

Kent State University Newman Center Parish  
Parish Council Constitution and Bylaws

**Mission Statement – KSU Newman Center Parish**

As a University Parish entrusted by the Church with a specific mission, we embrace fully our ministry of serving as a strong Catholic presence at Kent State University. By focusing on worship, learning and service to the local and global community, we accompany our students toward lifelong commitment to faith and to our Tradition. Enriched by many persons from within and beyond the university, we commit ourselves to the hospitality, generosity, and prayerfulness that mark those gathered at the table of the Risen Lord.

**Purpose**

The purpose of the Parish Council of KSU Newman Center Parish is to assist the pastor in developing and deepening the parish faith community. As a consultative body, the Council plans for the interpretation and implementation of the mission of the parish. We prayerfully and purposefully dedicate ourselves to enable parish involvement in global, national, and local issues and to bring Gospel values to bear on all aspects of daily life; particularly in light of our parish’s distinct mission in serving the needs of KSU students in their journey toward lifelong commitment to faith and our Tradition.

**Role**

The primary role of the Parish Council is to assist with pastoral planning. The Council envisions, addresses, and evaluates the needs and goals of the parish community in light of Church teaching and the mission of both the local and diocesan church. The Council directs the resources and gifts of the local community toward the fulfillment of that mission. Planning is always “mission motivated.” The Council discerns what needs to be changed, supported or enhanced to keep the parish faithful to its mission. Planning is an ongoing, cyclical process including goal setting, developing objectives, implementation, and evaluation.

**Council Responsibilities**

To assist the Pastor in formulating and implementing policies.

To promote the mission of the parish.

To engage in pastoral planning through development of parish goals, and empowering their implementation through dialogue with the various parish ministries.

To provide support and direction to all parish organizations in light of the goals and priorities decided upon by Parish Council.

To provide an open, honest and representative forum for full and free discussion of pastoral matters so that true consensus among the parish community may be achieved.

To take responsibility for the ongoing renewal of parish life and call upon appropriate parish committees, ministry groups, individuals, and organizations to implement pastoral goals and priorities.

To cooperate with other churches in the community, community organizations, other parishes, and the diocese in fulfillment of the broader mission of the church.

To review the annual parish budget prepared by the Finance Council.

To initiate and support, with the Bishop and Pastor, positive action for the common good of the church, other religious bodies, and the civic community.

**Powers**

Parish Council is consultative and advisory to the Pastor.

The Pastor, because of his role of pastoral leadership, presides over the Council and his consensus in any decision is required.

The powers of the Council emanate from the unity within it, the unity of the Pastor with the representative group of the people of the parish community, and the mandate of the Bishop.

The Council, inspired by the theological principal of shared responsibility, as a ministerial community of faith, has neither canonical nor legal authority, nor does it need such powers to function effectively.

The Council receives its formal mandate from its president, the Pastor, who, united with the Council as an indispensable member, shares his responsibility for achieving the pastoral mission of the parish in accord with diocesan and parish policy.

The Pastor has responsibility for the administration and pastoral ministry of the parish. This responsibility is given by the Bishop of Youngstown and the Canon Law of the Universal Church.

Council shall take action by way of consensus. Members shall strive to reach substantial though not necessarily unanimous, agreement on all matters of direction and policy. A consensus exists when there is a clear alternative to which most members can subscribe and if those who oppose it feel they have had their chance to influence the discussion. If consensus cannot be reached, a majority recommendation will be given to the Pastor for consideration and approval.

Although a member of Council, the Pastor (by virtue of his pastoral office) has the unique authority to ratify all that is done by the Council. In rare instances, and for serious reasons, the Pastor may veto a Council action. The veto must be prior to the next regular meeting of the Council. The council will reexamine the action and the reasons for the veto at its next regular meeting. If the Pastor and the Council cannot resolve differences, the Council may appeal the veto by referring the matter to the Bishop of Youngstown.

## **Membership**

### *Officio Member Eligibility*

- A fully initiated Roman Catholic in good standing with the church
- A registered, supporting member of the parish
- Active participant in Parish life
- Able to consider the needs of the whole parish
- Willing to listen and respect the ideas of others
- Willing to give time to prepare for and attend meetings
- Student members must be registered KSU students and members of the Catholic Student Association
- High school students (who's family are active members of the UNCP) can be considered student members

### *Number and Term*

Parish Council shall consist of 11-15 members, including 2-6 KSU students and 9 non-students. Student members shall be selected from members of the Catholic Student Association and will serve for a one year term, with the ability to hold two additional, successive, one-year terms should they be willing to do so. The remaining 9 non-student members shall serve 3 year, overlapping terms with new members selected each year to replace the members whose terms are ending. A nonstudent member may re-discern after a one-year break.

### *Ex-Officio Membership*

Pastor, associate pastor(s), permanent deacons(s), and professional staff (lay and religious) representing specific areas of service are considered ex-officio members of the Council and shall attend all Council meetings, participate as individuals in Council discussions and decisions, and give periodic reports to the Council regarding the status and needs of the constituency represented.

The Chair of the Finance Council is also considered an ex-officio member of Parish Council.

Chairs of standing Parish committees are also considered ex-officio members of Parish Council and are expected to give periodic reports to the Council regarding the status and needs of the constituency represented.

## **Method of Appointment**

### *Self/Nomination*

A member of the parish desiring to become a candidate for Parish Council will engage in a self-discernment process by responding to a series of questions that will be reviewed by the Council. These responses may be in written or oral form (i.e., interview). For non-student members, this discernment period will take place during the mid to late spring semester and service will commence at the beginning of the subsequent fall semester. Specific dates for the discernment period will be determined by the Pastor and Parish Council. The discernment period for student members will take place early in the fall semester and terms will commence immediately. Student members will be appointed by the Pastor, after discussion of potential candidates with the Campus Minister and the Director of Religious Education. Council members are encouraged to recommend students to the staff members for consideration. If the allowable number of student positions on Council have not been filled by the end of the student discernment period, the Pastor, with the approval of the Council has the right to appoint a student or non-student to the vacant slot for the remainder of the current school year. Should a student or non-student slot become vacant due to absence, resignation, or dismissal from the Council, the Pastor, with the approval of the Council, may appoint another student or non-student to fill the vacant slot for the remainder of the term.

### *Slate of Candidates*

Parish Council, in conjunction with the Pastor, will determine a slate of candidates from the list of nominees. In selecting a slate of candidates, Parish Council will also take into consideration the representation of all segments of the parish. If more than three candidates have been discerned from the list of nominees, three names from the list will be drawn at random during a specific Mass.

## **Council Leadership**

### *Executive Committee*

The executive committee shall consist of the Pastor (President), Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary. These officers shall be selected by the Council at the last meeting of the academic year (spring), to begin serving their 1-year terms when Council resumes meeting in September. Officers may be reelected to consecutive terms. The executive committee shall assist the Pastor in planning the agenda and making assignments. Additional standing or ad hoc committees may be appointed by Council as it may determine from time to time.

### *President*

The Pastor of the parish serves as President of the Council, a separate and distinct office from the Council chairperson. Duties of the President of Parish Council include: Participates as an individual in council discussions and decision-making. May call special meetings as deemed necessary. Makes special appointments as authorized by the constitution. Gives a Pastor's report at each meeting, including relevant internal or diocesan developments affecting the parish. Is an ex officio member of any and all standing and special committees of the Parish Council. The Pastor's approval is necessary for all Council decisions. Except in rare and extenuating circumstances, the pastor must be present in order to conduct meetings wherein official recommendations are discussed and acted upon.

### *Chair*

Duties of the Chair of the Parish Council include: Conducts all regular and special meetings of the Parish Council. Participates as an individual in Council discussions and decisions. Makes special appointments as authorized by the constitution. May be an ex officio member of any and all standing and special committees of the Parish Council. Contacts members who have been absent for two consecutive meetings and informs Council of their status. With the Pastor, plans the agenda for each upcoming meeting. This agenda is forwarded to the parish office to be distributed with the minutes before the next meeting. Reviews and orders corrections of minutes before publication.

### *Vice-Chair*

Assumes the duties of the chairperson in his/her absence. Participates as an individual in Council discussion and decisions.

#### *Secretary*

Maintains an attendance record of all council membership, noting those absent and bringing to the Chair's attention those members missing two consecutive unexcused meetings. Keeps an accurate record of all minutes of the Council at the regular and special meetings. Publishes the minutes of the Council meetings, submits for redaction, then corrects and forwards to the parish office for distribution about one week before the next meeting. Provides secretarial assistance to the Council as deemed appropriate. Participates as an individual in Council discussions and decisions, if elected as a member of the Council. Recording of minutes during the meetings may limit the Secretary's ability to participate in discussion. Therefore, a person who is not a Council member may be requested to perform this service.

#### *Standing Committees*

Finance Council

#### *Special Committees*

Internal concerns, research, and information on matters that are not part of a committee responsibility require the creation of an ad hoc or special committee. An ad hoc or special committee may be changed to standing committee or subcommittee status if the function changes in scope.

#### **Meetings**

Council shall have at least eight regular monthly meetings. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor or executive committee. Unless a special meeting is called, there shall be no meetings of Council in June, July, August, and December.

The nature of the Council calls for free open discussion leading to consensus, therefore a simple majority of members must be present in order to conduct meetings wherein official recommendations are discussed and acted upon. Members missing two consecutive unexcused meetings will be asked to withdraw from Council. All parishioners are invited to provide input and Council will consider such input when making recommendations to the Pastor. If a vote is required, only officio members of the Council may vote.

Parish council meetings include: opening and closing prayers, approval of minutes from the previous meeting, committee reports when appropriate, old business, and new business.

#### **Administration/Finance**

The Pastoral council is to be concerned with the total stewardship of the parish including time, talent, and treasure.

The Parish Finance Council, by Canon Law and by Diocesan directive, is constituted as a separate entity and, while it is an integral part of the Parish, it is not part of the Parish Council.

The Finance Council's function is to prepare the annual parish budget, to minister to financial matters of the parish, and to publish financial reports and related matters. The Chair of the Finance Council shall provide a report to the Parish Council at least twice yearly.

#### **Review and Amendment**

Every five years, Council shall review the constitution and bylaws in order to determine if changes are necessary or desirable.

In addition, amendments to the constitution and bylaws may be introduced in writing by a Council member at a regular meeting. Acceptance or rejection of amendments shall not take place until the next regular meeting of the Council. Amendment to the constitution and bylaws will require a consensus of the Council in order to be adopted. The parish community will be informed of any changes and the rationale for these changes.

**\* This Constitution and Bylaws was approved and enacted by Council in December 2010.**