



PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL GUIDELINES

“Building up the Community of Believers”



Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton

Revision date October 2025

Contents

Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines.....	4
Prayer for a Vibrant Parish	4
Молитва «Живої Парафії»	4
Parishes and Synodality	5
Elements of a Vibrant Parish	6
Our Church.....	7
Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton	7
Bishop and Eparchy	7
Parishes.....	7
Pastors.....	8
Parish Pastoral Councils.....	8
Parishioners	9
Parish Pastoral Councils.....	10
Membership	10
Training and Formation.....	11
Executive and Responsibilities	11
Pastor	11
Chair	11
Vice-Chair.....	12
Secretary	12
Treasurer	12
Council and Committees.....	13
Standing Committees	13
Sub-committees.....	15
Parish Finance Committee	16

Membership	16
Responsibilities of the Finance Committee	17
Parish Meetings	19
Meeting Minutes.....	19
Regular Meetings.....	20
Annual General Meeting	21
Commissioning Service of the Parish Pastoral Council.....	22
Sample Prayers before a Parish Pastoral Council Meeting.....	23
Guiding Documents	24
By-laws.....	24
Civil By-laws.....	24

Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines

This document is prepared for parish communities seeking to fully participate in the life of the Church through the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton's mission: to know God, to love God and to serve God. It will help parish pastoral councils understand their roles and responsibilities to support their pastor and represent the needs of the parishioners.

Prayer for a Vibrant Parish

O Lord, Jesus Christ, our Good Shepherd, you became incarnate to find the lost sheep of your flock and preached the Gospel so they might recognize your voice. So also, today graciously look down from heaven upon our parish community and send down on it your Holy Spirit that it might be a place to receive the joy of your Good News.

Strengthen us with your presence and always gather us together in prayer. Grant us the spirit of serving others, so that in our parish all might encounter you, the merciful God.

Bless our spiritual leaders with your wisdom, and inspire us to generously give our time, talents and treasure for the building up of your Kingdom.

Unite us in peace and harmony, as befits your community of love. Instill in us a missionary spirit and let our parish community shine with the light of the Gospel, with prayer and good works, inviting all to share in the divine life, so that your name, O Saviour, may be praised, together with your eternal Father, and your most-holy, good and life-giving Spirit. Amen.

Молитва «Живої Парафії»

Господи Ісусе Христе, Пастирю Добрий, Ти воплотився, щоб відшукати заблудлих овець стада Твого і проповідував євангеліє, щоб вони вчилися пізнавати голос Твій.
І нині споглянь милостиво з небесних висот на нашу парафію і зішли на неї Святого Духа Твого, щоб вона була місцем пізнання євангельської радості.

Скріплюй нас присутністю Твоюю і єднай нас повсякчас у молитві. Даруй нам духа служіння ближньому, щоб у нашій парафії кожний міг зустріти Тебе, милостивого Бога.

Благослови наш духовний провід мудрістю Твоюю і дай, щоб ніхто з нас не шкодував ні часу, ні талантів, ні земних благ для розбудови Твого Царства.

Єднай нас у мирі та злагоді, щоб ми були Твоюю спільнотою любові. Всели в нас місійного духа, щоб ми стали тим світлом євангельського слова, молитви і добрих діл, що кличе кожного до участі у Божественному житті, щоб славилася, Спасе, Твоє Ім'я з безначальним Твоїм Отцем та пресвятим, благим і животворящим Твоїм Духом нині, і повсякчас, і на віки віків. Амінь.

Parishes and Synodality

In 2024, the Synod on Synodality took place in Rome where Pope Francis brought together delegates from across the world to reflect on the theme “For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission.”

The results of the Synod are helpful in setting the stage for the present revised document *“Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines: “Building up the Community of Believers.””*

Synod or synodality simply means “walking together on the way.” Synodality is a path of spiritual renewal and structural reform that enables the Church to be more participatory and missionary so that it can walk with each person, radiating the light of Christ (Synod on Synodality, no. 28).

Synodality, therefore, invites the whole Church, including those who exercise authority, to conversion and reform (no. 33). Thus, synodal conversion calls each person to enlarge the space of their heart, the heart being the first place where all our relationships resonate, grounded in each believer’s personal relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church (no. 110).

Pastors, the parish pastoral council, the parish, and indeed the entire people of God are called to walk together in serving the faithful in their spiritual journey towards holiness in Christ. It is not a question of competition but of collaboration where the gifts of every person, granted in Baptism through the Holy Spirit, are recognized and fostered as missionary disciples.

This is the purpose and calling of each parish pastoral council.

Bishop David Motiuk

Elements of a Vibrant Parish

In their pastoral planning for the parish, the pastor and parish pastoral council are to strive to incorporate the following six elements of a vibrant parish:

1. The Word of God and Catechesis (Kerygma) – teaching the truths of the faith and their role in encountering the living Christ in everyday life.
2. Liturgy and Prayer – participation in liturgical, sacramental and prayer life for the sanctification of the People of God.
3. Service to our Neighbour (Diakonia) – giving attention and compassionate care to those in need, both within the parish and “in the world.”
4. Stewardship – the ministry of the bishop and the clergy with the cooperation of the laity in the stewardship of gifts (time, talent, treasure) for the common good and the building up of the kingdom of Heaven.
5. Communion (Koinonia) – fostering spiritual unity in the Church of Christ and promoting the unity of all Christians (ecumenism).
6. Missionary Spirit – witnessing to a life in Christ, while inviting others to conversion in Christ and participation in the life of the Church.

As leaders of a vibrant parish, the parish pastoral council aids the pastor in his administration and transformation of the parish. Parish pastoral council members have a responsibility to live out their baptismal vocation by serving their fellow parishioners. Parish pastoral council members are called to be examples of faith as they deepen their own conversion through regular individual and communal prayer, assisting the pastor in the salvation of souls.

Our Church

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) is an Eastern Catholic Church in full communion with the Apostolic See. With more than 5.5 million faithful, it is the largest of all twenty-three Eastern Churches in the global Catholic community, second in number after the Latin (Roman Catholic) Church. The UGCC is headed by the Patriarch (Major Archbishop) of Kyiv and Halych. According to the canonical tradition of the Catholic Church, the UGCC is a Church of its own right (*Ecclesia sui juris*). It has its own rite, which originates from the Constantinopolitan tradition, and preserves its liturgical, theological, spiritual, and disciplinary heritage in the cultural and historical circumstances of its people. Though the UGCC takes its origin from Ukraine and is centered there, the UGCC and its faithful have spread through the diaspora throughout Europe, Oceania, the Americas, and parts of Asia.

Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton

The Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton (Eparchy of Edmonton) is characterized by its devotion to the Byzantine Catholic faith and its commitment to serving others. Its dedicated clergy and laypeople work tirelessly to create a warm and welcoming environment for all.

The Eparchy of Edmonton serves some 25,000 faithful in 81 parishes and missions throughout Alberta. The Eparchy, together with its parishes, provide spiritual, catechetical, counselling and sacramental care for families and individuals, as well as outreach programs for the needy and marginalized. For legal status, related to legislated incorporation of the Eparchy at the federal and provincial levels, the legal name is The Ukrainian Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Western Canada.

Bishop and Eparchy

The Eparch of Edmonton is the bishop who leads the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton. The bishop, as a successor of the Apostles, is the shepherd of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic faithful of the Eparchy. The Eparchy is composed of multiple parishes, which are the local communities of the faithful throughout the area of the Eparchy.

Parishes

A parish is a community of Christian faithful united in Baptism and in the mission of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Every single parish makes a vital contribution to the life and ministry of the People of God. Under the leadership of the eparchial bishop, and in communion with him, the parish exercises its fundamental role in the Church. Hence, the mission and goals of a parish must reflect those of the bishop and the eparchy.

It is in the parish that the faithful most frequently encounter Christ through the reading of the Sacred Scriptures, the Holy Mysteries and other liturgical and paraliturgical services, catechesis, prayer, community and service to one's neighbour. By participating in the life of our local parish, we participate in the life of the entire Church.

Pastors

The local bishop assigns each parish of his eparchy a pastor. The pastor is a priest appointed by the bishop for the spiritual and temporal care of the parish(es) to which he is assigned. Pastors may be assigned to more than one parish particularly in the rural districts of the eparchy. The pastor serves his parish(es) with the authority of the bishop and in communion with him. As the representative of the bishop to the parish, the pastor is the shepherd of the local parish community. As shepherd of a parish the priest is specially chosen and ordained to lead the flock of the parish in love and service, in likeness to Christ the Good Shepherd. He is to strive to lead with a life of prayer, humility and holiness.

The pastor's main responsibilities are to teach, to sanctify, and to govern the parish. In his teaching function, the pastor is to preach the Word of God and to catechize. In his sanctifying function, the pastor is to lead the parish in prayer the celebration of the Holy Mysteries, especially the Divine Liturgy. In his governing function, the pastor is to know his flock and to be a servant for all his parishioners. The pastor, in the capacity to which he is able, should minister to the needs of the youth and elderly alike, to visit the sick and shut-ins, and to serve the poor.

A pastor cannot carry out all these functions on his own. The success of the parish depends greatly upon the pastor's ability to discern the spiritual gifts of his faithful, to encourage them to actively participate in the life of the parish, and to support the faithful in their roles within the parish and greater community.

Parish Pastoral Councils

The Eparchy of Edmonton is indeed blessed to have parish pastoral councils in each of its parishes. The primary purpose and responsibility of the parish pastoral council is to assist the pastor in creating and carrying out his overall pastoral vision and goal setting for the parish. The purpose and responsibility of the parish pastoral council is also to help the pastor in the administrative and financial oversight of the parish, and to provide leadership for the parish under the guidance of the pastor. The parish pastoral council is an integral link between the bishop and the parish in communicating, supporting and implementing the ministries, programs and policies of the Eparchy of Edmonton.

While the pastor has the primary canonical and legal responsibility for both the spiritual and temporal goods of the parish and its members, the parish pastoral council is co-responsible in helping to build the parish as a living Christian community and in spreading the Gospel message to all people.

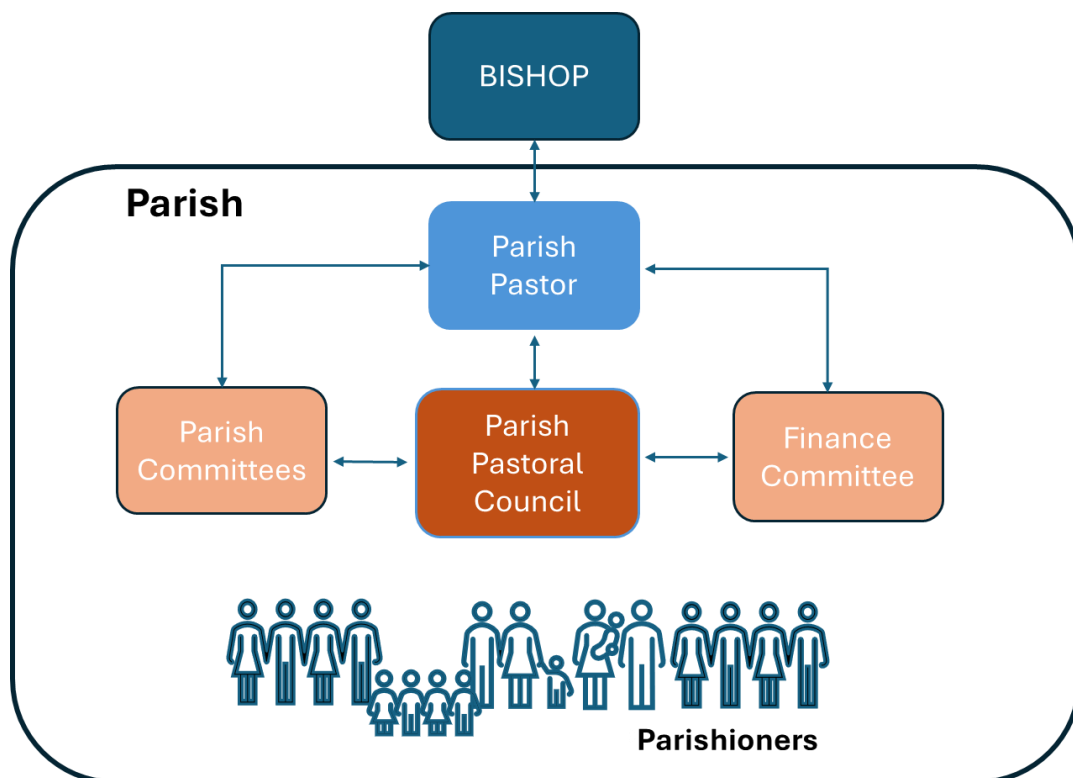
In carrying out its responsibilities, the parish pastoral council acts on behalf of all parishioners. However, this does not take away from the responsibility of each baptized parish member to contribute to the mission of the entire parish.

Parishioners

It is the responsibility of all parishioners to support their pastor in his office, as he discerns how to best govern, teach, and sanctify the lives of the faithful entrusted to him. Parishioners who are not a part of the parish pastoral council are not absolved of their responsibility to aid in the mission of the parish. To the best of their abilities, parishioners are encouraged to assist the pastor and parish pastoral council.

It is also the responsibility of each member of the faithful to discern their own personal gifts and charisms. This discernment is done to further the mission of both the local and the universal Church. When a parishioner discerns their God-given talents, the next step is to recognize how these talents can and should be used to further the mission of the parish. Each parishioner has their own unique contribution to make to the work of the Church. The pastor should help the faithful to discern and foster their gifts and charisms within the parish.

The following graphic illustrates the integral relationship between the bishop of the Eparchy, the pastor, the parish pastoral council (and its committees) and the parishioners of the parish:



Parish Pastoral Councils

Membership

The membership of the parish pastoral council is comprised of:

- the pastor, assistant pastor, deacons, and religious assigned to the parish by the bishop
- five to fifteen members of the parish (this number includes the executive), elected at the annual general meeting (AGM). Smaller parishes may have fewer members while larger parishes may require additional members to fully support the parish.
- representatives of parish organizations such as the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada (UCWLC), the Ukrainian Catholic Brotherhood of Canada (UCBC), the Ukrainian Catholic Youth of Canada (UCYC), and the Knights of Columbus (K of C), by-laws of the parish determine if these representatives have voting rights.

For a person to serve as a member of the parish pastoral council, they must (be):

- a fully initiated Ukrainian Greek Catholic and those who are in the catechumenate process to become Ukrainian Greek Catholic
- regularly attend Divine Liturgy on Sundays and holy days of obligation
- be 18 years of age or older
- a registered member of the parish for at least six months
- consistently active in the parish community and willing and able to share responsibility for the parish community
- willing to grow in an understanding of the Church through training and study of Sacred Scripture and Church documents
- believe in and accept the mission and doctrine of the Church
- seeking to deepen their relationship with Christ through their own personal conversion
- able to work with others in a spirit of trust, openness and co-operation
- capable of acknowledging the needs of all parishioners of the parish
- willing to comply with the safe environment training and protocols of the Eparchy and provide up-to-date police and vulnerable sector checks every three years as required
- follow good governance practices and financial prudence
- committed to regularly attending and contributing to meetings
- approved by the pastor

The above requirements for parish pastoral council membership are subject to the needs of the parish and the discretion of the pastor. The criteria for members who wish to serve on council should be read at the annual general meeting prior to nomination and voting.

Training and Formation

Parish pastoral council members serve the parish and parishioners best when they understand their roles and responsibilities. To help accomplish this, orientation and training are essential for council members, new and returning. The pastor alone, or in collaboration with the Eparchy of Edmonton, should offer workshops for parish pastoral council members throughout the Eparchy of Edmonton once or twice a year on the unique ministry of parish pastoral councils. Topics could include evangelizing among the youth, tips for serving those in care homes, financial stewardship of the parish, etc. Pastors and parish pastoral council members are also required to undergo safe environments training, protecting minors and vulnerable persons.

Members new to a position on council should be mentored and supported as they begin their new role. Outgoing members should be made available to assist new members transitioning into a new role.

Executive and Responsibilities

The executive of the parish pastoral council is comprised of the pastor, chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer. When necessary, the secretary and treasurer positions can be held by the same person.

The executive members have the responsibility of guiding, coordinating and evaluating the responsibilities of the parish pastoral council. Some basic responsibilities of the executive members include:

Pastor

- attends all meetings of the parish pastoral council as a representative of the bishop of the Eparchy of Edmonton, but does not chair the meetings
- by virtue of his office, he is an ex-officio member of all parish organizations and committees other than the UCYC, UCWLC, UCBC, and K of C, where he serves as spiritual advisor
- is one of the signing officers for the parish on legal and financial matters, except for accounts that do not allow employees to hold signing authority
- is responsible for the stewardship of the temporal assets of the parish

Chair

- organizes and coordinates activities and procedures for the parish pastoral council

- prepares and implements the agenda for meetings in consultation with the pastor
- chairs monthly and special meetings
- communicates regularly with the pastor and other members of the parish pastoral council regarding parish business
- ensures communication between the parish pastoral council and the parishioners which includes material information on administrative and financial matters
- is one of the signing officers for the parish on legal and financial matters

Vice-Chair

- serves as an assistant to the chair
- assumes the duties of the chair in the chair's absence
- takes on the role of chair, in the event of the chair's departure from office, until a suitable replacement is elected and appointed

Secretary

- records minutes of regular and special meetings and submits these for review and approval to the parish pastoral council
- ensures all minutes and records for the parish are stored in a safe and secure manner and location
- maintains a roster of members and records of attendance
- handles all parish pastoral council correspondence between its members and between the parish pastoral council and parishioners
- communicates via email monthly or as needed with the pastor and chair regarding parish business

Treasurer

- maintains the financial records of the parish and provides regular financial statements and information at parish pastoral council meetings
- communicates regularly with the pastor and chair regarding financial matters concerning the parish
- prepares all reports and filings as required by government agencies including year end financial statements and annual charity return (where applicable)
- ensures all financial documents are stored in a safe and secure manner and location according to the Records Retention Schedule
- is one of the signing officers for the parish on legal and financial matters

Council and Committees

In addition to the parish pastoral council executive, the directors represent the parishioners and support the parish in its activities, primarily through committee work.

Besides the finance committee, which canon law mandates for each parish, these committees are simply examples and need not exist in every parish. The proceedings of these committees are to be communicated to the pastor and the parish pastoral council through written minutes. Committees must have a clear mandate and determination of their ability to make decisions. Action items are always to be implemented at the discretion of the pastor and the parish pastoral council.

The following are examples of possible committees which may be of assistance to the parish.

Standing Committees

Finance

A committee established under canon and civil law. Members are selected for their financial expertise. This committee develops budgets and strategies for the fiscal implementation of the parish goals and priorities. The committee consults with the relevant eparchial commissions.

Liturgy

This committee is responsible for liturgical matters such as greeters, ushers, altar servers, readers, cantors, choir and extraordinary ministers of the Holy Eucharist. It is responsible for the preparation and celebration of the Divine Liturgy and other liturgical services. The committee is also responsible for sacramental preparation and post-sacramental care, visiting the sick, elderly, shut-ins, and those experiencing grief or bereavement. The committee consults with the Eparchial Liturgical Commission.

Catechesis and Evangelization

This committee is responsible for evangelization, bible study, catechesis, and evangelization for all parishioners, and sacramental preparation for all interested, regardless of age. The committee consults with the Eparchial Religious Education Centre.

Property Management and Maintenance

As a committee mandated by the Eparchy, this committee ensures that there are regular inspections and maintenance and repair of church property. Any potential problems are identified to the pastor and parish pastoral council, and corrective action is planned. The committee manages rental and lease of parish property and acts in an advisory capacity to the pastor and parish pastoral council regarding the purchase and sale of property. The parish office has a copy of a maintenance checklist, all warranties and a list of contracts for trades for specific work at the parish.

Safe Environments

This committee ensures that all parish pastoral council and committee members and parish volunteers have their safe environments training and documentation completed and up to date. The committee is also to ensure that safe environments best practices and regulations are followed in the parish. This responsibility is to be carried out in consultation and accord with the eparchial safe environments' coordinator.

Nominating

This committee has the responsibility, together with the pastor, of presenting a slate of candidates for positions on the parish pastoral council at the parish annual general meeting. In proposing candidates, the committee should consider those individuals who understand the role of the council and the talents which they bring to this ministry. This committee should seek to represent the diversity present in their parish, acknowledging the various demographics and their concerns.

By-law Review

This committee reviews the parish by-laws on a regular basis and brings to the attention of the parish pastoral council any necessary or suggested amendments.

Parish Family Life and Social

This committee is responsible for parish family hospitality, recreational and social concerns and often works together with organizations in the parish, for example, the UCYC, UCWLC, UCBC and K of C. Actions by this committee could include activities such as minor fundraising, potluck suppers, dances, parish picnic, coffee after Divine Liturgy, and home visits. The committee consults with the Eparchial Family and Life Ministry.

Social Justice

This committee is responsible for social justice concerns such as immigration and refugees, food bank, clothing depot, the unemployed, recycling, overseas missions, and Development and Peace. Action by this committee could involve the parish, school(s) and community and other social actions as identified by the parish pastoral council or the committee. The committee consults with the Eparchial Social Mission Commission.

Youth

This committee is responsible for providing and promoting "youth friendly" faith communities by encouraging growth in discipleship and Catholic identity. The committee will seek to draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the parish and community. The committee consults with the Eparchial Youth Commission.

Seniors

This committee serves the spiritual and social needs of seniors by implementing programs and social events for seniors, as well as outreach to the homebound. At the

same time, it recognizes the gifts and wisdom of the elders of the community and engages this valued experience in the overall parish pastoral plan.

Personnel

This committee is involved in the selection of parish employees, for reviewing their work on a regular basis, being attentive to grievances, and ensuring that civil law and church teachings regarding employment standards are adhered to.

Sub-committees

Sub-committees (*ad hoc* committees) are a temporary group formed to address a single, specific issue or task. Typically, a member of the parish pastoral council sits on this committee.

When work is complete, the committee is thanked and then disbanded. Examples of sub-committees could include:

- capital projects
- humanitarian aid and sponsorship
- bible study
- Sunday fellowship
- parish praznyk (dinners and picnics)
- fundraising events
- annual youth camps
- workshops (e.g. iconography, missions, etc.)
- outreach projects (e.g. Christmas hampers)

Parish Finance Committee

The *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches* mandates a parish finance committee in each parish (canon 295), which has as its primary function to help the pastor in the administration of the material goods of the parish.

The parish finance committee is governed by canon law, eparchial statutes and guidelines, and civil law. The pastor represents the parish in all its juridic affairs, both civil and church (canon 290, §1).

Membership

The Parish Finance Committee should consist of:

- the pastor
- the treasurer of the parish pastoral council
- two to five parishioners with financial background or related business experience, who are not parish staff or immediate relatives of parish staff or have a financial interest in the parish except for their fiduciary responsibilities

Parish staff may report to the parish finance committee on occasion but should not be committee members as conflict of interest may arise. The members of the committee are to be elected at a general parish meeting and/or are to be appointed by the pastor, keeping in mind the need for financial and administrative experience.

The committee members are to serve for one to five years as determined by the needs and resources of the parish. A process of rotation, replacement, re-appointments, and re-election is to be determined by the parish.

The committee members are bound to fulfill their duties in the name of the Church and in accord with the norm of law. Since such duties are to be carried out in the name of the Church, they can be a form of apostolate. As an apostolate, those who share in these duties share by virtue of their baptism in the Church's royal mission, the mission of serving.

The members should have an attitude that may differ from that of people entrusted with the administration of secular temporal goods. The purpose of the parish finance committee is not primarily to make a profit but is to provide resources for the pursuit of the Church's proper ends, such as the ordering of divine worship, providing decent support for the clergy and pastoral workers, and performing apostolic and charitable works, especially toward the needy. Thus, the temptation to evaluate a situation simply by looking at a financial statement is to be avoided.

At all times, the members are to carry out their responsibilities with an attitude of stewardship, maintaining the Church's trustworthiness and credibility.

Responsibilities of the Finance Committee

Custody of Assets

- administer parish property in accordance with the eparchial policy and directives
- prepare a detailed inventory of the parish's material and financial goods and update annually
- ensure that parish property is properly maintained and that appropriate insurance coverage is arranged through the eparchial insurance program
- assist the committee responsible for the monitoring of necessary maintenance of parish buildings and other properties, with special effort in the area of preventative maintenance by providing the financial impact of schedules and timelines

Financial Planning

- prepare an annual budget for both operating and capital expenditures of the parish for presentation to the parish pastoral council based upon:
 - the goals and objectives of the parish as determined by the pastor and the parish pastoral council
 - input from other committees of the parish pastoral council
 - financial patterns of the parish from previous years
 - financial estimates for the future needs of the parish
- examine operating costs of the parish to ensure that financial resources and goals of a parish are compatible
- submit proposals to the pastor and parish pastoral council based upon:
 - a study of parish revenue
 - recommendations for maintaining or increasing revenue through fundraising to meet parish objectives and priorities

Financial Management

- support and monitor treasurer's duties
- determine whether the parish is complying with the intentions of donors who have made donations for specific purposes and communicate the results to the pastor, parish pastoral council and the parish

- analyze revenues to ensure they are accurately and correctly recorded
- ensure the parish's ability to repay debts, both capital and interest prior to committing to expenditures
- invest funds securely in accordance with eparchial guidelines
- ensure financial records are in order and keep paper and electronic financial documents secure
- publish reports on the financial position of the parish in relation to the budget:
 - at least yearly
 - share monthly or quarterly and annual financial statements with the pastor and parish pastoral council
 - present to the parish an audited annual account of the parish financial situation
- review expenditures with the pastor that exceed amounts for their parish's threshold and make appropriate recommendations and seek required approvals
- request permission from bishop for all expenditures over \$15,000 and include:
 - budget of the project
 - quotes from at least three vendors
 - approval of parish pastoral council
 - approval of general parish membership
- provide advice on all other acts of extraordinary financial administration
- complete and submit all forms and requests for information in compliance with federal, provincial and local governments
- apply for grants
- prepare and distribute contracts

Parish Administration

- observe church law and civil law in all matters, paying particular attention to matters relating to the hiring of personnel and remuneration, as well as observing the social teaching of the Church by providing just working conditions and a living wage
- secure the bishop's permission before initiating or contesting lawsuits in secular courts
- observe testamentary (last wills) clauses when goods are left to the parish

General Norms

- develop budgets and strategies for the fiscal implementation of the goals and priorities

- subject to all eparchial policies and directives issued by the eparchial finance council
- requires the permission of the bishop in acts of extraordinary administration

Parish Meetings

Parishes share information regarding the parish at meetings. Meetings can be held at many levels including regular parish pastoral council meetings, committee meetings and annual general meetings. Meetings are an opportunity to communicate ideas, foster collaboration, and make good decisions on behalf of the parish.

Some basic suggestions for preparing for and carrying out effective meetings include:

- meet according to pre-set schedules and times
- prepare an agenda in advance and distribute
- include time for prayer and spiritual reflection
- start and end meetings on time
- keep clear and concise minutes of meetings
- request reports from committees prior to the meeting and keep presentations brief
- keep focused on the key items where decisions are needed
- summarize all action items at the end of the meeting confirming who is responsible, when a task is to be completed and any relevant details
- Robert's Rules of Order should be followed particularly when motions are made for important decision of the parish

Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes are a written record of what was discussed, decided and actioned during a meeting. Taking of minutes is an important function of all meetings as these minutes form part of the permanent archive of the parish.

Meeting minutes should be written using clear and concise language with a focus capturing key elements such as when and where the meeting takes place, who attended, topics discussed, motions made, summary of discussions and any action items. Decision-making is an important role of the council. These decisions are officially recorded in the minutes as follows:

1. If a member moves a particular decision forward (i.e. an expenditure that was not budgeted). The motions is reported in its entirety along with the name of the member who moved it.
2. Another member seconds the motion and their name is recorded.

3. The chair asks if there is any discussion on the motion. Members may speak freely, and a summary of the discussion is recorded in the minutes.
4. A vote is requested on the motion. Members vote with a show of hands and typically most decisions are a simple majority (i.e. 51%). The minutes reflect the results of the vote including for, against and abstentions. A reminder, only voting members may vote and in the case of a tie, the pastor will decide the outcome.

Minutes are finalized and sent to parish pastoral council members prior to the next meeting if possible. Those members present at the meeting are welcome to provide edits to the minutes. The minutes are brought to the next meeting, and a motion is made by the secretary to approve the minutes (with amendments if any). A seconder is required. A vote is then taken of all the members who attended the specific meeting. Once approved the minutes become the permanent record of the parish.

Regular Meetings

Regular parish pastoral council meetings are usually scheduled monthly in larger parishes and semi-annual in smaller parishes.

The following is a suggested agenda format where the sequence of items may be changed after item 4:

1. Opening prayer
2. Ensure quorum is met
3. Approval of agenda (motion is required with a seconder and vote)
4. Approval of minutes from previous meeting (motion is required with a seconder and vote)
5. Business arising from the minutes from the previous meeting (updates on action items or events completed since last meeting)
6. Current and ongoing business
7. New business
8. Committee or ministry reports
9. Pastor's report
10. Education/spiritual reflection
11. Closing prayer

It is helpful, after each meeting, to develop a list of action items with assigned persons or overseeing the task, and estimated completion date.

Annual General Meeting

The annual general meeting of the parish should be held within two to three months after the end of the parish fiscal year.

At least two to three weeks prior to the annual general meeting notice is to be given to all parishioners, indicating the date, time and place of the meeting. All parishioners should be encouraged by the pastor to attend the annual general meeting.

The following is a suggested agenda format for an annual general meeting:

1. Opening prayer and welcome by pastor
2. Selection of chair and secretary
3. Approval of agenda
4. Approval of minutes from the last annual general meeting
5. Business arising from minutes
6. Annual report of the parish pastoral council chair
7. Annual reports from the parish pastoral council committees
8. Annual financial statements and budget
9. Auditor's report
10. Approve auditor's report and budget for the coming year
11. Dissolution of previous parish pastoral council
12. Nominating committee report
13. Elections
14. New business
15. Pastor's remarks
16. Closing prayer
17. Adjournment

Commissioning Service of the Parish Pastoral Council

The parish consists of a community of people who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord, live the Good News, and pray together. Parish leadership relies on prayer. The following are suggestions for prayers that can be used in the commissioning of the new parish pastoral council. During the Divine Liturgy, the following petition may be added:

Pastor: For the members of the parish pastoral council
who will be commissioned on this day,
that they may give witness to the presence of Christ
in their lives by manifesting faith, hope and love,
on behalf of the entire parish community,
let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

During the Divine Liturgy, after the Ambon Prayer, that is, after “Blessed be the name of the Lord,” the pastor invites the members of the incoming parish pastoral council to come forward and to stand facing the parishioners. The pastor then reads the names of the parish pastoral council members and their positions (chair, vice-chair, secretary, treasurer, etc.). The pastor then addresses the entire parish:

Pastor: Brothers and sisters, these members of the parish pastoral council have been selected to serve our parish community. In sharing their gifts and wisdom, they have the pastoral needs of our entire parish at heart. Let us pray for their perseverance in this important service.

Dear members of the parish pastoral council, you are called to a most important work in our community. Your duty is to foster the pastoral activity of this parish, to help all of us grow in faithfulness to the Gospel, to be the disciples of Christ that we are called to be. Because of your knowledge and wisdom, you have been chosen to share your insights with one another, with me your pastor for the well-being of our parish community, and the building up of the kingdom of God.

Loving Lord, bestow your (+) blessings upon these members of our parish pastoral council. May your Spirit enlighten their minds and guide their actions that they may be renewed in faith, united in love, and bring to fulfillment the work of your Church for your honor and glory and for the benefit of all your people.

For you are our God, and we are your people, and we glorify your name,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now, and for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Sample Prayers before a Parish Pastoral Council Meeting

Heavenly King, Advocate, Spirit of Truth,
who are everywhere present and fill all things,
Treasury of Blessings, Bestower of Life,
come, and dwell within us; cleanse us of all that defiles us,
and O Good One, save our souls.

God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,
 You have called us
 to be the servants of Your servants –
 our brothers and sisters in the parish.
We meet here as their representatives,
 and so we ask for the grace of your guidance.
Help us to truly represent them
 and not simply ourselves.
May the true needs of our parish
 and the common good of all be our concern.
And above all, may your will in these matters
 become our will.

Help us who serve in these positions to remember that all our concerns are aimed at the
spiritual transformation of our parish community.
May the matters we shall discuss not blind us to the primary work of our parish the holiness of
all its members.
May the Holy Spirit, who inspired the Pentecost meeting of the apostles, visit us and grant us
the light of divine wisdom.
We give glory, thanks, and worship to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for ever and
ever. Amen.

Guiding Documents

By-laws

The parish itself is both a civil corporation under the laws of Alberta and a juridic person, ecclesiastical corporation, under the laws of the Church. The pastor is charged by canon law to manage the temporal goods of the parish and has a collaborative role with the parish pastoral council.

Each parish shall have written by-laws which reflect the nature and the mission of the parish, namely, to share in the mission of the Church. The eparchy has available, to all parishes, a template for a set of bylaws suitable for the parish. Modifications to the template could be considered, however the spirit and the directives of the by-laws should remain intact.

By-laws are typically reviewed and, if required, updated by the by-law committee. Changes are then presented to the parish pastoral council for review and approval. These changes are then brought to the parish for approval, usually at an annual general meeting. Once approved by the parish, the updated by-laws are forwarded to the eparchial bishop for final approval. All changes to by-laws are required to be filed with the provincial government at Alberta Corporate Registries.

In addition to by-laws, every parish may find it beneficial to develop policies and procedures to support good and consistent governance in the usual activities and business of the parish.

Civil By-laws

The Christian faithful are subject, in addition to the laws of the Church, also to the laws of the civil society. Thus, the Church recognizes civil law, especially in regard to what is to be observed concerning the civil effects of marriage and the administration of church property and goods, where such civil laws are not contrary to divine law or canon law provides otherwise.

In this light, the parish pastoral council is encouraged to take advantage of civil law especially where the protection of church rights and property are concerned. Most parishes would have incorporated under the *“An Act to Provide for the Incorporation of Parishes of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in the Province of Alberta”* assented to March 29, 1956, where information on how civil law relates to our church is discussed.

Parishes established prior to 1956, may have been incorporated under related but separate legislation. The parish should have all originating documents filed securely with a copy provided to the eparchial office for archiving. Parishes in Alberta would have been legally recognized as Ukrainian Catholic, or Ruthenian Greek Catholic or Greek Ruthenian Rite United with Rome.