

Church of the Beloved
A Member of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion

By-Laws

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**BY-LAWS OF
THE CHURCH OF THE BELOVED
ECUMENICAL CATHOLIC COMMUNITY**

I. PARISH COUNCIL

A. Eligibility:

The council consists of five to seven voting members. In addition, the Pastor and Parish Administrator serve as non-voting advisory members.

The Parish Council is the decision-making body of the faith community, excluding those matters that are the responsibility of the Pastor. As such, the Parish Council represents the voting congregation in all such matters. In issues of disagreement between the parish council and the pastor, the parish council may opt to consult the community, however the parish council holds final authority.

The council has authority to delegate tasks and decisions to Teams or individuals within the parish.

B. Requirements:

The minimum requirements to serve on the council are:

- o Must be at least 18 years of age or a confirmed youth
- o Has a clear knowledge of the purpose, role, and mission of the Church
- o Signed the New Member registration form and the Membership Covenant and has been a member for at least 6 months
- o Is actively involved in parish ministry or church volunteer activities
- o Attends Mass on a regular basis

Members of an immediate family are not allowed to serve on council at the same time.

C. Term:

Council members serve a three-year term. The terms are staggered among the members such that no more than two members are replaced each year. One is able to serve an additional year, if the need arises. Then, upon completing a term, one is ineligible to serve on the council again for one year. There is no limit to the number of terms one may serve. Exiting council members shall end their term with the May meeting.

Newly selected council members shall begin their term at a council orientation meeting. Typically, the council orientation meeting is held in April, but may be changed to accommodate members.

D. Appointment of Council Members:

Council member selection is performed according to the following steps:

- 1) Council and Pastor will accept nominations from any member of the voting congregation who would like to nominate himself or herself or another to serve on council.
- 2) Prior to February, the Pastor and Council President will compile a list of all members of the congregation who meet the eligibility requirements to serve on the parish council. The Pastor shall review the list and remove any names deemed necessary in the best interests of the parish, based on the Pastor's privileged information about the parishioners.
- 3) At the February council meeting, the reviewed list shall be presented to the rest of the council. Each council member will vote for two or three people (depending on how many outgoing members) as candidates for new council members. The votes will be counted by the President at the February council meeting. Those candidates who receive the top two (or three) votes shall be considered candidates for council, with the remaining nominees considered alternates. In the event of a tie, a runoff vote of the council shall be taken.
- 4) By February 28th, the Pastor or designated council member shall approach each of the selected candidates to verify that they are willing to serve on the council. If any refuse, the alternates shall take their place in the selection process, until the positions being vacated are filled. The newly nominated Council Members names will be published in the bulletin for 3 consecutive weeks. The nominated Council Members will be-presented to the Congregation to be ratified by acclamation during Mass in March/April. The new Council Members will be installed in May.

E. Appointment of the Council President and Vice President:

At the last council meeting of the year (May), each Council member shall nominate candidates for offices. Incoming Council members are eligible for any office except President. Any nominated council member shall be allowed to withdraw their names from consideration. If a consensus cannot be reached, the Council will determine how to proceed.

F. Duties of the President:

The President shall be responsible for but not limited to:

- o Schedule and notify members of council meetings
- o Assemble and distribute council meeting agendas
- o Preside over and moderate council meetings
- o Be aware of and communicate with the Pastor all issues regarding the Council including participation and attendance of Council members
- o Administer voting process (consensus) within the council
- o Delegate tasks within the council
- o Ensure each Team is sending minutes to the Council.

- o Ensure each Council member fulfills the Council member responsibilities during his/her term

G. Duties of the Vice President:

The Vice President shall:

- o Preside at Council meeting in the absence of the President
- o Ensure the minutes are taken at each Council meeting. The Vice President may either appoint a permanent member of the Council to act as secretary, or make other arrangements for a voting or non-voting member to take minutes at each meeting.
- o Assist in the orientation of New Council Members
- o Other duties as may be prescribed by the President or Pastor

H. Duties of the Secretary:

The Secretary may be a council member or non-council member. In the case of a secretary being a non-council member they shall not have a vote.

The Secretary shall:

- o Record attendance at all council meetings and determine if a quorum is present.
- o Keep an accurate written record of all proceedings at Council meetings and sign all approved records.
- o Conduct official correspondence for the community as authorized by the Council.
- o Maintain historical and current lists of Council Members, voting active members of the community, including terms of office and expiration thereof.
- o Submit original minutes and/or documents to the church office for filing, and safe keeping and/or electronic copies.
- o Maintain a master copy of the Constitution and By-Laws, reflecting any changes and amendments thereto, with effective dates of such changes.

I. Duties of the Treasurer

The Treasurer may be a council member or non-council member. In the case of a treasurer being a non-council member they shall not have a vote.

The Treasurer shall be responsible for:

- o Preparing a monthly record of all offerings of the individual giving tithes which is sent to the Treasurer.
- o Maintain confidentiality of all records of contributions. This information will be available to the Pastor and church Treasurer.
Distribute annual statements to every giving member, showing the total contributions for the year. The annual individual contributions summary report must be maintained for a period of 3 years.
- o Prepare monthly financial statements and present to Parish Council and Pastor for approval at the monthly Parish Council meeting.

Council may engage a bookkeeper responsible to the Treasurer.

J. Signature Authorities

Two leadership signatures are required on the checking, savings and CD accounts. Two signatures are required for checks \$1500.00 and over, savings and CD withdrawals \$1,000.00 and over. Payroll checks are an exception to the 2-signature requirement. All transactions over \$5,000.00 will require the approval of the Council.

There shall be one Church credit account in the name of the Church of the Beloved, with a card for the Pastor, and the second card for a designated member.

K. Vacancies

Parish Council shall fill mid-term vacancies on the Council in a timely manner. The new Council member will serve the remaining term of the departing Council Member. This does not preclude the Council member from being nominated for a new term of their own once the term of the vacated member has been completed.

L. Frequency of Meetings:

The parish council shall meet monthly. Meetings may be added or rescheduled by the President or Pastor with ample written notice indicating the date, place, time and matters proposed to be considered.

M. Quorum:

A Quorum shall consist of 2/3 of the council rounded up to the nearest integer. If a quorum is not available, any decision votes shall be postponed until the next meeting. If a member of the Council is absent, he/she may vote by proxy

N. Order of Business

Council meeting agendas shall include the following elements:

- Opening prayer
- The core values of our community as stated in the constitution
- Approval of the minutes
- Financial Report
- Team Reports
- Pastor's Report
- Old business
- New business
- Closing prayer

O. Removal of a Council Member:

A Council Member may be relieved of his/her duties in conjunction with Article VII of the Bylaws below and Article XI of the Constitution and including but not limited to the following circumstances:

- 1) Behavior that is not consistent or representative of the mission of the church, misconduct, violation of the Code of Ethical Conduct.
- 2) Behavior that is in direct opposition to the vision of the Council; continuously undermining the objectives of the Council.
- 3) Absence in excess of three (3) unexcused meetings.

The President and Pastor shall be responsible to remove a Council Member if removal becomes necessary. The seat shall be replaced according to the By-Laws.

II. TEAMS

Examples of Teams: Audit, Feast Day Planning, Financial, Liturgy, Marketing, Membership, Religious Education, Social Justice, Outreach.

A. The following responsibilities apply to all Teams.

- o Submit an annual budget request to the Parish Council
- o Provide accurate accounting for all events and expenses in accordance with financial procedures of the Parish
- o Submit all expenses/costs not in the approved budget in advance to the Parish Council for approval.
- o Prepare an annual Team report for staff and parish council prior to the preparation of the next year's budget. These reviews should be submitted to the Finance Team.
- o Be in compliance with the constitution reporting requirements – minimally a monthly written report

B. Appointment of Team Chair

Each team must designate a Team Chair each year. It is up to the individual team members to determine the best process to accomplish this requirement.

C. Term Duration of Chair

It is recommended that the Chairperson rotate annually.

D. Removal of a Team Member shall be discussed with the Pastor and Council President.

III. HOUSE OF PASTORS

The delegates to the House of Pastors are the Pastor and other clergy as designated by the Pastor.

IV. HOUSE OF LAITY

The delegates to the House of Laity shall be chosen by the Council and approved by the Pastor. It is recommended that the Delegates shall have had prior experience as members of Council. Additional requirements are based on the constitution of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion.

The term is two (2) years and a delegate may serve consecutive terms.

V. ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL COUNCIL

The regional representatives will be selected and appointed in the same manner as Council members: Nominations, screening and interview, Council vote.

VI. AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

A. Submission

Amendments to the Constitution or By-Laws shall be submitted to a Parish Council member who will refer it to the full Council for discussion.

B. Voting

Adoption of an amendment shall require a favorable vote of 2/3 of the full Parish Council. Votes may be made in absentia.

C. Implementation

An adopted amendment shall take effect immediately unless otherwise resolved by the Parish Council.

D. Ratification

Initial ratification of the constitution and bylaws, or complete replacement of the constitution and bylaws, shall require a favorable vote of quorum the full Parish Council, and the assent of the Pastor and 2/3 of the voting members in attendance.

VII. ACTIONS REQUIRING SPECIAL PROCEDURES

A. Investigations of accusations within the Faith Community: Clergy, Staff, Parish Council, Member. (Examples: Grievance with Clergy, Staff, Council Member, Member, Fraud, Theft, Abuse)

1. Overview of the Response Process

We hold the values of confidentiality and transparency, the one and the many, the well-being of the community and the dignity and respect of the individual. In addition, we affirm the principles of subsidiarity, compassion, non-judgment, privacy, due process, civil rights, discretion, and redress in effect at all times throughout the process.

Listening Team

Annually, the Parish Council shall identify and train an ad hoc Listening Team, ideally 2 women and 2 men, to be prepared to engage in investigation if necessary.

- a) Upon notification of an accusation, the Listening Team (LT) of three (no less than 2) may be commissioned by the Parish Council. Special consideration should be given to maintaining a team that is objective and removed from the party(ies) involved.
- b) This team shall conduct a fair line of questioning that is consistent with the accusation, involving all necessary parties/witnesses.
- c) Interviews and actions shall be conducted with at least two members of the investigation team present, as to insure the presence of witnesses.
- d) In cases involving the pastor, the Listening Team and/or Parish Council shall consult with the local and/or Presiding Bishop early in the process.
- e) All information shall be documented for the record and maintained in a secured file in the church office.
- f) Legal consultation is strongly recommended.
- g) The findings of the Listening Team shall be presented to the responsible party (either the Pastor or the Council) and a fair

decision shall be made accordingly, in the best interests of the strength and spiritual development of the community.

- h) In the case of the investigation of the Pastor, at the discretion of the Parish Council, the community members may be included in the deliberation. The Pastor or Parish Council will report any findings of the Listening Team to the community as necessary and appropriate. Consideration shall be given to a public disclosure of such events, in keeping with an open and honest line of conduct.

2. Initiation of the Complaint Process

Any individual, or any members of a faith community, can address, initiate, or call for review any matter related to the alleged misconduct of a clergy person, staff or member, and shall take the complaint to the Pastor or Parish Council. Should circumstances warrant, the person against whom the complaint has been lodged may be asked to sign a statement stating they understand the ECC Whistleblower and Non-Retaliation Policy. (See Appendix A)

- a) Situations of a direct threat to the community or complainant may warrant immediate suspension of the subject pending an investigation (i.e. threat of violence, danger to self or others, financial impropriety, sexual advances or conduct, etc.)
- b) Within two weeks, the Parish Council shall engage the Listening Team.
- c) Within two weeks, the Listening Team shall formally convene and hear the complainant(s)'s allegations in a spirit of compassion, neutrality, and prayerfulness.

3. Expectations of the Listening Team

- a) Within two weeks of the first hearing with the complainant(s), the subject must sign a non-retaliation agreement before proceeding.
- b) Depending on the nature of the offense, the Listening Team may invite the subject to listen and respond face-to-face with the complainant(s). Should the complainant(s) not wish to interact with the subject, the transcript of the allegations and signed statement shall be presented for the clergy person to hear and understand the nature of the allegations.
- c) The subject shall have the right to hear the complainant(s)'s allegations in an atmosphere of compassion and mediation.
- d) Witnesses, materials, or statements which support either the subject or the complainant(s) shall be made available to the LT, as well as to the subject and the complainant(s).
- e) The statements of both the complainant(s) and the subject shall be recorded for the sake of accuracy, memory, and protection.
- f) Due process shall be the goal for both the complainant(s) and the subject.
- g) If deemed prudent and agreed to by all parties, a trained mediator shall be present.

4. Outcomes

- a) Following the hearing with the subject, the LT shall have the responsibility of further investigation and determining a possible resolution, with the assistance of the faith community's legal advisor, as appropriate.
- b) If the LT deems that, based on the allegations, there are sufficient grounds for criminal misconduct, it shall be obligated to contact the appropriate legal authorities through the leadership of the Parish Council.
- c) If the LT deems the issue to be a personnel matter, the subject may be offered the opportunity of resolving the issue directly with the complainant(s), with the assistance of a mediator, as appropriate.
- d) If the LT deems the issue to be personnel matter with larger implications than the immediately-affected community, then the matter shall be referred to the Vicar or local Bishop.
- e) The LT shall thoroughly review the matter, not excluding further interviews with the subject and/or the complainant(s) or other witnesses or parties.
- f) The Parish Council shall have the responsibility for making a final determination, with the assistance of the faith community's legal advisor, as appropriate. In the event that the Parish Council determines that sufficient grounds exist for further action, it shall take appropriate action, not excluding a formal reprimand, a program of counseling or education, probation, or termination of employment
- g) If possible, every attempt shall be made to resolve the issue at the Parish Council level.
- h) In the event of an impasse in deliberations at the Parish Council level, with no satisfactory resolution of the issue, the Parish Council shall refer the matter to the Vicar or Bishop.
- i) Should either the complainant(s) or the subject be dissatisfied with the Parish Council's disposition of the matter, either has the right of appeal to Vicar or Bishop.
- j) A sitting Council member whose spouse or relative is subject to a discipline or conflict of interest, must abstain from voting on the measure.

B. Conflict Of Interest

The following *Conflict of Interest* provisions are intended to protect the integrity of the Council and leadership of Church of the Beloved. An actual or potential conflict of interest may exist under the following circumstances:

- o Where there is appearance that the member is advancing his or her personal interests by virtue of his or her position; or

- o Where a member has allegiance to another organization or entity and it appears that the interests are competing; or
- o Where there is a direct or indirect financial interest that is incompatible with the responsibilities of Council.

Procedures: Council members must carefully and spiritually weigh all circumstances in which there exists an actual or potential conflict of interest.

Where such circumstances exist:

- o Actual or potential conflicts must be disclosed to any member of Council, at which time the Council will determine, by quorum, as to whether the conflict of interest actually exists and, if so, as to whether to exclude the person with the potential conflict.
- o The person with the potential conflict may provide written or verbal information regarding matters involving the potential conflict, but is not permitted to participate in the final vote on the matter.
- o All such activities must be reflected in the minutes of Council meetings approved by Council.

Appendix A

Church of the Beloved ECC Whistleblower and Non-Retaliation Policy –

- I. **Church of the Beloved Parish Council Resolution:** The Parish Council approves the inclusion of the following policy, and will ensure that it is given to and acknowledged by all staff and members. In addition, the Administrator will ensure this Whistleblower and Non-Retaliation Policy is posted on the church bulletin board where notices are posted. Church of the Beloved's Code of Ethics

requires all clergy and lay members, paid or non-paid, to observe high standards of ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As representatives of Church of the Beloved ECC, we must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

- II. **Reporting Responsibility:** It is the responsibility of all staff and members to comply with and to report violations or suspected violations of the Code of Ethics, Church of the Beloved policies, or laws in accordance with this policy.
- III. **No Retaliation:** No staff or member who in good faith reports a violation of the Code, Church of the Beloved's policies, or law shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment consequence. A member who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of the relationship. This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable members to raise serious concerns within Church of the Beloved prior to seeking resolution outside Church of the Beloved.
- IV. **Reporting Violations:** Members should share their questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints with someone who can address them properly. In most cases, members should report to the pastor. However, if a member is not comfortable speaking with the pastor or is not satisfied with the response, that member is encouraged to report to any Parish Council Member.
- V. **Acting in Good Faith:** Any good faith report, concern or complaint is fully protected by this policy, even if the report, question or concern is, after investigation, not substantiated. Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation of the Church of the Beloved policy, or law. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and have been made maliciously or with knowledge that they were false will be treated as a serious disciplinary offense.
- VI. **Confidentiality:** Upon the request of the complainant, Church of the Beloved will use its best efforts to protect the confidentiality of the complainant for any good faith report. Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant or may be submitted anonymously. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

Handling of Reported Violations: All reports will be promptly investigated and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation. The complainant will be informed that follow-up has or is occurring within two weeks after the report or complaint has been received. The Parish Council shall be informed of all such complaints or reports and consider referral to the Listening Team (see **VII.**

ACTIONS REQUIRING SPECIAL PROCEDURES in the By-Laws).

My signature below indicates my receipt and understanding of this Policy. I also verify that I have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions about the Policy.

Name

Date

