

**St. Francis of Assisi Parish Council By-Laws
June 2014**

St. Francis of Assisi Parish Council shall be the organizational structure and coordinating framework for St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic parish in Warwick, Rhode Island, Diocese of Providence. The Council shall direct, evaluate and unify the various activities within the parish which promote the Church's mission of worship, evangelization and charity. Working in concert with the pastor and the universal Church, the Council will encourage and guide all parish activities in the apostolate of bringing the Gospel message to all people.

ARTICLE I: NAME

This organization shall be known as **St. Francis of Assisi Parish Council**.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The Council exists:

Section 1

To promote a Catholic parish community capable of discharging its responsibilities of worshipping God, spreading the Word, uniting all Christians in Christ and serving all peoples in charity.

Section 2

To provide leadership, representation, direction, education, resources, and encouragement to each parishioner in accordance with the constant and continuing goals of the parish, the diocese and the Church universal.

Section 3

To survey and determine continually and thoroughly through its committees the spiritual and temporal needs of individuals, families, the parish and the larger community.

Section 4

To utilize the abilities of all members of the parish community and to serve as a coordinating body for all organizations and group activities within the parish.

Section 5

To set priorities and then to plan, develop and implement suitable programs aimed at meeting these needs.

Section 6

To serve as a permanent structure for constructive dialogue between clergy and laity of the Parish as promoted by the Second Vatican Council so all can work in close cooperation as a truly Christian community in fulfilling Christ's saving mission.

Section 7

To cooperate with and effectively carry out the guidelines and the directives given by the Bishop and the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

Section 8

The authority vested in the Council shall be advisory and implemental, according to the guidelines of the Diocese of Providence.

ARTICLE III: NOMINATION AND ELECTIONS

Section 1

There shall be eight (8) elected members, selected by lot to the Parish Council. Bi-annually, four adult lay members shall be selected for a term of two (2) years. Selection of new lay members will be made prior to the annual election of Parish Council officers.

Section 2

The Pastor may appoint 1-5 members on the basis of the special needs of the Parish. The appointed members will be appointed for two (2) years or a fraction thereof, to coincide with the seating of newly selected council members, renewable bi-annually.

Section 3

All members of the Parish in good standing, 18 years of age or older as of the date of the selection, shall be eligible for nomination. A member of the parish is an individual in good standing with the Roman Catholic Church and formally registered with the Church of St. Francis of Assisi.

Section 4

The Pastor and Trustees shall be the only ex-officio voting members of the Parish Council.

Section 5

In addition to the Council members provided in preceding sections of this article, one additional voting member may be selected each year by those members of the Parish who have reached the age of 14 years, but have not yet attained the age of 18 years. The members shall be selected by lot to a term of two years, and shall serve no more than two (2) consecutive terms.

Section 6

No two (2) members of the same family may be seated on the Council at the same time.

Section 7

In the event that a Council member has more than three (3) unexcused absences in the same year, that member will be replaced and a new member shall be appointed in his/her place.

ARTICLE IV: VACANCIES

Vacancies, which occur in the positions of appointed members to the Council, shall be filled by the Pastor. Vacancies in selected positions shall be filled in the order the names were selected. In the event that all selected names are exhausted, vacancies shall be filled by a majority vote of the Parish Council. Such replacements shall complete the remaining time of the original member's term.

ARTICLE V: MEETINGS

Section 1

Meetings of the Parish Council shall be held at least monthly, ordinarily on the third Tuesday of the month, in St. Francis School or other pre-designated suitable area. An agenda and notification of regular meetings shall be forwarded by the President to each member. All regular meetings of the Council shall be open to all members of the Parish and notice of such meetings shall be published in the Parish bulletin on the prior Sunday.

Section 2

Any person in the Parish wishing to speak at a Council meeting may request to do so through the Pastor or President.

Section 3

Special meetings of the Council may be called by the President on three-day notice to each of the Council members, as specified in Section 1.

Section 4

A summary of the Parish Council meetings shall appear in the bulletin within a reasonable time and the full minutes shall be available on the Parish Website.

ARTICLE VI: OFFICERS

Section 1

The members of the Council shall elect from among its members a President, Vice-President and Secretary of the Council. Selected, appointed or Ex-Officio members, who are parishioners of St. Francis Parish (except for Pastor, Pastoral Assistant and Deacon), shall be eligible to hold office. Only returning elected, appointed, and Ex-Officio members may hold the offices of President and Vice President. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Council. In the absence of the President, the Vice-President shall perform the duties of President, and when so acting, shall have all the powers of and be subject to all restrictions upon the President. The Secretary shall keep minutes of the meetings, and shall be responsible for other duties requested by the President.

Section 2

The President shall appoint a nominating committee at the April meeting of the Parish Council. The nominating committee, in consultation with the Council members, shall develop a slate of officers for the following year. The nominating committee shall present the slate of officers at the June business meeting of the Council. The President shall open the floor for additional nominations. Each office shall be voted on separately, by secret ballot, and an officer elected by simple majority. In the event that there is only one nominee for an office the secretary shall cast one vote electing the nominee to office. Officers shall serve a term of two (2) years and may succeed themselves.

ARTICLE VII: MINISTRIES/GROUPS/COMMITTEES

Section 1

Each Parish ministry /group / committee is self-governing and elects its own chairperson and officers as appropriate. A report on the ministry / group / committee's activities shall be made to the Parish Council on a regular basis.

Section 2

Particular attention shall be paid to gathering reports concerning liturgical activities, religious education programs, family life activities, financial statements, and parish outreach programs.

Section 3

The President may, upon approval of the Council, designate committees or commissions and appoint members, thereto, to perform their duties as authorized and directed by the Council.

ARTICLE VIII: PROCEDURES

Section 1

At the discretion of the President, when necessary, Robert's Rules of Order, Revised in the hand of a parliamentarian appointed by the President, shall govern the procedures of the Council.

Section 2

Every three (3) years, or when deemed necessary, a By-Law Committee shall be formed to review and up-date the By-Laws.