

Guidelines and Regulations of the Parish Pastoral Council of St. Malachi Parish **October 9, 2016**

Preface

St. Malachi Parish was established on November 7, 2009 by the merger of St. Malachi Parish (established in 1865) and the Community of St. Malachi (established as a parish in 1975). The St. Malachi Parish Pastoral Council, in collaboration with the Pastor and all members of our Parish, provides leadership in continuing to develop this parish, while building on the charisms of its predecessors. Calling upon the gifts and wisdom of the Holy Spirit, the Council engages each member's active and loving participation in the building of this faith community.

Belonging to St. Malachi is an invitation to participate fully in the life of the Church. It is a call to prayer and sacramental practice -- most especially Eucharistic celebration -- with others as part of the greater Catholic community. It also calls us through the grace of Baptism to continue in faith formation, give input into the growth of the parish community and its mission, and offer stewardship within the ministries, programs and committees of our Parish as well as the local area. Through the offering of time, talent, and treasure each member, individually and in communion with others, gives witness to the Gospel.

The Parish Pastoral Council

These are the Guidelines for the Parish Pastoral Council (the "Council") of St. Malachi Parish in Cleveland, Ohio.

I. The Parish Mission Statement

St. Malachi is formed as
a Eucharistic people
united in prayer
welcoming to all
serving those who are poor and in need

II. Purpose and Function of the Council

A. Purpose: The Council collaborates with the Pastor in guiding the life and pastoral ministry of St. Malachi Parish. The Council is an energizing, representative unit, in which diverse members of the parish community bring their wisdom to bear on the issues and challenges of parish life. It engages the entire parish community in accomplishing the mission and ministry of the church.

B. Functions: The Council, in pursuit of the parish mission, exercises a variety of functions that are ultimately aimed at supporting our life as a faith community. The Council seeks to be and become a model of prayer, cooperation, celebration and service.

1. **Pastoral Planning:** The Council ensures ongoing collaboration in developing and renewing a pastoral plan which promotes the full mission of the Church. While ministries, committees and other groups focus on specific areas, the Council is responsible for envisioning how the parish can be most effective in fulfilling its total mission. The Council discerns what needs to be supported, changed, and/or developed to make the parish more faithful to God's call.

To fulfill its planning responsibility, the Council regularly listens to the parishioners and evaluates the overall experience and quality of life of the parish community. It develops updates and recommends plans and priorities for the future.

This planning work includes:

- a. *Reviewing the Parish Mission, Identifying Key Needs/Concerns:* The Council, in cooperation with the parishioners and pastoral staff, attempts to identify the key needs and concerns of the parish, ministry/group leaders, our Near West Partner Parishes, and the larger community in which it exists. Critical to this process is seeking out and attending to the experience and perspectives of parishioners; this can be done in a variety of ways, both formal and informal.
 - b. *Establishing Goals and Objectives to Respond to Priority Needs:* The Council will formulate specific, realistic goals and objectives that respond to parish needs. By Council agreement and approval by the pastor, these goals and objectives become guides for action.
 - c. *Monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of programs and activities:* The goals and objectives set by the Council are implemented through various processes, ministries and/or programs. Administration and programming are not functions of the Council. The Council's role of monitoring and evaluation is an oversight function to assure that Parish needs are being met effectively. It is never a role of "passing judgment" on persons or intentions.
2. ***Spiritual Formation:*** Council encourages opportunities for discipleship in the whole parish community as well as the Council itself. The Council strives to be a small Christian community with mutual trust, respect and understanding among members.
 3. ***Policy Development:*** The Council develops, reviews, and recommends policies to the pastor that offer a clear course of action to effectively meet pastoral needs.
 4. ***Communication:*** The Council communicates regularly with the whole parish community and ministries/groups as well as parish staff, our partner parishes, and affiliates. It welcomes feedback.
 - a. The Council enables the members of the parish community to:
 - * relate their experiences, needs and hopes to the planning process of the parish, and
 - * recognize their gifts and talents, and share in the ongoing pastoral work of the parish.
 - b. The Council also communicates with the diocesan community and universal Church through participation in Central West District, our partner parish and regional gatherings.

c. The mission of St. Malachi Parish extends to all people living within its area. The Council supports and encourages communication with other faith communities and the local civic community.

d. Open, trusting, loving communication among the members of the Council themselves is vital to its effectiveness. The Council should reflect annually on the quality of its internal-communications process.

5. **Attending to "the preferential option for the poor"**: We are called by the presence of persons who are poor and marginalized in our midst. From the beginning, St. Malachi has accepted that "the preferential option for the poor" is a basic, constitutive element of the mission of the Church and of this parish. Our tradition of ministry to people who are poor or marginalized, and efforts to address the causes of their poverty and marginalization, are both an asset and a responsibility. This responsibility includes assuring the human and financial resources for sustaining our ministries and commitments to them.

The mission of St. Malachi Parish extends to all people living within its area. The Council supports and encourages communication with other faith communities and the local civic community.

III. Composition of Council

- A. Composition**: Council shall consist of the Pastor and 12 elected parishioners. All Council members shall be fully initiated Catholics and registered parishioners of St. Malachi Parish. Registered parishioners are those individuals 16 years of age and older whose names appear on the St. Malachi Parish registry maintained by the parish office.
- B. Term Length**: The length of the term of each Council Member shall be as follows:
1. In the case of the Pastor, his term shall commence when he becomes pastor of St. Malachi Parish and shall continue until his position as pastor terminates.
 2. The term of each elected Member shall be 3 years, beginning on July 1 of the year in which he or she is elected and ending on June 30 three years later.
 3. The Council shall make its best efforts to ensure that only one third of the Council Members have terms that expire in any particular year.
- C. Term Limits**: No person may serve more than two consecutive three-year terms without the passage of at least one three-year term during which he or she is not a Council Member.
- D. Election**:
1. The Vice-Chairperson of the Council shall serve as the chair of the Nominating Committee for New Council Members ("Nominating Committee").
 2. By April 1 of each year, the Vice-Chairperson shall convene a Nominating Committee consisting of no less than three (3) people, at least one (1) of whom is not a Council member. The purpose of the Nominating Committee shall be to arrange for an open and fair process by which registered parishioners shall nominate and

elect individual parishioners to fill any positions on the Council that are up for election that year.

3. The Nominating Committee shall adequately publicize to the parishioners the manner and period of time during which nominations may be made, including:
 - Announcements at the meetings of various parish organizations
 - Homily and/or other pulpit announcements
 - Flyers in the parish bulletin
 - Posters
 - Parish website and social media
4. In executing the above duties, members of the Nominating Committee will be expected to engage in tasks such as a) developing a list of potential candidates, b) soliciting self-nominations from parishioners, and c) encouraging parishioners to nominate other parishioners.
5. Nominations will be accepted on the St. Malachi website as well as being distributed and collected at Mass. The Nominating Committee then contacts potential candidates to gauge their interest and to brief them about Council Member roles and responsibilities.
6. The Nominating Committee shall seek to produce a slate of candidates for Council that reflects the diversity of the parish, including, but not limited to: diversity in age, gender, culture, points of view, skills, and level of involvement in the parish.
7. Voting for Council members commences at the Annual Parish Meeting and continues for the next two weeks.
8. Furthermore, this Committee shall ensure that the elections are completed by June 1 for new Council Member positions scheduled to begin on July 1 of that year. After the elections are completed, the Chairperson of the Council shall announce to the parish the names of the newly elected and re-elected Members.

E. Vacancies: In the event of the resignation, removal or death of any Council Member before the end of his or her term, the Council shall appoint a replacement to complete the term. The Chairperson of the Council shall announce to the parish the name of any person appointed to fill a vacancy on the Council.

F. Responsibilities of Council Members

1. Expectations: Council Members are expected to demonstrate the following:
 - a. Commitment:
 - To promote the mission and spiritual welfare of St. Malachi Parish
 - To work with the pastor who is the spiritual leader of the parish
 - To attend all Council meetings and to prepare sufficiently
 - To work in a group process of prayer, consensus building and planning
 - To actively participate in Mass and parish life
 - b. Openness
 - To listen attentively, be open-minded towards the ideas of others and show respect to all opinions shared
 - To convey parishioners' concerns and comments to Council when asked to do so

IV. Attendance at Council Meetings: If a Council member knows he or she will be absent from a Council meeting, the Council member shall notify the Chairperson/Secretary in advance of the meeting. If a Council member is absent from more than one-third of the Council meetings in a year, the Council may formally remove the Council member from the Council.

V. Council Meetings

- A. **Number:** The Council shall hold at least eight (8) meetings each year, including the Annual Parish meeting, on the dates, times and places determined by the Council.
- B. **Notice:** The Secretary shall provide notice of the date, time, place and agenda of a Council meeting to each Council member at least seven (7) days in advance of the meeting. This information should also be posted on the parish website at least seven (7) days in advance of the meeting.
- C. **Quorum:** The presence of 50% or more of the Council members shall constitute a quorum for a Council meeting, provided that the pastor is present. A quorum is required for the making of any recommendation or decisions or the taking of any official action by the Council.
- D. **Meeting Policies:**
1. The Chairperson, in consultation with the pastor and other Council officers, shall be responsible for preparing the agenda for the Council meeting.
 2. A parishioner may suggest an agenda item for a Council meeting. If the item is not approved for inclusion in the upcoming meeting or future meeting, the pastor or Chairperson should make the reasons clear to the parishioner. The parishioner may override that decision by collecting the signatures of at least 10% of the registered parishioners on a petition to place that item on the agenda for the following Council meeting.
 3. Guests are invited to Council meetings for education, discussions about particular topics or for other purposes as determined by Council officers or the pastor.
 4. Parishioners are welcome to be present at Council meetings. If a parishioner wishes to engage with council regarding a specific agenda item, this should be arranged in advance of the meeting with the Chairperson. The Chairperson will invite the parishioner to make a statement when that agenda item is being discussed.
 5. Certain sensitive or confidential issues may necessitate Council moving into Executive Session at which point visitors are excused.

VI. Decision Making

- A. **Scope:** Primarily the pastor is to consult with the Council on major matters of concern related to the life and pastoral ministry of the parish. The pastor may also consult with the Council on other matters on which the input of the Council would be beneficial.

- B. **Consultation:** As understood by Canon Law, “consultation” is the process by which Council shares in the pastor’s decision-making process. The pastor should make sure that the Council is properly convoked and its recommendations are taken seriously. Ordinarily the pastor should not act contrary to its advice, especially if consensus is achieved. In the rare case where the pastor chooses to act contrary to the advice of the Council, it is expected that he would communicate his reasons as clearly and fully as possible. Both the Council and the pastor should work together in a climate of goodwill and trust. Great care should be taken to assure a complete and honest dialogue in which all points of view are considered. Council members should seek to arrive at recommendations that promote the life and vitality of the larger parish community.
- C. **Consensus Decision-Making:** Council recommendations will ideally be made by consensus (see Appendix A.) Consensus is the process of arriving at a decision through open discussion and resolution of major discrepancies. In seeking consensus, the key value is to reach an optimal level of agreement and support, not necessarily unanimity.
- D. **Decisions by Communal Discernment:** On matters of major importance, Council may choose to engage in communal discernment. Discernment is the process of arriving at a decision in accord with the group’s understanding of God's will through prayerful reflection and deliberation. Communal discernment is related to consensus but adds the following dimensions to the consensus process: prayerful reflection, gathering of evidence, discussion of positive and negative factors of proposed alternative plans of action, and confirmation by the group. Because of the time involved, it is not usually practical for lesser issues.
- E. **Appeal Process:** In situations where the Council has difficulty accepting the pastor's decision, Council may invite the pastor and all concerned persons to study the issue further and to provide additional relevant data and/or insight. The Council shall prayerfully review the issue again in light of all of the information provided. If the recommendation of the Council is again not accepted by the pastor, the issue may be referred to the Bishop. Either the Chairperson or the pastor can initiate the referral.

VII. Officers

- A. **Officer Positions:** The Council shall have a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and a Secretary, selected by the Council from among its members. The Council shall also have a Recording Secretary, selected by Council, but who is not a member of Council.
- B. **Officer Term Lengths:** The length of the term of each Officer shall be one year, beginning on the date of the July Council meeting at which he or she is selected and ending when his or her successor is selected at the July meeting of the following year.
- C. **Officer Term Limits:** No person serving as Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson or Secretary may serve more than three consecutive one-year terms without a one-year term out of office. There are no term limits for the Recording Secretary.

D. Officer Selection: At its July meeting each year, the Council shall select a person for each office specified in Section 7A for the next term. Method of selection is typically discernment. Council may choose other methods such as by acclamation or election.

E. Officer Responsibilities: The Officers shall have the following responsibilities:

1. The Chairperson shall lead the Council in fulfilling its purpose and functions. In doing so, he or she shall also:
 - Chair all regular and special Council meetings and all Annual and Special Parish meetings
 - Motivate other Council Officers and members to fulfill their specific responsibilities
 - Encourage all Council members to participate actively and express ideas freely
 - Assist discussion by restating, summarizing and contrasting ideas and sentiments expressed by Council members
 - Identify and clarify the consensus reached by the Council, and, where consensus cannot reasonably be achieved, direct the Council in how to move forward
 - Clarify Council procedures
 - Attend to the need to communicate with, involve and meet with parishioners for their input as necessary
2. The Vice-Chairperson shall perform the duties of the Chairperson in his or her absence and shall serve as an aid to the Chairperson in conducting the Council's work. In doing so, he or she shall also:
 - Convene and Chair the Nominating Committee
 - Coordinate the nomination of candidates and election of Council members
 - Perform other functions requested by the Chairperson or the Council
3. The Secretary shall serve as the custodian of the Council's records. More specifically, he or she shall:
 - Ensure that a record of the minutes of all Council and parish meetings are kept
 - Maintain a roster of the Council members, Council and Officer terms and attendance records
 - Ensure that appropriate notice is given for all Council and General Parish meetings as required by these Guidelines
 - Keep on file careful records of the Council's history, development, minutes, decisions and rosters, which will be maintained with parish records at the parish office
 - Provide Council meeting minutes for inclusion in the parish bulletin and on the parish website
 - Make available, collect and count valid ballots for parishioner votes in accordance with Section X and publish results in the following issue of the parish bulletin and on the parish website as soon as the voting process is completed

4. The Recording Secretary shall take minutes of all Council and Parish meetings and, under the supervision of the Secretary, distributes copies of the minutes for Council approval.

VIII. Parish Organizational Chart: St. Malachi Parish has ministries, groups and committees that carry out the mission of the Parish (see Parish Mission Statement). These groups are identified in the organizational chart according to the mission areas in which they are associated:

- Eucharistic people (Worship)
- United in prayer (Faith)
- Welcoming to all (Community)
- Serving those who are poor and in need (Outreach)
- Operations (to Support the Mission)

The Council shall create “ad hoc” committees to perform certain delimited tasks relating to the work of the council on an “as needed” basis. The Council shall be responsible for preparing and, as necessary, updating descriptions of the specific objectives of each ministry/committee/group. The Pastoral Staff serves as a resource to the ministries, committees and groups.

IX. Consultation with the Larger Parish

As part of its mandate to be responsive to the needs and concerns of Parishioners, the Council shall, as provided below, convene General Parish Meetings to which all registered Parishioners shall be invited.

- A. **Biannual Meetings with Leaders of Parish Ministries/Groups:** Council will convene meetings with leaders of ministries/groups to share council priorities, obtain feedback from those present and discuss topics of mutual concern. Ministries and committees are also encouraged to convene meetings with each other to foster collaboration such as “calendar meetings” where groups share plans.
- B. **Annual Parish Meeting:** Each year, during the month of April or May, the Council shall convene an Annual Parish Meeting. At this meeting, the Council shall report on the state of the parish and may request feedback from parishioners about important issues or concerns. The Finance Council shall report on the parish finances. Candidates for Council membership shall be given an opportunity to introduce themselves to the parish and answer questions. Parishioners shall have the opportunity to voice their concerns related to the parish. Any reports made at the Annual Parish Meeting shall also be made available to the whole parish in written form and by posting on the Parish website.
- C. **Special Meetings with the Parish:**
 1. **Called by Council:** Whenever it deems appropriate or necessary, the Council may convene a Special Parish Meeting to get input from parishioners. The agenda for such a Meeting shall be limited to the purposes stated in the notice for the meeting.

2. Called by Parishioners: In response to a signed petition of at least 10% of the registered parishioners calling for a Special Parish Meeting, the Council shall convene such a Meeting as soon as is reasonably possible. The agenda for such a Meeting shall be limited to the purposes stated in the petition calling for the meeting.
3. Notice: The Secretary of the Council shall be responsible for posting notice of, and the agenda for, any Special Parish Meeting at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting (a) in the parish bulletin and (b) on the parish website.

X. Parishioner Votes

Whenever these Guidelines call for a vote of the registered parishioners, the Secretary of the Council shall make his or her best effort to ensure that ballots are made available to all registered parishioners by (i) including a paper copy of the ballot in the parish bulletin, (ii) including instructions for electronic submission of ballots on the parish website and (iii) placing paper copies of the ballot on tables at the church entrances, for two weeks before the ballots are due. Parishioners must submit their ballots in the manner and by the due date listed on the ballot and/or on the parish website for the ballot to be counted.

The Secretary shall be responsible for collecting and counting the ballots with either the Chairperson or a member of the Nominating Committee (for the election of Council members) or the Council Chairperson or an appointed designee for all other elections. To ensure the integrity of the election process, the Secretary will require that each registered parishioner submit only one ballot and may require that each registered parishioner attest to that fact when he or she submits a ballot. If the ballot requires a voter to attest that s/he is a registered parishioner submitting only one ballot and the parishioner fails to do so, the ballot shall be deemed invalid and will not be counted.

Receipt of the completed ballots of at least 10% of the registered parishioners shall be required for a vote of the parishioners to be considered valid.

XI. Relationship with Parish Finance Council

The Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Finance Council are distinct entities with distinct functions. However, they are related since both are concerned with the life and mission of the Parish. Cooperation between these two Councils is essential for the good of the entire parish. Both Councils are consultative to the pastor: The Parish Pastoral Council on matters related to the life and pastoral ministry of the parish, the Finance Council on matters of financial concern.

The purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council is to promote the spiritual growth of the parish community and plan ways for the parish to carry out its mission. The purpose of the Finance Council is to aid the pastor in the administration of parish resources to carry out the mission of the parish.

The Finance Council looks to the Parish Pastoral Council for a statement of the mission of the parish, a pastoral plan and parish priorities. The Parish Pastoral Council looks to the Finance Council for sound financial guidance and planning regarding the resources needed to develop and implement parish plans, programs and policies.

Both Councils can foster cooperative relationships through regular communication. Regular reports are to be exchanged between the two Councils. The Parish Pastoral Council shall select one of its members to serve as a liaison to the Finance Council.

XII. Amendments

- A. Minor amendments to these Council Guidelines may be made on an as-needed basis. Examples of minor amendments would be to add new methods of nominating members for council or to make grammatical changes. After discussion of a proposed amendment at a Council meeting, the proposed amendment shall be circulated in written form to all Council Members for review. At a subsequent Council meeting, the proposed amendment shall be voted upon by the Council. Passage of the amendment requires a quorum and affirmation from two-thirds of the voting members. Minor amendments will be implemented immediately.

- B. Major amendments to these Guidelines should follow the same procedure, but should also be approved by the registered parishioners by a vote conducted in accordance with Section 10 of these Guidelines. Major amendments are a significant change from past practice and have an impact on the life and ministry of the parish. Examples of major changes include changing the size of council or the method of council decision-making. In order to be valid, the amendment must receive the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Registered Parishioners who vote on it. Major amendments will be implemented at the July Council meeting.

Implementation Process

1. Upon passage of the proposed replacement *Guidelines and Regulations of the Parish Pastoral Council of St. Malachi Parish*, the provisions regarding elections to Parish Council in the replacement *Guidelines* will take effect for the next election process. The remaining provisions of the new *Guidelines* will take effect on July 1, i.e. the beginning of the new Parish Council year.
2. Current At-Large members of the Parish Council with one or more years remaining in the term will continue to serve for the duration of their term and shall be counted among the 12 members.
3. Elections for “At-Large” members of Parish Council will be conducted according to the new *Guidelines* for the number of representatives needed to create a full complement of 12 members, as required in the new *Guidelines*.

4. The term of representatives of the various Commissions currently serving on Parish Council (“delegate members”) will conclude at the end of the current Parish Council year on June 30.
5. For the upcoming election, all outgoing At-Large members of Parish Council, all current Commission representatives serving on Parish Council and all qualified parishioners shall be eligible to be elected to Parish Council, without regard to term limits established in the current *Guidelines*.

Appendix A

PERSPECTIVE OF CONSENSUS

Consensus is a group process of seeking substantial, though not necessarily unanimous, agreement on a significant matter. The group strives to attain a conclusion which all can support, even if some still disagree. Consensus can be described in the following way for a person who does not fully agree with a group's position: "I understand what most of you would like to do. I personally would not do that, but I feel that you understand what my alternative would be. I have had sufficient opportunity to openly share my thoughts and feelings. I feel that I have been listened to, but I clearly have not been able to sway you to my point of view. Therefore, I will support what most of you wish to do."

In seeking consensus, the key value is to reach an optimal level of agreement and support. This contrasts with the concern to make a decision expediently, however divided people might be.

The concern to reach consensus has a profound impact upon how a group goes about its work. The desire for consensus leads to seeking participation by all members of the group and by others who will also be impacted by the outcome. Input is used to shape and reshape a proposal based upon what is said.

If a group choose to build consensus, it is first necessary to build relationships which will enable consensus to happen. Building an atmosphere of openness and truth is essential for a group seeking consensus. Otherwise people often end up with a false consensus. For example, if one asks, "Does everyone agree?" or "Does anyone disagree?" it may be that few people respond. However, there may be people who do not feel comfortable expressing disagreement, especially if an atmosphere of honesty has not been created.

In one form of the consensus process, each person is asked to:

- Prepare his/her own position as well as possible before the meeting and realize that the task is incomplete until the viewpoints are supplied by the other members of the Council. Each person has a part of the truth. To do this preparation, each member should have the agenda and proposal under study at least four (4) days before the meeting.
- Recognize an obligation to express his/her own opinion and explain it fully so that the rest of the Council will have the benefit of all the members thinking.
- Recognize an obligation to listen to the opinions and feelings of all the other members and to be ready to modify his/her own position on the basis of logic, understanding and sensitivity.
- Avoid conflict-reducing techniques such as voting, compromising, or giving in to keep the peace, and to realize that differences of opinion are both helpful and often present. In exploring differences, the best course of action will gradually make itself apparent. Consensus begins only when members are ready to really listen and are open to modifying their positions.

Consensus almost always takes more time at the beginning than other methods. However, it can also be more 'efficient' than other methods when one considers a long-term perspective that includes effective implementation and positive community impact. Decisions that are made

quickly but do not receive support in the implementation phase are seldom effective or efficient. It is also important to be clear about ‘who makes what decision in what ways.’ This is an excellent area for dialogue at the very beginning of any significant consensus process. Otherwise the unspoken expectations about roles in the consensus process can lead to frustration and disappointment as different people or groups feel they were excluded or ignored. Some issues will require the consensus of a particular group. Other issues will warrant only informational updates on what is happening.

Consensus is often more time-consuming than simple voting. While voting allows for all members of the group to participate before a conclusion is reached, it is also competitive and tends to produce winners and losers. Furthermore, voting tends to become legalistic.

Here are some guidelines for successfully using the consensus decision-making method:

- The proper attitude for consensus requires a desire to arrive at a common conclusion and a willingness to compromise. This compromise is not yielding to an inferior solution, but recognizing the validity of another point of view. Members may disagree, but should avoid being argumentative.
- Determining the areas of agreement and isolating the areas of disagreement will minimize the level of polarization in the group.
- Dealing with the interests behind a declared position of disagreement will help to reach a general consensus.
- The aim of consensus is to reach a common conclusion after the members have had a fair opportunity to express options and opinions.
- The ability of the person to lead and unify the group is a dominant factor in achieving consensus.

Before they are enacted, recommendations of the Council need to be accepted by the pastor. If the pastor and Council deal with issues openly and honestly from the beginning of the consensus process, in a consistent environment of mutual respect, disagreements on issues will be minimized and an exceptional disagreement will not damage the relationship between pastor and the Council.

Outline of a process for reaching group consensus efficiently:

- Appoint a clock-watcher (other than Chairperson / facilitator)
- The Chairperson / facilitator presents the “decision item” or “discussion item” to the group.
- The Chairperson / facilitator stipulates how much time will be allotted for the discussion / decision process.
- The Chairperson / facilitator solicits the opinions from every member of the group BEFORE open discussion.
- During the discussion, the Chairperson / facilitator should limit those who talk too much and draw out those who tend not to speak, or who look “uncomfortable”
- When two-thirds of the group appear to be in agreement, the Chairperson / facilitator articulates what he or she believes the “consensus” position to be. [“It seems like the group believes that we should (insert conclusion here)”].

- The Chairperson / facilitator then tests the consensus position with the group: [“Is this accurate? Does someone see it differently?”]
- Allow for a possible revision of the “consensus” position to be stated by a group member. If there is no revision, go with the stated consensus position.
- If there is a suggested revision to the consensus position of the group, poll group members to see if the revised or original stated consensus position is more reflective of the group.
- Go with the majority.

If two-thirds agreement is not reached...

- Negotiate more time, or...
- Table discussion
- Determine what is unresolved and assign members to address it
- Schedule a time to return to the topic