



## **New Ministry Application and Review Process St Mary Magdalene Catholic Church**

### **Ministry Definition**

At StMM, a parish-sponsored ministry is a structured group of volunteers that are organized to meet the needs of the parish which are not being met by an existing ministry. A ministry is sustainable in serving the mission of the church through volunteers and the continuity of the program. Each ministry will be pre-approved by the parish council with an approved charter and will prepare an annual report.

### **Ministry Criteria**

- An StMM-sponsored ministry meets the following criteria:
- Has a plan for sustainability; plans are in place for succession, ongoing documentation, and ongoing engaged leadership
- Meets a need that is not already being met by another ministry
- Open to everyone in the parish who meets the target population (not limited to friends/acquaintances of ministry chairs)
- Structured through the written new ministry application which will act as a foundational guiding document throughout the ministry's existence; includes consideration or assessment of risk (including liability) and a mitigation plan
- Consistent with the mission of StMM and the Catholic Church

### **Ministry Benefits**

- Inclusion of StMM in the name of the ministry
- StMM email address for the ministry
- Access to the parish community (bulletin / pulpit announcements / table in narthex)
- Potential funding if approved by parish council
- Meeting space when available (must be scheduled through parish secretary)

## **Responsibilities in New Ministry Application and Review Process**

### **Council Responsibilities**

The Parish Council ensures official ministries of StMM are sustainable and consistent with the mission of the parish by reviewing new ministry applications and either approving or denying

them. Parish council reviews the ministry application form periodically to ensure it is consistent with the informational needs of the ministry application process.

### Convener Responsibilities

The Convener is a pastor-elected member of Parish Council. The following responsibilities apply to the Convener's role in new ministry applications:

- Neutrally provide information and education on the ministry approval process and ministry criteria to parishioners wishing to start a ministry
- Guide potential ministries to understand ministry criteria and application process
- Assist ministry applicants in completing the ministry application, ensuring they are fully addressing each area
- Update ministry applicants on the status of their applications and ensure they are prepared for and attend the final review.
- Submit new applications to the parish council
- Liaise between new ministries and existing ministries if they require assistance
- Convener submits the list of potential new ministries since the last meeting and their disposition, and where the current applicants are in the process of application to the council chair for inclusion into the agenda at least two weeks prior to each meeting. The list of potential new ministries includes suggestions made by parishioners to the convener.

## New Ministry Application and Review Process

The following new ministry application and review process provides structure and fairness in the approval or denial of new ministries at StMM. The entire process is likely to take at least three months, accounting for time to review the applications, then conduct an initial review and a final review during consecutive Parish Council meetings. The timeline may be extended if more information is needed or if Council meetings are cancelled. However, Parish Council is dedicated to ensuring that StMM offers a robust array of ministries to serve the StMM mission and that the process of creating a new ministry is streamlined and transparent.

### 1. Applicant Completes Application with Assistance of the Convener

- Person wishing to start a new ministry will be put in contact with the convener for a meeting
- Applicant meets with convener to understand the StMM ministry criteria and the process.
- The convener reviews each application and identifies weaknesses to be strengthened prior to submitting it to parish council. Weaknesses could include incomplete or unanswered items, or situations not considered about which the convener anticipates the parish council will inquire.
- The convener recommends whether or not the ministry moves forward with application based on the ministry criteria and explains the recommendation to the ministry applicant.
- The applicant may complete application to submit to parish council regardless of the convener's recommendation, but all applications must receive a recommendation that they proceed or not proceed to a parish council review based on their application by the convener and submitted to parish council by the convener.

## 2. Application Reviewed by Parish Council - Initial Review

- The convener requests time on the next two parish council meeting agendas for (1) the initial new ministry application review (without applicant present) and (2) the final application review. The goal of this initial review will be to quickly identify questions or issues to be communicated to the applicant. This will require that all members review the application and recommendations and formulate their proposed questions in advance of this meeting.
- The convener submits the final application and the convener's detailed written recommendation at least two weeks prior to the meeting at which parish council will conduct the initial new ministry application review.
- Following the initial review, the convener will work with the applicant to ensure all questions/issues are addressed.
- Parish council members' questions/issues may be addressed by the applicant through the convener either by email prior to the final review or in-person at the final review.

## 3. Application Reviewed by Parish Council - Final Review

- The convener consults with the council to ensure the final review is on the next meeting agenda following the initial review.
- The convener ensures the applicant is aware of the meeting time and location, as well as the process.
- The ministry representative will have five minutes to present the overview and purpose of the ministry to the group. A limited time will then be available for the council to hear answers to questions formulated at the prior meeting. The applicant will address any questions from the pc members. The convener may offer additional information at the end or if asked by the pc and/or the applicant.
- The applicant will be dismissed from the meeting for a members-only discussion and determination. If more information is needed, the Council may extend the discussion to future Council meetings as needed.
- Convener notifies the applicant of the final decision and ensures that approved ministries are entered on the ministry list within 30 days of the final decision. The convener will ensure the new ministry leader(s) is(are) connected with the parish administrator and parish secretary and aware of resources needed to access the ministry benefits (e.g., email address, bulletin announcements).
- Ministries approved will be asked to provide a written status report to the council six months after approval.