

**The Church of the Most Holy Trinity
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**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
CHURCH OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY PARISH COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 2011**

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of the body established by this constitution shall be the **CHURCH OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY PARISH COUNCIL**.

ARTICLE II - OBJECTIVES

As a body of representatives of the people of God in the parish community, this **Parish Council** seeks:

1. To foster the unity of the parish.
2. To assess adequately, under the leadership of the Pastor, the spiritual and temporal needs of the parish.
3. To coordinate all parish activities in a manner that will serve the best interests of the people of the parish.
4. To encourage participation by all members of the parish in the spiritual and apostolic life of the parish.
5. To provide a forum for constructive dialogue among all members of the parish community and the community at large.
6. To discern, develop and implement plans and programs that will promote parish unity and deepen Catholic identity.
7. To promote programs and activities recommended by the Bishop, Diocesan Commissions and Agencies, as well as the Parish Council itself.
8. The Parish Council will serve as advisors to the pastor to provide their distinct talents to benefit the parish.

ARTICLE III - NATURE AND ROLE

1. The Parish Council shall exercise a meaningful role in the decision-making process on the parish level.
2. By the decision-making process is meant the open and free dialogue of the pastor, priest (s), pastoral associates, and representatives of the parish community on all matters pertaining to the life of the parish as together they seek a consensus of thought and action.
3. The deliberations and conclusions of the Parish Council must take into account and be in accord with the requirements of the Book of Canon Law as well as existing diocesan policy.
4. Any action of the Parish Council requires a majority vote of the total voting membership present.
5. For any action to be taken a quorum or majority of voting Parish Council members must be present.
6. The Pastor retains the ultimate decision-making responsibility within the parish.
7. Any actions by the Parish Council shall become final and binding only when ratified by the Pastor.

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP

1. The Parish Council shall consist of elected, ex-officio (non- voting), and appointed members plus elected representatives of particular parish organizations. Only actively participating CHURCH OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY members, who are “in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church and registered in the Diocese of Savannah” can be elected or appointed to the Parish Council.
2. A conflict of interest shall be defined as any situation or issue that would directly or indirectly result in personal benefit or monetary gain of the Parish Council member. Should there exist a possible conflict of interest, the council member shall notify the full council of the possible conflict. No person shall serve on the Parish Council who has a conflict of interest.

NON-VOTING COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. The parish priests, by virtue of the office entrusted to them by the Bishop, are ex-officio, non-voting, members of the Parish Council.
2. Permanent and transitional deacons, as well as seminarians, assigned to the CHURCH OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY Parish are ex-officio, non-voting, member of the Parish Council.
3. The Principal, or an appointed delegate, of Immaculate Conception School shall be an ex-officio, non-voting, member of the **Parish** Council.
4. A representative or chairman, of the African-American Ministry shall be an ex-officio, non-voting, member of the Parish Council.
5. The Grand-Knight of the Knights of Columbus shall be an ex-officio, non-voting, member of the Parish Council.
6. A Pro-Life Committee representative shall be an ex-officio, non-voting, member of the Parish Council.
7. The Parish Council of Catholic Women representative shall be an ex-officio, non-voting, member of the Parish Council.
8. Any committee chair, who is a non-voting Parish Council member, shall also be an ex-officio non-voting member.

VOTING PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. There will be (11) lay-representatives serving as the Parish Council of the Church of the Most Holy Trinity. Six (6) will be elected at-large and five (5) shall be appointed by the pastor.

ARTICLE V - ELECTIONS AND OFFICES

1. All members, elected and appointed, of the **Parish** Council shall serve three-year terms commencing July 1st.
2. Any vacancy of an elected member shall be filled through appointment by the Pastor for the remainder of the unexpired term.
3. No elected member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms; after an interim of one (1) year that member is eligible for election again.
4. Appointed members may be reappointed for two (2) successive terms. They are a eligible for elected membership. However, tenure shall not exceed six (6)

consecutive years.

5. In the spring, the executive Committee will present a list of nominees for the six (6) elective openings on the Parish Council. Additional nominees from other Parish Council members may be submitted at this time. All qualified nominees will be contacted by the Pastor or his delegated representative will interview each candidate to determine if the name can be placed on the ballot. Elections will then be held each spring for the possible six (6) elected and five (5) positions.
5. Parish groups and organizations who have the right to choose an ex-officio (non-voting) representative to the Parish Council shall designate such choice by June 15th.
7. The members to be appointed by the Pastor shall be appointed by June 15th.
9. In its first meeting following the elections: 1. The Parish Council shall elect by majority vote from among its voting members a President, and a Vice-President or 2. The pastor may select a President and/or Vice President at his discretion.
10. Officers shall serve for a term of one (1) year. They will not be eligible to serve more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office.
11. Any vacancy in one of the offices shall be filled for the remainder of the term in question by an election within the **Parish** Council.

ARTICLE VI - COMMITTEES

1. The Parish Council shall have the following committees: Building and Grounds, Religious Education, Christian Service, Liturgy, Parish Life, Stewardship, Pro-Life and Finance.
2. The Executive Committee, composed of the Parish Council's two (2) officers and the Pastor, shall be responsible for:
 - a. Appointment of the Chairperson of each committee.
 - b. Preparation of the agenda for the Parish Council meetings.
 - c. The calling of the executive sessions of the Parish Council.
3. The Pastor and the President of the Parish Council shall be ex-officio (non-voting) members of each committee.
4. The chairperson of each committee shall solicit volunteers from the parish-at-large to assist in accomplishing the objectives stated in Article II. Solicitation may be via written and/or oral communications.

5. Configuration of each committee shall be the responsibility of the committee chairperson, in contact with the executive committee, and will be based upon the needs and requirements of the particular ongoing program or activity.
6. The Chairperson of each committee may appoint one (1) member as Vice-Chairperson to report to the Parish Council in the chairperson's absence.
7. The work of the committees shall be directed by the Parish Council and all matters of policy should be referred to the Parish Council by the Chairperson.
8. The Pastor and/or the President of the Parish Council shall appoint special committees as needed.

ARTICLE VII - MEETINGS

1. The Parish Council shall meet regularly. Meetings may be scheduled by the Pastor and president.
2. A special meeting may be called by the Pastor and President.
3. A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting shall be 60% of the total voting membership of the Parish Council.
4. All meetings of the Parish Council shall be open to all members of the parish.
5. Membership in the Parish Council requires attendance at all meetings. Two (2) unexcused absences shall be considered as an act of resignation from the council and accepted as such. Absences shall be approved by the pastor or the Parish Council President.
6. Severance: Any member of the Parish Council may resign by filing a written resignation.
7. At all meetings of the Parish Council, Roberts Rule of Order, revised, shall be used as Rules of Order.
8. Any active parishioner may request approval from the pastor to be placed on the agenda and subsequently address the Parish Council. Any such request must be presented to the pastor at least 48 hours in advance of the Parish Council meeting stating the subject to be addressed. The addressee will be allowed 5 minutes if he or she is placed on the agenda.

ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting membership of the Parish Council following fifteen (15) days notification of the proposed change.