

**PARISH OF ST. STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR
COUNCIL CHARTER**

(Revised and Approved 10/95)

(Revised 6/00)

(Revised 01/09)

PROLOGUE

We, the people of God of The Parish of St. Stephen, the First Martyr, Warwick, New York, having been born in the Holy Spirit through the waters of Baptism, strengthened by Confirmation, and nourished by the Eucharist, sharing with our ordained priests a Priesthood of the Laity, do adopt this charter in order to carry out together our mutual responsibility of spreading the love of Christ to all people and ensuring our mission that is: A Eucharistic Community, Journeying in Knowledge, Love and Service.

ARTICLE I

A. NAME

Parish Council of The Parish of St. Stephen, the First Martyr, Warwick, New York, referred to in this Charter as the "Council."

ARTICLE II

A. PURPOSE, AUTHORITY, FUNCTION

1. PURPOSE

The council shall:

- a) Provide a structured way for laity, religious, and priests to coordinate, encourage, promote, and participate in every apostolic, spiritual, and administrative work of the parish in order to have an organized way of sharing in the teaching, sanctifying, and guiding of the people of God.
- b) Provide an ongoing survey of the spiritual and temporal needs of the parish and the community, and after setting priorities, develop and implement programs aimed at meeting those needs.
- c) Serve as a permanent structure for constructive dialogue among the priests, religious, and laity so that all can work in close cooperation as a truly Christian community in fulfillment of the mission of Christ.

2. AUTHORITY

The council shall act as a consultative body, whose recommendation shall be binding when ratified by the Pastor, and shall enact by-laws to govern the

PARISH OF ST. STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR, PARISH COUNCIL CHARTER

manner in which it shall conduct its business. The Council will operate under "Consensus," which is defined as a decision that is reached in an atmosphere of prayerful and open deliberation.

3. FUNCTION

The council shall assist the Pastor in conducting the necessary business of the parish and in establishing such commissions and committees as necessary.

ARTICLE III

A. MEMBERSHIP

1. The Council shall consist of designated, selected, and appointed members as follows:

a) Designated Members:

- (1) The Pastor as a non-voting representative of the Archbishop
- (2) Parochial Vicar(s), Permanent Deacon(s), Principal of St. Stephen – St. Edward School, Director of Religious Education (DRE) and parish lay trustees. These members will be voting members.

b) Selected Members:

The Council shall be composed of fourteen (14) members selected at large in addition to the designated and appointed members; additional qualifications for the selected members shall be:

- (1) Must be Catholic registered in the parish for at least one (1) year
- (2) Twelve (12) Adult members must be at least eighteen (18) years of age and have received the sacrament of Confirmation
- (3) Two (2) Teen members must be at least in High School and confirmed, to serve a one (1) year term
- (4) Must have the desire to serve and attend regular and special Council meetings
- (5) Must be willing to fulfill the responsibilities of a Council member

2. The term of the office on the Council shall be:

a) Adult member three (3) years

PARISH OF ST. STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR, PARISH COUNCIL CHARTER

- b) Teen members one (1) year
 - c) Selected members may serve no more than two (2) consecutive terms, which may follow a partial term resulting from action to fill a vacancy.
3. Any vacancy that occurs, other than completion of terms, will be filled by recommendation of the Council to the Pastor, until the expiration of the individual's term of office.

ARTICLE IV

A. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

There shall be a President, a Vice President, and a Recording Secretary elected each year by the members of the Council from its membership for a one-year term. Officers may serve no more than two (2) consecutive one-year terms of office. Although designated members of the Council are not eligible to hold these offices, they will participate in the balloting for these positions

ARTICLE V

A. MEETINGS

The Council shall meet a minimum of eight (8) times a year, the second Monday of the month whenever possible, as provided in the Bylaws, and these meetings shall be open to the parishioners. The Pastor may call special meetings of the Council when necessary. The Bylaws may provide for additional methods of calling special meetings.

All meetings of the Council shall be public, except when the Council votes to hold executive sessions.

ARTICLE VI

A. NOMINATIONS AND SELECTIONS

1. NOMINATIONS

- a) The Nomination Process for the Council shall be established subject to the terms and conditions as stated in the Bylaws.
- b) Nominations for consideration of serving on the Council may be made by any parishioner.
- c) Adult Member - Any parishioner who is Catholic and a registered member of St. Stephen Parish for one (1) year at the time of nomination and has attained his/her eighteenth (18) birthday may be nominated for selection for Council membership as a adult member.

PARISH OF ST. STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR, PARISH COUNCIL CHARTER

- d) Teen Member - Any parishioner who is Catholic and a registered member of St. Stephen Parish for one (1) year at the time of nomination and is a least a High School student and confirmed may be nominated for selection for Council membership as a teen member.

ARTICLE VII

A. RATIFICATION

Ratification of this charter shall require approval by Consensus of the Council.

BYLAWS

Article II of the St. Stephen Parish Council requires enactment of Bylaws governing the manner in which business shall be conducted.

A. VOTING PROCEDURE (ARTICLE II)

All motions approved by the Council will be subject to the Pastor for ratification.

B. MEMBERSHIP

Currently, the Council consists of fourteen (14) selected members:

1. Yearly, four (4) new adult members are selected for a three (3) year term. They will replace the four (4) adult members who have completed their term.
2. Yearly, two (2) new teen members are selected for a one (1) year term. They will replace the two (2) teen members who have completed their term.

C. DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS (ARTICLE IV)

1. The President shall
 - a) Convene and preside over all meetings
 - b) Be responsible for the general management of the business meeting
2. The Vice President, in the absence of the President, shall preside at the meetings and shall, for the purpose of such meetings, have the duties and exercise the function of the President.
3. The Recording Secretary shall be responsible for recording the minutes of all Council meetings and responsible for their distribution to Council members in a timely manner.

PARISH OF ST. STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR, PARISH COUNCIL CHARTER

4. Any member of the Council shall be deemed to have resigned after unexplained absences from three consecutive regular Council meetings. Vacancies will be filled in accordance with Article III, Section A (Membership), Paragraph 3 of the Charter.

D. MEETINGS (ARTICLE V)

1. Executive meetings will be held as designated by the Council, usually eight (8) times a year, the second Monday of the month whenever possible. Regular meetings will be announced in the bulletin. The parishioners are invited to attend these regular meetings after consulting with the pastor.
2. Executive sessions require no prior announcement in the bulletin and exclude attendance of individuals other than those invited.
3. If, in the opinion of the members present, there are an insufficient number of members present to achieve consensus, an informal meeting may be held.
4. The order of business shall be as follows:
 - a) Opening Prayer
 - b) Acceptance of minutes
 - c) Old business
 - d) Pastor's Issues
 - e) New Business
 - f) Open Session
 - g) Closing Prayer
5. Members of the Parish are encouraged to present items for consideration to the Pastor to determine whether it will be included for discussion at the monthly Council meeting.

E. NOMINATION PROCESS (ARTICLE VI)

1. The annual Council selection will be held in May of each year. The process will take place beginning in April and will take four weeks to complete.
2. Week 1: Information concerning the selection process will be contained in the Parish Bulletin prior to the first week of nomination balloting.

PARISH OF ST. STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR, PARISH COUNCIL CHARTER

3. Weeks II and III: The process of nomination and selection will be explained at Mass. Ballots will be passed out and nominations solicited from parishioners and collected after Mass.
4. Week III: The Sunday before the selection shall be designated as a day of prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
5. During the week following the second Sunday of balloting, the name of each nominee will be passed through the Pastor and his Associate(s) for final acceptance. Each of the nominees will be called, complimented, and asked if he or she will be willing to serve. This task will be accomplished by the outgoing Council members.

F. SELECTIONS (ARTICLE VII)

The Sunday before the selections are made shall be designated a day of prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

1. Week IV: After the Homily, the Pastor will draw names from a basket equal to the number to the vacancies on the Council.
2. The responsibility of assuring that the parish records are complete and up to date lies with the individual parishioners. Therefore, no nominations shall be considered unless the person is registered in the parish, except by special approval of the Pastor.
3. The annual Council selection will be in May of each year. All terms of office run through the regular June meeting. During this meeting, newly selected candidates and Council members whose terms of office have not expired will be seated as the new Council. Following this meeting, an Executive Session will be held to elect new officers for the coming year.