2) individuals receiving the highest two (2) vote counts shall serve three (3) year terms, and one of the Pastor/Trustee appointees shall serve a three (3) year term;
 - The next two (2) highest vote getters, and one of the Pastor/Trustee appointees shall serve two (2) year terms; and
 - The fifth and sixth highest vote getters, and one of the appointees, shall serve one year terms.
 3. Each year thereafter, a general election will be held to replace those members whose terms are expiring. Council members may seek re-election; no Council members may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. Vacancies shall be filled by the Pastor and the Trustees for the balance of the unexpired term of any resigning Council member.
 4. After the first Council election, following expiration of initial terms, all subsequent terms, both elected and appointed, shall be for three (3) years.

C. Filling Vacancies

At any regular or special meeting of the Council duly called, any one or more of the members of the Council may be removed, for cause, by a vote of the majority of the entire Council and a successor may then and there be appointed as provided in the previous paragraph to fill the vacancy thus created. Any member whose removal has been proposed shall be given an opportunity to be heard at the meeting, upon no less than thirty (30) days notice, and with an explanation of the reason(s) proposed for removal.

Any member of the Council may resign by filing a written resignation with the Secretary. Said resignation shall become effective immediately.

ARTICLE VII. MINISTRIES/COMMITTEES (or the Pastor)

- A. The Council shall consult with the Pastor, when it deems same appropriate, to review the functions of the various Ministries and Committees, and to recommend changes the activities of particular Ministries to better satisfy the overall effectiveness of Parish life.
- B. Any ministry may have a representative present at Parish Council meetings.
- C. Ad Hoc committees shall be appointed by Council from its membership or the Parish community at large for a specific pastoral need and for a limited time span.

ARTICLE VIII. MEETINGS

- A. The Parish Council shall normally hold regular meetings, with a minimum of five (5) per year.
- B. The Parish Council meetings shall normally take the form of regular meetings. The date, time and place of each regular meeting shall be published in the Parish bulletin at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting.

- C. All parishioners may attend regular meetings as observers and may speak when recognized by the Chair.
- D. In addition to, or in place of, regular meetings, the Council may schedule meetings such as:
 - 1. Educational meetings - for the purpose of acquiring greater theological and ministerial insights and skills.
 - 2. Orientation meetings - for the purpose of introducing new Council members and informing them of the history, procedures and priorities of the Council.
 - 3. Planning meetings - for the purpose of strengthening personal and communal spirituality, as well as council interaction.
 - 4. Social meetings - for the purpose of strengthening relationships among the Council members and for the celebration of significant achievements and events.
 - 5. Meetings - for any other appropriate purpose.
- E. Special meetings may be open to Parish members or restricted to Council members, depending upon their purpose.
- F. All meetings are to include time for prayer and reflection.
- G. Emergency meetings of the Parish Council may be called at the request of the Pastor normally with at least five (5) days notice.
- H. A quorum shall consist of a majority of existing Council members; however, a quorum shall not be necessary for the regular meetings of the Council provided all members were given prior notice. Notwithstanding this flexibility, no meeting may be convened unless at least five (5) members are present.
- I. The Chair with discretion, shall be obliged to contact all members who are absent for two (2) consecutive meetings of the Council in order to be informed of the reasons fostering the member's absence.
- J. Three (3) consecutive absences from regular meetings shall be considered as

withdrawal from the Parish Council by a member except under unusual circumstances agreed to by the majority decision of the Executive Committee, or as otherwise provided herein or in the accompanying By-Laws.

ARTICLE IX. PARISH COUNCIL DECISION PROCESS

- A. The Parish Council should strive for the greatest degree of consensus in all its decisions, and to this end should seek full discussion so that all views may be understood. However, a majority of those present is sufficient to reach a decision.

- C. The Pastor has the right by Church law to reject a Council decision; however, consistent with the unique identity of the Parish Council as the leadership community of the Parish. The Pastor should provide the Council with an explanation of the rationale for his veto action when appropriate.

ARTICLE X. AMENDMENTS

- A. Amendments to the Constitution can be introduced by Council members at a regular meeting of the Council; however, the amendment is to be submitted in writing and voting on the amendments shall not take place until the next regular meeting of the Council. Each amendment to the Constitution will require a two-thirds vote in favor by all members of the Council.

- B. By-laws may also be amended by a majority vote of the entire Council, but amendments must be introduced in writing and voting on the amendment shall not take place until the next regular meeting of the Council.

CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN NEUMANN
COUNCIL BY-LAWS DESCRIPTION AND
RESPONSIBILITIES

1. INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

A. OFFICERS

1. CHAIR

- a. To chair all Parish Council meetings.
- b. To make special appointments as authorized by the Constitution.
- c. To participate as an individual member in Council decisions and activities.
- d. To contact Council members who have been absent for two (2) consecutive meetings.
- e. To be a member of the Executive Committee.

2. VICE-CHAIR

- a. To assume the duties of the Chair in his or her absence.
- b. To serve on at least one standing committee or ministry of the Parish Council.
- c. To be a member of the Executive Committee.

3. SECRETARY

- a. To maintain a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of all Parish Council members, as well as the time their terms began and when they will expire.
- b. To keep an attendance record of each Council meeting.
- c. To take minutes of every Parish Council meeting.
- d. To mail, or e-mail, copies of the minutes to each member or deliver them in ample time that they may be read prior to the next Council meeting.
- e. To provide a bound copy of the minutes at the end of her (his) term to the new Secretary. The bound copies are to be kept in the Parish files and should be accessible to Council members and Parishioners and Parishioners as needed; Except that sensitive or confidential information may be redacted from such viewing.

- f. To mail, or e-mail, out notices of the time and place of each meeting to all members.
- g. To be a member of the Executive Committee and to keep minutes of all Executive Committee meetings.
- h. To forward an updated Parish Council membership list each year to the Diocesan Commission for Parish Councils.

B. TRUSTEES

- 1. To attend all Council meetings and to participate, as an individual, in Council discussions and decisions.
- 2. To serve as a member of the Executive Committee.
- 3. To give “State of the Parish Report” at least annually, including relevant financial information and developments affecting the Parish to the Council

C. YOUTH GROUP REPRESENTATIVE

- 1. To attend all Council meetings and to participate in all Council discussions and decisions.
- 2. To serve as a member of at least one ministry or standing committee.
- 3. To give a periodic report to the Council as regards the status and needs of the youth’s constituency represented.

D. STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

- 1. To recruit membership for the standing committee from the parishioners at large.
- 2. To inform the Parish Council of their membership.
- 3. To appoint a person who shall take the minutes of each standing committee meeting and notify members of all meetings.
- 4. To preside at all committee meetings and to prepare and distribute agendas at least one (1) week prior to such meetings.
- 5. To designate subcommittee Chairperson who will prepare and distribute agendas at least one (1) week prior to such meetings and report results to the Council.
- 6. To acquaint all members with the Committee scope of concern.
- 7. To report to the Council, for concurrence or modification, the annual objectives and the strategies for achieving the stated objectives formulated by the Committee

8. All meetings will be opened and closed with a Prayer.
9. To give a periodic report to the Council as regards to the Committee plans and programs.
10. To submit an annual report (in writing) to the Parish Council evaluating the Committee efforts and programs over the past year accompanied by the recommendations for future directions and efforts.

II. STANDING COMMITTEES

1. Shall meet periodically as circumstances dictate.
2. Shall be viewed as a continuing body to encourage continuity of planning and execution of its mission.
3. Shall formulate annual objectives and shall present them to the Council before finalization and implementation.
4. Decision making shall normally be by consensus of the membership, but the Committee shall establish its own procedure, subject to review by the Council.

III. SELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

A. NOMINATION PROCEDURE

1. Notice of elections shall be given to the Parish Community at least six (6) weeks before the election date. The notice shall at least include a letter to be published in the Parish bulletin, which letter shall contain information regarding the vacancies. An application form shall accompany the letter. Notice of receipt of nomination shall be included in at least two (2) consecutive bulletins.
2. Nomination applications shall include a formal statement, for publication, from the applicants regarding their views or beliefs about Parish life and Parish needs, along with biographic data needed for publication about the candidates.
3. All nominations including self-nominations, must be received by the Trustees at the Parish Office within fifteen (15) days of the second published notice.
4. Upon the close of nominations, the Parish Office shall publish the slate of candidates in the Parish bulletin for at least two (2) weeks before the election date(s).
5. The Parish office shall be responsible to display the photographs of all candidates, properly identified by name, on the Church bulletin boards. This shall be done no later than two (2) weeks before the election date(s).

B. CANDIDATES (NOMINEES)

Candidates (nominees) shall be registered, practicing Parishioners at least 19 years of age at the time of the election who should possess in a substantial degree the following qualifications: (The age requirement shall be at least 15 years of age at the time of election in the case of candidate for Youth Representative.)

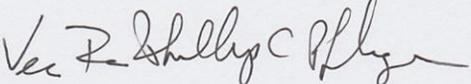
1. Their faith is alive and active.
2. Their faith in and appreciation of the Eucharist is evident.
3. They are energetic, enthusiastic and creative.
4. They are willing to give three years of their time.
5. Their involvement will not be detrimental or problematic for their family life.
6. They acknowledge a need for and display a genuine willingness to study and work at effective leadership.
7. They are respectful of people and have an ability to relate well with others.
8. They are open to change and are willing to listen to and respect other viewpoints.
9. They can work interdependently with others and support others who serve with them.

C. ELECTION PROCEDURE

1. All members of the Parish 19 years of age and older shall be eligible to vote for adult member candidates in all Parish Council elections. Members of the Parish between 15 through 19 shall be eligible to vote for Youth Member candidates.
2. Election of Parish Council members shall take place during the times preceding and immediately after the weekend Masses of the last week of February.
3. Ballots shall be published in the bulletin, and also shall be available at the voting locations designated by the Pastor.
4. The vote count shall be supervised by the Pastor or his representative and the Trustees, recorded and kept on record if needed for vacancy considerations.
5. The six (6) adult member candidates receiving the most votes, and the three (3) members appointed by the Pastor and Trustees, shall be installed as Council Members. The Youth Member candidate receiving the most votes shall be installed as a Council Member; the Youth Member receiving the second most votes shall be the Alternate Youth Member.
6. Ties shall be resolved by the Pastor and the Trustees.

7. Election results shall be posted on the Church bulletin boards and published in the Parish bulletin the two (2) weeks following the election.

Approval Summary

Modifications/Changes/Amendment Summary Description	Pastor/Administrator Approval Signature	Date
Initial Release	/signed/ Very Rev Phillip C. Pflieger, EV	1 Feb 2015
Rev A - Change date of Council Elections from December to February		16 Nov 2015