

Canon 35 Working Group
(Fictional) Examples to Illustrate Our Proposal

August 14, 2024

To Be Read in Conjunction with the Report of the Canon 35 Working Group

The following examples are intended to illustrate some possible governance structures which we propose be available for parishes in the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. They are illustrative and are not the only possible options or configurations. As you read them, consider:

- What parts of these examples sound like you? (Mix-n-match is possible!)
- What parts of these examples sound like they might be useful to you?
- What might you want to stop doing in your parish as it's no longer being helpful?
- What might you want to adopt, in full or with changes, in your parish?
- What aspects of your situation could not fit within any part of these examples? What would be helpful to address that gap?

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Parish of William Laud

We are a large suburban parish with many programs: choir, band, youth group, Sunday school, adult study groups, outreach to our community through programs we run and through partnerships with other community groups. Our building is complex; we have a very old sanctuary and newer additions from several periods of time. We have a Rector, a CAP priest, two honorary assistant priests, often a theological student, eight Licensed Lay Ministers, and two music leaders. We have a half-time administrative assistant/ bookkeeper. We have experimented with new ways of being church (Fresh Expressions) a number of times and have two under way at the moment: a weekday café church which attracts seniors; a youth group in association with the local high school. Both are aimed at people who don't normally attend church.

Our parish council was recently reorganized and roles and responsibilities have been clarified.

Parish council consists of:

1. The Rector
2. Three wardens, one specializing in the building, one in communications, and one warden-in-training, who is also an LLM.
3. Treasurer
4. Secretary, who works closely with the warden who is responsible for communications.
5. Three members at large. Each of them has a portfolio of parish organizations: a cluster of pastoral visiting/ fellowship; prayer/ Bible study and the outreach organizations; and the youth/ children/ emerging ministry
6. The two adult Lay Delegates to Synod and the youth Delegate to Synod

There are a number of standing committees which report to Parish Council. The chairs are welcome to attend Parish Council meetings and are specifically invited if there are items on the agenda dealing with their work.

1. Executive Committee – Rector and Wardens, with the Treasurer attending as needed
2. Property – through one of the wardens
3. Finance – through the Treasurer
4. Worship – through the Rector
5. Discipleship (study groups and outreach) – through one of the members at large
6. Children’s Ministry – through one of the members at large
7. Fellowship and Visiting – through one of the members at large

The committees may have sub-groups (e.g. Worship includes the music groups and the Altar Guild and a group which arranges worship in Long-term Care homes in our area).

In addition to these committees, we arrange our work through short-term task groups with experienced leaders. This has been particularly helpful for Bible study and for fundraising activities as volunteers don’t feel obliged to do more than one event, although many do help out regularly. We also have several fellowship groups with whom we connect new members.

When someone identifies a possible new area of ministry, they meet with the Executive Committee who helps them develop the initial plan, including a Safer Church review. The project is given a sponsor on Parish Council. As the ministry moves from experimental to established, its governance is reviewed.

Parish Council meets about 8 times a year, skipping December, February (AGM), July and August. The Executive committee meets approximately twice a month, as needed. Other committees establish their meeting schedule as needed.

We have an annual Parish Council retreat in March which allows us to plan out the coming year and adjust the responsibilities based on the skills and gifts of the members.

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Parish of St. Hilary

We are a small parish with a half-time Rector and an honorary assistant. We have two Licensed Lay Ministers as well. We have an organist, a volunteer office assistant, and a cleaner.

We have a long history, unique culture, and established presence in our community; while we have considered amalgamating with other nearby parishes, we have not been able to develop an acceptable collaboration.

Our parish council consists of:

1. The Rector
2. Two wardens, who rotate as “warden on call” monthly, although if one is involved in a significant project, that person remains the lead until the project winds up.
3. A treasurer/secretary; this person is also the envelope secretary.

4. Five members at large, one of whom is an LLM and another of whom is one of our Lay Delegates to Synod.
5. Our other Lay Delegate to Synod is also a member of the Council

We have very few committees or groups:

1. The Rector, CAP priest, and LLMs meet about 3-4 times a year to schedule the services. The musician sometimes attends these meetings (especially the ones planning Christmas and Holy Week).
2. There is an Altar Guild which also operates as a fellowship group for some of the women in the congregation. The head of the Guild works closely with the Rector as services are being planned.
3. There is a building committee, with the warden, treasurer, and another member of Parish Council who has good repair skills and contacts with tradespeople. They recruit members of the congregation for spring/fall yard cleanup and any projects which we can do ourselves.
4. One member of Council is the lead on fundraising and invites members of the congregation to help out through sign-up sheets. We have recently encouraged that person to have a buddy co-lead to share the work and the knowledge.
5. One member of Council is interested in starting a Fresh Expression ministry and is working with a group of interested people both inside and outside the parish. One of the LLMs is also in this group.
6. One member of Council does a lot of pastoral visiting, linking the Rector with those in need of care.

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### Parish of the Four Winds

We are a four-church parish in a lightly-populated part of the Diocese. All the churches are small but are well-rooted in their communities. Due to recent immigration, we have seen a little growth in church membership, especially in one of the churches. We have a part-time Rector and two LLMs. Services are held three Sundays a month in each church; on the fifth Sunday, we worship together and have a potluck meal in a local hall. We have two organists who play in two churches each and cover for each other when they are away.

Church of St. Agnes: This is the largest church and has a council which meets about 6 times a year. It has two wardens and a treasurer. The council arranges for the building maintenance and fundraisers. The Rector arranges any bible study or prayer groups from time to time (usually in Lent, sometimes in Advent). These are open to all members of the parish. Some of the newer members of the church are exploring outreach to the other newcomers in the community, with the blessing of the Council.

Church of St. Bede: This is the oldest church but also the smallest. There is one warden and one treasurer elected at the annual meeting. When an event is being planned, they call a meeting of the congregation after church to arrange it. If members are missing from church that day, someone calls them to update them on the plans and see if they can help.

Church of St. Cuthbert: This church has recently lost some of its key leaders and has asked Parish Council to take over managing the church. It is in poor repair and they are discerning the future of the

congregation with the assistance of one of the Parish Wardens who is an LLM. It is located near a seniors' residence and they are considering whether they could begin meeting there.

Church of St. Dunstan: This church has two wardens and a treasurer as its executive committee. One of the wardens has primary responsibility for the building, which is in good repair. It has adapted its worship once a month to focus on prayer for its community and discernment of its calling. It has formed a "Council of the Community" which meets after those prayer services and continues the discernment work in conversation with those who have attended the service. The operational plans to support its calling are developed by this council. There are some regular teams which carry out the work (e.g. setting up for worship, cleaning, yard work) and ad-hoc teams for events, including fundraising. The executive committee stays in touch with these teams. Recommendations about significant decisions are forwarded to Parish Council for its approval.

Parish Council:

Parish Council is comprised of:

1. The Rector
2. The five church wardens (two from St. Agnes, one from St. Bede, two from St. Dunstan).
3. The three church treasurers.
4. Two parish wardens (one of whom is also a church warden).
5. The parish treasurer (who is also a church treasurer).
6. The parish secretary (who is also a church warden)
7. The two Lay Delegates to Synod (one of whom is an LLM and one of whom is a church warden).
8. Two representatives from St. Cuthbert.

Parish Council has the following primary responsibilities:

1. Covenant with the Rector and mission discernment
2. Coordination:
  - a. the service times among the churches
  - b. shared events, including Bible Studies, summer day camp, special services, and fundraisers
3. Ensuring good communication among the churches and externally (social media)
4. Financial Management:
  - a. Approving the budgets for the four churches and for the shared resources (rectory, office, allotment, and rector's stipend)
  - b. Establishing signing authorities for the churches and the parish
  - c. Approving out-of-budget expenses of the churches and the shared resources
  - d. Completing the annual return package and tax returns
5. Policy development and implementation
6. Management of Parish Property:
  - a. St. Cuthbert's church
  - b. Cemeteries
  - c. Rectory
  - d. Oversight of the local management of St. Agnes, St. Bede, St. Dunstan.

## Parish of the Three Angels

This is a parish with three small churches which are relatively close together but which have three different cultures and neighbourhoods which they serve. They have a CAPP priest and the bishop has designated a priest in charge who is in the parish once a month. There is one LLM. Services rotate among the three churches; people usually attend more than one church, although they usually think of one as their “home” church.

The churches have determined that they want to offer many programs together, including gathering for most of the principal feasts of the church and fundraising, while retaining the local heritage of their buildings and engaging in their own communities. They have pooled their bank accounts, keeping separate records for each church’s donations and investments, including its building. The parish treasurer acts as treasurer for each church. Fundraising goes into the parish account as people from all churches participate in it.

Each church has two wardens, who are the point people for community contact and for the maintenance of the buildings. There is an annual meeting in each church to review its activity and elect wardens. However, most discussion and decisions occur at Parish Council.

Parish Council includes:

1. The Bishop’s designate (priest in charge)
2. The CAP priest
3. The six church wardens
4. Two parish wardens (who are usually also church wardens)
5. The treasurer
6. The parish secretary
7. The LLM
8. The lay delegates to Synod.

Parish Council establishes working groups to arrange the programs which it runs. These working groups will recruit people from each of the churches to run the programs, whether they are fundraising dinners or sales, prayer and study groups or community outreach. Each group has one member of Parish Council on it who reports back to Parish Council.

One of the programs is Messy Church, which has now run for a number of years and regularly attracts new families as the original children have outgrown its program. The parish wardens and CAP priest, who leads Messy Church, are considering recruiting a member of Messy Church onto Parish Council, considering it to be a church which is run by Parish Council.