

Saint Matthew Ecumenical Catholic Church

PARISH CONSTITUTION

**Amended 5/19/15
2015 Parish Council**

ARTICLE

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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, desiring to unite together to preach the Word, celebrate the sacraments, and carry out God's mission, do hereby adopt this constitution and solemnly pledge ourselves to be governed by its provisions. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

I. NAME

The name of this parish community shall be: Saint Matthew Ecumenical Catholic Church.

For purposes of this Constitution and accompanying by-laws, "Saint Matthew Ecumenical Catholic Church" is hereinafter designated as "this faith community" or "parish."

This faith community shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of California.

II. ARTICLES OF FAITH

A. Jesus Christ

Saint Matthew Church is a Christian community that is committed to the person of Jesus Christ and to His teaching. We accept and believe the testimony of His apostles who were His disciples and the eyewitnesses of His life, death, and His resurrection from the dead. Their testimony is called the apostolic tradition which is embodied in the collected writings of the New Testament which together with the ancient Hebrew Scriptures has been passed on to the Catholic Church founded by the same apostles.

Saint Matthew Church is an ecumenical Catholic faith community in that we celebrate a characteristically Catholic faith that is not sectarian.

B. Historic Background

Our Church is "Old Catholic" in that we derive our apostolic succession from the Old Catholic Church of the Netherlands. The Catholic Church is an ecclesial body which descends from the Roman Catholic Church. Becoming independent of Roman jurisdiction over conflicts with ever-expanding papal authority, the Catholic Church of Utrecht, Holland maintained an authentic Catholic identity and a valid apostolic succession since the early 18th century. When Rome proclaimed the Dogma of Papal Infallibility in 1870, Catholic Churches were formed by conscientious Catholics in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Poland. Deriving their apostolic succession from the independent Catholic Church in Holland, these Catholic Churches continue to this day.

Since that time, other independent Catholic Churches have come into being, many of whom derive their apostolic succession from the Catholic Church. Saint Matthew Church not only possesses a valid apostolic succession through the Catholic Church of Utrecht, but also shares with other Catholic bodies, a commitment to the foundational document known as the Declaration of Utrecht, on September 24, 1889 (see Appendix A).

C. Sacraments

Saint Matthew Church follows an authentic Catholic faith tradition in that we participate in the full sacramental ministry of the Church. The seven sacraments of the historic Catholic Church are affirmed and practiced: baptism, confirmation, Holy Eucharist, reconciliation, anointing of the sick, marriage, and Holy Orders (see Appendix B).

D. Distinctives

We, the faith community of Saint Matthew, practice an authentic Catholic tradition with the following distinctives:

1. The Catholics of Saint Matthew Church, though recognizing the importance of the Pope and his role as a sign of unity and as an important source of leadership within the Church, reject the proclamation of the First Vatican Council (1869) promulgated by Pope Pius IX concerning the dogma of papal infallibility. We view such a dogma as being inconsistent with Catholic theology and as not being part of an authentic Catholic tradition. We see this dogma as an abuse of power that reinforces an authoritarianism within the Church which runs counter to the spirit and teachings of Jesus. The dogma of the infallibility of the Pope, though an effort to create unity within the Church, has had the opposite effect. It now stands as an immense obstacle to the unity of the Church and actually diminishes the important ministry of the Pope as the successor of Peter and as a sign of unity. At best, the dogma of papal infallibility is sectarian and not truly Catholic.
2. The deacons, priests and bishops of Saint Matthew Church are free to marry and raise families or to remain celibate. To deny marriage to those who have an authentic vocation to the ministerial priesthood is to diminish the spiritual and psychological health and growth of the Church's clergy. Rather than enhancing the priesthood, we weaken its potential and make our clergy vulnerable to unhealthy psychological development.
3. At Saint Matthew Church, women are not denied the opportunity to respond to a genuine vocation and to participate in the ministerial priesthood. As Saint Paul writes, "there is neither Jew or Greek, slave nor free, male or female, all are one in Christ Jesus."

4. People who have gone through the painful experience of divorce and have chosen to remarry are not excluded from the sacramental life of the Church. Divorce is not the unforgivable sin. Therefore, a divorced person may remarry with the blessing of the Church without being required to seek a Church annulment which may be perceived as a violation of one's privacy as well as a violation of one's conscience.
5. The use of contraception and artificial birth control as a way of responsibly limiting the size of one's family is an issue of conscience to be decided by the husband and wife. The use of contraception is not considered intrinsically evil. We see very little difference between discovering infertility and creating infertility in that the intention in both actions are the same, that is, to avoid pregnancy.
6. We recognize that each baptized person is an equal member of the Catholic Church. No deacon, priest or bishop owns the Church or the sacramental ministry or the grace of Christ. Therefore, lay people play an important and prominent role in the government of the Church. The lay people of a given faith community must participate in the process of selecting their bishop.
7. At Saint Matthew Church, no baptized Christian is excluded from the sacramental ministry. All baptized Christians are invited in the worship and sacramental life of our ecumenical community.

III. PURPOSE AND MISSION

A. Purpose

Saint Matthew Church is a spiritual Christian community dedicated to the practice of a Catholic faith where all are welcome. Together we are called to realize our spirituality by living Christ's teachings. We encounter the loving and forgiving presence of Jesus in one another and in our celebration of the sacraments. Together we endeavor to comfort and give hope to all through loving acts of kindness.

B. Mission Statement

We are a loving and accepting community of faith; following the teachings of Jesus, honoring the dignity and equality of each person, and restoring the Spirit in an authentic Catholic tradition.

IV. MEMBERSHIP

Members of Saint Matthew Church are those who identify themselves as members, participate in liturgies and church activities, contribute in some way to the community, and have built relationships with other community members. The number of registered adult members in the community determines the number of Ecumenical Catholic Communion

(ECC) House of Laity (HOL) delegates. Registered members are all those who meet the following requirements: (i) are over 18 years of age who attend services; (ii) have contributed money or other services provided to the community; and (iii) are listed on the Saint Matthew Church membership email distribution and/or mailing lists.

V. CLERGY

A. Clergy

It shall be the responsibility of all the clergy to:

1. Provide spiritual leadership to the faith communities they serve.
2. Ensure the healthy development and growth of all faith communities according to the doctrine and theology of the Ecumenical Catholic Community.
3. Ensure the church decisions and actions reflect the distinctives and the purpose and mission stated in Articles II and III of this Constitution.

B. Pastors

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

1. Oversee and guide the activities of all clergy in their parish responsibilities.
2. Oversee and approve the liturgical programs of the parish.
3. Serve as a non-voting member and clergy representative on the Parish Council.
4. Assist in the budgeting and business planning of the parish.
5. Supervise the Parish Administrator and/or Business Office Manager.
6. Develop and maintain relationships with all the members of the faith community.
7. Reserve the right to veto the appointment of any parishioner to a Parish Ministry Team or Council without explanation. This protects the privacy of the parishioner, while allowing the Pastor to exercise privileged information in the best interests of the parish.

While pastors are responsible for the general wellbeing of their parish, their areas of special authority in their parish are theological, spiritual and liturgical.

VI. PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council is a decision-making body dedicated to fulfilling the mission of Saint Matthew Ecumenical Catholic Church. Authority is irrevocably delegated to the Council from the Pastor for making and implementing decisions on (but not limited to):

- A. The physical needs of the Parish environment.
- B. The financial and budget needs of the Parish.

- C. Acquisitions and purchases for the Parish.
- D. Legal and financial responsibilities of the Parish
- E. Ministry Teams
- F. Outreach Ministries
- G. Employment of parish staff and other issues related to human resources
- H. Appointments of delegates to the ECC House of Laity

The Parish Council shall form ministries within the community to help develop and implement these areas of Church life, as appropriate. Procedures for Council operation, member selection and membership duration are defined in the Parish By-laws.

VII. PARISH DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

A. Ordinary parish decision-making authority is distributed as follows:

1. Pastor

Subject to approval of the Bishop, the Pastor is the decision-maker in these areas:

- a. Management of the parish clergy. The Pastor shall have authority to dismiss any parish clergy and shall make recommendations to the Bishop and Parish Council for priest and deacon candidates.
- b. Approval and oversight of liturgical programs and initiatives within the Parish.
- c. Maintenance and enhancement of the spiritual and theological direction of the Parish.
- d. Veto authority on nominations to Parish Council and Parish Ministry Teams.

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, either in person or by proxy, be present. A quorum is a simple majority of the Council members.

3. Business Office Manager

The Business Office Manager is authorized to:

- a. Negotiate and bid all contractual services, to be presented to the Parish Council for final approval.
- b. Act as business liaison to financial institutions and business associations.
- c. Implement the approved parish budget.
- d. Prepare and distribute financial reports, as required.
- e. Make purchases within amount limits set by the Parish Council.

B. Special decision-making provisions

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

VIII. DIOCESE AFFILIATION

A diocese is an independent group of missions and Churches under one unified cooperation. Typically, a Diocese is led by a Bishop, who has authority over the member Pastors.

A. Diocese Membership

To seek membership in a Diocese, all the following conditions must be met:

1. Two-thirds vote of the full Parish Council, in favor.
2. Assent of the Parish Pastor.
3. Upon approval of the Parish Council and Pastor, a special meeting shall be called to all adult Parish members. Of the members attending the meeting, a majority vote, in favor.

B. Expectations of membership shall include:

1. Following all Diocesan canons.
2. Financial support of the Diocese at a rate not greater than 10% of net income.

C. Separation from a Diocese

If issues develop between the Parish and Diocese which cannot be reconciled, the Parish may decide to leave a Diocese under the following conditions:

1. Two-thirds vote of the full Parish Council, in favor of leaving the Diocese.
2. A special meeting shall be called to all adult Parish members. Of the members attending the meeting, a majority vote in favor of leaving the Diocese.

If all conditions are not met, the Parish remains in the Diocese.

IX. SELECTION OF A PASTOR

The steps in selecting a new Pastor are as follows:

- A. The Parish Council appoints a Selection Committee of lay members and clergy.
- B. Selection Committee performs the search for potential candidates.

- C. Selection Committee presents their recommendations to 1) the Diocesan Vocational Board; and 2) the Bishop for approval.
- D. Approved candidate is presented to the Parish Council. A simple majority vote of the full Parish Council is required.
- E. Approved candidate is then presented to the Church members at a special meeting. A majority vote of attending adult members is required.

X. REMOVAL OF A PASTOR (BY THE BISHOP)

The Bishop shall be a non-voting observer of these proceedings, to insure due process. In the case of complete deadlock, arbitration may be required. If the Pastor is voted out of the Parish, the Bishop shall remove the Pastor from his/her position in the Parish.

A. Criteria/Grounds

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

1. Incompetence.
2. Unconstitutional behavior.
3. Abuse of power.
4. Physical or mental health/emotional health.
5. Doctrinal misconduct.
6. Criminal conduct.

B. Conditions

To remove the Pastor, all the following conditions must be met:

1. Two-thirds vote of the full Parish Council, in favor of removing the Pastor.
2. A special meeting shall be called of all adult Parish members. Of the members attending the meeting, a majority vote in favor of removing the Pastor.

XI. SEPARATION FROM THE CHURCH

Denial of the Christian faith, conduct unbecoming of a member of the Church or persistent trouble-making in this congregation are sufficient causes for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, the matter will be brought up before the Parish Council and reconciliation will be attempted, proceeding through these successive steps in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17:

- A. Private admonition by the Pastor.
- B. Admonition by the Pastor in the presence of two Parish Council members.
- C. If the above steps fail, the Pastor will ask the member to leave the Parish.

Reinstatement to the community may be considered by the Pastor and the Parish Council.

XII. DISSOLUTION OF PROPERTY RIGHTS

In the event that the Parish is dissolved as an entity, its assets are dispersed as specified by the Parish Articles 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 Parish Council shall decide where to donate the remaining assets as follows:

- 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 Parish Council, the decision shall be made by the Parish 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

- A. Submission
Amendments to the Constitution shall be submitted by a Parish Council member to the full Parish Council one month prior to the Council meeting in which the amendment(s) shall be voted on.
- 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 By-laws, or complete replacement of the Constitution and By-laws, shall require a favorable vote of 2/3 of the full Parish Council and the assent of the Pastor.

APPENDIX A

THE DECLARATION OF UTRECHT, A TRANSLATION OF THE PROFESSION OF FAITH, OR DECLARATION, FORMULATED BY THE OLD CATHOLIC BISHOPS ASSEMBLED AT UTRECHT. SEPTEMBER 24TH, 1889

1. We adhere faithfully to the Rule of Faith laid down by St. Vincent of Lerins in these terms: “id teneamus, ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est; hoc est etenim vere proprieque catholicum.” For this reason, we persevere in professing the faith of the primitive Church, as formulated in the ecumenical symbols and specified precisely by the unanimously accepted decisions of the Ecumenical Councils held in the undivided Church of the first thousand years.
2. We therefore reject the decrees of the so-called Council of the Vatican, which were promulgated on July 18th, 1870 concerning the infallibility and the universal Episcopate of the Bishop of Rome, decrees which contradict the faith of the ancient Church, and which destroy its ancient canonical constitution by attributing to the Pope the plenitude of ecclesiastical powers over all Dioceses and over all the faithful. By denial of his primatial jurisdiction we do not wish to deny the historic primacy which several Ecumenical Councils and the Fathers of the ancient Church have attributed to the Bishop of Rome by recognizing him as the Primus inter pares.
3. We also reject the dogma of the Immaculate Conception promulgated by Pius IX in 1854 in defiance of the Holy Scriptures and in contradiction to the tradition of the first centuries.
4. As for other Encyclicals published by the Bishops of Rome in recent times – for example, the Bulls Unigenitus and Auctorem fidei, and the Syllabus of 1864 – we reject them on all such points as are in contradiction of the doctrine of the primitive Church, and we do not recognize them as binding on the conscience of the faithful. We also renew the ancient protest of the Catholic Church of Holland against the errors of the Roman Curia, and against its attacks upon the rights of national Churches.
5. We refuse to accept the decrees of the Council of Trent in matters of discipline, and as for the dogmatic decisions of that Council, we accept them only so far as they are in harmony with the teaching of the primitive Church.

6. Considering that the Holy Eucharist has always been the true central point of Catholic worship, we consider it our duty to declare that we maintain with perfect fidelity the ancient Catholic doctrine concerning the Sacrament of the Alta, by believing that we receive the Body and the Blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ under the species of bread and wine. The Eucharistic celebration in the Church is neither a continual repetition nor a renewal of the expiratory sacrifice which Jesus offered once for all upon the Cross, and it is the act by which we represent upon earth and appropriate to ourselves the one offering which Jesus Christ makes in Heaven, according to the Epistle to the Hebrews ix. 11, 12, for the salvation of redeemed humanity, by appearing for us in the presence of God (Heb. ix. 24). The character of the Holy Eucharist being thus understood, it is, at the same time, a sacrificial feast, by means of which the faithful, in receiving the Body and Blood of our Saviour, enter into communion with one another (I Cor. X. 17).
7. We hope that Catholic theologians, in maintaining the faith of the undivided Church, will succeed in establishing an agreement upon all such questions as caused controversy ever since the Churches became divided. We exhort the priests under our jurisdiction to teach, both by preaching and by the instruction of the young, especially the essential Christian truths professed by all the Christian confessions, to avoid, in discussing controversial doctrines, any violation of truth or charity, and in word and deed to set an example to the members of our churches in accordance with the spirit of Jesus Christ our Saviour.
8. By maintaining and professing faithfully the doctrine of Jesus Christ, by refusing to admit those errors which by the fault of men have crept into the Catholic Church, by laying aside the abuses in ecclesiastical matters, together with the worldly tendencies of hierarchy, we believe that we shall be able to combat efficaciously the great evils of our day, which are unbelief and indifference in matters of religion.

APPENDIX B

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS

- I. Baptism – The rite of entrance or initiation into the Christian community. In the waters of baptism we are washed clean of sin. Buried with Christ in the mystery of His death, we rise with Him to a new way of life.
- II. Confirmation – Through the anointing with oils and the laying on of hands, the Bishop or Priest confers the Holy Spirit upon a Christian. In receiving the Spirit, a Christian is strengthened with the charismata, the gift of grace, in order to participate in the continuing saving ministry of Christ in the Church.
- III. Holy Eucharist – The celebration through which we renew and participate in Christ’s birth, sacrificial death, resurrection and ascension into Heaven. During this celebration, we receive the actual Body and Blood of Christ, given to us under the forms of bread and wine, for our continuing spiritual nourishment and growth.
- IV. Reconciliation – Along with Catholic and other Christian communities, we acknowledge that a sincere prayer of sorrow to our God will bring the response of His forgiveness. We also believe that Christ left us a special sacrament which is a powerful encounter with Jesus Christ and His loving forgiveness. Also called the sacrament of penance, reconciliation can be celebrated in two ways:
 - A. Individual absolution is usually preceded by a Christian’s confession of personal sins in the presence of a Priest. The Priest’s prayer of forgiveness or absolution is said for each sincere penitent, at which time the penitent’s sins are forgiven.
 - B. General absolution is sacramental absolution, given at one time, to a large number of people, especially when the number of penitents is too great to allow for individual confession of sins.
- V. Anointing of the Sick – Consists of the anointing of ill or injured members of the Christian community with oil and prayers for their healing and forgiveness. The effects of this sacrament are strength and peace for the Christian in the face of his illness, and physical healing and recovery according to God’s will.

- VI. Marriage – Two people join their two lives together into one. This sacrament is administered by the two partners themselves, with the Priest or Deacon acting as a witness on behalf of God and the Church. The Holy Spirit breathes God’s own love into the couple’s love, so that each becomes a grace for the other.
- VII. Holy Orders – Is the sacrament through which the Church sets aside people for the special service of ministry to the Christian community. This sacramental act is called ordination. There are three ranks or orders in the ministry of the Church. They are Deacon, Priest and Bishop.

PARISH BY-LAWS

ARTICLE

TITLE

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PARISH COUNCIL

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- G. Duties of Assistant Moderator
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- E. Ministry Teams
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- B. Grievance with Clergy or Staff
- C. Parish Real Estate Transactions
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I PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council is the decision-making body of the faith community, excluding those matters that are the responsibility of the Pastor. The Council has authority to delegate tasks and decisions to committees or individuals within the parish. The Council consists of nine voting members. In addition, the Pastor, Associate Pastor(s), and Business Office Manager serve as non-voting advisory members.

A. Eligibility: The minimum requirements to serve on the Council are:

1. Parishioner for at least two years.
2. Must have served on a parish ministry team for one year, or given similar active service to the parish.

Parish clergy and staff are excluded from serving on the Council, with the exception of the previously described non-voting positions. Also excluded from Council service are the spouses, partners, and immediate family members of parish staff and salaried parish clergy.

B. Responsibilities:

1. Attend the Parish Council retreat(s) during Council term.
2. Attend and participate in all monthly Council meetings or notify Moderator in advance.
3. Review and approve Council minutes prior to each meeting.
4. Serve on a Parish Ministry team during the Council term.

C. Term:

Council members serve a three-year term. The terms are usually staggered among the nine members such that three members complete their term and are replaced each year. Upon completing a single term, members are eligible to be nominated for one consecutive term. After completing two terms, that member 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 terms and newly selected members begin their terms with the last Council meeting of the year, which shall include a Council orientation.

D. Appointment of Council Members:

Council member selection is performed according to the following steps:

1. Prior to September, the Parish Council will compile a list of all parishioners who meet the eligibility requirements to serve on the Parish Council.
2. The Pastor shall review the list and remove any names, based on the Pastor's privileged information about the parishioner(s) which would cause them to be ineligible.

3. Prior to the September Council meeting, the reviewed list shall be presented to the Council. The revised list will be prioritized to include three candidates and alternates. By October 31st the Pastor shall approach each of the selected candidates to ask if they are willing to serve on the Council. If any refuse, then the alternates shall take their place in the selection process, until three candidates who agree to serve are found.

E. Appointment of a Council Moderator and Assistant Moderator:

At the last Council meeting of the year, the Council shall select an Assistant Moderator from among the current or qualified incoming members. The Assistant Moderator will serve one year and shall normally assume the duties of Moderator in the following year. If no Assistant Moderator is selected in a given year or if the Assistant Moderator is unable to assume the duties of Moderator, the Moderator may be selected at any time from current or qualified incoming Council Members to serve the following year.

F. Duties of Moderator:

The duties of the Moderator include, but are not limited to:

1. Scheduling and notifying members of Council meetings.
2. Assembling and distributing Council meeting agendas and minutes.
3. Moderating Council meetings.
4. Communicating to the Pastor all issues regarding the Council, including participation and attendance of Council members.
5. Administering the voting process within the Council.
6. Delegating tasks to Assistant Moderator or Council members.
7. Facilitating the annual Council Retreat in January.
8. Preparing and scheduling Council retreats, as needed.
9. Calling upon Ministry teams to submit annual budgets.
10. Facilitating nominations for new Council members.
11. Facilitating selection of Assistant Moderator.
12. Ensuring each Ministry team has a liaison on the Council.
13. Ensuring Council members fulfill Council-member responsibilities during their term.

G. Duties of Assistant Moderator:

The duties of the Assistant Moderator shall include:

1. Ensuring that minutes are taken at each Council meeting.
2. Assuming Moderator responsibilities in the absence of the Moderator.
3. Coordinating an orientation meeting for new Council members at the end of the year.
4. Planning and coordinating the Parish Council annual retreat held in the new year when the Assistant Moderator has become Moderator.
5. Completing other tasks as delegated by the Moderator.

H. Vacancies:

Vacancies on the Council shall be filled using the same method as appointing Council members. The new Council members will serve the remaining term of the departing Council member. The Council members shall make their nomination at the first Council meeting after the vacancy occurs. The Pastor shall approach the selected candidate before the next Council meeting. A selected candidate who agrees to serve shall attend that next Council meeting.

I. Frequency of Meetings:

The Council shall meet monthly on a mutually agreed upon date. Meetings may be added or rescheduled by the Moderator or Pastor.

J. Meeting Procedures:

At least one week prior to each meeting, the Council members shall notify the Council Moderator of any issues they wish to discuss at the meeting. The Moderator shall prepare a meeting agenda and deliver it to the rest of the Council prior to the meeting. The Moderator shall conduct the meeting according to the agenda order of business. Decisions shall be made according to the modified Roberts Rules of Order. In the event of a tie, the Pastor shall cast the deciding vote.

Decisions, in order to be recognized, require that a quorum of the Council, either in person or by proxy, be present. A quorum is a simple majority of the Council members. A proxy must be in writing, to include e-mail or FAX. Unless otherwise stated, a simple majority of votes cast is required to carry a motion. Abstentions shall be recorded; however, abstentions are not considered a vote.

If a quorum is not available, any decision votes shall be postponed until the next meeting at which a quorum is present.

K. Order of Business:

Council meeting agendas shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Opening prayer.
2. Mission statement and meeting objectives.
3. Approve minutes of prior meeting.
4. Old Business.
5. New Business.
6. Report from the Parish Pastor.
7. Reports from Standing Ministry Teams.
8. Closing prayer.

L. Removal of a Council Member:

1. A Council member may be relieved of his/her duties pursuant to Article XII of the Constitution.
2. In addition, a Council member may be removed for cause including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Behavior that is not consistent or representative of the mission of the church.
 - b. Behavior that is in direct opposition to the vision of the Council; continuously undermining the objectives of the Council.
 - c. Absence in excess of three (3) meetings per year, including retreats.
3. The Moderator and Pastor shall be responsible for the counseling of a Council member. If the Moderator is the Council member in question, then the Assistant Moderator and Pastor shall be responsible for the counseling of the Moderator.
4. Removal of a Council member requires a 2/3 vote (6 votes) of the Council. The seat shall be filled according to Article I, Section H, Vacancies of the By-Laws.

II. STANDING MINISTRY TEAMS

A. Creation and dissolution of Ministry Teams:

When a Ministry is deemed necessary, the Council shall create a Ministry Team by a 2/3 vote (6 votes) of the Council. A Ministry Team may be removed by a 2/3 vote when the Council no longer considers it necessary.

B. Responsibilities of Ministry Teams:

The following responsibilities apply to all Ministry Teams. Additional responsibilities may be included under the specific Ministry.

1. Fulfill the purpose of the Ministry as defined in these By-Laws.
2. Prepare and submit an annual budget to the Parish Finance Committee.
3. Provide accurate accounting for all events and expenses.
4. Submit all expenses/costs not in the approved budget in advance to the Finance Committee for approval.

C. Appointment and Term of Ministry Team Chair:

Each team must designate a Chair each year. It is up to each team to determine the best process to accomplish this requirement, within the guidelines of these by-laws.

D. Removal or Resignation of Ministry Team Members:

1. A Ministry team member may be relieved of his/her duties pursuant to Article XI of the Constitution.
2. In addition, a Ministry team member may be removed for cause including, but not limited to, the following:
 - a. Behavior that is not consistent or representative of the mission of the church.
 - b. Behavior that is in direct opposition to the vision of the Council; continuously undermining the objectives of the Council.
3. Removal of a Ministry team member requires a 2/3 vote (6 votes) of the Council.
4. Resignation of a Ministry team member must be submitted to the Council in writing.

E. Ministry Teams:

1. BEREAVEMENT

Purpose – To support families at the death of their loved ones and assist, as appropriate, in the community's response to their loss.

2. BUILDING AND PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

Purpose – to ensure the proper maintenance, repair and protection of all the property of Saint Matthew; to provide both long and short-term plans for property maintenance, repair and improvement.

3. COMMUNICATION and PUBLIC RELATIONS

Purpose – Through a diversity of media, to create an awareness of Saint Matthew Church on local and national levels and to assure appropriate communication within our community.

4. COMMUNITY LIFE

Purpose – To create and enhance social life in the community, providing venues for interaction; to welcome visitors on Sundays (including hospitality after the liturgies); and to create, as appropriate, ongoing group opportunities to raise funds for the benefit of the church.

5. EDUCATION

Purpose – To encourage and nurture the Christian education of all members of Saint Matthew, including adult education (Sunday morning classes and forums), Bible study; young adult education; confirmation classes and children's religious classes.

6. FINANCE

Purpose – To create the annual church budget for Parish Council approval and monitor income and expenditures to assure the financial well-being of the church; to advise Parish Council on the purchase, encumbrance and disposal of real property.

7. LITURGY, ENVIRONMENTS, AND MUSIC

Purpose – To assure that the liturgies and celebrations are supported by volunteers and appropriate environmental elements.

A. Assuring that volunteers are recruited, trained, and scheduled to serve as Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Altar Servers, and Ushers.

B. Assuring volunteers to prepare and maintain the church environment to support the seasonal changes of the church (especially during Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter), including seasonal vestments, decorations, seating configurations, and processions.

C. In collaboration with the Director of Music, assuring appropriate presence of music in the liturgies and celebrations of the church.

8.. OUTREACH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Purpose – to create and support ministries that serve our brothers and sisters in need, including, but, not limited, to designated Outreach Ministries (Emmanuel House, OC Shelter Network, Phoenix Families) and social justice ministries.

9. STEWARDSHIP

Purpose – To encourage the members of the community to grow as stewards of God's resources, with a special concern for deepening their financial support, time commitments, and use of God-given talents in the service of the community.

III. DELEGATES TO THE ECC HOUSE OF LAITY (HOL)

A. Announcement:

Several months before a scheduled Synod, the Parish Council should, together with the pastor, announce to the community that volunteers are sought to be delegates at the next synod to serve as members of the House of Laity. This announcement should include:

1. The dates of the next Synod, its location, and a brief description of Synod purpose and activities
2. An explanation of the role of the delegates in Synod participation
3. An explanation that delegates are members of the House of Laity (HOL) and remain so until the next synod (a two-year term).
4. Explanation that delegates must be willing and able to attend the next Synod, including bearing costs associated with attendance (travel, lodging, fees).
5. The date when volunteers should step forward.

B. Selection

1. The Parish Council will consider qualities of potential community members
2. Membership in Saint Matthew community long enough to be well-known by community members.
3. Recognized good character and common sense
4. General understanding of the relationship between the ECC and Saint Matthew community.

C. Communication

After selection of the delegates, the Parish Council will inform the community of their decision.

IV. SIGNATURE AUTHORITIES - TBD-

V. AMENDMENT OF BY-LAWS

- A. Submission
Amendments to the By-Laws shall be submitted by a Parish Council member to the full Parish Council one month prior to the Council meeting in which the amendment(s) shall be voted on.
- 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 By-laws, or complete replacement of the By-laws, shall require a favorable vote of 2/3 of the full Parish Council and the assent of the Pastor.

VI. ACTIONS REQUIRING SPECIAL PROCEDURES

The following are procedures relating to special circumstances, which may come to the attention of the Parish Council. They are not deemed to be all-inclusive.

- A. Investigation of Accusations of Serious Misconduct within the Parish:
 1. Upon notification of an accusation an ad-hoc Investigation Team shall be commissioned consisting of at least 2 Council members. Special consideration should be given to maintaining a team that is impartial and removed from the party(ies) involved.
 2. This team shall conduct a fair line of questioning that is consistent with the accusation, involving all necessary parties/witnesses.
 3. Interviews and actions shall be conducted with at least two members of the investigation team present, as to insure the presence of witnesses.
 4. All information shall be documented for the record.
 5. Legal consultation is strongly recommended.
 6. The findings of the Investigation Team shall be presented to the responsible party (either the Pastor or the Parish Council), and a just decision will be made in the best interest of the community.
 7. Consideration shall be given to a public disclosure of such events, in the spirit of honesty and transparency.

B. Grievance with Clergy or Staff: TBD

C. Parish Real Estate Transactions: TBD

D. Abstaining:

A sitting Council member whose spouse, partner and/or immediate family member is subject to a disciplinary or conflict of interest action, must abstain from voting on the measure or matter.

E. Ecumenical Catholic Communion Code of Ethical Conduct.

We endorse the Ecumenical Catholic Communion Code of Ethical Conduct.