



Parish Council Manual 2025 – 2026

Father Patrick J. Sheedy

5 S.E. 17th Street
Ocala, FL 34471
(352) 629-8092

This document provides an overview of the purpose of Blessed Trinity's Parish Council, explains the composition/membership and roles and responsibilities of the members, conduct of meetings, and scope of authority.

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What is the Parish Council?

'In every parish in every diocese, a pastoral council shall be established, if the diocesan bishop, after consulting with the council of presbyters, so decides' (Canon 536, #1)

Parish pastoral councils are recognized bodies within the Church structure. Like the diocesan pastoral councils, parish pastoral councils were strongly recommended by the bishops of the Second Vatican Council as a vehicle for promoting the mission of Christ and ensuring that the “life and activity of the people of God may be brought into greater conformity with the gospel”.

The Parish Council* is composed of representative members of the congregation working along with parish staff who have pastoral care by reason of their office, and the parish pastor. Along with the pastor, the Parish Council shares the responsibility for building the parish into a vibrant Christian community that promotes gospel values of love, justice and peace. It is a consultative body of leaders who actively seek the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and are guided by the teachings, laws and recommendations of the universal Church and the local diocesan Church.

Vatican. (n.d.). *CODE OF CANON LAW*. Code of Canon Law - Book II - The People of God - Liber II. De Populo Dei - Part II. (Cann. 460-572). https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic_lib2-cann460-572_en.html#CHAPTER_V

*It should be noted that the terms “Parish Council”, “Parish pastoral councils”, and “Pastoral Council” are used interchangeably and have the same meaning.

Purpose of the Parish Council

We, as Council Members, strive to embody the stewardship way of life, guiding and serving our Blessed Trinity community with its Pastor. Our purpose is to enable the parish community to carry out the mission statement. We help coordinate the ministry efforts of the parish, organize parish-wide events, and serve as a communication hub for the ministries and parish staff (Appendix 1).

The parish council seeks to work with the Parish Pastor and parish team to enrich the quality of parish life by bringing alive the parish's vision for itself.

Its principal role is to:

- Lead the parish's vision and mission,
- Review, evaluate, and continuously develop the parish's pastoral plan
- Provide a monthly update of the ministries, and staff charged with pastoral care
- Inform the Pastor of the needs, concerns, gifts, and resources of the parish
- Provide support, guidance, advice and guidance to the Parish team.
- Ensure that members participate in parish pastoral plan activities
- Represent views of the congregation to the parish pastor.
- Advise the parish pastor regarding any major decisions or changing circumstances within the parish or wider community which affect the life and well-being of the parish.
- Periodically review and continuously develop the parish mission statement.
- Recommend policies, procedures, and programs that will assist in implementation of the mission statement.
- Keep Blessed Trinity Catholic Church community up to date on Parish Council's recommendations and activities.

Vision Statement

To inspire our Christ-centered stewardship parish to use their time, talent, and treasure to bring people together, and make disciples out of believers.

Mission Statement

We, as Council Members, strive to embody the stewardship way of life, guiding and serving our BT Community, with its Pastor.

Membership – Elections and Appointments

Membership of the Parish Council (PC) is open to all parishioners of Blessed Trinity Catholic Church who are over the age of eighteen years.

The Parish Council should reflect the diversity of our parish. The Parish Council will have at least nine (9), but no more than 15 members and the Pastor, with three classifications of members:

One or more individuals may be invited to attend a parish council meeting when additional or specialist advice and information is needed

To appoint new members to the PC there may be a process of appointment or election. Annually, the Pastor will announce to the parish that Parish Council vacancies exist and invite the parish's involvement through nominations of suitable candidates. An election will be conducted, and the parish is invited to elect members from the list of nominees. (Attachment 2)

Additional vacancies may be filled by the Pastor's appointment.

Elections will be announced/advertised in the Parish Bulletin. Samples of the advertisements/announcements are provided in Attachment 2.

Who We Are

Parish Council Members:

- Appointed Commission Heads (6): Administration, Community Outreach, Communication, Religious Education, Social, and Worship.
- At-Large Members (3)
- Appointed Members (3)
- Special Representatives

Terms of Membership

Council members are elected or appointed for a 3-year term and may be appointed to one additional 3-year term.

The aim is for the parish council to remain unchanged for a 3-year period. After 3 years, at least one-third of the membership should change. No member should serve more than two consecutive terms.

A member who has served 2 consecutive terms may be elected or appointed after a one-year absence.

Qualities and skills needed by the Parish Council Members

All should be practicing Catholics who participate regularly in the parish Sunday Mass. Members should seek to represent the parish as a whole and not act as representatives of particular parish groups/organizations. They must be able to contribute effectively to the work of the PC and be willing to give the commitment required from a parish council member.

Qualities

- An ability to listen
- An ability to articulate accurately what one has heard
- A desire for spiritual growth
- An openness to study and reflection
- An eagerness to help the parish articulate its vision and direction.

Skills

- An ease in working in groups
- An ability to inspire and lead others
- A willingness to delegate responsibilities
- An ability to “follow through” after making a commitment
- An ability to make decisions
- An excitement about the parish
- Availability of time and focused energy

Roles and Responsibilities within the Parish Council

The Parish Priest brings the authority of the Bishop to the work of the council. He bears the ultimate responsibility for decisions regarding pastoral ministry and the overall mission of the parish.

In rare cases, he may choose not to follow the advice of the parish council (Code of Canon Law 536), but as a member of the PC, he will not readily ignore their advice because he has participated in the prayerful process of making the decisions.

He shares his understanding of the pastoral needs of the parish, including his hopes and aspirations for the future. He also enables the members of the council to exercise and develop their gifts, and together, they recognize and affirm the many gifts and ministries within the parish community. Appointments to President, Vice-President, and Secretary roles are by election by the members of the Parish Council.

Officers shall serve a term of one year. An officer can be reelected at the discretion of Council for an additional term of one year.

President

The role of President is key. The President must be able to work with the Pastor and also have the confidence of the whole Parish Council.

The role of the President is to:

- Establish a relationship of mutual trust and respect with the Pastor and develop an understanding of his aspirations for the parish.
- Run the Parish Council meetings effectively, ensuring that everyone has a chance to contribute. Ensure significant time for prayer and formation is included at meetings to maintain the pastoral focus of the council.
- Provide encouragement and support for Parish Council members.
- Establish communications channels within the parish. These channels should ensure that the PC is in two-way communication with parishioners and all groups within the parish.
- As outgoing President, oversee the election process for the President, Vice-President and Secretary roles.

Vice-President

The role of the Vice-President is to support the President and occasionally act for him or her – this is a good development role.

Secretary

The role of the Secretary is to:

- Produce and distribute agendas (plus any preparatory reading), at least 4 days prior to the meeting
- Organize a meeting place and resources for the meeting, to include refreshments if appropriate.
- Ensure actions and decisions are recorded and circulated to the Parish Council members within seven days of the meeting, ensuring that a brief summary is made available to the parish.

Executive Board

There will be an executive board, consisting of the Parish Pastor, President, Vice-President and Secretary.

They will be responsible for:

- meeting on a monthly basis prior to the designated Parish Council meeting to develop the agenda for the upcoming meeting.
- agreeing on the agenda for each meeting including matters identified by:
 - individual Parish Council members
 - individual parishioners
 - parish groups and organizations, and the wider community.
- dealing with any urgent business matters which may arise between the Parish Council meetings and ensuring that such matters are reported to the next parish council meeting

- Sufficient time needs to be set aside for prayer and reflection, and its priority understood. Responsibility for leading prayer should be taken by different people through the life of the PC, and a range of individual approaches encouraged.

Duties & Expectations of the At-Large Members

- Attends all Parish Council meetings (2nd Tuesday of the month from August – June at 6 p.m.). Priority given to this meeting over any other ministry meeting that may fall on the same day/time. If unable to attend, notifies the President or another member of the council before the meeting.
- Willing to volunteer for sub-committees or projects that may come up during the year.
- Attends and helps serve at Leadership Dinner in January (counts as PC January meeting).
- Attends Parish Picnic. Assists with set up the day before & clean up on day of picnic.
- Attends Annual Leader's Day of Reflection in September.
- Represents parish interests at council meetings by listening, asking good questions and sharing ideas and expertise.
- Reliable.
- On time.
- Committed to serving an entire 3-year term.

Parish Council Meeting Effectiveness

The elements that enable the PC to work well together are:

- Facilitating Environment – arranging the meeting space so that it enables the active participation of the whole group. All members should be able to see and hear each other.
- Good Agenda
 - Proposed, discussed, and agreed upon by the Executive Board
 - Distributed ahead of time with any reading material that is required
 - Should provide allocated time for each agenda item
 - Should be focused on a limited number of pastoral issues
 - Should indicate the group member who is responsible for the agenda item.
- Succinct Minutes – PC minutes should record the issues addressed and the agreed outcomes. This includes agreed actions, who will carry them out and by when.
- Accountability – the PC should support each other in their ministry particularly by holding each other accountable to commitments that are made, calling those who have missed meetings, undertaking to work with each other rather than alone. The PC is also accountable to the archdiocese, and Parish communities.

Frequency of Parish Council Meetings

- The Executive Board members will hold an Agenda planning meeting with the Parish Pastor, the Thursday prior to the 2nd Tuesday of each month from August through June.
- Meetings will be held every month on the 2nd Tuesday of the month excluding July.

Evaluation of Parish Council

The members of the parish council will meet in a prayerful context at an annual Half-Day of Reflection.

The Parish Council will also account for its work annually by reflecting on the work of the PC in the life of the parish, and to explain the proposed plans for the future.

Change of Parish Pastor

In order to ensure continuity in the life of the parish, the Parish Council will continue its work during any period of transition.

The PC will welcome, support and help a new Parish Pastor as he settles into his new role; and be ready to adjust, adapt or review its work and membership in consultation with parishioners, to meet any change of emphasis or new direction.

Appendix 1

Blessed Trinity Catholic Church Pastoral Council By-Laws

Mission Statement

We, as Council Members, strive to embody the stewardship way of life, guiding and serving our BT community with its Pastor.

Article I

Name

The name of the organization is the Blessed Trinity Pastoral Council.

Article II

Purpose

The purpose of the Pastoral Council is to enable the parish community to carry out the mission statement.

Article III

Function

The Pastoral Council will join with the Pastor in the leadership of the faith community. Through prayer, deliberation, and living the Gospel message, the Pastoral Council will foster the spiritual growth of the parish. The Council will also coordinate parish community activities, and through a shared vision, develop and implement plans to meet the needs of the members of the parish and its outreach ministries. Any decision made by the Pastoral Council will be a Christ-centered consensus decision.

Article IV

Membership

Section 1 – The Pastoral Council will have at least nine, but no more than 15 members and the Pastor, with three classifications of members:

A. Appointed Commission Heads:

Members appointed by their Ministry Commissions will serve three years and can be reappointed for an additional three-year term. An Appointed Commission Head may serve no more than six years.

B. At-Large Members:

There will be three At-Large members. At least one new At-Large member must be elected each year by the parish to serve a three-year term. If an At-Large member is appointed to a Commission Head, they can only serve six years.

C. Appointed Members:

After consultation with Council, the pastor can appoint up to three members to serve a three-year term. These Appointed Members can be reappointed to serve an additional three-year term.

D. Youth Representatives:

The Youth Representatives will be selected from grades 10 through 12 by the youth, under the direction of the youth director annually.

E. Hispanic Representative:

The Hispanic Representative will be selected by the Hispanic community and approved by the priest as a permanent representative to the Parish Council. When vacating the position, the representative will recommend a replacement.

Section 2 – Eligibility:

- A. All registered members of the parish 18 years or older by June 1, with the exception of the Youth Representatives.
- B. Elected members of the Pastoral Council may not serve consecutive three-year terms. A member who fills a vacancy of an At-Large member will serve out the term of that vacancy and is eligible for election.

**Article V
Elections**

- Section 1 – The Pastoral Council will have at least nine (9), but no more than 15 members and the Pastor, with three classifications of members:
- Section 2 – The Pastoral Council shall identify eligible candidates. The Council is responsible for fully explaining the purpose and workings of the Council to the respective candidates.
- Section 3 – Any member of the parish 18 years or older will be allowed to vote.
- Section 4 – Elections will be held in conjunction with the School Board election.
- Section 5 – Election of Officers of the Council shall occur each year at the May meeting.
- Section 6 – Officers shall serve a term of one year. An officer can be reelected at the discretion of Council for an additional term of one year.
- Section 7 – Incomplete terms of At-Large members will be appointed by the Pastoral Council Executive Committee.

**Article VI
Meetings**

- Section 1 – Ten (10) regular meetings of the Council shall be scheduled during a Council year, but no less than six (6), and shall be open to all parishioners. A Council year will run August through June. The Youth may be represented at these meetings no less than three (3) times.
- Section 2 – Special meetings may be called by the President or the Pastor. The President must call a special meeting upon the request of six (6) members of the Council. All the members of the Pastoral Council, including the Pastor, will be notified of the meeting 72 hours in advance.

- Section 3 – Blessed Trinity staff members shall be scheduled to report on their ministry at the Council meetings throughout the year.

Article VII

Attendance for Church Year

- Section 1 – Each meeting shall normally begin with prayer in the Adoration Chapel, as prayer is an important part of the mission of the Council. Each member is expected to attend. Each member is expected to give attendance of Pastoral Council meetings a top priority over other committees/ministry involvement.
- Section 2 – In the event a Council member is unable to attend or will be late, he/she shall notify a fellow member. In the event a member misses two (2) meetings, the President shall contact that member. Three (3) unexcused absences will vacate any member's position on the Council. To remain in good standing, you must attend at least five (5) meetings annually.

Article VIII

Duties of Officers

- Section 1 – The President shall:
- A. Preside at all Council meetings
 - B. Take necessary measures for the conduct of the business of the Council
 - C. Coordinate the work of the officers and committees of the Council in order to promote the Council's objectives
 - D. Meet with the Executive Committee to plan Council meeting agendas
- Section 2 – The Vice President shall:
- A. Serve in the absence of the President
 - B. Ex-Officio member of all Council committees
 - C. Meet with the Executive Committee to plan Council meeting agenda
- Section 3 – The Secretary shall:
- A. Keep all records and minutes of the Council
 - B. Be responsible for appropriate correspondence
 - C. Publish Pastoral Council meeting dates and a brief summary of the last meeting's minutes in the parish bulletin
 - D. Send agenda, minutes, and reports to members prior to Council meeting
 - E. Meet with the Executive Committee to plan Council meeting agenda

Article IX Committees

- Section 1 – The Executive Committee shall consist of the Pastor, President, Vice President and Secretary. They shall meet to prepare the agenda prior to each meeting and also set the annual calendar prior to each new year.
- Section 2 – The Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the President for the purpose of identifying eligible candidates for Pastoral Council.
- Section 3 – Ad hoc or other committees are to be formed by the President as needed: (Includes the following but not limited to Parish Picnic, Ministry Fair, Stewardship Dinner, Ministry Head Dinner)

Article X Commissions

- Section 1 – There shall be six (6) standing Commissions to include all parish ministries: Worship, Religious Education, Social, Administration, Communication and Community Outreach. The Hispanic and Youth representatives attend to promote the interests of their respective groups.
- Section 2 – Each Commission Head shall meet with or call his or her ministries and report on a scheduled quarterly basis, to be determined by the Executive Committee each year. Ministry Heads and the Pastoral Council shall meet at the annual Stewardship Day of Reflection and the annual Ministry Head Dinner.

Article XI Amendments

These By-laws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Council by a consensus of the members present, provided that a copy of the proposed amendment is submitted to the members prior to the meeting.

Rules for Parish Council Members

1. Your actions and discussions must reflect the Council's function.
2. Know the Council mission and live it.
3. Know the difference between consultative and governance.
4. Read materials and be knowledgeable about the parish.
5. Continue to develop your spirituality and integrate it into the Council's decision-making.
6. Participate on a committee or commission.
7. Be prepared to deal with complaints.
8. Strive to provide intelligent input.
9. Offer to assist and participate in parish functions.

10. Respect the wisdom of each member of the Council. Respect confidentiality.
11. Keep an open mind.
12. Pray often for the other members of the Council, the parish, and the community it serves.

Appendix 2

Parish Council Elections - Announcement (Samples)

Blessed Trinity's Parish Council strives to embody the stewardship way of life, guiding and serving our Blessed Trinity community with its Pastor. Are you ready to take a leadership role in our parish? Would you like to help foster the spiritual growth of Blessed Trinity? Will you help develop and implement plans to meet the needs of the members of our parish and its outreach ministries?

If you are interested in running for an At-Large seat on Blessed Trinity's Parish Council, contact xxxx at (352) xxx-xxxx or parishcouncilpresident@gmail.com

(Note: This should be the Current President. This is an example.)

Announcement

This weekend, we are voting for a new at-large member to represent parishioners on Parish Council.

Ballots and pencils have been placed in the pews.

Please take a few moments to read over the ballot and mark one choice.

To allow parishioners at the next Mass to vote, please leave the pencils in the pews.

We are asking that you hold onto your ballot until the end of Mass. We will be outside in the portico after Mass with boxes to collect them.



Blessed Trinity
Catholic Church

2025 Parish Council Ballot

At-Large Member Miembro General	Vote for One by placing an (X) in the box next to the picture of the candidate of your choice. Vota por Uno colocando una (X) en la casilla junto a la foto del candidato de tu elección.	
	ELIZABETH EGAN ☐	Hello, my name is Elizabeth Egan. I am married to Marty Egan. Between us we have 8 kids and 8 grandchildren. I moved to Ocala in 2004, from the United States Virgin Islands. I have been a parishioner for approximately 15 years. I have been employed at Truist Bank for 21 years, and I am currently a Branch Manager. I am a member of the Council of Catholic Women, an Usher and Sacristan. I volunteer at the bookstore and assist with Catholic Appeal every year. I am currently on Team as Retreat Leader and preparing for our next Christ Renews His Parish Retreat. I would love to work with our Pastor and the other Council members to help achieve the church's mission to be a Stewardship Parish with God as the source of all our blessings and members giving back their time, talent and treasure. Thank You for your consideration.
ANGIE YATES ☐	Angie Yates was born and raised on the south side of Indianapolis, IN. She is a lifelong Catholic and was the third generation in her family to belong to her former parish, St. Roch. Following graduation from Veterinary school in 2008, Angie accepted an equine hospital internship in Ocala, and she and her husband, Eric, initially lived here and were BT parishioners from 2008-2009. At the completion of her internship in 2009, they returned to the Midwest and Angie opened her own equine practice. During that time, Addie, Tess and Maggie were born. In 2020, the family returned to Ocala and to Blessed Trinity. Addie (7th), Tess (5th) and Maggie (1st) have been enrolled at BT since 2021 and are involved in sports and school activities. Outside of her practice, Angie is also involved in the Ocala equestrian community as an amateur eventer and jumper rider.	

What is the Parish Council?

‘In every parish in every diocese, a pastoral council shall be established, if the diocesan bishop, after consulting with the council of presbyters, so decides’ (Canon 536, #1).

Our Blessed Trinity Parish Council (BT PC) Members strive to embody the stewardship way of life, guiding and serving our BT Community, with our Pastor.

Our purpose is to enable the parish community to fulfill our mission statement. We help coordinate the ministry efforts of the parish, organize parish-wide events, and serve as a communication hub for the ministries and parish staff.

Council members are elected or appointed for a 3-year term and may be appointed to one additional 3-year term. Our BT PC Meetings are held every month on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, excluding July.

Elections

There are currently 2 vacancies on the Parish Council. One At-Large member will be elected, the other position will be appointed.

This weekend, all parishioners will have the opportunity to vote for the new at-large member on the Parish Council.

Please take a moment to review the ballot and select one candidate by placing an X in the box next to the picture of the candidate of your choice. To allow parishioners at the next Mass to vote, please leave the pencils in the pews.

Please hold onto your ballot until the end of Mass and place it in one of the boxes provided outside the Church in the portico as you leave Mass today.

¿Qué es el Consejo Parroquial?

“En cada parroquia de cada diócesis, se establecerá un consejo pastoral si el obispo diocesano, tras consultar con el consejo de presbíteros, así lo decide” (Canon 536, n.º 1).

Nuestro Consejo Parroquial de la Santísima Trinidad (CPBT) se esfuerza por encarnar el estilo de vida de corresponsabilidad, guiando y sirviendo a nuestra Comunidad de la CPBT junto con nuestro párroco.

Nuestro propósito es permitir que la comunidad parroquial cumpla con nuestra misión. Ayudamos a coordinar los esfuerzos ministeriales de la parroquia, organizamos eventos parroquiales y servimos como centro de comunicación para los ministerios y el personal parroquial.

Los miembros del Consejo son elegidos o nombrados por un período de 3 años y pueden ser nombrados por un período adicional de 3 años. Nuestras reuniones del CPBT se celebran el segundo martes de cada mes, excepto en julio.

Elecciones

Actualmente hay 2 vacantes en el Consejo Parroquial. Se elegirá un miembro general y el otro cargo será designado.

Este fin de semana, todos los feligreses tendrán la oportunidad de votar por los nuevos miembros del Consejo Parroquial.

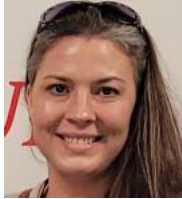
Tómese un momento para revisar la boleta y seleccionar un candidato colocando una X en el cuadro junto a la foto del candidato de su elección.

Para que los feligreses puedan votar en la próxima misa, dejen los lápices en las bancas.

Conserven su papeleta hasta el final de la misa y deposítela en una de las urnas provistas afuera de la iglesia, en el pórtico, al salir de la misa de hoy.

2023 Parish Council Election Ballot

_____ **HEATHER SMITH** - Hello, my name is Heather Smith. I'm married to Scott Smith. We have 4 children, 2 girls/2 boys, 24, 19, 18, and 11. I've been a parishioner of BT since birth. I'm involved in several ministries here. My paying job is at Campus USA Credit Union. I homeschool my son and volunteer as a Guardian Ad Litem. I absolutely love working for Jesus and If you'll have me, I will work hard to help the Parish Council accomplish important things.
Thank you for your consideration.



_____ **RODNEY GUTIERREZ**- Rodney has been a member of Blessed Trinity Catholic Church for almost three years. He is an active member of the adult choir and handbell choir. Prior to moving to Ocala with his wife and four children, Rodney was highly involved at St. Mary Magdalen Church in Altamonte Springs. There he served as Stewardship chair, was a reader, Eucharistic minister, choir director and handbell choir member. He was also involved with the Christian arts ministry.



_____ **BILL KENNEDY**- Parishioner of Blessed Trinity since 2003. Married to Suzi, assistant to K of C agent Raul Fernandez, since 1996. Daughter, Caitlin (24) BFA Fashion Design, Kent State University class of 2022. Son, Christopher (22) Spring 2023 BM Commercial Music Technology, Florida Atlantic University. Native of Massachusetts. Lived in Buffalo, NY, Pittsburgh, PA and St. Louis, MO.

Career in sales, marketing, product management and servicing of industrial and automotive equipment. Presently, global marketing manager for an Italian manufacturer of air & amp; gas compressors. Past: 2008 deputy grand knight K of C Council 5960; Board of Directors, Florida Center for the Blind; BT Lay Director for Christ Renews His Parish. Present: BT Adoration Hour; BT Choir; BT 'All Things Productions' cast member.



Appendix 3

Resolutions

Resolutions of the Parish Council at Blessed Trinity

The Parish Council at Blessed Trinity Catholic Church, in accordance with the Parish Council Mission Statement, do hereby resolve the following:

1. Blessed Trinity Catholic Church is a stewardship parish, acknowledging that everything we have is a gift from God, and we honor him by giving back of our time, talent, and treasure in response to His great love. As Parish Council members, we pledge to embody the stewardship way of life and maintain Blessed Trinity as a stewardship parish.
2. The history of Blessed Trinity Church and Blessed Trinity School are intertwined for the benefit of them both. We pledge that Blessed Trinity School shall always be a major ministry of Blessed Trinity Church.
3. We believe that all children of parishioners have a right to a Catholic education. For this reason, no child shall ever be denied a Catholic education for financial reasons. We will ensure that tuition be provided for all stewardship parishioners at Blessed Trinity School and Trinity Catholic High School.

Signed this 10th Day of September 2019

Appendix 4

Parish Council Membership

– **Include updated list**

Appendix 5

Commissions/Ministries List

– Include updated list

Appendix 6

Annual Plan Blessed Trinity Parish Council

- Include updated plan