

GOOD SHEPHERD CATHOLIC CHURCH
LOVING AS CHRIST LOVES, SERVING AS CHRIST SERVES

As sharers in the role of Christ as priest, prophet and king, the laity has their work cut out for them in the life and activity of the Church. Their activity is so necessary within the Church communities that without it the apostolate of the pastors is often unable to achieve its full effectiveness. Strengthened by active participation in the liturgical life of their community, the laity is eager to do their share of the apostolic works of that community. The laity offers their special skills to make the care of souls and the administration of the temporalities of the Church more efficient and effective.

Excerpted from Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, No. 10

FINANCE COUNCIL CHARTER

In compliance with Canon Law (492.3, 532, 537), a Finance Council is hereby constituted to carry out the responsibilities set forth herein and to act on all other matters relating to the financial operation of the Good Shepherd Parish, Diocese of Arlington, Virginia. The Finance Council shall be guided by the Parish Pastoral Plan, the Vision and Mission of the Parish and the Holy Spirit in all it does.

Purpose and Goal

The primary purpose and goal of the Finance Council is to provide a comprehensive financial plan for the wise and efficient use of Parish resources which will ensure the long term financial viability of the Parish, accomplish the goals and objectives set out in the Parish Pastoral Plan and promote the Vision and Mission of the Parish.

Relationship with the Pastor and the Parochial Vicar(s)

The Finance Council serves as a consultative and advisory resource to the Pastor and as such shall advise and make recommendations to the Pastor on all matters pertaining to the financial management of the Parish. The Pastor is requested to be present during quarterly Finance Council meetings in order to hear discussions and basis for advice being recommended and to give due consideration to the advice and recommendations of the Finance Council. The parochial vicar(s) is (are) welcome to attend and participate in Finance Council meetings to assist the Pastor in his decision making process.

Relationship with the Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee has been assigned the primary responsibility for establishing the desired level of offertory collections and other fundraising initiatives. The Finance Council shall work closely with the Stewardship Committee to encourage dialogue and to ensure unity of purpose. Communications from both committees to the parishioners shall be consistent.

Relationship with the Parish Pastoral Council

The goal of the Parish Pastoral Council is to ensure effective pastoral planning in light of church teaching which will promote the Vision and Mission of the Parish. The Finance Council shall work closely with the Parish Pastoral Council to ensure that the goals and objectives set out in the Parish Pastoral Plan are supported.

Relationship with the Pastoral Team, Parish Committees and the Parish Community

The Finance Council shall serve as a resource to the Parish Administrator, Pastoral and Administrative Teams and the various Parish Ministries. The Finance Council shall meet on an as needed or as requested basis with the Parish Pastoral Council, Committees, Pastoral and Administrative Teams, and the Parish Community to encourage dialogue and unity of purpose and to further ensure understanding of each other's concerns. The members of the Finance Council are encouraged to seek the views of other parishioners on important matters.

Finance Council Responsibilities

In compliance with Diocesan guidelines (Parish Financial Manual June 2002) and this Charter, the Finance Council shall have the responsibility to:

1. Establish a multiple year Budget (three to five years) which supports and advances the Parish Pastoral Plan. The Budget shall address the needs of the Parish Pastoral Council, Committees, the Pastoral Team and the various Parish Ministries. The Budget shall comply with Diocesan policy and sound financial management principles. The Budget shall be presented to the Pastor for approval and implementation. The Budget shall also be provided to the Parish Pastoral Council together with income and expense trend analysis.
2. Work with the Stewardship Committee (which has primary responsibility for all fundraising activities) to develop, plan and implement fund raising and income development programs and to encourage all members of the Parish through personal stewardship, to financially support the needs of the Parish.
3. Provide guidance and instruction on an as needed or as requested basis in collaboration with the Parish Administrator and the Director of Finance to the various Parish Ministries concerning their respective individual annual budgets.
4. In collaboration with the Pastor, review and approve the Annual Financial Report to Diocese.
5. In collaboration with the Pastor and the Parish Pastoral Council, review and approve the Annual Report to Parish.
6. Regularly review and monitor the Budget (including both operating and capital expense and offertory income) during the course of the fiscal year and make recommendations to the Pastor concerning any adjustments that are necessary to stay within the Budget.
7. Review and approve all financial statements and all other financial reports which are to be disseminated to the Parish Pastoral Council and/or the Parish.
8. Periodically assess the internal control systems employed by the Parish to determine compliance with Diocesan policies and guidelines and to suggest changes when necessary or appropriate.
9. Establish a plan to pay any Parish debt; regularly review and monitor that plan and suggest changes when necessary or appropriate.
10. Establish a multiple year (three to five years) capital expansion and/or improvement plan; regularly review and monitor that plan and suggest changes when necessary or appropriate.
11. Upon request, provide the Parish Pastoral Council with updates concerning the fiscal status of the Parish and make recommendations to the Parish Pastoral Council concerning long-range goals and objectives and the means to secure their funding.
12. Review with the Pastor the results of diocesan internal audits and any external audits and help ensure that recommendations are implemented.
13. Assist the Parish Administrator and the Director of Finance when requested by the Pastor.
14. Advise the Pastor on how to implement Diocesan policies on financial matters.
15. Develop and recommend financial management systems, including automated budget and accounting systems, necessary to meet immediate and long-term program requirements.
16. Provide oversight of the money counters' procedures, recruiting and training.
17. Maintain open communications with all members of the Parish.

Membership

In addition to the Pastor, the Finance Council will consist of nine (9) members appointed by the Pastor. The Parish Administrator, the Director of Finance and the Chairperson of the Stewardship Committee are ex-officio non-voting members of the Finance Council.

Any Good Shepherd Parishioner is eligible to serve on the Finance Council. Members serve in a fiduciary capacity and, as such, need the ability to study, analyze, and examine financial matters and to make sound recommendations. Members should have empathy for the poor and the capacity to balance legitimate needs with available resources and should be able to listen to differing opinions, integrate various points of view and discern with others what is best for the Parish. Members should be open to the workings of the Holy Spirit for guidance.

Any Parishioner may, after prayerful consideration of his or her own gifts and abilities, apply for membership on the Finance Council by submitting an application to the Discernment Committee. The Pastor using his personal gifts and the Holy Spirit and in collaboration with Parish lay leaders will discern the individuals who make up the Finance Council

Members shall serve a three-year term with the possibility of serving subsequent term(s). One third of the members' terms shall expire annually. Any vacancies shall be filled through discernment by Parish lay leaders with a recommendation to, and appointment by, the Pastor.

Finance Council Leadership

The Finance Council Leadership shall consist of a Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary. Discernment and judgment of the Pastor and the members of the Finance Council will determine selection and rotation of leadership. The Finance Council Leadership shall: consult with the Pastor and Parish Administrator to plan meetings; publish an agenda for each meeting; prepare background materials needed for all meetings; appropriately facilitate meetings; and coordinate reports and action items with the Director of Finance.

The Finance Council Chair shall: convene and lead all meetings; serve on the Parish Pastoral Council; and communicate and correspond as appropriate with and on behalf of the Finance Council with other elements of the Parish leadership.

The Finance Council Vice Chair shall: convene and lead all meetings in the absence of the Chair; and carry out special assignments from the Chair.

The Finance Council Secretary shall: maintain complete and accurate records of meetings and activities; identify and distribute materials to members prior to meetings; and place appropriate notices in various parish media to keep the Parish apprised of Finance Council activities.

Frequency of Council Meetings

Council meetings shall be convened by the Pastor and/or the Chairperson at least four times a year. Additional meetings may be convened at the request of the Pastor or the Finance Council Chairperson. Members are expected to attend meetings and to notify the Chairperson when they cannot attend. Meeting dates and times will be announced in Parish media. Meetings are to be open to Parishioners but portions of the meeting may be closed at the discretion of the Pastor or Chairperson.

Subcommittees

Subcommittees are responsible to the Finance Council as a whole and may be formed on an as needed basis at the discretion of the Chairperson. Ad-hoc subcommittees also may be formed to conduct Finance Council special business as appropriate. Subcommittee or other ad hoc committee meetings will be called at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Finance Council or the subcommittee depending on need. Only members of the subcommittee need attend subcommittee meetings but other members are welcome to attend.