

Saint Barnabas Church

Chicago, Illinois



Parish Leadership Covenant Booklet

April 2006

PREFACE

In 2004 and 2005, Saint Barnabas Parish conducted a Parish Assessment and Renewal (PAR) study under the direction of Fr. Tom Sweetser and Sr. Peg Bishop of the Parish Evaluation Project (PEP). Close to 400 parishioners were actively involved in the PAR process which included a random sample survey, personal interviews, lay leadership meetings, staff meetings, and a Parish Town Hall meeting. As a result of that process, the parish agreed to transition to a new structure in order to involve more parishioners, improve communication between all the ministries, and improve collaboration between priests, staff, lay leadership, and parishioners. At the core of the structure is the shared wisdom model where “All Are Welcome” and every member of Saint Barnabas is recognized as meaningful and significant to the parish as a whole.

- **How the Structure Works**

The structure connects lay leaders, staff and the pastor in a collaborative model of partnership and shared leadership. Five Commissions are responsible for setting goals as well as providing planning, direction and evaluation for their areas of parish ministry. All current and future parish committees and/or ministries fall into one of these Commissions. Each Commission consists of 6-10 people.

Implicit in and essential to the structure is the agreement that decision-making will occur at the appropriate level for the decisions being made. Decision-makers are to use the CDI method of decision-making -- Consult with others affected, Decide, and Inform others of the decision.

Each Commission selects two co-chairpersons to lead the Commission. In addition, two members from each of the Commissions are selected to serve on the Parish Pastoral Council. Finally, each Commission has a staff member assigned as its liaison. This structure should facilitate healthy communication -- between Commissions, between Commissions and the Council, and with the Staff.

The Parish Pastoral Council is formed directly from the Commissions, two members from each, and also includes the pastor and one representative from the parish staff. The role of the council is to work with the pastor in setting the vision and direction for the parish as a whole. It also serves as a link between the Commissions and furthers communication among them.

- **How This Is Different**

In the past, the Parish Pastoral Council was an advisory body to the pastor discerned from nominations provided by the entire parish. Now, the council is formed directly from members of the Commissions and assists the pastor in setting the vision and direction for the parish as a whole.

In the past, many of the functions of the Commissions were led and carried out by staff persons. The present structure aims to balance the workload of the staff and provides for increased input from parishioners. The current commission model also provides a consistent link between parishioners, ministries, and parish leadership that was previously lacking.

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The following Covenant Booklet was first adopted on April 24, 2006 and provides aspirational guidelines for the St. Barnabas Parish community.

ST. BARNABAS MISSION STATEMENT

*THE LOCAL GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE,
CELEBRATING THE EUCHARIST,
WELCOMING AND SERVING ALL,
SHARING TALENTS, FOSTERING AND LEARNING,
AND INITIATING OTHERS INTO THE
EXPERIENCE OF CHRIST'S PASCHAL MYSTERY*

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

The Pastoral Council coordinates five working commissions whose functions are outlined in this covenant booklet. All parish organizations and activities are included within one of these commissions.

The five commissions are: **Spiritual Life, Human Concerns, Parish Life, Education and Faith Formation, and Administration.** Two people from each commission, along with the Pastor and a representative of the parish staff, make up the Pastoral Council. The Council, therefore, is made up of 12 members. The term of office on the pastoral council is two years, and three years on the commission. That means a person could serve on a commission for one year and then could be selected to serve on the pastoral council, while still remaining on the commission for the next two years.

As the members of the Pastoral Council and commissions, we freely accept the call to serve as leaders of this faith community. We realize that we share this privilege and responsibility with the Pastor and Staff of this parish community. We understand that our Baptism call, which we share with every Christian, is to live out the Gospel. We accept the challenge to make this a priority for ourselves and our families and for our larger parish community as well.

THE COVENANT COMMITMENT

To ensure a well-functioning and responsive group, we agree to live by the following covenant:

We have been chosen, recommended by other members of this faith community and confirmed by the Holy Spirit. We acknowledge our unique role as representatives of the many voices of the people of this parish. To effectively function in this role, we realize the need to come prepared to all meetings of the Pastoral Council and Commissions, to share honestly, accurately and freely, entering fully into all discussions.

We must strive to possess:

- a willingness to listen;
- a desire for spiritual growth;
- an openness to study and reflect;
- an eagerness to see a vision or direction;
- an ease in working with groups;
- an ability to draw upon others' gifts;
- a freedom to delegate responsibilities;
- a resolve to make needed decisions;
- an excitement about the parish;
- a willingness to be a liaison to a given group.

A Yearly Tradition of Planning

The tradition of planning begins in late **August** with commissions reviewing all the parish groups and ministries for the coming year. As part of their review, the commissions identify what volunteers are involved in each group or ministry and write job descriptions for these volunteers. Volunteer descriptions should include a summary of what the position entails as well as the time commitment involved and whether any special training or skills are required.

With these volunteer descriptions as a central focus, the council, staff and commissions sponsor a **Ministry Fair for Volunteers** sometime during **September**. The Ministry Fair is a feeder for volunteers to all parish organizations and ministries. It can be a starting point for those who previously have not been involved; or, it may serve as a way for current volunteers to investigate other needs or opportunities in the parish. It is a parish-wide event with everyone invited and potential volunteers personally encouraged to attend. The fair is divided into the five commissions and their component ministries, with people free to roam from one ministry to another, picking up volunteer descriptions as they choose.

In **November**, **Pledge Cards** are mailed to all Parishioners. This is the time people are asked to share their gifts and talents for the coming year. In addition to returning their cards, they may consider choosing a ministry for volunteering their time and talents.

People fulfill their volunteer commitments throughout the year, receiving training as needed and being part of groups involved in similar ministries. All are given frequent affirmation and support for their generosity. The commissions continue to meet on a regular basis, coming together on their common **Leadership Nights** each month.

In **March**, the pastoral council and commissions sponsor the **Gathering of Ministers**. This is the time when all those involved in groups and ministries have a chance to give feedback to the commissions about what has happened so far this year and to offer ideas about what the commissions are planning for the next year. This is also the time people are selected for positions on the commissions and eventually on the pastoral council.

At the **April Leadership Night**, the newly chosen commission members are welcomed into the commissions. Either sometime before or at the beginning of the April meeting, outgoing members pass on their knowledge of “how we do things around here,” using the covenant booklet as a training manual. The covenant booklet is then passed on to the new member as a sign of the authority and responsibility now vested in the new member.

During the **May Leadership Night**, all the new and current members, as well as those leaving the commissions, participate in an evaluation session. They identify what worked in each area of ministry and what did not. They also investigate the *reasons* things worked or did not work in order to build on strengths and avoid repeating mistakes. This is also the time to begin setting goals. Based on the evaluations, commissions decide what will be their focus for the coming year, while the pastoral council maps out the direction for the parish as a whole or establishes a common

GUIDELINES FOR THE PASTORAL COUNCIL

A. Criteria for membership to the Council

1. Be sixteen years of age or older;
2. Be a member of one of the five parish commissions;
3. Be a registered member of the parish;
4. Live up to and accept the "Mission Statement" of the Council and the parish;
5. Attend Council meetings regularly, with no more than two absences per year.

B. Membership

1. Each member of the Council will serve a two year term with half of the membership being chosen each year.
2. A member of the Council may serve only one two-year term.
3. There are no ex-officio members of the Pastoral Council.

C. Selection

At the June Leadership Night, each commission will discern from its members one person to serve on the Pastoral Council for a two-year term. At a weekend liturgy in August or September, the new council members will be presented to the congregation and, along with the current members, will participate in a Commissioning Service as an affirmation of their commitment.

D. Meeting Dates

The Council will meet on the first Monday of each month during the final hour of the Common Leadership Night that includes all the commissions. Additional meetings may be called if necessary.

E. Officers

The Pastoral Council will be served by co-chairpersons who will be selected by a consensus of all members of the Pastoral Council in attendance at the September meeting.

F. Purpose

A parish council was originally formed for St. Barnabas in order to more fully meet the needs of the St. Barnabas community of faith and to adhere more closely with Archdiocesan guidelines. The purpose of the current Parish Pastoral Council is to:

- research the needs, ideas, goals and hopes of the faith community;
- encourage and support existing ministries;
- evaluate the quality of life of the parish faith community;
- evaluate the parish's success in carrying out the church's mission;
- draft and periodically reevaluate the Parish Mission Statement;
- coordinate and hold accountable the five parish commissions; and
- communicate with the parish faith community regarding all of its work.

The Council will implement the Council Mission Statement by developing yearly themes for the parish, doing visioning and long-range planning for the parish, establishing goals and action steps for the parish as a whole, coordinating and holding accountable the five parish commissions, and working with the pastor in handling parish crises.

G. Executive Committee

An executive committee, comprised of the two co-chairpersons and the Pastor, is to meet the week before the Common Leadership Night and establish an agenda for the Pastoral Council meeting. In setting the agenda, the Executive Committee will consider potential agenda items forwarded from the commissions. The co-chairpersons will notify the council members so that each person is reminded about the meeting and informed of the agenda.

H. Communication

1. Ordinarily, all Pastoral Council meetings will be open meetings.
2. The minutes of the Council meetings will be prepared by the Recording Secretary, as chosen by the membership. The minutes, which should include a brief report from each commission, will be reviewed, amended and approved by the Council. A brief summary of the Council's meeting, along with the brief commission reports, will be included in the parish bulletin.
3. Council members will be responsible for communicating to and from their commission.
4. The staff representative will communicate with the staff.

GUIDELINES FOR THE COMMISSIONS

A. Criteria for membership to the Commission

1. Be sixteen years of age or older;
2. Preferably have served for at least one year in some group or ministry associated with that particular commission;
3. Be a registered member of the parish;
4. Communicate regularly with the groups and ministries the person represents on the commission;
5. Live up to and accept the "Purpose Statement" of the commission and the parish;
6. Attend commission meetings regularly, with no more than two absences per year.

B. Membership

1. Each member of the commission will serve a three year term with one third of the membership being selected each year. The membership of each commission will number from six to ten people, as determined by the needs of each commission.
2. Ordinarily, a member of the commission should not serve consecutive terms.

C. Meeting Dates

1. The commissions will meet on the first Monday of each month during the first hour of the Common Leadership Night, following the general gathering for prayer.
2. Each commission will determine goals and action plans that are consistent with the theme and Mission Statement of the Pastoral Council.

D. Selection to the Commission

During the Gathering of Ministers, to be held each March, the members of the constituent groups and ministries associated with each commission shall discern enough new members to make up one-third of the commission membership.

E. Selection of Co-Chairpersons

During the June Leadership Night, every Commission will select, by discernment, its own co-chairpersons. Ordinarily, the co-chairpersons will not be the Pastoral Council members.

F. Selection for the Council

During the June Common Leadership Night, each commission will choose, by discernment, one of its members to serve on the Pastoral Council.

G. Communication

1. Ordinarily, all commission meetings will be open meetings.
2. At the conclusion of the one-hour commission meetings on the Common Leadership Night, a representative from the commission will give a “two-minute” verbal report to the gathering of all commission members. The representative will provide a short written report summarizing this verbal report. The written report will become part of the Minutes and will also be published in the parish bulletin.
3. The staff resource person on each commission will have the responsibility of communicating information between the commission and the staff.
4. Two members of each commission, ordinarily not the co-chairpersons, will be members of the Pastoral Council. These Pastoral Council members are responsible for communicating Pastoral Council matters back to the commissions.

DECISION-MAKING ON THE COUNCIL AND COMMISSIONS

Consensus-Building through Shared Wisdom

The Pastoral Council and commissions are to prayerfully reflect upon, study, and discuss matters pertaining to their purposes. The Council and commissions commit themselves to work towards consensus through a “shared wisdom” model of interaction. The Holy Spirit is present in every person. The wisdom of the group lies not in any one articulate person, nor in one dynamic idea, but in the actual sharing of everyone’s insights. Thus, the Council and commissions are committed to listening to each of its members with the desire to surface the wisdom available, and coming to a consensus about the will of God for the group at this time. This takes faith in the group and the ability to let go of personal agendas for the broader good of the parish.

Consensus means that, given the above process, the Council and commissions do not make decisions until all members have had a chance to share their views and express whether they can live with a certain result. There may be times when one person can make the group go back to its deliberations, look for other data, or consider other solutions. There also may be times when a person may have to let the group’s shared wisdom prevail. On some occasions, a vote may contribute to the process. The pastor’s special responsibilities to the parish and to the greater church may assist the process.

Decision-Making Process

It is important to remember that there are many levels of decision making in a parish as complex as St. Barnabas. The more that people are included in the planning and decision making of events, projects and functions, the greater their involvement and ownership of the project. Thus, the Pastoral Council and commissions should also utilize the C-D-I process of decision making. C stands for Consult, D for Decide and I for Inform. Whenever an issue arises, those in leadership need to ask who the actual decision makers will be for this issue, as well as who should be consulted about and informed of the decision. Before a decision is reached, the *deciders* should *consult* those who have knowledge about or who might be affected by the decision. The *deciders* should be open to others’ ideas, wisdom and knowledge on the subject.

The consultation process should include:

- communicating with all the key people and groups that may be affected by the decision;
- checking parish facilities for conflicts and availability; and
- examining financial implications.

After taking into consideration the information and wisdom received, the *deciders* make a decision. Once the decision is made, but before an action is taken, those making the decision should *inform* those to be affected about the decision and the reasons for the decision. Only then does action take place. This process should alleviate much confusion in the decision-making process.

If an ambiguous situation arises, and it is unclear who should make the final decision, then it is the role of the Parish Pastoral Council to determine who the deciders should be. The Council, working in conjunction with the pastor, should resolve the issue through thought, prayer, discussion and sharing of each other's wisdom.

(For further information regarding "Shared Wisdom"; "Consensus"; and the C-D-I Decision-making Process, see pp. 20-22, *infra*.)

DESCRIPTION OF COMMISSIONS

Administration Commission

The Administration Commission gathers monthly on Leadership Night for the purpose of coordinating the administrative committees of St. Barnabas Parish to ensure the proper administration of the parish as a whole. Liaisons to each committee provide updates on previous business, discuss progress on current activities, share information on future activities, and when needed, seek guidance and assistance from the commission as a whole.

The administrative committees include: Finance Board, Physical Resource Committee, Communications Committee, Grant in Aid, Stewardship, and Endowment Foundation. These committees strive to achieve the following goals:

- **Finance Board:** The Finance Board is a consultative body to the Pastor, made up of 8 appointed members, providing advice, planning, and direction on financial matters.
- **Physical Resource Committee:** The Physical Resources Committee is made up of parishioner volunteers with expertise in the areas of building trades (plumbing, electrical, roofing, construction, etc). The committee meets on an as-needed basis to discuss the repair, remodel, or reconstruction of major facility needs. Contractors are contacted, bids are requested and reviewed; and, when necessary, recommendations for implementation are made to the Parish Finance Board.
- **Communications Committee:** The Communications Committee evaluates the effectiveness of parish communications and makes recommendations for continued improvement. Media focus includes church bulletin, website, promotional flyers, newsletters, etc.
- **Grant in Aid:** The Grant-in-Aid Committee is responsible for evaluating requests from Catholic school families, living within parish boundaries, for tuition assistance and determining the amount provided to specific recipients utilizing policy guidelines approved by the School Board and the Finance Board.
- **Stewardship:** The Stewardship Committee coordinates and develops annual requests for parishioners to share their time, talents, and treasures with others.
- **Endowment Foundation:** The purpose of the St. Barnabas Endowment Foundation is to support ministries that could not be supported by ordinary parish income. The focus of the foundation board is to oversee the endowment funds and to solicit funds through persons' bequests.

Parish Life Commission

The Parish Life Commission is made up of various organizations in the parish. Its goal is to build a deeper sense of Christian community for all ages and interest groups in the parish. These areas are:

Leisure Club	Coffee Shop
Women's Club	Social Events
Men's Club	Bridge Group
Athletic Board	Family School Association
Youth Group	Y-Guides/Scouts

The Parish Life Commission is responsible for the following:

1. Promoting ongoing communication between all the organizations of this commission.
2. Promoting ongoing communication between Parish Life organizations and the Parish Council and staff, including the scheduling of events, and contributing to the yearly calendar.
3. Sponsoring and coordinating various social activities that help promote friendship and goodwill among the parish and surrounding community.
4. Fostering interaction between groups and organizations, especially in sponsoring events in which a number of groups participate in the planning and implementation of those activities.
5. Working to foster a spirit of welcoming to new parishioners and new members of our community through a Welcoming Committee of volunteers.

Human Concerns Commission

The Human Concerns Commission is dedicated to continuing the work of Christ in helping and caring for those in need. The Commission coordinates the ministries that reach out to the parish community as well as those that reach out to the larger community. These ministries include pastoral care, social concerns and service, peace and justice initiatives, and evangelization. The commission strives to bring parishioners an understanding and knowledge of the various needs confronting us and others, so that we, as individuals and as a parish community, might help address those needs.

The Commission is responsible for the following:

1. Helping to ensure that the parish recognizes its duties as a good steward to share its wealth with the larger world.
2. Making sure the needs of the sick, homebound, and handicapped are being met through the Pastoral Ministry and network of pastoral ministers. This includes hospital and nursing home visits and responding to requests for the Eucharist and needs for prayer.
3. Making sure the needs of those who are grieving are being met through the Pastoral Ministry, providing support in personal and group settings, as well as in prayer.
4. Communicating to the entire parish community the work of all of the outreach groups and organizations, as well as fostering a parish-wide awareness of each parishioner's responsibility to recognize and serve those in need.
5. Promoting programs and participating in special events that give witness to Christian love, show reverence to life and challenge injustice whether in our parish, in the neighborhood, or in the world.
6. Providing support to groups that coordinate periodic service projects in the parish, such as blood drives; collections of food, clothing and/or money for the needy; or a response to national and international disasters.
7. Welcoming new outreach projects.

Education and Faith Formation Commission

The Education and Faith Formation Commission coordinates all levels of educational programming in the parish. These programs are designed to address the formation needs of Catholic and public school children of the parish at all levels of development as well as a variety of growth opportunities for adults. The role of the Commission is to foster cooperation, coordination and communication among all groups and individuals involved in the education and formation ministries of the parish. The Education and Faith Formation Commission is responsible for coordinating the following: Adult Faith Formation Committee, Marriage Preparation, Baptismal Preparation, Family School Association, School Board, Religious Education Program, Bible Study, Sacramental Preparation, School Learning Support Group.

The emphases of the Education Commission are religious education for parish children, developmental programs for youth, sacramental preparation, religious activities and focus in the parish school, faith sharing, family ministry and marriage preparation.

Goals of the Education Commission:

1. Encourage all eligible parishioners to participate in the rich faith life of the parish.
2. Promote communication and coordination between the various educational and formational programs of the parish.
3. Communicate to all parishioners the opportunities for education and religious formation.

Make-up of the Education Commission

The Commission includes member representatives from among St. Barnabas School, the School Board, Religious Education and Adult Faith Formation Committees, as well as other ministries involved in parish religious education and formation activities.

Spiritual Life Commission

The Spiritual Life Commission is to give direction to the liturgical life of the parish, as well as foster and promote the spiritual growth of all parishioners, enabling them to understand what it means to respond to their baptismal call by worshipping and ministering to the gospel. The Spiritual Life Commission desires to lead the faith community of St. Barnabas parish into a fuller and richer relationship with God by providing experiences of the Eucharist which foster an understanding that “liturgy” is the work of the people and is a living, dynamic experience and by providing other opportunities for prayer and spiritual growth. Its vision includes spiritual enrichment opportunities through liturgy, and other expressions of prayer that offer fitting praise to God, represents the community of St. Barnabas, invites the Assembly’s full, conscious and active participation and empowers the community to live out their faith in their everyday lives.

The Spiritual Life Commission includes the Liturgy Committee, Art and Environment Committee, Music Ministry, Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, Sacristans, Ushers, Altar Servers, and Children’s Liturgy of the Word, and RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults).

The Spiritual Life Commission is responsible for the following:

1. Coordinating the liturgical ministries of the parish including the music, sacristans, lectors, Eucharistic ministers, ushers, servers, art and environment, liturgical planners, and Children’s Liturgy of the Word.
2. Fostering dialogue between liturgical ministers and committees in order to insure that liturgical and spiritual programs are meeting the needs of all parishioners.
3. Evaluating, periodically, the weekend liturgies and other forms of prayer experiences, drawing upon the insights and feedback of parishioners.
4. Promoting spiritual enrichment through various forms of liturgical and prayer experiences which may include the liturgical component of parish missions, retreats, days or evenings of recollection, communal praying of the rosary, Advent and Lenten programs.
5. Fostering an annual evaluation of parish programs of spirituality in order to discover what is working and what more might be needed in order to meet the diverse needs of the parishioners.

RUNNING COUNCIL AND COMMISSION MEETINGS

SAMPLE MEETING

1. The facilitator sends an e-mail to remind all Commissions of The Monthly Leadership Night.
2. An agenda for the Pastoral Council Meeting has been prepared by the co-chairs and pastor and distributed to the Pastoral Council by e-mail.
3. The meeting place is prepared so that the environment is conducive for a good meeting, with the table and chairs in a circle, extra chairs included for visitors, a warm, work-oriented setting with good lighting.
4. All the commissions and council members assemble at the common Leadership Night on the first Monday of each month. The schedule for the Leadership Night is as follows:

7:00 Common Prayer -- Each commission takes a turn leading prayer

7:10 A short introduction on some aspect of leadership and planning

7:20 Break into commissions to work on their agenda items

- During the one hour commission meeting, a brief report is made about what has happened at the last Pastoral Council meeting and in any area associated with that commission since the last meeting.
- The special issues for the meeting are now taken up in turn. These issues might include action plans that the group is working on to achieve a stated goal, or items left over from the last meeting or concerns about some area of ministry associated with the commission's ministries and groups.
- After the agenda items have been handled, a summary of actions taken and decisions made is given by the person who will give the verbal report to the larger group, and the results of the meeting are written down in a brief statement to be given to the pastoral council. A "buddy system" is set up so those who were not present are called and told about the meeting within a day or two. All the participants also have a chance to evaluate the meeting to make sure that all were heard and there was good sharing and quality time together.

8:20 Commission reports followed by socializing

- The facilitator keeps track of time and limits reports to two minutes per group.
- Each commission takes a turn providing refreshments.

- Each commission hands into the council a brief written summary after its verbal report.

8:40 After a brief period for socializing, the Pastoral Council meets to work on its agenda items.

- No reports are needed from the commissions although some clarifications may be necessary. Additionally, matters may be presented for Council consideration or action.
- In handling items that come up before the council, the following check might prove helpful:
 - Is this a big matter that the council has to handle or can it be funneled to one of the commissions or subgroups?
 - In funneling an item to a commission, does the council need to hold the commission responsible? Should the council empower the commission to make a decision? Or, should the council consult the commission and ask for its views and any relevant information for the council to act on at a later date?
 - Whether the council funnels it or not, does it need to set a policy or give an overall direction for the parish on this issue?
 - Or is this a big enough issue that it has to go to the parishioners with a discernment process so the council can gain people's wisdom on this important matter?

9:30 Pastoral Council Adjourns

- Summary of Pastoral Council Minutes and Commission Reports are published in the parish bulletin.

FORM FOR MAKING UP THE AGENDA FOR THE
LEADERSHIP NIGHT

DATE

COMMISSION

Members in Attendance:

Report of important issues from the last Pastoral Council meeting:

Identify issues related to groups or ministries associated with the commission:

Review of last month's Action Steps:

Work on this month's Action Steps for reaching the goal:

Issues that need to be brought to the Council by the Commission:

Evaluation of the meeting and writing up highlights to go to the Council and verbal report:

THE SHARED WISDOM MODEL OF INTERACTION

The Pastoral Council and commissions commit themselves to operate out of a Shared Wisdom model of interaction. This means that during their deliberations, they pay attention to the following aspects of the model:

Shared Wisdom

- Each person has a **piece** of the wisdom.
- Nobody has all the wisdom. We all have **different** pieces.
- We are not trying to convert others to our own views.

Implications

- The Wisdom needs to be **shared**.
- The Wisdom needs to be **heard**.
- We need to nourish a **holy climate**.
- We must be willing to **let go** of the need:
 - to control;
 - to win;
 - to be right.
- We need to **risk the unfamiliar**.

THE SHARED WISDOM METHOD

1. Gather the data: Those to be affected by your decision have the right to share their wisdom with you before you make the decision.
2. Reflect prayerfully on the data: Both analysis and synthesis take place in each person's understanding of the data.
3. Share the wisdom that results from the reflection: Hear the wisdom of the Spirit coming through the wisdom being shared within the group.

Reference: McKinney, OSB, Mary Benet, Sharing Wisdom: A Process for Group Decision Making, Allen TX: Arbor Publishing, 1986.

CONSENSUS

The important decisions of the pastoral council and commissions will be made by consensus whenever possible.

Aspects of consensus

- Each person has an equal opportunity to participate and influence the outcome.
- Going with the "sense of the group" does not necessarily mean total agreement, unanimity or complete satisfaction for all.
- In consensus, the decision arrived at is **acceptable** to all in the group and all agree to support the decision and support the group in choosing it. All **consent** to the final outcome. There must be a willingness to live **positively** with the decision.

Necessary CONDITIONS and ASSUMPTIONS for consensus

- All consent before-hand as to how a decision will be made.
- Both feelings and thinking are treated as important. The best results flow from a fusion of information, logic and emotion.
- Each member's voices and viewpoints are important and encouraged so all concerns are heard.
- Group members are committed to both listening and speaking, hearing and being heard.
- There is time available to consider options, opinions and consequences. There is time for sharing information, listening, speaking, responding, reflection and silence. Time is not used as a coercive element.
- Group members are aware of the process and are willing to challenge attitudes and attend to process as they continue to learn and practice decision making skills.
- There is a level of trust that allows honesty, directness, candor and the sharing of all necessary information.

GUIDELINES for building consensus

- All agree to voice views and express opinions as silence blocks the sharing of wisdom.
- All agree that consensus will be blocked only on matters of conscience, not feelings or thoughts.
- A facilitator may be helpful to guide the agenda, clarify and rephrase ideas, equalize participation, or summarize areas of agreement and disagreement.

C - D - I

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

1. Define problem so it is clear to all

2. Determine the Decision-maker(s)

WHAT

WHO

WHEN

Consult

Who to ask?

Before Decision

Decide

Who decides?

During Decision

Income

Who to tell?

After Decision/Before Action
(With Reasons)

THE ANNUAL GATHERING OF MINISTERS

The annual Gathering of Ministers occurs each **March** during Lent. The purpose of this Gathering is to call together all those ministering in any capacity in the parish so they can share stories, discover what the commissions have been working on, offer suggestions for the coming year and determine who would be good candidates to serve on the commissions. The process for this Gathering is as follows:

AGENDA

1. The parish is informed about the Gathering of Ministers. Everyone who is active in some ministry or organization or group is encouraged to attend. Heads of ministries and groups personally invite their members to attend. People are informed that the meeting will take less than three hours and is a key moment in the yearly traditions of the parish.
2. The gathering space is set up to accommodate a large group of people, with chairs arranged in semi-circles facing the front where the initial prayer and presentation will begin. Five other gathering spaces are set up, one for each commission.
3. Each participant is greeted and provided with a name tag and a handout listing the commissions and their corresponding ministries, committees, and groups. The meeting begins with a prayer (whether in the form of Scripture, music, or petitions) and a description of what will take place during the meeting.
4. A few members of the pastoral council describe the structure of the council and the commissions. This opening section of prayer and presentation should take less than 30 minutes, including time for questions.
5. Individuals are asked to choose the area of ministry they want to emphasize for the coming year. After deciding what ministry and commission they would like to focus on, they are instructed to join that commission's breakout discussion. Although they may continue to minister in more than one area, they should choose one commission area to be their major focus for the coming year. This process of choosing opens up areas of ministries for others to join.
6. Members from the commissions act as leaders for each area of ministry. The leaders begin by letting everyone introduce him/herself and talk about the ministry or group he/she is active in or represents.
7. Participants should have a chance to ask questions to clarify their understanding of the council and commissions. The leaders then ask people to identify what all these ministries have in common, what links them together, what might be common goals or objectives.
8. The leaders describe the operation of the commission and how it serves as the coordinating group for all these ministries, providing direction, linkage, evaluation and support. The

leaders should also pass out and explain the criteria and responsibilities of members on the commissions so that people know what is expected of the commission members.

9. Finally, the leaders ask whether anyone would like to serve on the commission for the next three year term. Should there be more volunteers than leaders needed, the group should undertake a discernment process for commission membership. All those joining a commission should be invited to the next common Leadership Night.
10. After the commission groups have met for about an hour, all are asked to regroup for general reactions. The meeting ends with a prayer for guidance and a time for socializing.
11. Sometime shortly after the Gathering of Ministers, the pastoral council members meet to evaluate the meeting and see what was accomplished and what more needs to be done.
12. At the next common leadership night, the newly chosen commission members are welcomed into the commissions. Either sometime before or at the beginning that meeting, outgoing members pass on their knowledge of “how we do things around here,” using the Covenant Booklet as a training manual. The covenant booklet is then passed on to the new member as a sign of the authority and responsibility now vested in the new member. Sometime after this meeting, the roster of the newly constituted commissions is published in the bulletin.

THE ANNUAL EVALUATION AND GOAL-SETTING PROCESS

The following process of evaluation and goal-setting begins as part of the **May** Common Leadership Night. This evaluation session includes members going off the commissions, those continuing on for the coming year, and the new members. This gathering is both a community-building experience, as well as a time for evaluating the past year and setting goals and actions for the coming year. The process for the evaluation and goal-setting is as follows:

SUGGESTED PROCESS

1. With all the commissions, staff and council members gathered together, construct a history line of the last year, having people add events that have happened over the year.
2. Each person is then given an index card and asked to write down three things that worked over the last year, whether or not they were included on the history line, along with all the reasons that each one of these events worked. On a second index card, each person writes down two things that did not work or still need some help, along with all the reasons each event did not work so well.
3. People then count off so as to form random groups of five or six persons each. In each group, a list is prepared of all the things that work, along with the reasons, and another list of all that did not work, and the reasons. The two lists are shared with the entire assembly as a way of evaluating what worked and did not work over the last year. This leads into the goal-setting.
4. Each commission then meets on its own, looking over the lists of what did or did not work to see which events were related to their ministry. They also consult the goals they had been working on over the last year to see if they still provide interest and energy for the commission. Are the stated goals, in other words, still worth working on for the coming year? If so, then these are affirmed or rewritten in order to give the goals new energy and vitality. If not, then one to three new goals are constructed by the commission as a way of focusing energies for the coming year.
5. Once the goals are determined, each goal is taken in turn and an action plan is drawn up for that goal. The members individually think up as many concrete ways as possible for reaching the specified goal. A list is made of all these ideas. The commission members then determine which actions they want to commit themselves to over the next year. It may be possible to deal with only one goal during the meeting, saving others for a future meeting.
6. Using the "Parish Action Plans" worksheet as a tool, commission members take all the actions they have chosen and determine which actions they want to work on over the next two months, adding in to whom it is directed, how often will it happen, where will it take place and who will be responsible for carrying out the action, along with a stated victory at the end of the designated time. They continue to fill out the action plans for the entire year that will bring the group closer to its goal.

DISCERNMENT PROCESS FOR COMMISSION AND COUNCIL CO-CHAIRPERSONS AND COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVES ON THE COUNCIL

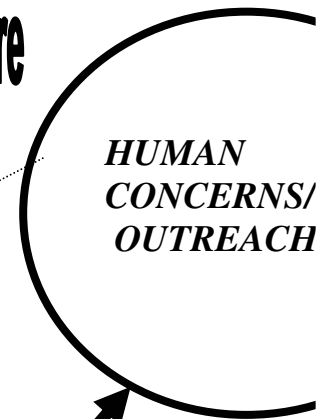
The following is a description of how the co-chairpersons are chosen to lead the commissions and pastoral council each year. The same process is used to select commission representatives to the council. Ideally, only one co-chairperson is chosen each year and serves a two year term. Likewise, one representative will be chosen each year from each commission to serve on the council for a two year term. Selections should occur at the **June** Common Leadership Night each year.

SUGGESTED PROCESS

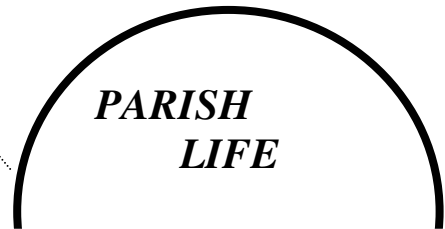
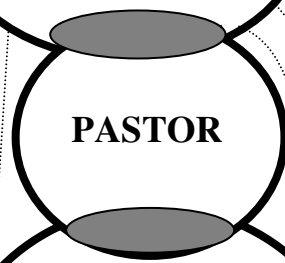
1. The first step is to establish a prayerful atmosphere. This is accomplished with a short prayer service and the participants asking themselves, “What are we being called to as we discern our chairpersons?” Every effort is made to have all the members of the commission or council present for this discernment process.
2. Each individual is asked to reflect personally on the reasons he or she would be a good co-chairperson and to think of all the talents he or she has to offer as a co-chairperson. Each person is also asked to reflect on any reasons why he or she would not be a good co-chairperson and to list the things that might hinder or prevent his or her being a good chair.
3. Everyone is then asked to share with the entire group all the reasons and qualities that would make the person a good co-chairperson. Once everyone has had a chance to share the positive aspects, then they are invited to share the negative aspects.
4. Once everyone has listened to the reasons for and against, persons should be asked if they would be willing to keep their names on the list as potential co-chairpersons for the coming year. The group should select from those willing to serve. If more than one person is willing to serve, a written vote shall be taken.
5. The same process should be used to discern the commission representative(s) to the Parish Pastoral Council. Ordinarily, the co-chairs should not be the representatives to the council.
6. All present give their acceptance and affirmation of the choice(s). The process is concluded with a brief prayer of thanksgiving.

St. Barnabas Parish Structure

- **Liturgy Planning Committee**
- **Liturgical Ministries**
 - Sacristans
 - Lectors
 - Eucharistic Ministers
 - Music
 - Adult Choir
 - Children's Choir
 - Cantors
 - Ushers (Greeters)
 - Altar Servers
 - Altar Care
 - Art/Environment
 - Children's Liturgy of the Word
 - RCIA
- **Prayer**
 - Rosary after daily Mass
 - Sorrowful Mother Novena
 - Men's Night of Prayer
 - Women's Prayer



- **Pastoral Ministry**
 - CONSOUL (Bereavement)
 - EM's to homebound
- **Service**
 - St. Vincent de Paul
 - Red Tag
 - Su Casa Soup Kitchen
 - St. Elizabeth Worker
 - Holy Family Sharing Parish
 - PADS – Various Locations
- **(Social Justice)** (JustFaith)
- **(Evangelization for Inactive)** (Landings or Remembering Church)



- **Adult Faith Formation**
 - Retreats
 - Marriage Preparation
 - Baptism Preparation
 - Bible Study
- **(Religious Ed Committee)**
 - Catechist
 - Sacrament Preparation
 - RE for 1st to grade 8
 - SPRED
- **School**
 - Teachers
 - School Board
 - Family School Association
 - Pre 3 yrs. – Grades 8
 - After School Program



- **Finance Board**
- **Stewardship Committee**
- **Communication Committee**
 - (Parish Newsletter)
 - Bulletin
 - (Technology – computers and phones)
 - Website

- **Physical Resources**
- **Endowment Foundation**
- **Grant-In-Aid**

- **(Hospitality Committee)**
 - Coffee Shoppe (Greeters)
- **Social Events Committee**
- **Organizations**
 - Leisure Club
 - Women's Club
 - Men's Club
 - Scouts
 - Irish Dance
 - Athletic Board
 - Duplicate Bridge
- **Youth Ministry**
- **(Welcoming Newcomers)**

() Recommended for Formation