



CARITAS COMMITTEE

Mission Statement and Procedure Guidelines

St. Joseph Parish Dexter, Michigan

Updated May 2023

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CARITAS COMMITTEE MISSION AND PURPOSE

The mission of the Caritas Committee is, *“Sharing our compassion and treasure with our neighbors in need.”* The Committee, a sub-committee of the parish Finance Council, was formed for the purpose of stewarding the distribution of funds gathered in a special collection taken on the fifth Sunday of months with five Sundays. These funds are to be shared with charitable nonprofit organizations whose policies are in line with Catholic principles and teaching.

HISTORY OF THE CARITAS COMMITTEE

Committee History

In 1992 St. Joseph Parish began to take a monthly second collection to share with charitable nonprofit local, national and international organizations serving the needs of the less fortunate. As the parish grew, 5% and later 10% of the regular monthly collection was committed to being distributed. A Tithing Committee of at least 6 but no more than 12 members was formed to research and determine the recipients. Each month, Faith in Action received a share of the collections along with 4-5 other organizations chosen by the Tithing Committee.

With the dawn of the 21st century the needs of our growing parish were identified through parish-wide visioning sessions, and plans for the building of a new parish campus began. In order to financially support the realization of our new parish campus project and to continue to support our Caritas commitment to the community, the Pastoral and Finance Councils elected to share a second collection taken on 5th Sundays rather than tithe 10% of our monthly collections. This began with fiscal year 2008 (July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008.)

The Tithing Committee became the Fifth Sunday Committee, and as the adjustment to the revised system was made, the Committee chose to concentrate on four local charitable organizations that supported those most in need in our local community: Dexter Family Services, Grace Clinic, Christmas in Action and the parish Christian service trip with the National Relief Network. Faith in Action continues to receive monthly support from the parish as a line item in our monthly budgets.

In 2011 the Committee changed its name from the Fifth Sunday Committee to Caritas Committee. At the same time, the Committee proposed the National Relief Network hold a separate collection. The distribution allocation has since been revised several times to enable the Committee to respond to the needs around us.

Inspiration for the Caritas Name

In July of 2011, the Fifth Sunday Committee met to formulate a mission statement to present to the Parish Council. They looked to the 2006 Encyclical letter of Pope Benedict XVI – “*Deus Caritas Est*” for guidance.

“Caritas in veritate” is the principle around which the Church's social doctrine turns, a principle that takes on practical form in the criteria that govern moral action. Love in truth — caritas in veritate — is a great challenge for the Church in a world that is becoming progressively and pervasively globalized. The risk for our time is that the de facto interdependence of people and nations is not matched by ethical interaction of consciences and minds that would give rise to truly human development. Only in charity, illumined by the light of reason and faith, is it possible to pursue development goals that possess a more humane and humanizing value. The sharing of goods and resources, from which authentic development proceeds, is not guaranteed by merely technical progress and relationships of utility, but by the potential of love that overcomes evil with good (cf. Rom 12:21), opening up the path towards reciprocity of consciences and liberties.

From this came the inspiration to change the name of the Fifth Sunday Committee to Caritas Committee – a name that embodied our mission:

“Sharing our compassion and treasure with our neighbors in need.”

The word “caritas” is Latin for charity; love for all people; human compassion for one’s neighbor; selfless love as God for man. With this change, we now have Caritas Sunday instead of Fifth Sunday Sharing.

COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES, COMPOSITION AND PROCEDURES

Caritas Committee Responsibilities

The Caritas Committee manages the distribution of funds gathered in special collections in months with five Sundays. These funds will be distributed to nonprofit groups or organizations – not to individuals.

The purpose of the Caritas Committee is to steward these funds to charitable nonprofit organizations. Potential recipient organizations will be identified, and the Committee will select recipients only after researching recommended organizations and insuring they meet the Roman Catholic Church’s mission and morals. Acting on behalf of the parish, the Committee considers things such as:

- (a) Does the charity address the real needs of the community they serve?
- (b) Are the charity needs already being adequately met by a well-organized fundraising agency?
- (c) Are the administrative costs of the organization excessive?

The Finance Council liaison will then present the Committee’s recommendations to the Finance Council for approval.

Nominations for potential charitable organizations that meet these guidelines will be solicited from committee members as well as from St. Joseph parishioners. Requests for suggested organizations will be printed in the bulletin and will be included in the oral presentation on each Caritas Sunday.

The formula for distribution of these funds is discussed and reviewed by the Committee annually, typically at the first meeting after Pentecost. A change in distribution policy may be made by consensus and must be approved by the Finance Council.

Caritas Committee Formation

The Caritas Committee is comprised of twelve people, including one liaison person from Parish Council, one from Finance Council and one staff liaison appointed by the pastor. Nine nominated members of the St. Joseph congregation form the core of the Committee. Two alternate members will also be nominated, and would serve on the Committee if any committee members are unable to fulfill their responsibilities. Three new members will be selected each year to fill vacated slots. New members will be selected by lot on Pentecost weekend to serve for a three-year term. Two alternates will also be selected for a one-year period to fill in for members who cannot complete their term during that year. If an alternate fills a position, the alternate will complete the term of the person whom they are replacing. Alternates will be kept informed about Caritas Committee activity by including them on distributions about the meetings and minutes.

Caritas Committee Election of Officers

Committee members will elect a chairperson at the first meeting after Pentecost. The chairperson should have at least one year of experience serving on the Caritas Committee and can serve for a term not to exceed two years. If more than one person accepts a nomination for this position, then the chairperson will be chosen by lot. The chairperson will facilitate and guide all meetings.

Members will also elect a secretary who will be responsible for the following tasks or delegate these responsibilities:

- Maintain Caritas Committee records.
- Record minutes at meetings and distribute minutes by email to all committee members for review.
- Submit parish bulletin articles to the parish secretary on recipient organizations to be included the week of Caritas Sunday.
- Submit occasional Caritas articles for *Chips and Sawdust*.
- Notify parish secretary of meeting dates to update the parish calendar.
- Work with chairperson to create meeting agenda for e-mail distribution prior to scheduled meetings.

Caritas Committee Member Requirements

- Members must be registered members of St. Joseph Parish for at least six months.
- Members must be confirmed Catholics, at least 18 years of age.
- Members must attend Mass regularly and contribute to the Sunday collection.
- Members cannot have a spouse on the Caritas Committee as per Diocesan guidelines.
- Members cannot serve on Parish Council or Finance Council concurrent with serving on Caritas, unless acting as the liaison from either council.
- Members cannot have a spouse concurrently serving on the Parish Council or the Finance Council.

Members are nominated for a 3-year term and may serve again after a three-year break. If a member is unable to fulfill the responsibilities due to death, resignation, or relocation, the chairperson shall ask the next alternate drawn in the last selection if he/she is willing to complete the departing member's term. If neither is available the pastor shall appoint someone. Members are expected to attend all committee meetings. Members who miss two meetings in a year *without prior notification to the Committee chair* will be asked by the chairperson if they still intend to serve on the committee.

Caritas Committee Nomination Schedule

A nomination committee of outgoing members will facilitate the nomination process for new members.

[THE FOLLOWING TIMETABLE IS A GUIDELINE THAT MAY BE ADJUSTED AS REQUIRED FOR THE PARISH CALENDAR.]

1st of month before *Chips* publication for month of Easter – article due on upcoming nominations.

Friday of 2nd week of Easter – 4th Sunday of Easter bulletin insert on Caritas Committee nominations due in Parish Office.

Tuesday of 5th week of Easter – Caritas Committee nomination form due in office for preparing/copying.

6th Sunday of Easter – Caritas Committee members speak at all Masses to solicit nominations.

Thursday of 6th week of Easter – Conduct Evening of Discernment / Education for nominees.

Pentecost Eve – Selection of new Caritas members by lot following Parish Council selections.

Caritas Committee Meetings

Meetings will typically occur 6 weeks prior to each Caritas Sunday. Additional meetings will be called as necessary. The dates are to be published in the parish bulletin. Meeting dates are set for the year at the first meeting after Pentecost but can be changed closer to the date if need be to maximize attendance. Members are to notify the Caritas Committee chairperson at least three days before the Caritas meeting if they can attend or not. This will allow the chairperson to determine if there will be two-thirds present to conduct the meeting or postpone it and notify members. Two-thirds of the committee must be present to determine the disbursement of funds. If for some reason two-thirds of the members are not present at a meeting, the members present can make the selections. Enough members, contacted by the chairperson, to fulfill the two-thirds condition, can then agree upon these selections.

Caritas Committee Voting Process

The Committee requires a vote to approve the distribution of collected money to candidate organizations. This vote requires a majority of members to approve the discussed direction. Parish Council, Finance Council and staff liaison members are full voting members. Before voting, a quorum comprising at least 8 members must be present. (See explanation above for collecting absentee ballots) Recommendations approved by vote will need to be presented to the Finance Council for final approval.

The pastor may exercise his pastoral responsibility as the one accountable for the “financial goods of the parish” (Canon Law 532) and ask the Caritas Committee to consider overriding these guidelines as occasions may warrant.

Appendix A

Organizations Meeting Caritas Criteria (through 5/2023)

1. Christmas in Action (April 2007)
2. St. Joseph Parish National Relief Network Service Trip (July 2007)
3. Dexter Family Services (September 2007; ongoing)
4. Grace Clinic (December 2007; ongoing through February 2015)
5. Catholic Habitat for Humanity House (April 2009, January 2011, May 2015, January 2017, December 2018, March 2019, May 2021, April 2023)
6. McGivney House (June 2010)
7. Hope Clinic (September 2010, April 2012, April 2017, October 2021)
8. His Eye is on the Sparrow (October 2010)
9. St. Joseph Parish Christian Service account (October 2010; ongoing)
10. Fr. Pat Jackson House (May 2011)
11. Catholic Social Services (May 2011)
12. Interfaith Hospitality Network – Alpha House (July 2011)
13. Feed My Starving Children (January 2012, January 2016, December 2018, May 2022)
14. Food Gatherers (January 2012, June 2014)
15. St. Leo Soup Kitchen (September 2012)
16. Emmanuel House (April 2013, May 2016)
17. Friends in Deed (June 2013)
18. McGivney House (September 2013)
19. St. Joan of Arc, Kokomo – tornado assistance (December 2013)
20. LACASA (March 2014)
21. Unbound (September 2014)
22. Caring for Our Treasured Gifts (diocesan drive) (November 2014)
23. Safe House (February 2015, July 2018)
24. Faith in Flint (August 2015; ongoing)
25. Delonis Center (November 2015)
26. Joan Chittester Fund for Prisoners (July 2016)
27. Project Outreach Team (October 2016)
28. CSS Food Pantry; became on-going (July 2017)
29. Samaritas (October 2017)
30. Love Takes Root (December 2017)
31. St. Louis Center (April 2018, January 2021)
32. Building Bridges of Hope (June 2019)
33. Family Life Services (September 2019, March 2020, August 2021)
34. Peace Neighborhood (December 2019)
35. BetterWAY Detroit (March 2020, January 2022)
36. St. Brigid Parish, Midland – flood relief (January 2020)
37. Bread of Life Food Pantry, Baldwin (November 2020, October 2022)
38. Dexter Senior Center (August 2020)
39. K of C Pregnancy Mobile Unit
40. Angel Outreach Ministry Flint, MI (July 2022)

Appendix B

Formula to Distribute Caritas Collections

1. As noted under “Caritas Committee Responsibilities” the Committee may amend the distribution recipients and formula, with the approval of the Finance Council.
2. The recipient organization, chosen by consensus by the committee members, must have been researched and vetted as meeting the Caritas guidelines.
3. The Caritas Committee has amended the allocation of the Caritas collections in response to changing needs and situations.
 - a. In December 2016, Fr. Brendan requested and the Committee agreed to add Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County Food Pantry to the distribution.
 - b. Beginning with the April 2017 collection
 - 25% each - Dexter Family Services, the parish Christian Service Fund, and the selected recipient
 - 12.5% - Faith in Flint (aka Water for Flint/St. Luke NEW Life Center)
 - 6.25% each - Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County Food Pantry, Catholic Habitat for Humanity House (CHH.) By restricting funds for CHH, when it is time for St. Joseph Parish to commit funds to the biennial CHH project, the funds will be on hand to reduce the total amount necessary to be committed from the Caritas collection to CHH.
 - c. In 2021, the distribution was again revised:
 - 25% - Dexter Family Services
 - 10% each - SJ Parish Christian Service Fund, Habitat for Humanity, St. Luke NEW Life Center
 - 15% - Catholic Social Services Food Pantry
 - 30% - selected recipient