

THE CHURCH OF THE BELOVED

PARISH CONSTITUTION

ADOPTED

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PREAMBLE

We, as baptized members of the Catholic Church of Jesus Christ, responding in faith to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, desire to unite together to preach the Word, celebrate the sacraments, and carry out God’s mission. The Church of the Beloved chooses to associate with the Ecumenical Catholic Communion (ECC), a California Nonprofit Corporation, as an affiliate, under the spiritual and ecclesiastical direction and governance of the presiding Bishop of the ECC, adhering to the Constitution, Canons, Administrative, Legislative and Ecclesiastical Norms and Bylaws, the faith, doctrine and order of the ECC. Therefore, we, do hereby adopt this constitution and solemnly pledge ourselves to be governed by its provisions.

I. NAME

The name of this parish faith community shall be: Church of the Beloved Ecumenical Catholic Community. For the purposes of the constitution and accompanying bylaws “Church of the Beloved” is hereinafter designated as “this faith community” or “parish.” This faith community shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Colorado.

II. MISSION STATEMENT

“To Love and Be Loved”

The Church of the Beloved is an inclusive independent Catholic Community, welcoming each and all as the Beloved of God. We are ecumenical; we celebrate the rich heritage of Catholic spirituality while honoring all spiritual traditions. We strive for justice and peace, and respond to the call of discipleship by loving deeply and rooting our lives in prayer and service.

The core values of our community include Hospitality – welcoming all, Inclusivity, Forgiveness and Reconciliation, Genuine caring for one another, Humor and Laughter, the Sacredness of Life, Community, Lay empowerment, a Catholic Sacramental Life and Honoring Tradition, and valuing Love over Law.

III. ARTICLES OF FAITH

Church of the Beloved believes, embraces and accepts all of the articles of faith contained in the current ECC Constitution and Bylaws.

Should any future revision or amendment by the ECC Synod and/or the office of the Presiding Bishop to the ECC Constitution and bylaws conflict with the beliefs of Church of the Beloved, the faith community should prayerfully discern these changes. If the changes are deemed to be of a profound nature and if the changes cannot be reconciled with the faith community’s belief

system, consideration should be given to the community's withdrawal from the ECC.

IV. MEMBERSHIP

Baptized Christians 18 years or older attending services at Church of the Beloved may enhance their commitment to their spiritual life and increase their participation by formally becoming a member of our faith community. Also, youth confirmed in the Catholic faith are eligible to vote as formal members. Members are entitled to vote on issues referred to them.

Members are eligible and encouraged to hold positions on the Parish Council and may serve in leadership. Prospective members attend a Membership Meeting and sign the Church of the Beloved Membership Covenant. The Covenant declares a commitment to:

- A. Preserve the unity of the Church.
- B. Share in the responsibility of the Church.
- C. Serve in the ministry of the Church through the use of each one's unique gifts.
- D. Support the mission of the Church through regular attendance, financial support, and prayer.

A roster of current active members will be maintained, defined as those who attend, participate and/or contribute regularly.

Membership is not required. Those not wishing to become formal members are always included, always most welcome to participate in church services, sacraments and to attend church events.

Church of the Beloved strives to include and welcome all, inviting all members to be involved in collaborative leadership. Being involved in a variety of ministries, active stewardship, exercising leadership, and participating fully in opportunities for decision-making confers authority for the direction of the community to the broad base of membership.

V. PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

Pastoral leadership is shared among clergy and lay members of the community. All persons involved in leadership commit to and strive toward our shared statement of ethics and morality. Though not exclusive, it is recognized that:

- A. Clergy
 - It shall be the responsibility of all the Clergy to:
 - 1. Provide spiritual leadership to our faith community.

2. Ensure the healthy development and growth of our faith community according to the doctrine and theology of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion.
3. Ensure that Church decisions and actions reflect the teaching and mission stated in Articles II and III of this constitution.
4. Abide by the Code of Ethical Conduct adopted by the parish council
5. Abide by the continuing education requirements of the ECC
6. All clergy who serve Church of the Beloved in any capacity shall have a memorandum of agreement or Letter of Call.

B. Pastor

The pastor is an ordained priest who is the spiritual leader of our faith community. The Pastor is under the leadership of a bishop, and is responsible for the spiritual life of the faith community. A pastor shall:

1. Develop and maintain relationships with the members of the faith community.
2. Oversee, discern and guide the liturgical programs of the parish.
3. Participate in the work and responsibilities of the Parish Council, while serving as a non-voting Ex-officio member and clergy representative of the Parish Council. Assist in theological and spiritual leadership formation of council and those involved in ministerial leadership.
4. Assist in the budgeting and business planning of the parish.
5. Supervise the Administrator.
6. Oversee and guide the activities of all clergy in their parish responsibilities.
7. Serve as a delegate to the ECC Synod House of Pastors for the duration of his/her tenure as Pastor, as well as appoint a second representative to the House of Pastors.
8. Reserve the right to veto, after consultation with any Associate Pastors, the appointment of any parishioner to a Parish Committee or Council without explanation, protecting the privacy of the Parishioner while acting in the best interest of the parish.
9. While the Pastor is responsible for the general well being of the faith community, his/her areas of special authority are theological, spiritual, and liturgical.

VI. PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council is the church's decision-making body dedicated to fulfilling the mission of Church of the Beloved. The council sets the vision for our faith community, provides pastoral direction, and provides for the

day-to-day operations of the community. The Council shall be responsible for making and implementing decisions on (but not limited to):

- A. The physical needs of the parish environment.
- B. The legal and financial needs of the parish, including an Ethical Code of Conduct.
- C. Acquisitions and purchases for the parish.
- D. Parish fundraising.
- E. Promoting community life and activities.
- F. Providing religious education.
- G. Public Relations.
- H. Hospitality.
- I. Outreach Ministries.
- J. Oversight of the Administrator's responsibilities for accurate and complete reporting of minutes and financial reports, and an annual financial review.
- K. Personnel, paid or nonpaid.

The Parish Council shall form Teams from the community to help develop and implement these areas of church life.

The Council shall meet at least one each month. Procedures for council operation, member selection, and membership duration are defined in the Parish Bylaws.

VII. PARISH ORGANIZATIONS

Teams or ad hoc task forces shall be formed and dissolved by the Parish Council as needed in order to accomplish parish tasks and goals. Generally, the Parish Council shall ask members of the community to serve on the teams and occasionally people and organizations outside the community may be asked to help with specific tasks.

The Team or Task Force Chairperson shall be responsible for the team schedule, coordination, notification to the bulletin coordinator of the next meeting date and time, and frequency of meetings. It is helpful if meeting minutes are forwarded to the parish council in a timely manner, i.e. monthly.

VIII. PARISH DECISION PROCESS

- A. Ordinary parish decision-making authority is distributed as follows:
 - 1. The Pastor is responsible for:
 - a. The areas of liturgical, theology, and spiritual programs.
 - b. Supervision and Management of the Parish Clergy. The Pastor may make recommendations to the Council in regard to the

hire or dismissal of any Parish Clergy and shall make recommendations to the Bishop and Parish Council for priest and deacon candidates.

- c. The day-to-day supervision of the Administrator and other staff as delegated by Council.
- d. Initiation or modification of activities within the parish as necessary in order to maintain and enhance the spiritual and theological direction of the parish.

2. Parish Council

The ordinary decision-making responsibilities of the Parish Council are specified in Article VI of the Constitution. These matters shall be decided at council meetings on a majority vote, provided a quorum of the council is voting. Council members may vote in absentia or by proxy if they cannot attend.

Any action that could be taken at a regular meeting may also be taken by written action, including electronic correspondence. The criteria for passing such action shall be the same as that required at a regular meeting.

Voting is referenced in these documents as the method of formal decision-making. Based on our collaborative vision and the belief that the Holy Spirit speaks in and through all members, in practice, consensus shall be the normative decision-making process. All voices are encouraged to be heard and acknowledged, with particular heed to dissenting opinions.

The Council supports the principle of subsidiarity, that decisions should be made at the lowest possible level, by the persons most affected by the decision.

Personnel: Parish Council shall be responsible for personnel issues, including but not limited to: Calling a Pastor, providing an annual performance review for all employed personnel, hiring additional clergy or staff as needed, disciplinary action or termination of personnel, determining appropriate compensation and benefits for services rendered by all employed personnel, and developing human resource policies and procedures.

All parish council meetings are open meetings and all are encouraged to attend. For matters of a limited sensitive nature, the value of confidentiality may take precedence over the value of transparency. In these situations, council may enter into a closed executive session. These matters may include personnel action, potential disciplinary or corrective action, legal or

financial matters and other matters in which confidentiality must be maintained. Council will state the general category of the issue and expected duration of deliberation before entering a closed session.

3. Administrator

The Administrator is authorized to:

- a. Negotiate and bid all contractual services rendered to the church.
- b. Act as business liaison to financial institutions and business associations.
- c. Monitor and coordinate the parish budget and business plan.
- d. Review and distribute financial reports, as required.
- e. Supervise major purchases within the approved business plan.
- f. Supervise administrative staff
- g. Complete an annual review (more often if needed) of the financial books and records. Submitting annual reports to governing bodies.
- h. Maintain accurate and complete minutes and financial reports.

B. Special decision-making provisions

Under extraordinary circumstances, special decision-making processes are required. These are detailed in the following Articles as needed.

1. Affiliation with the Ecumenical Catholic Communion
2. As an independent Catholic community, the faith community may choose to affiliate with a national organization, such as the Ecumenical Catholic Communion. The ECC is served by the leadership of a Presiding Bishop, presbyters and lay leaders.
3. To seek membership in the ECC, all the following conditions must be met:
 - a. Quorum vote of the Parish Council, in favor.
 - b. Assent of the Pastor.
 - c. Upon approval of the Parish Council and Pastor, a special meeting shall be called to all parish members. Of the members attending the meeting or voting by proxy, a majority vote in favor.
 - d. Expectations as a member community of the ECC shall include: Embracing the spirit and practices of the ECC Constitution, its mission and canons and distinctive teachings and financial support of the ECC in the amount established at the Synod.

- C. Separation from the ECC.
If issues develop between the Parish and the ECC which cannot be reconciled, the Parish may decide to withdraw from the ECC under the following conditions:
 - 1. Quorum vote of the full Parish Council, in favor of withdrawing from the ECC.
 - 2. A special formal meeting shall be called of all parish members. Of the current active members attending the meeting, a majority vote in favor of withdrawing from the ECC is required.

IX. SELECTION OF A PASTOR

The steps to select a new pastor are as follows:

- A. The Parish Council appoints a Selection Committee of lay members and clergy, and may include non-member advisors or observers.
- B. The Selection Committee performs the search for potential candidates.
- C. The Selection Committee presents their recommendations to the ECC and to the Bishop for approval.
- D. Approved candidate(s) is presented to the Parish Council. A three-fourths vote of the full Parish Council is required to move the candidates forward to the community.
- E. Approved candidate(s) is then presented to the faith community members at a special meeting. A three-fourths vote of current active members is required. A proxy vote will be allowed if not in attendance. If there is a tie or a problem, we go back to the parish council.

X. REMOVAL OF A PASTOR

This faith community fully supports pro-active, fair and just human resource practices including an annual review of the Pastor's Letter of Call and an annual evaluation. The faith community is committed to ongoing dialogue and negotiation with staff. In the event that a mutual agreement cannot be reached, the following policy applies:

If a complaint has been received, Parish Council will follow the procedures under Article VII in the Bylaws to appoint an investigative Listening Team and adhere to the process outlined.

The local and/or Presiding Bishop shall be a non-voting observer of these local proceedings, to ensure due process. In the case of complete deadlock, arbitration or mediation may be required. If the decision is made to remove the Pastor, the local and/or Presiding Bishop will be notified.

- A. Criteria/Grounds

In the event that all attempts at reconciliation have failed, the following criteria apply as just cause:

1. Incompetence
2. Unconstitutional behavior and/or leadership incompatible with the ECC or faith community vision.
3. Abuse of power.
4. Physical, mental, and/or emotional problems that prevent a pastor from doing his/her duties as outlined in this constitution.
5. Doctrinal misconduct.
6. Criminal misconduct.
7. Violation of the locally adopted current Clergy Ethical Code of Conduct
8. Falsification of credentials

B. Conditions

1. To remove a Pastor under just cause criteria 5-8 (above), a three-fourths vote of the full Parish Council in favor of removing the Pastor is required and sufficient.
2. To remove a Pastor under just cause criteria 1-4 (above), a special meeting may be called of all community members. Of the active formal membership attending the meeting, a majority vote in favor of removing the Pastor is required. The Parish Council considers the results of the vote and the substance of the community meeting in order to determine if removal is warranted or whatever appropriate corrective action may be necessary.
3. Either pastor or parish council or community may initiate a change in leadership based on the annual evaluation or review and may terminate the agreement based on the terms in the Letter of Call.

XI DISCIPLINE/SEPARATION OF A MEMBER FROM THE CHURCH

Each member is respected and honored as a valued member of the Body of Christ. If a member engages in behavior that becomes a great scandal to the rest of the body, openly denies the Christian Faith, or threatens the safety of others in the community, such behavior constitutes sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, the matter will be brought before the Council and remediation and/or reconciliation will be pursued, proceeding through these successive steps in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17.

When a complaint of this type is received:

- A. The Pastor and the Executive Officers of the Parish Council will consult confidentially and determine if an investigative Listening Team is warranted (Article VII of the Bylaws).
- B. If the infraction does not warrant a Listening Team, the Pastor will initiate a private meeting of counseling and/or reprimand.
- C. If the behavior continues, the Pastor will meet with the member in the presence of two Parish Council members, reiterating the admonition, the gravity of the offense, and the possible consequences.
- D. If the above steps fail, the Pastor will require the member to leave the Parish until the issue is resolved. Depending on the nature of the offense, council may identify 2-3 community members willing to support the member at home in order to retain community connection.
- E. The Pastor will document each step taken in this process. Reinstatement to the community may be considered by the Pastor and the Parish Council.

XII DISSOLUTION OF PROPERTY RIGHTS

In the event that the Faith Community is dissolved as an entity, its assets are dispersed as specified by the Parish Article of Incorporation: once all debts and obligations are paid, the remainder of the Parish assets must be donated to a similar non-profit entity. The Pastor and the Parish Council shall decide where to donate the remaining assets. Additionally:

- A. If less than half of the Parish Council remains, the decision shall be made by the Pastor.
- B. If the Pastor is no longer involved, the decision shall be made by a majority vote of the remaining Parish Council.
- C. If agreement cannot be reached between the Pastor and a majority of the remaining Council, the decision shall be made by the Council if they have a 2/3 consensus of the remaining members. Otherwise, the decision shall be made by the Pastor.

XIII AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

- A. Submission
Amendments to the Constitution shall be submitted by a parishioner to the full Parish Council one month prior to the council meeting in which the amendments shall be voted on.
- B. Voting
Adoption of an amendment shall require a favorable vote of quorum 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 a quorum of the full Parish Council, and the assent of the Pastor.