

The Charity of Christ Compels Us...

The Constitution of the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish Council - Shrub Oak, New York

Preamble:

We, members of Christ's Mystical Body, each of us essential to the task and privilege of bringing to the world His Truth, do, according to the spirit of Vatican II, and recognizing our communion with our Holy Father, our Cardinal Archbishop, and our Parish Pastor, hereby unite to form the Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish Council.

Established May, 2015 by the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish Council.

Article I – Purpose and Function

- A. To be a consulting and advisory body to the Pastor for the good of the Parish.
- B. To help the Pastor discern, prioritize and implement solutions to the needs of our parish community.
- C. To help the various organizations, committees and/or commissions formulate and meet their yearly mission goals.
- D. To plan and help bring to fruition long-term goals for the parish as it seeks to involve and serve all parishioners and the whole of our community.
- E. To bring our parishioners closer together and grow our parish by encouraging community building activities and fuller participation in the temporal and spiritual missions of the parish.

Article II – Membership

- A. There shall be 12 members selected by draw after public prayer in the Church the first year. All who are on the list, from which names are drawn, will be assigned a number for the purpose of filling vacancies during the year.
- B. Each year, in the spring, this process of nominations, public prayer and drawing lots shall be repeated to fill terms that have expired.
- C. The pastor may select up to 5 additional members. They will serve one year terms renewable at the request of the Pastor up to six consecutive years.
- D. All practicing, and registered, members of the parish who are age 17 and above (or will be HS seniors) are eligible to be nominated to be on the Council. Parishioners may nominate others or themselves. The nominating committee and the pastor will work to have a slate of candidates that represents a cross section of the parish so that there is representation of the various demographics that exist in the parish.
- E. The term of office for selected members shall be 3 years, with no more than 2 consecutive 3 year terms served. After a one year hiatus, a person may serve additional terms.

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F. There will be a nomination committee comprised of selected council members who with the clergy will vet nominated persons according to the requirements of Article II D. Initially, to achieve a 1/3rd turnover possibility each year, of the 12 selected, the first 4 will have 3 year terms, the second 4 will have 2 year terms and the third 4 will have a 1 year term. Thereafter, all selected will be for 3 years.

G. In addition to the above members will be the Clergy, the Finance Council Chairperson, and certain employees of the parish, such as the Parish Facilities Manager, the Religious Education Coordinator, the School Principal *et al*. These are *ex officio* members, who can participate in dialogue but will not have a vote when votes are taken.

H. Vacancies will be promptly filled, going to the next person on the list that has been maintained (see A above). The Pastor will fill the vacancy if it was from the five he chose. Replacements will serve out the remaining term of the person they replace.

I. Members are expected to be active members, in good standing in the Church community and have good attendance at meetings. A vacancy can be declared by the membership if a member has 3 un-excused absences within a year.

Article III: Officers of the Council

A. **The Council will have 3 officers:** Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary who will be elected by the Council at the last meeting of the school year for 2 year terms, renewable for one year by election. These officers together with the Pastor shall constitute the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall meet, or communicate, as necessary to conduct necessary business and at least a week before Council meetings to finalize and propagate the agenda.

B. The duties of the Chairperson:

1. To call and chair all meetings. (The pastor may also call for a meeting.)
2. To convene the Executive Committee in order to prepare the Council meeting agenda, get this agenda and a summary of approved minutes of previous business disseminated by e-mail to members and by bulletin and/or web-site to parishioners.
3. To oversee and facilitate the activities of the Council.

C. The duties of the Vice-Chairperson:

1. To execute the duties of the Chairperson in the Chair's absence.
2. To assist the Chairperson in a collaborative manner while taking direction from the Chair.
3. To succeed the Chair for the balance of the term if that position is vacated.
4. To organize and chair the Nomination Committee and execute the selection process for new members each year.

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D. The duties of the Secretary:

1. To maintain a written record of meetings.
2. To prepare a summary of Council business, agendas, and decisions for dissemination prior to meetings, subject to review first by Pastor and executive committee.
2. To maintain an attendance record of all Council members in an Attendance Register.
3. To maintain a current record of all Council members and their contact information.

Article IV: Meetings and Voting

- A. The Council will meet every month except December and July, usually on the same day of the same week of each month, to be determined by the Council. Meetings will normally be from 7:30 PM to 9PM.
- B. Meetings are open to all parishioners and will be advertised as such each month.
- C. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor, the executive committee, or a majority of the council members. It will be up to the Pastor whether or not these meetings will be open to the parishioners.
- D. Council meetings will open and close with prayer and follow the agenda, after which “New Business” will be addressed, including input from members towards the next agenda.
- E. Parishioners are to be invited to submit proposals and comments to the Council for consideration but must do so in time to be included on the agenda. These shall be communicated to the Pastor or the Chairperson in writing, and with their approval, the parishioner can make a personal presentation.
- F. For a meeting to be official, a quorum of voting members must be present, that is 9 of 17 or ½ plus 1 if less than 17. To carry a motion, a simple majority of those present is needed.

Article V: Relationship of Council to Parish Organizations:

- A. The Pastor and not the Council has authority over the Parish organizations.
- B. The Council assists the Pastor in helping the organizations define and execute their functions and missions, and may therefore request of the organizations plans and reports that will help the Council in its duty.
- C. Seton currently groups all of its organizations into four categories, henceforth to be known as **Commissions**, namely **Worship, Christian Service, Faith Formation, and Community Building**. The Council will implement a mechanism to interface with each of these Commissions on a regular basis in order “To help the various organizations, committees and/or commissions formulate and meet their yearly mission goals.” (see Article I, section C)

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Article VI: Amendments:

This Constitution can be amended. The process must start by a member introducing in writing a proposed amendment, having it seconded and having due discussion of it. If a consensus then exists, the proposal will be promulgated by notice in the bulletin and web-site, giving opportunity for parish input. More discussion/debate will be on the next meeting agenda and a formal vote will be scheduled for the meeting after that. A 2/3rd vote of **all** of the voting members will be necessary to amend the Constitution.

***As sharers in the role of Christ the Priest, the Prophet, and the King,
the laity have an active part to play in the life and activity of the Church
(Decree on the Apostolate to the Laity, 10).***