I. Purpose

1983 Code of Canon Law Can. 536 §1. If the diocesan bishop judges it opportune after he has heard the presbyteral council, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish, over which the pastor presides and in which the Christian faithful, together with those who share in pastoral care by virtue of their office in the parish, assist in fostering pastoral activity.

§2. A pastoral council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by the norms established by the diocesan bishop.

The Parish Pastoral Council participates in the responsibility for pastoral ministry of the Parish. Its purpose and goals are extensive. It should research the needs, ideas, hopes, life and activity of the people of God, so that the whole Parish community can effectively carry out the mission of the Parish and fully participate in the ongoing conversion that is central to its life. The Parish Pastoral Council should constantly evaluate the Parish in its conformity to the Gospel and those constitutive elements of the Gospel that call for understanding the implications of justice. In this sense, the Parish Pastoral Council shares in the decision making process which assists the Pastor and trustees in carrying out the leadership role that is theirs within the Parish.

The Parish Pastoral Council assists the Pastor and trustees in accomplishing these goals by offering counsel to them. This consultative responsibility is rooted in the obligation of all the baptized to pursue the common good of the Church. It is present in the emerging consensus flowing from the combined gifts and multiple experiences of the people of God.

II. Definitions

"Archbishop" means the sitting Archbishop of St. Paul and Minneapolis (or the appointed Apostolic Administrator).

"Archdiocese" means that certain corporate entity formed, maintained and existing under Minnesota Section 315.16 with the Minnesota Business Name: “The Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis”.

"Parish" means a Parish within the Archdiocese Territory that is Archdiocese-recognized as Catholic.

"Parish Pastoral Council" means the canonical consultative body established in a Parish in accordance with canon 536 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law and the policy of the Archdiocese, which provides
consultation to the Pastor from a cross-section of parishioners to share thoughts and insights in service to the mission of a specific Parish.

"Pastor" means a Parish Pastor or a parochial administrator, as the case may be.

"Trustees" means the two lay members of the parish appointed to serve as members and officers of the parish corporation by the Archbishop, the Vicar General and the pastor or a majority of them.

III. Policy

Each Parish is required to have a constituted and active Parish Pastoral Council to assist and support the Pastor and trustees in their stewardship of Parish resources. Parishes that are clustered (sharing one Pastor while remaining separate legal and canonical entities) may form and maintain one collective Parish Pastoral Council with the approval of the trustees of each individual Parish. A cluster forming one Parish Pastoral Council must have a Constitution and Bylaws as outlined above.

A Parish Pastoral Council must meet at least quarterly. The Parish Pastoral Council must operate in accordance with current Constitution and Bylaws that have been approved by the Archbishop or his designee.

The Parish Pastoral Council remains in place where there is a change in Pastor or Parochial Administrator. A new Pastor or Parochial Administrator must meet within 90 days of his appointment with the Parish Pastoral Council.

A new Pastor or Parochial Administrator who is assigned to a Parish without a Parish Pastoral Council is obligated to form a Parish Pastoral Council within one year of his appointment.

A suggested template for the Constitution and Bylaws of a Parish Pastoral Council is attached to this policy. Parishes are welcome to form and develop their Pastoral Councils to fit the unique needs of the Parish community, provided that the council remains within its scope as defined in canon law, and the Constitution and Bylaws that have been approved.

Members of the Parish Pastoral Council must be current with Essential 3 safe environment requirements of the Archdiocese.

A Pastor wishing to suppress a Parish Pastoral Council should submit a request to the Chancellor of Canonical Affairs that includes a plan to form a new Parish Pastoral Council.