

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CHURCH, BALTIMORE

PREAMBLE

We, the People of God at St. Vincent de Paul Church, are a Eucharistic community of Word, Sacrament, and Service, baptized into Christ's roles as prophet, priest, and servant leader. We are in communion with the living, dynamic Catholic Church throughout the world. We believe that the harmonious work of laity and clergy is an essential element for the function of any parish. To these ends, we do hereby authorize the continued work of our Parish Council, guided by this Constitution.

ARTICLE I – PURPOSE

The Parish Council fosters, shapes, and gives expression to the Mission and Vision of the Parish. The Parish entrusts the ministry of collegial discernment to the Parish Council. The Council serves as a forum in which the views and initiatives of the parishioners may be expressed and considered. This Constitution defines the Council's roles and responsibilities.

ARTICLE II - MEMBERSHIP

The Council shall be comprised of a minimum of eight Elected Representatives, the Pastor, the Pastoral Associate, committee-selected annual Representatives of the six Foundational Parish Committees, and the two Lay Corporators (18 members). Members shall be registered parishioners and regular participants at Mass. They must engage with parishioners from the various weekend and weekday liturgies. All Council members must be in full compliance with the most current and operative version of the Archdiocese of Baltimore's Child and Youth Protection Policies and Procedures. Members shall sign and abide by the Parish's Conflict of Interest policy. Members shall be committed to full participation: any member who fails to attend three meetings in a Council year will be deemed to have resigned.

ARTICLE III - DEFINITIONS

As used herein,

Annual Meeting shall mean a meeting of continuing, outgoing, and incoming members of the Council. This shall be the first meeting after Council elections.

Bylaws shall mean the rules adopted by the Parish Council to carry out the provisions of this Constitution. The Parish Council may create or change bylaws as needed.

Council shall mean the Parish Council of St. Vincent de Paul Church in Baltimore, Maryland.

Elected Representatives shall mean a parishioner elected for a two year term of service.

Executive Committee shall mean the three officers of the Council, the Pastor and the Pastoral Associate.

Foundational Committee shall mean those committees fundamental to fulfilling parish mission. These are: Church Reform, Education & Enrichment, Facilities, Finance, Liturgy, and Social Action.

Foundational Committee Representative shall mean a person chosen by their Foundational Committee to serve on the Council for one Council year.

Governance Subcommittee shall mean the subcommittee responsible for the Council's observance of its Constitution and bylaws.

Lay Corporators shall mean the two lay members of the Board of the legal entity known as St. Vincent de Paul Roman Catholic Congregation, Inc.

Officers shall mean the President, Vice-President, and Secretary of the Council.

Parish shall mean the community of St. Vincent de Paul Church, Baltimore.

Parish Engagement Subcommittee shall mean the subcommittee responsible for the Council's communications to and interactions with Parish members, and the welcoming of others.

Parishioner shall mean one who is registered at St. Vincent de Paul Church.

Pastor shall mean the person assigned as Pastor.

Pastoral Associate shall mean that person who is charged by the Parish to work with the Pastor in administering the functions of the Parish.

ARTICLE IV - RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNCTIONS

Council members will make every effort to attend meetings on-site. To accomplish its responsibilities, and with the obligation of ensuring robust parishioner input, the Council is given the power to do the following:

1. Carry out annual elections of Elected Representatives.
2. Meet regularly in open session and hold general meetings of the Parish as needed.
3. Approve the Council President's Annual State of the Parish Report and publish it by September 30 each year.
4. Approve the appointment of a Pastor, Pastoral Associate, and Lay Corporators, and the creation of new staff positions.
5. Provide oversight, direction, and support for Parish Mission, Vision, and Strategic Planning.

This responsibility includes ensuring that the Parish is outward-looking to the larger community.

6. Review and approve by June 30 each year an annual Parish budget and work plan. Monitor the budget and work plan throughout the year.
7. Implement any other activities appropriate to further its overall responsibilities.
8. Fill a vacancy of an Elected Representative (other than President) to serve until the next election.

ARTICLE V - MEETINGS

1. The Council shall hold regular meetings in at least ten months of the year.
2. The Annual meeting shall count as a regular meeting.
3. The President shall set the agenda for the meetings.
4. A quorum is no fewer than eight members, of which four must be Elected Representatives.
5. Meetings of the Council shall be open to all parishioners.
6. Special meetings of the Council may be held in accordance with the bylaws.

ARTICLE VI – ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES

1. Elections to the Parish Council shall be held annually in October. All registered parishioners aged 16 and over are eligible to vote.
2. Nominations shall be taken at each Mass on two weekends in September. Elections will be held on the first weekend in October.
3. The process of the election shall be overseen by the Governance subcommittee.
4. Terms will be staggered: with half the Representatives being elected each year.

ARTICLE VII – ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

1. The term of service of Elected Representatives shall be two years with term limits as set in the bylaws.
2. Elected Representatives are at large. Their constituency is the entire parish.
3. Elected Representatives who are not officers shall be a member of either the Governance or the Parish Engagement sub-committees of the Parish Council.

4. **Officers**

- a) Officers are chosen by the Council membership at the Annual Meeting. The term of office is one year. Officers may serve in their respective office for no more than three years.
- b) The **President** will work collegially with the Pastor, Pastoral Associate, and chairs of Foundational Committees. They will set the agenda and preside at all meetings of the Council and shall have the authority to call special meetings at their discretion. The President is responsible for an Annual State of the Parish Report, to include a financial statement, delivered to the Council no later than the September Council meeting.
- c) The **Vice President**, in the absence of the President or in the event of the President's unavailability to carry out the functions of office, shall assume during such times the duties of the President. The Vice President shall chair the Governance and Parish Engagement sub-committees. The Vice President shall perform such other duties as may be delegated by the President.
- d) The **Secretary** shall take the minutes of each meeting of the Council, preserve them in a permanent record, and send copies of the minutes to all members of the Council before the next meeting. The Secretary shall be responsible for the publication of the minutes to the Parish. The Secretary shall work with Parish Staff to ensure the preservation of all archives of the Council.

ARTICLE VIII – THE THREE SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

1. *Executive Committee*. Consists of the Council Officers, Pastor, and Pastoral Associate. The Executive Committee may convene by the request of any of its members to make decisions on parish matters which require immediate attention. Any such meeting will be followed by immediate notice to the Council.
2. *Governance Sub-Committee*. Consists of a membership of at least two elected Representatives, with the Council Vice President as Chair.
3. *Parish Engagement Sub-Committee*. Consists of a membership of at least two elected Representatives, with the Council Vice President as Chair.

ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES AND MINISTRIES

1. The Council has the responsibility of oversight of the Foundational Committees and all other committees and ministries of the Parish.
2. The establishment of any new committee or ministry shall be approved by the Council.
3. The Chairs of the Foundational Committees will each appoint one Representative as a Council member for the period of one full Council year. This Foundational Committee Representative cannot be an Elected Representative.

ARTICLE X – DECISION-MAKING

1. The Council shall use the consensus decision-making process articulated in the bylaws of this Constitution.
2. Council members are expected to participate in deliberations, and thus are responsible for the final decisions of the Council. Per Article V.5, other parishioners may be present at Council meetings; these parishioners may participate in the discussion, though not the decision.
3. All currently-serving members are responsible for decision-making through the conclusion of the Annual Meeting. New members will assume decision-making responsibilities one month after beginning their term of service at the Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE XI - ADOPTION OF THIS PARISH COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

1. The Council shall submit this Parish Council Constitution to parishioners for ratification by a two-thirds majority of those voting.
2. Immediately upon ratification, this Constitution shall take effect.
3. The Council shall then operate under this Constitution, with the extension of the Council year until October 2024.
4. Existing procedures and practices of the Council which are not in disagreement with this Constitution will remain in practice until the adoption of the bylaws by the Council, which will occur within 5 months of the adoption of the Constitution.
5. Upon the adoption of this Constitution, the Foundational Committees and other committees and ministries of the Parish will continue as established.

ARTICLE XII – AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Constitution may be proposed by a decision of the Council and shall be effective upon ratification by a two-thirds majority of those parishioners voting.