



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION  
OF THE ECUMENICAL CATHOLIC COMMUNION

# The Journey Shared



## Ordination

### DEACON JANE REINA OF MARY OF MAGDALA ECC

Jane's ordination to the Sacred Order of Deacons was held on January 19, 2020. Our community was honored to host this special event and honored by the presence of people from regional ECC churches to witness the ordination. If you have ever attended an ordination liturgy you know how special it is. Bishop Francis presided, assisted by our Vicar, Fr. Michael Nicosia. The reception provided an opportunity for MoM to spend some time with Bp. Francis in a social setting. We look forward to the **next ordination on March 22nd** as Dcn. Jane will receive her Ordination to the Priesthood.



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*Editor*

Fr. Michael Nicosia  
[nicosia410@yahoo.com](mailto:nicosia410@yahoo.com)



# Mary of Magdala

## ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

Mary of Magdala participated in the Wednesday evening Soup Suppers and Taizé services of our combined congregations for 3 weeks in Advent. All participated in the Taizé services while each church provided the food for one of the evenings.

A Giving Tree and A Giving Fair were two Advent activities in which Mary of Magdala participated with our partner churches. Each congregation had tables for causes they support. MoM received donations for Madonna Hospital in Umuahia, Nigeria, and for One Spirit, serving Pine Ridge Reservation.

The Giving Tree supported a local organization helping Voices Carry Child Advocacy Center. The organization works to prevent and respond to child abuse.

## FAITH PARTNERS VISION TEAM

The Faith Partners Vision Team began meeting in November. This team has a charge to see what our three churches, (Trinity Lutheran, St. Paul’s Episcopal, and Mary of Magdala ECC), can envision on working together going forward. The ultimate goal is to become a true ecumenical center in Fort Collins and Northern Colorado. Our meetings have been focused on setting ground rules, operational processes, and our team vision. We hope to present that to our communities at the next joint service on Feb 23rd. Bill Smith, Yvonne Wootten, and Kerrie Anderson are the current members. We need to replace Jane Reina who is ineligible now that she is an ordained deacon. Stay tuned for more information as we work together.

## FAMILY HOUSING NETWORK

Mary of Magdala supported this program (formerly Faith Family Hospitality) for families without stable housing the week of Christmas, a challenging time to give up personal family time to help make other families have a better Christmas. Volunteers do make a difference and continue to be Christ's hands and feet in this world.



REGIONAL COUNCIL  
[www.coloradoecc.org](http://www.coloradoecc.org)

REGIONAL VICAR  
 Fr. Michael Nicosia, 720-218-1081  
[nicosia410@yahoo.com](mailto:nicosia410@yahoo.com)  
 Follow on Instagram and Twitter  
[@FrMichaelECC](https://www.instagram.com/FrMichaelECC)

AUXILIARY BISHOP  
 The Rt. Rev. Denise Donato  
[revdenised@gmail.com](mailto:revdenised@gmail.com)

PRESIDING BISHOP  
 The Very Rev. Francis Krebs  
[bishop.francis@ecumenical-catholic-communion.org](mailto:bishop.francis@ecumenical-catholic-communion.org)



For more about the  
 ECUMENICAL CATHOLIC  
 COMMUNION, visit  
<http://ecumenical-catholic-communion.org>

## MARY OF MAGDALA

### CO-PASTORS AFFIRMATION!

Dcn. Rosean Amaral and Jane Reina (now Dcn. Jane) were formally affirmed by the MoM Community as co-pastors on January 5th. This affirmation by the community followed a 9-month period of the Call Committee setting forth the call process, job description, interview process, community input, and recommendation to the Leadership Council. Ruth Alexander facilitated our meetings and guided us through this lengthy process. Ruth Alexander, Jared Orsi, Jim Berry, Tom Moos, and Kerrie Anderson were committee members.

### LENTEN SOCIAL JUSTICE PROGRAM

1st Sunday in Lent, March 1  
 Gun Violence Prevention and Migrant Justice in Mexico & Colorado, 2:30-4:30 presentation (*see page 13*)

2nd Sunday in Lent, March 8  
 focus on local homelessness, with a collection for the Food Bank of Larimer County

3rd Sunday in Lent, March 15  
 collecting toiletries for the Family Housing Network

4th Sunday in Lent, March 22  
**Jane's Ordination!**

5th Sunday in Lent, March 29  
 building non-perishable "Blessing bags" for Homeward Alliance after Mass

**ASH WEDNESDAY**, February 26  
 7pm Communion service with ashes

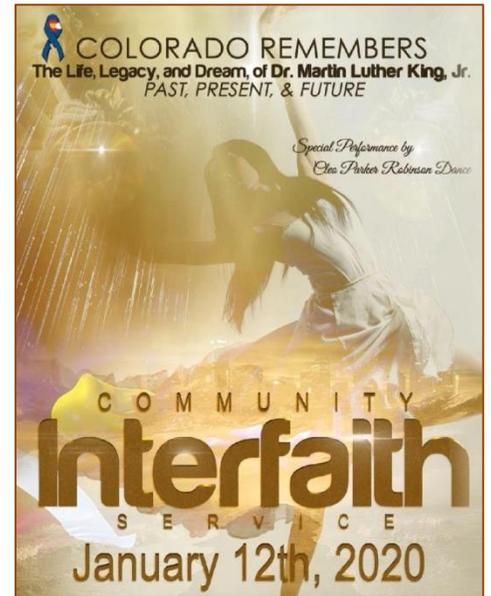
### LENTEN WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

6pm Simple soup suppers followed by 6:30pm joint readers theater liturgy

**HOLY THURSDAY**, April 9 at 5:30pm  
 Liturgy with foot washing

**GOOD FRIDAY**, April 10  
 Noon "Seven Last Words of Christ"\*  
 7pm Stations of the Cross\*  
 \*joint liturgy with Trinity and St. Paul's

**EASTER VIGIL**, April 11 at 7pm.  
 (No Easter Sunday service.)



## VICAR MUSINGS

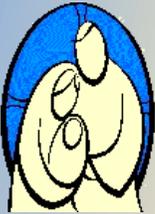
# the challenge begins in each of our hearts

The Colorado Council of Churches was asked to collaborate with the City of Aurora and Aurora Faith Communities (a loose group of non-denominational pastors) on the inaugural Interfaith Service *Colorado Remembers the Life, Legacy and Dream of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. – Past, Present and Future*.

Being a resident of the City, when our Executive Director asked the Board for a volunteer to represent the CCC on the planning team I jumped at the chance to collaborate with other local faith leaders.



While it was an honor to be asked to give the Catholic Invocation (*text follows*), that presented the question:



### CHURCH OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Pastoral Team:

Dcn. Mike Weil, Dcn. David Dunn  
and Rev. Kathleen Gorman

[www.churchofholyfamily.org](http://www.churchofholyfamily.org)

Mass: 10:00 am Sundays  
8811 E. Hampden Ave, Suite 101,  
Denver, CO, 80231

(303) 369-9000

[admin@hollyfamilyco.org](mailto:admin@hollyfamilyco.org)



### CHURCH OF THE BELOVED

[www.churchofthebeloved-ecc.org](http://www.churchofthebeloved-ecc.org)

Mthr. Kae Madden, Pastor

Mass: 5:00 pm Saturdays

10500 Grant Drive

Northglenn CO 80233

303-489-7046

Mother Kae, 720-232-1562

[pastor@churchofthebeloved-ecc.org](mailto:pastor@churchofthebeloved-ecc.org)

Fr. Paul Burson, 720-254-2083



### LIGHT OF CHRIST ECUMENICAL CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

[www.lightofchristecc.org](http://www.lightofchristecc.org)

Fr. Teri Harroun, Pastor

Masses: 5:00 pm Saturdays

9:00 am Wednesdays

1000 W. 15th Avenue

Longmont CO 80501

303-772-3785

[churchoffice@lightofchristecc.org](mailto:churchoffice@lightofchristecc.org)

### VICAR'S MUSINGS continued...

What to wear? The Planning Chair wanted liturgical garb that would visually speak of the diversity of the faith traditions represented. Bishop Francis said that a cope would be appropriate, and Fr. Don Sutton happened to have one that he had yet to use! It's curious how your Vicar, who obviously doesn't have any qualms about being over-the-top theatrically, was a little self-conscious wearing something so high church! I was glad Fr. Jim DeMuth was at my side for moral and spiritual support.

I also want to thank fellow CCC Board Member Roland Halpern of the Human Society for staffing our CCC/ECC information table with Fr. Jim.



### CATHOLIC INVOCATION

✠ *In the Catholic tradition, this weekend we celebrate Jesus' Baptism by John in the River Jordan. The first reading appointed for the feast is from the prophet Isaiah; in part it reads: "I, the LORD, have called you for the victory of justice, I have grasped you by the hand; I formed you, and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations, to open eyes that are blind, to bring out prisoners from confinement and, from the dungeon, those who live in darkness" (Is 42:6-7).*

*God of Revelations, your servant Martin and his companions took up that mantle, as each generation must. This day we honor him—a prophet, a martyr, a saint who walked in our midst and intercedes for us as we face the challenges of our day.*

*This day we call upon you, God of Enlightenment, mindful that, if we are to carry his dream from past to present to future, the challenge begins in each of our hearts.*

*And so, echoing the words of St. Francis of Assisi, we pray (singing):*

*"Most High and Glorious God, bring light to the darkness of my heart. Give me right faith, certain hope, and perfect charity. Lord, give me insight and wisdom so that I always may do your holy and true will." Let it be so.*

~ Fr. Michael J. Nicosia, Vicar

**SPRING ISSUE SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

**MAY 15**

...so take lots of Resurrection photos!



### MARY OF MAGDALA COMMUNITY

[www.marymagdalafc.org](http://www.marymagdalafc.org)

Pastoral Director candidates being interviewed

Mass: 5:00 pm Sundays

301 E Stuart Street

Fort Collins, CO 80525

970-493-9536

Dcn. Rosean Amaral 970-692-4238

[marymagdalafc@gmail.com](mailto:marymagdalafc@gmail.com)



### ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN AND CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Rev. Barbara Berry-Bailey, Co-pastor

Fr. Don Sutton, Co-pastor

[donaldsutton@gmail.com](mailto:donaldsutton@gmail.com)

Catholic Mass: 5:00 pm Saturdays

Lutheran Service: 10:30 am Sundays

1600 Grant St, Denver, CO 80203

303-839-1432

<http://saintpauldenver.com>

Also check out our friends of

### BOULDER COMMUNITY IN DISCERNMENT

Mass: 1:30 pm

every first and third Sunday

Community United Church of Christ

2650 Table Mesa Drive

Boulder CO 80305

Mthr. Sheila Dierks 303-449-4302

[sheiladierks1@gmail.com](mailto:sheiladierks1@gmail.com)

# Light of Christ

Light of Christ has decided that 2020 will be our "Year of the Family" and we kicked off the year with several fun events that remind us of our bonds to each other while letting the greater Longmont community know that we want to be family with them, too!

**2020 Year of the Family**

**ALL ARE WELCOME**  
Everyone is welcome at Light of Christ, and every committee and activity, including Communion, is open to all. You are welcome. Wanted. Valued.

**CHILDREN IN ALL MINISTRIES**  
Children of all ages are welcome to serve on committees and in ministries like reading, serving Communion, and singing.

**OPEN COMMUNION TABLE**  
Where ever you are on your journey, you are invited to join us for Communion. We even have a gluten-free option.

**15 YEARS**  
Women's Ordination  
Lay lead Community  
Call our own Pastor  
LGBTQ Affirming  
Sacramental Justice  
Mass with the Body of Christ  
Liturgy and Pastoral Care  
[lightofchristecc.org](http://lightofchristecc.org)



To emphasize that everyone is part of our family and that all families are welcome, we celebrated Epiphany with an intergenerational Epiphany pageant, creating our own nativity scene. We had several Marys and Josephs and lots of animals, shepherds, and angels. There were no rehearsals, just enthusiastic time together proclaiming the Good News of Jesus' presence among us.

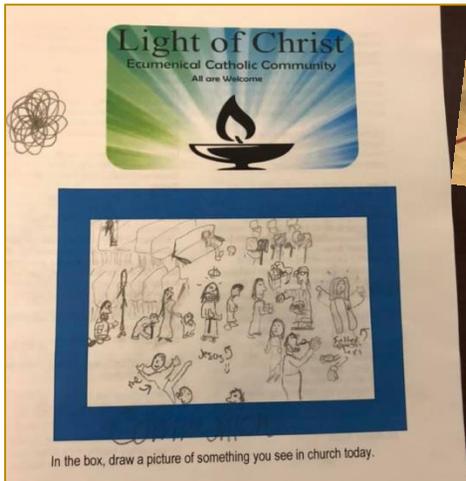
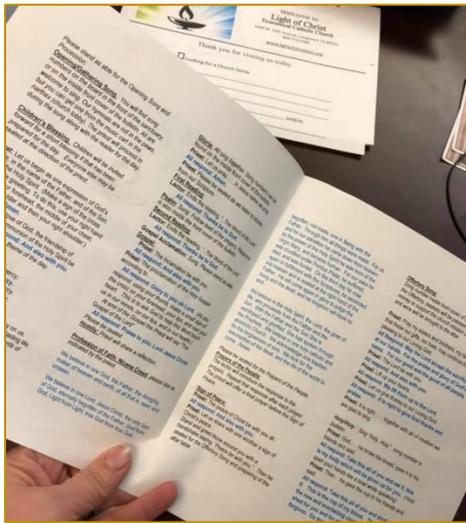


Our Adult Formation Committee collaborated with OUT Boulder to host a panel discussion about gender. OUT Boulder members shared their personal journeys and answered questions to help our members better understand gender. Our community felt this was an important first step for us to take to help us become an even more inclusive and welcoming community to all. →



LOC continued...

In January, Light of Christ's bread bakers worked with the youth from Growth Youp (our youth group) to make Communion bread together. It is good to share this ministry with one another and recognize that all hands can be hands of blessing.



To further highlight our Year of the Family at our weekly Mass and help make sure visitors to our community, especially those who may not be as familiar with the Catholic Mass feel welcome, we've created new missalette handouts. We made sure to make them kid friendly with a place on the front cover for children to draw images of what they see at Mass. On the weekend they were introduced, Fr. Teri asked the children to join her in blessing them before they were distributed.

In early February, Light of Christ hosted a booth at the City of Longmont's "Wellness Fair." While other groups at the fair were focused on physical and mental wellness, we emphasized spiritual wellness. We met many people who were intrigued and interested to learn about how our community offers an alternative way to

live out Christ's love in the Catholic tradition. We connected with several people who were raised Catholic, but had fallen away for one reason or another. It was a wonderful way to connect with people in the Longmont community who didn't know about us and were interested in hearing about our church family.



**LIGHT OF CHRIST**  
**PALM SATURDAY**, April 4 at 5pm

**PALM SUNDAY SERVICE**  
April 5 at 10:15am\*

**HOLY THURSDAY**, April 9 at 7pm\*

**GOOD FRIDAY**, April 10 at 7pm\*

**EASTER VIGIL**, April 11 at 8pm

*\*joint service with Bethlehem Lutheran*

**BOULDER COMMUNITY**  
**IN DISCERNMENT ASH WEDNESDAY**

To begin our fast from anger, technology, consumerism, distraction, judgment... we are gathering with our hosts at Community United Church of Christ for a soup supper and intergenerational, multisensory prayer service with ashes and communion from 5:30-7pm on Ash Wednesday, February 26. If you can provide a pot of vegetarian soup, contact Mother Sheila Dierks at [sheiladierks1@gmail.com](mailto:sheiladierks1@gmail.com), 303-449-4302.



Sunday Mass time. At that time Deacon David Dunn, Mother Kathleen Gorman and myself came together to form a pastoral team to help lead Holy Family into the future. Our primary goal at that time was to make sure we could celebrate Eucharist on a weekly basis. With the help of many hands we were able to accomplish that goal.

The Strength of Holy Family has always been its members — a kind, generous, intelligent and committed group of individuals. It was this commitment that has sustained CHF for the last 21 years and will sustain it into the future.

After exploring our options with Christ the Savior Lutheran Church for a Sunday service, it was decided that we find a new home. A few of the members took up the task of finding us a home for Sundays.

Christ the Savior Lutheran Church was a wonderful host. We greatly appreciate their willingness to host us over the past year plus. It was unfortunate that we were not able to find a Sunday option that worked for both communities. We are grateful to them for their support.



Fr. Jim Demuth helped celebrate our last Mass at Christ the Savior. He did a beautiful blessing and thanksgiving of the space and then blessed the Holy Family Community and commissioned us to move forward. It was very spiritual. Thank you, Fr. Jim.

We searched exhaustively, for a space. We searched club houses, schools, hotels, church sharing options and store fronts for the better part of two months. Just when it seemed like there were going to be no more options, Melinda Seigle and →

## Holy Family

### JOURNEY ONWARD

by Deacon Mike Weil

Holy Family celebrated Mass in its **New Home** on Sunday February 2nd. This journey started at a congregational meeting back in the second week of November when the Church voted unanimously to continue forward by moving our mass times back to Sunday. With Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas quickly approaching, we knew this was going to be a tall task to reorganize Holy Family and move to a

CHF continued...

Gayle Craun found our new home. It is an office suite in a building on the corner of Yosemite and Hampden in east Denver. After having an open house to view the opportunity, we decided to lease the space for a year.

The community leaped into action. They painted the walls and cleaned up the space. Carpets were cleaned; new chairs were bought and assembled. All of this was done in about a week and a half. God has always provided for this little community and continues to every day.



Holy Family is a church of Radical Inclusivity where all are welcome and worthy of God's love. We believe strongly in Laity and Clergy working together. It was the laity that found our new home. Our first Mass was such a blessing. Our Vicar, Fr. Michael was there with us to celebrate our new beginning. He blessed us moving forward.

We will be closing the office space on Iliff by the end of February and consolidating it into our new space at **8811 East Hampden Avenue, Denver CO, 80231**. We meet on Sunday Mornings at 10am.

It is amazing what is provided, when you trust in God.

## CHURCH OF THE HOLY FAMILY ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

February 26 at 7pm

## SOUP SUPPERS

6-7:30pm from March 4 to April 1

**HOLY THURSDAY**, April 9 at 7pm

**GOOD FRIDAY**, April 10 at 7pm

**EASTER SUNDAY**, April 12

10am Mass with brunch to follow

# Church of the Beloved

## BEING SALT AND LIGHT

On February 8, twenty-three adults and ten youth as a community got together and packaged 1,700 pounds of bulk rice and beans in one hour! Our fourth annual service project was tons of fun and productivity. The staples were purchased from our quarterly outreach tithe of membership offerings. We gathered to pray and consider current statistics in Colorado as many hands made light work.

Given a variety of estimates that 15 pounds of beans and 10 pound of rice can feed 100 people, we provided a food staple for 12,500 meals. We blessed the bags of food during our liturgy and distributed them to eight local food pantries. When asked about their experience, Lincoln responded, "What I most liked about our rice and beans project was knowing how much this was going to help people and where it was going to go." The Zamora family "loved working together as a family and watching our boys understand how to bring the light of Christ to others."

"Share your bread with the hungry... then your light will shine like the dawn" (Isaiah 58).



## CHURCH OF THE BELOVED

**ASH WEDNESDAY**, February 26:

Ashes "On Your Way" 6-7:30am at the Wagon Road RTD Park N Ride and

11am-12noon at E B Rains Jr. Memorial Park at 117th and Community Center Drive in Northglenn

12:30pm and 7pm Contemplative Prayer Services\* at the church

**COMMUNAL RECONCILIATION SERVICE**, March 13 at 6pm

**PALM SUNDAY VIGIL**, April 4 at 5pm procession with palms

**HOLY THURSDAY**, April 9 6:30pm Tenebrae\*

7:30pm Mass of the Lord's Supper\* with washing of feet, followed by Eucharistic Adoration\* until 10pm

**GOOD FRIDAY**, April 10 at 7pm

**EASTER VIGIL**, April 11 at 9pm

**EASTER SUNDAY**, April 12 at 8am

*\*shared services with Northglenn United Church of Christ*



*Wall of Soul Boxes displayed at 1st Baptist Church of Denver*

Instead of gun violence being someone else’s problem, we can each make a difference in raising awareness and finding small ways of impact to reduce violence in some area of life.

The Soul Box Project started in Portland, Oregon following the mass shooting in Las Vegas. Locally, we may connect with our sisters and brothers at First Baptist Church in Denver who are working to create more than 30,000 boxes by April. (Fr. Michael folded one there at the last general meeting of Colorado Faith Communities United to Prevent Gun Violence.) They’ll carry the boxes to the Colorado capitol for a memorial service for victims of gunfire.

## HUNGER & POVERTY IN COLORADO

updated: 10/19

- Nearly **1 in 11 Coloradans (9.1%) struggle with hunger**, not always having enough money to buy food. (U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Household Food Security in the United States in 2018*, September 2019)
- More than **1 in 10 Coloradans (10.3%) struggle financially**, living below the federal poverty line. This includes more than 1 in 8 kids (13%) with those under the age of 5 most likely to live in poverty. (U.S. Census Bureau, *American Community Survey: Poverty*, Sept. 2018)
- Nearly **1 in 8 Colorado kids (12%) may not always know when or where they will get their next meal**. (Colorado Children’s Campaign, *2019 KIDS COUNT in Colorado!*, August 2019)
- About **21,000 veterans in Colorado live in households that participated in food stamps** at some point during a 12-month period. (Center of Budget Policies and Priorities, *SNAP Helps Almost 1.5 million Low Income Vets, including thousands in every state*, November 2017)

## OPPORTUNITY FOR UNIFYING ACTION: THE SOUL BOX PROJECT

<https://soulboxproject.org/home>

by *Mother Kae Madden*

I recently participated in one of the kick-off gatherings for Faithful Thursdays that was held at the First Baptist Church of Denver across from our State Capitol. I was very moved by their display of Soul Boxes and plan to join them in this compelling action. The Soul Box project is a national community art project raising awareness of the gunfire epidemic by counting and honoring victims. In the tradition of the AIDS Memorial Quilt, the Project is collecting one hand-folded paper box – a Soul Box - for every person killed or injured by gunfire in the US since 2014. On average, over 100 people are shot every day in the U.S.

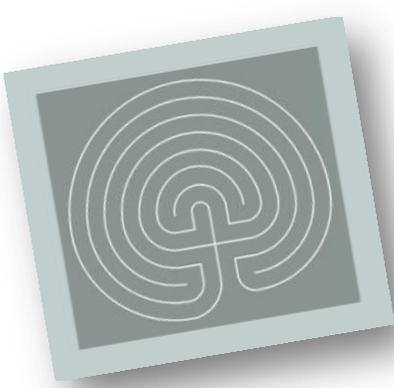
There are many facets that contribute to the complexity of gun violence. Contributing factors include depression, suicide desperation, gun safety, hate and racism, violence in speech, isolation and loneliness, domestic violence, gun storage, police shootings, access to quality mental health services, the glorification of violence in visual entertainment such as movies and games – to name a few.



*Folding at First Baptist*

Folding a Soul Box can be a healing meditative act, whether done individually or as a group. Coming together to make Boxes provides a chance to share our stories. Folding a box is a way to add to a conversation without being confrontational. The founder said the goal of the project is not to lobby for gun control at a federal level. Instead, “the goal is for each person who sees the project to take one personal action,” whether that’s locking their personal guns away to keep them safer, speaking to local government about gun laws or reaching out to people in distress. “Whatever that one personal action is, that’s what we want people to take,” she said.

COB →



# St. Paul Lutheran & Catholic

CHRISTMAS JOY!

## COB CENTERING PRAYER/MEDITATION AND LABYRINTH

On the first Sunday of each month, we meet at 6:30 a.m. in the sanctuary for 20 minutes of silent Centering Prayer, then walk the outdoor labyrinth and return to the sanctuary for another 20 minute period of silent prayer. During wintery weather, we engage in a meditative walk around the sanctuary. **March 1st** is our next prayer opportunity. All are welcome.



## STP COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Congratulations to the Council members voted into office during our annual congregational meeting on February 2nd! Aaron Oberg, President; Andrea Arey, Vice President; Jeff Parrott, Treasurer; Karlene Burrell, member; Lin Holly, Secretary. They join Irene McCahill and Greg Yonker (whose terms were not up for election) on our council.

We are most grateful for outgoing Council members Maryann O'Brien and Lori Eastman for their tireless dedication to our community of faith.

## ADULT FORUM

The three Sundays before Lent were devoted to discussions from *40-Day Journey with Dietrich Bonhoeffer*. Bonhoeffer was a Lutheran pastor and University Professor of Theology in Germany the first half of the 20th century. A prolific author and letter writer, he spoke out against the Nazi regime in the 1930s and met his death because of it. The series generated deep, probing discussions about who God is and what God desires from us.

Our Adult Forum during Lent will be like a patchwork quilt. Using the Lectionary as our guide, we will explore different topics such as white privilege (*Living Lutheran*, January 2020), the ELCA Living Simply Program, continuing with Bonhoeffer, and many other blocks that will make up our Lenten reflection quilt. Every piece will be a surprise, so please join us and our presenters, 9:15-10:15am in the lower level of the church on the six Sundays in Lent. Everyone is welcome. →



## Regional Chrism Mass!

EASTER MONDAY  
7PM APRIL 13

### AT CHURCH OF THE BELOVED

While Bishop Francis is in town for Dcn. Jane's ordination, all are invited to attend our Regional Chrism Mass. In addition to blessing and consecrating the Sacred Oils for use in our communities our lay leaders, deacons, priests and bishop will recommit to the ministries that continue to bless the local church.



StP continues...

**SHROVE TUESDAY-MARDI GRAS**

Gumbo supper with King Cake and 3 semi-professional story tellers

**ASH WEDNESDAY**

Fr Don and Pastor Barbara take to the streets in what has become an annual custom. Because of the amount of foot traffic around the church, they will be stationed outside for “Prayer and Ashes” 11:30am-1pm.

**DAILY ON-LINE SHARING**

Fr. Don will shepherd a group for daily prayer and reflection during Lent, hosted online in a Facebook group which will use Joyce Rupp’s *Jesus, Friend of My Soul*. It is the first time we have used a virtual group in this manner and hopefully it will enable more folks to participate regularly.

**WEDNESDAY EVENINGS IN LENT**

We gather for Soup Supper and Study for “Courageous Conversations” – talking about racism, led by Pastor Barbara and Pastor Rich Gianzero of Nativity Lutheran in Commerce City.

**PALM SATURDAY**, April 4 5pm

**PALM SUNDAY**, April 5 10:30am

**MAUNDY THURSDAY**, April 9 7pm

**GOOD FRIDAY**, April 10 7pm

**EASTER VIGIL**, April 11 8pm

**EASTER SUNDAY**, April 12 10:30am



**Colorado Council of Churches**  
Walking together in faith, working together for justice.

**Faithful Thursdays**

**NOON AT THE CAPITOL**

Upcoming conveners include:

- March 6:** Denver Presbytery
- March 19:** Rocky Mountain Rabbinical Council

**April 2:** Colorado Council of Churches

**April 16:** Multi-Cultural Mosaic

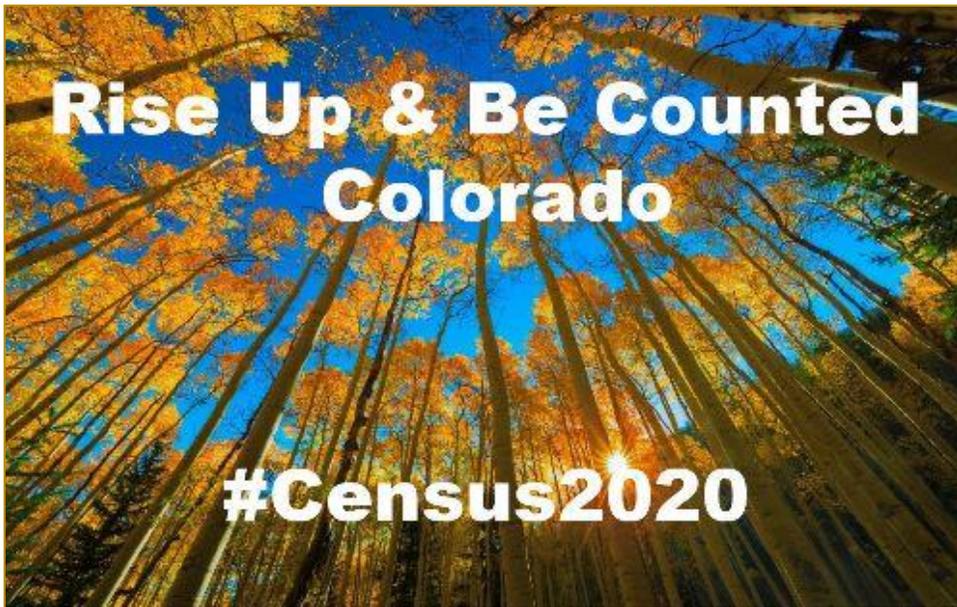
**April 30:** Closing Ceremony with All Coalition Partners

As a Covenanting Denomination of the CCC, ECC representation is particularly important at the red-fonted events above. Check on social media for location, sometimes in the Capitol Building, often across the street at 1st Baptist Church of Denver.



Nice thing about moving the event this session to Thursdays is that legislators can attend. Pictured above, Rep. Dafna Michaelson Jenet, a prime sponsor of HB20-1086 Insurance Coverage for Mental Health Wellness Exams (ensuring coverage similar to annual physical examinations).





## Faith Census Sunday

The Colorado Council of Churches and Together Colorado are coordinating a Census 2020 educational push in our faith communities on Faith Census Sunday, **March 29**. Our ECC Vicar will be sending out CCC's information packets (sample sermons, bulletin blurbs) for our Region in order to support the outreach.

The count determines the number of Representatives our State has in Congress. Federal funding is also calculated using census numbers, so it's vitally important — not only to get our fair share of moneys for our roads, hospitals, schools, fire departments and other public services, but also ensures that our most vulnerable citizens have access to the social programs they need.

For that reason, immigrant populations are also counted. This can be a daunting task given the general mistrust some have of the government. The information is not to be shared across federal agencies, however, and census takers need not come knocking on anyone's door — 10 minutes to fill out 10 questions that

you can respond to online, by phone or by mail.

#Census2020  
#EveryoneCounts

### PLANNING COMMITTEE INVITATION

We invite you to our Faithful Complete Count Committee Kickoff meeting noon-1:30pm on Tuesday, **March 3rd**, at Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church located at 1980 Dahlia Street, Denver CO, 80220. Lunch will be provided.

During our time together, we will share an overview of the 2020 Census, share information about current plans to educate around the Census, talk about the upcoming Census Faith weekend, and share resource information. We look forward to hearing about your efforts as well!

**Please RSVP by Wednesday, February 26th by clicking on this link:** <https://forms.gle/94TujDnQUmTeUblW9>. All are welcome, and please feel free to invite anyone who you think may be interested in attending this event.



## Gun Violence Prevention & Migrant Justice

For those of you who can't make it up North to the presentation at Mary of Magdala / Trinity Lutheran / St. Paul's Episcopal in Ft. Collins on March 1st, AFSC & Coloradans For Immigrant Rights, Denver Justice & Peace Committee, and Colorado Faith Communities United to End Gun Violence will be presenting **Gun Violence Prevention and Migrant Justice in Mexico & Colorado — How We Work Together on March 3, 5-7pm**, at 1420 Ogden Street, Basement Conference Room, Denver CO 80218.

The crisis in migration is driven by a combination of anti-migrant racism and the proliferation of guns and militarism from the United States. John Lindsay-Poland documents the legal and illegal flows of guns from the United States that are bringing devastating violence to communities and migrants in Mexico and Central America. This event will explore the trajectory of trans-border U.S. guns and policies, how Mexico is responding, and what our communities can do to stop these vectors of violence and trauma.

For background info read *Where the Guns Go: US Arms and the Crisis of Violence in Mexico* [www.afsc.org/resource/report-where-guns-go](http://www.afsc.org/resource/report-where-guns-go)

# Priests of the Region

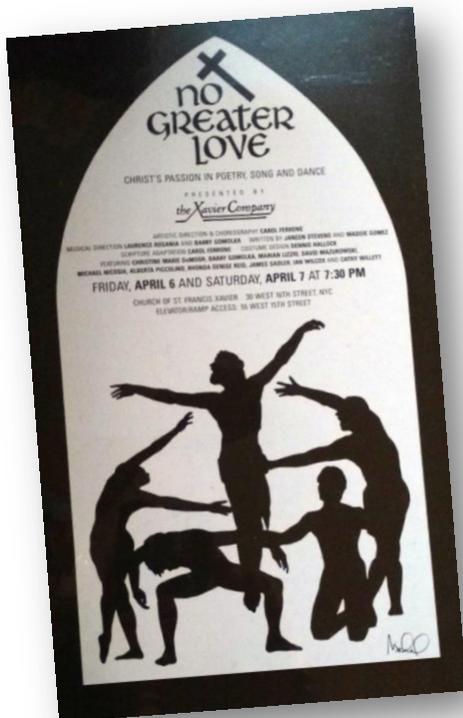
This series began as a way of getting to know our regional priests better and learn a bit about what they're up to. Guess the editor will jump in:

## FR. MICHAEL J. NICOSIA

Exploring and expressing my faith through the arts has always been part of my life. In college at Syracuse University, I was the Newman Center's "artist in residence," coordinating a team of classmates who hand-painted a new banner for the altar every week; I also was able to introduce the community to liturgical dance. The latter led to membership in several dance troupes after graduation: *Hosanna Sacred Dance* in Rochester NY and *JazzEast* in New York City. (Yep, that's me in the foreground, below. Proof I was young and nimble once.)



When I moved to NYC I sojourned with an Evangelical Full-Gospel Episcopal Church, serving as their Leader of Sung Worship. I also found *The Xavier Company*, a Christian performing arts company in Manhattan that toured the archdiocese every Lent with *No Greater Love*, a passion play told in poetry, song and dance. (I was Jesus for the last 4 of my 7 years with them.) The group also had a Charismatic healing ministry. The monthly healing Masses were so life-giving that I thought, maybe I could do this full-time, leading to my making simple vows with the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement. (During my Postulancy



year, I got special permission to do the passion play one last time... an exercise in humility, as I came back in the role of Judas!)

Well, as artists are stereotypically individualistic, though my charisms resonated with several other creative on-the-fringe friars the Order didn't think my vocation with them was the right fit. So I left to complete my Masters of Divinity at St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry back in Rochester.

I was hired as the Liturgy Coordinator for two parishes (I now qualify for a meager pension!) and was a member of the bishop's Liturgical Commission for two terms, serving on its Standing Committees on the Eucharist and on Art & Environment. I also worked as a freelance Liturgical Artist, Environment Coordinator and Ritual Consultant for a number of diocesan and national ministry conventions, transforming hotel ballrooms into worship spaces.

Before relocating to Denver, I became certified as a Christian Minister by the Federation of Christian Ministries and worked for 7 years as a Chaplain in an eldercare community; I also served for 12 years as Chaplain and Liturgical Advisor to Dignity-Integrity/Rochester,

a community of LGBTQ Roman Catholics and Episcopalians, their families and friends. It was in these lay ministries that I began composing my own liturgies and prayers. If you're interested in reviewing some of my early prophetic work, visit my website *STICKS & STONES / FLESH & BLOOD: Liturgical images and movements that speak to experience* at <https://mjnicosia.webs.com/>.

Most of my creative writing now is composing homilies, prefaces for Mass, and my regular social media posts.... oh, yah, and there's the newsletter editing.

I continue my music ministry as a freelance presider and performer through my original art and ritual company, *Spirit Songs*. My regular ministry includes a Sunday morning service in a local memory care community, planned around familiar hymns. Of course, I also jump at any chance I get to sing a few torch songs and Broadway show tunes in a Cabaret Show with friends.



My visual arts nowadays focus mostly on twitter graphics and fine art watercolors which I try to hock on my website <http://spirit-songs/square/site>. My color sense also comes in handy when my husband, Marc, is selecting fabrics for his quilts and Native American dance regalia. Promoting the arts with my colleagues in the Aurora Arts Guild, I've also taken on administration of their Facebook page @ArtGuildAurora.

# APPENDIX A

## Process to Call a Regional Bishop

### Introduction/Background

In the 2017/2018 time period, the lay and clergy leadership of the Rocky Mountain Region of the ECC decided that it would be to our own membership's benefit to formalize the existence of the Rocky Mountain Region by becoming a Colorado Non-profit Corporation; and to call a Regional Bishop to be a part of the structure and functioning of the Region. The possibility of this change was communicated to the five ECC communities of the Region in 2018 through a series of educational meetings. The membership of all five communities expressed valid concerns but also saw the benefit of better representation among the larger National ECC community. At the conclusion of those meetings all five communities voted "to support moving forward with the process to call a Regional Bishop in 2019." The communities were told that "nominations for or discussion of candidates is not permitted until the process is developed and affirmed."

This permission to move forward was seen as preparing all of the documentation and meeting Colorado State and ECC Constitutional requirements to form a non-profit corporation and to select a Bishop. A primary goal in this preparation work is to address as many of the concerns as possible. Leadership determined that the Communities' concerns could be addressed in three documents:

- A new Constitution for the region
- A Ministry Description for the Regional Bishop
- A Process to Call a Bishop

This document is that Process to Call a Bishop

### A Three Step Plan

The total process to call a Regional Bishop began in 2018 when the Regional Council started meeting with the communities to educate and identify concerns. This process will continue until a new Regional Bishop is called and consecrated, and until corporation papers are filed with the State of Colorado. Together with membership affirmation, the process can be viewed as having three distinct phases.

- Preparation
- Nomination
- Election

### Phase 1 Preparation

There are three groups of people from the local region involved in this preparation as well as the Office of the Presiding Bishop (OPB) serving in an advisory role. Those local groups are:

- The Regional Council, which acts in a project management role overseeing the two teams engaged in document writing,
- The Polity Team which is writing the Constitution for the region, and
- The Bishop Call Committee which is writing the Ministry Description and the Call process.

In addition, all three of these groups have responsibilities that become visible in later phases of this process. For example, The Call Committee is developing cover letters and forms that will be used during the nomination phase.

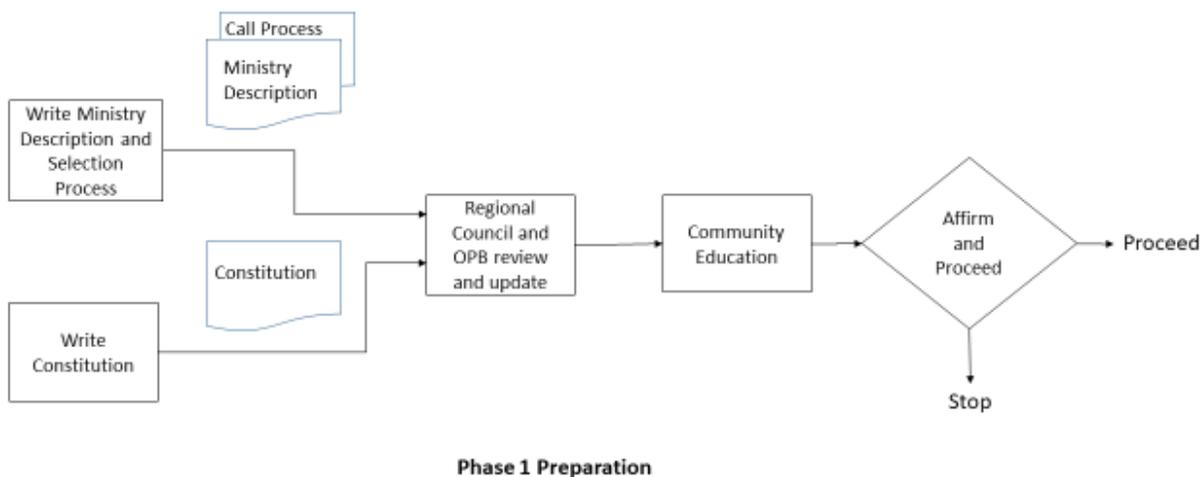
There are three primary goals that all three groups are trying to accomplish during this phase:

1. Address all of the concerns expressed by our five communities
2. Receive affirmation for the 3 documents from, at a minimum, four of our five communities

3. Ask the communities if we should call a bishop, which tells leadership to proceed with phases 2 and three of this process. Again, four of five communities must vote in the affirmative for leadership to proceed.

The three documents that need affirmation are dual purpose documents. For example, the Constitution is required for incorporation and it directly addresses the communities' concerns regarding responsibility and limits of authority of the bishop. However, one cannot find in one place in the Constitution that which addresses all concerns regarding authority. The constitution is written to serve as the region's primary governance document. This one document/multiple uses approach, necessitates information sharing and educational meetings to provide the opportunity for those individual members to ask exactly how their concerns have been addressed. Discussion is required between RMRC and Polity Team to determine if filing incorporation papers with state will be done at this time or after the election of the bishop.

A work flow diagram is shown below that illustrates how we get from starting our process to a point where all of the affirmations required to proceed are obtained.



As of January 2020, most of the writing is done and the updating from the OPB and Regional Council's review is in progress. The community education material is under development. Community involvement in the process will increase during February and March when leadership hopes to obtain affirmation to proceed to Phase 2.

During this education and affirmation time period, all of the documentation will be available to whomever wishes to read it. Each community will have one or more opportunities for education and discussion with the leadership people most familiar with the documentation and process.

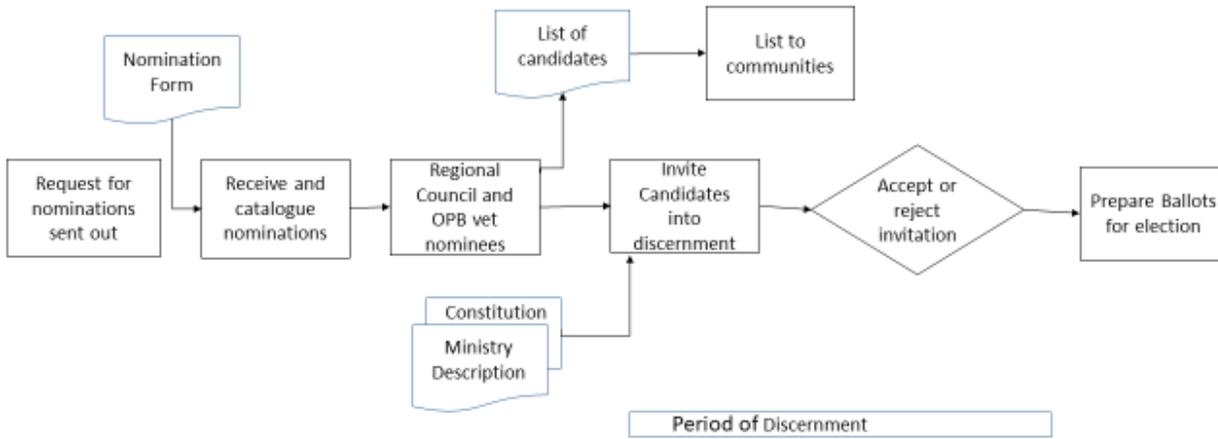
### Phase 2 Nomination

Every member from within the region is eligible and will be given the opportunity to nominate someone to become the Regional Bishop. Clergy from within the Region can nominate themselves if they have an interest in the job. OPB is also notified that we are seeking nominees in case there are candidates from outside the region that deserve consideration.

This phase begins with a broad based notification that the region is seeking nominees and ends with a list of fully vetted candidates who are willing to accept the ministry position. The primary goal of the Nomination Phase is to

identify a short list of highly qualified candidates who feel called and will stand for election. The work during this phase is guided by the Call Committee.

The work flow diagram shown below summarizes the activities during this time frame.



### Phase 2 Nomination

The bishop call letter details the procedure for a member or community to nominate a person(s). Nomination forms, qualifications, resume, references, letters of recommendation and other instructions for submitting a nominee are all included in a nomination packet to the nominee. The Call Committee receives the completed nomination forms, catalogues and reviews them to verify each meets the necessary qualifications as outlined in the Ministry Description and sends them on to the OPB for further vetting. Each nominee will receive a letter to inform them that they are invited to become a candidate in the upcoming election. If for some reason a nominee does not meet some of the vetting criteria, they will be notified of that also.

A period of discernment follows that invitation. The discernment benefits both candidates and the people in the community. One big part of discerning a call, in this case, is getting to know one another. This takes time. There is the possibility, and maybe a likelihood, that our best candidate for Regional Bishop is nearly unknown in one or more of our communities. During this time period, it is important that both the candidates and the communities be proactive in getting to know each other.

When the candidates are known to the region a period of communal discernment follows. This is a time for all to prayerfully and communally discern who has the charisms and calling to lead our Region.

### Phase 3 Election

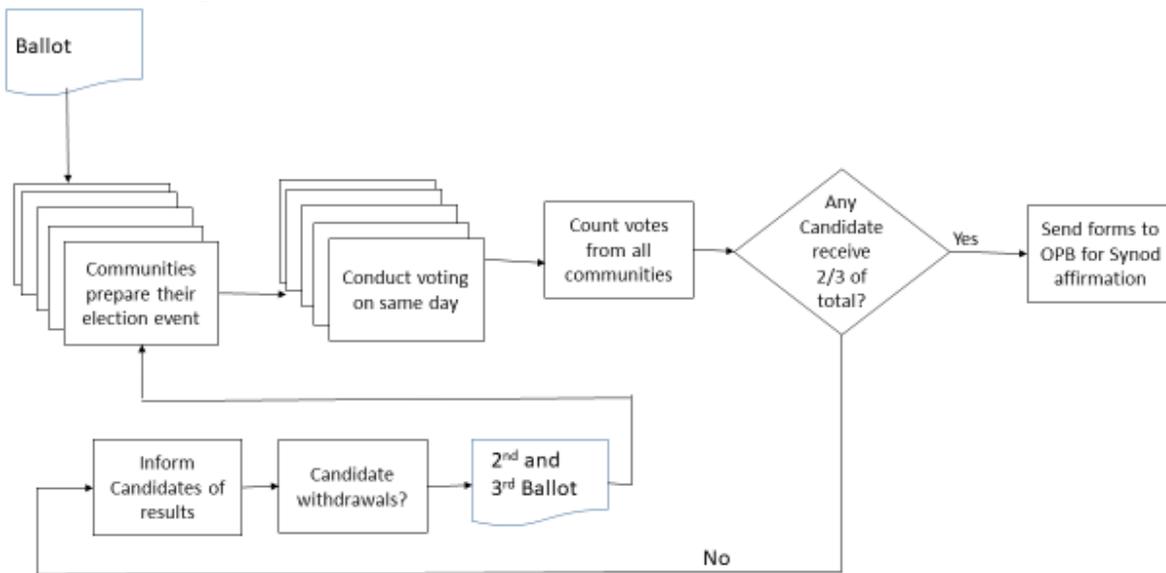
While the Call Committee in consultation with the Polity Team and the RMRC will have outlined the process of election, the actual management will be taken up by a Regional Election Committee. Two members of each regional community will be invited to serve on said Committee.

The election phase begins with logistical planning for the communities election event and ends with either our Bishop Elect being presented to the National Synod according to the ECC Constitution, or not being able to meet the criteria threshold and, therefore not naming a bishop at that time. This may be an iterative process depending on how the voting turns out. However, the goal is to select a Regional Bishop who is supported by all the communities of the region.

The criteria for selecting the Bishop Elect is that two thirds of the people casting a vote, voted for that candidate. There is only one voting pool for the entire region. That is, each community's individual vote count does not matter, nor does laity differ from clergy. Every vote is equally important across the entire region. If no candidate receives the required two thirds majority vote, there will be another round of voting.

The ballot for the first round has names listed in alphabetical order. If a second, or third ballot is required the names will be listed in descending order from votes received on the previous ballot. After each ballot, candidates will be informed of the percentage vote they received, and they may decide at that time to remove their name from the next ballot. If no candidate reaches the two thirds threshold by the time three ballots have been cast, the region may declare that we will not select a bishop at this time. That will start a one year delay until another attempt is made.

A work flow diagram for this phase is shown below.



**Phase 3 Election**

Communities will plan and conduct their own election events so long as it occurs on the same weekend as all other communities in the region.

When a candidate is selected, with two thirds of the vote, the OPB is notified and the affirmation process for the following synod is triggered. The Bishop elect is not consecrated until after affirmation at the ECC National Synod.

# APPENDIX B

## Bishop Ministry Description

### Rocky Mountain Region Ecumenical Catholic Communion

**Title** Bishop of the Rocky Mountain Region of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion

**Ministry Summary** The Bishop of the Rocky Mountain Region of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion (RMR-ECC/Region) will serve as the primary servant leader, shepherd, teacher and liturgical presider of the Region. The Bishop, who empowers the local Body of Christ, serves as guardian of Catholic faith and tradition. The Bishop is a visible sign of our unity in Christ Jesus and gives voice to our sacred communal call within the Region, the national ECC and secular society.

**Time Commitment** Anticipated average of 16 hours per week, with flexibility to adapt to the needs of the ministry

**Educational Requirement** Master of Divinity (M.Div.) or equivalent

**Elected Term of Office** Six years and not to exceed two consecutive terms

**Compensation** Nominal housing allowance and reimbursement of approved expenses

**Qualifications** The nominee will:

- a. Have a devoted prayer life.
- b. Agree with the ethos and canons of the ECC.
- c. Be an ECC priest in good standing, typically for a minimum of five years.
- d. Ordinarily, have at least five years of lay or ordained pastoral leadership, having demonstrated service as shepherd and teacher.
- e. Have demonstrated works of charity and advocacy so as to lead by example.
- f. Receive the blessing of their Parish Council/faith community.
- g. Enter into Holy Conversation with a team comprised of representatives of the laity, deacons and priests of the Region, to discern whether the nominee has the charisms and call to proceed. A bishop's perspective may also be helpful to the nominee.

**According to the changing priorities articulated by the Region and the charisms of the individual, the Bishop ministers in the following ways to provide spiritual/pastoral leadership:**

- I. Shepherd the Local Church
  - a. Be the primary spiritual leader and shepherd for the local Church.
  - b. Periodically visit each community.
  - c. Discern the movement of the Spirit with the laity and clergy of the Region and the larger ECC.
  - d. Provide teaching and guidance on matters of faith and ethics in keeping with the unifying central tenets of the ECC and the Holy Conversations within the Region.
  - e. Nurture regional identity among the communities.
  - f. Engage communities in days of prayer, planning, advisement, discernment, education, et al.
  - g. Engage in prayer and theological reflection that stimulates the creation of periodic pastoral letters.
  - h. Address issues of irregularities and problems as they arise while honoring subsidiarity.
  - i. Assist communities in moving toward consensus when requested.
  - j. Respond to matters of importance and urgency impacting the communities and/or Region.
  - k. Provide guidance and support in times of crisis.
  - l. Coordinate the evaluation and formation of new priest and deacon candidates brought forward and discerned in the communities of faith.
  - m. Coordinate the evaluation and reception of clergy from other denominations (incardination).
  - n. Commission individuals or teams as needed to assist with duties of the Office.

- II. Shepherd the Laity, Lay Ministers and Leaders, and Lay Professional Ministers
  - a. Be a spiritual leader and shepherd for the laity of the Region.
  - b. Be in relationship with and accountable to the laity of the Region.
  - c. Build relationships among the laity of the Region.
  - d. Take special care to build relationships with the youth of the Region.
  - e. Collaborate with and nurture laity in periodic days of prayer and education.
  
- III. Shepherd the Priests and Deacons
  - a. Be the primary spiritual leader and shepherd for the priests and deacons of the Region.
  - b. Be in relationship with and accountable to the priests and deacons of the Region.
  - c. Build relationships among the local priests and deacons of the Region.
  - d. Serve as Minister to the Ministers, Pastor to the Pastors, Servant to the Servants; someone from whom the priests and deacons may seek guidance, direction, solace and prayer.
  - e. Collaborate with and nurture priests and deacons in periodic days of prayer and education.
  
- IV. Nurture Sacramental and Liturgical Life
  - a. Foster and celebrate the sacramentality of the Word, the Eucharist and the Community.
  - b. Guide communities in liturgical worship, preserving our catholicity while honoring diversity of expression.
  - c. Uphold sacraments as a source of God’s grace, presence and action in the world.
  - d. Identify, foster, incorporate and celebrate the gifts, ministries and vocations of all in relationship with local communities.
  - e. Preside or co-preside at confirmations.
  - f. Ordain individuals called to the diaconate or priesthood.
  - g. Co-preside in the consecration of other bishops of the Communion.
  
- V. Facilitate Relationships among the Region’s Communities, with other ECC Regions/Dioceses, and with the ECC as a Whole
  - a. Foster relationships among the Region’s communities.
  - b. Serve as the Region’s voice on the Episcopal Council.
  - c. Participate in scheduled bishop/vicar conference calls and meetings.
  - d. Gather periodically with the Episcopal Council to discuss pastoral needs and plans of the Communion.
  - e. Collaborate with and shepherd the Regional Council and the Region’s ECC delegates.
  - f. For purposes of incorporation with the State of Colorado, serve as President of the Region.
  
- VI. Foster Increased Awareness and Visibility of the ECC
  - a. Create a more visible ECC presence, thus increasing awareness and opportunities for others to join our existing communities or establish new ECC communities in the Region.
  - b. Coordinate the process of receiving new faith communities into the Region.
  
- VII. Foster Relationships with other Communities
  - a. Be the local episcopal liaison of the ECC.
  - b. Represent the Region in ecumenical/interfaith services and initiatives (e.g., serve on the Judicatory Board of the Colorado Council of Churches).
  - c. Build collaborative relationships with leaders of other faith communities and secular associations.

# APPENDIX C

## CONSTITUTION Rocky Mountain Region of ECC

**Note – This draft Constitution was developed by the Polity Team, made up of representatives from each of the five communities of the Rocky Mountain Region. Subsequent to the initial draft, it has undergone review by the Bishop’s Call Committee, the Regional Council, and the Office of the Presiding Bishop. The text contained herein, is a near consensus view from all these participants. The purpose of this version, is to provide members of all five communities an opportunity to read, comment, and ask questions about how a new region, that includes a bishop, would govern itself. Should there be concerns about the contents, the opportunity to amend the document will be provided, so long as the near consensus status is maintained.**

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### Preamble<sup>1</sup>

We, as members of the Catholic Church of Jesus Christ, living and working in the Rocky Mountain region of the United States of America, responding in faith to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel and desiring to unite together as a Region of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion, to preach the gospel, celebrate the sacraments and carry out God’s mission, formally organized as an autonomous Region of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion, do hereby adopt this document and solemnly pledge ourselves to be governed by these provisions. We further recognize and accept the responsibility to be bound by the Constitution of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion; in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## I. Name

Formed as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the State of Colorado, the name of this corporation will be: Rocky Mountain Region of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion (herein referred to as the RMR-ECC, the RMR or the Regional Church). The address for the corporation is (fill this in after Bishop is named and office support determined; required for incorporation)

## II. Mission Statement / Being Church Together

We are people of God, baptized in Christ and professing our faith in a living Catholic tradition. We are people of faith, lay and ordained, joining together as a communion of communities in response to our baptismal call to preach the Gospel of liberation and justice; to offer a refuge in Christ for those who suffer prejudice; to stand open to dialogue with others so called and to conform our lives to the life and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>

The mission of the Communion and particularly the Regional Church (here identified as the Region, paralleling the term Diocese used in other regions) is an “incarnational” ministry of discipleship and evangelization. Within this context, our members recognize and celebrate the diversity of gifts the Spirit gives for the building up of the church and honor the roles of the orders of ministry within the church, and the dynamics of ecclesial interaction and relationships among them:<sup>3</sup>

- The Laity – the “People of God,” into which all are joined by Baptism, are called by God as the foundation membership of the church. The Laity are drawn to various ministering roles and their active participation is supported through the gifts of the Holy Spirit among which are wisdom, knowledge, understanding, stewardship, fortitude, counsel and leadership. The people are commissioned to the ministry of justice, peace, and compassion, and to each other through their various roles.
- The Bishop – the “attentive” or “watchful one” and the “bridge builder,” who safeguards the church’s unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity and gives voice to our sacred communal call.
- The Clergy
  - The Presbyters / Priests, who counsel, support, encourage, nurture and inspire the People through the ministry of Word and Sacrament; and who together with the Bishop constitute the Presbyteral Circle.
  - The Deacons who, out of an intimate relationship with their local community, interpret the world to the church, and share concretely in the Bishop’s prophetic and interpretive ministry.

### **III. Organization**

In order to understand the organization, it is helpful to first know the culture and structure of the Ecumenical Communion (ECC). The ECC is fundamentally a communion of independent Catholic communities. Each community is self-governed with their own constitution or by-laws. The communities have shared leadership where clergy and laity work together to pursue Christian missions.

#### **Section 1. Synodal Church**

The communities are joined together by shared beliefs, acceptance of the ECC constitution, and becoming part of the National ECC Synod. This means that each community sends delegates, both ordained and lay to participate in the governance of the whole church with the Regional Bishop. Lay, ordained, and consecrated see and treat each other as equals in governance. Each have assigned areas of responsibility, to proceed and act, while maintaining collaboration, community, and transparency. Responsibility is treated as how each group can best serve the other. These relationships of service are explained in more detail in Article VII. Decisions are made in collaboration and are largely consensus based. This sharing of leadership at all levels makes us a Synodal Church.

#### **Section 2. Rocky Mountain Region of the ECC**

The organization for this new corporation has three parts; the communities of the Rocky Mountain Region, a Regional Bishop, and a Regional Council (herein referred to as the Council). The polity set forth in this document applies to all three components of the Rocky Mountain Region.

The founding communities of this Region are:

- Church of the Beloved, Northglenn, Colorado;
- Church of the Holy Family, Aurora, Colorado;
- Light of Christ ECC, Longmont, Colorado;
- Mary of Magdala ECC, Fort Collins, Colorado;
- St. Paul Lutheran and Catholic Community of Faith, Denver, Colorado.

#### **Section 3. Member Churches in Good Standing**

The autonomous faith communities of the Rocky Mountain Region are those which:

- Are incorporated within their respective state and operate under their respective, viable Constitutions;
- Are self-sustaining and faithful to their fiscal responsibilities to the Region and the national ECC;
- Fully participate in the synodal governance of the Region and the national ECC; and
- Share in the communal life, mission and prayer of the Region and the national ECC.

Other faith communities within the geographic boundaries of the region that desire to join must:

- Commit to the above conditions;
- Meet all other existing requirements for ECC membership as described in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion;
- Apply through the Council.

#### **Section 4. Missions and other ministerial affiliates**

The work of the church in the world may take diverse form beyond the life and ministry of the traditional parish/church. The Spirit sometimes leads us to explore out-of-the-box models of church, liturgy and faith formation, bringing church to where the people are.

Certain defining characteristics should ordinarily be in place to safeguard any particular outreach's relationship with the Regional Church. Such requirements would include:

- Being in relationship with an existing ECC church.
- Having clergy and lay leadership.
- Maintaining clerical relationships with the local Presbyterium.
- Encouraging member participation in Regional gatherings.
- Said affiliates would have voice but no vote in Regional decision-making.

#### **Section 5. Ethical Code of Conduct**

The region will adopt an Ethical Code of Conduct modeled after one currently in use by the Church of the Beloved. This Code of Conduct applies to all who work within the region, both employee and volunteers.

## **IV. The Regional Bishop**

The Regional Bishop or Ordinary is the principal guardian and one who empowers the Body of Christ. With and among the people as their primary servant leader, shepherd, teacher, and ordinary liturgical presider, the Bishop is a visible sign of our unity and gives the Region a voice at the national ECC. The Bishop also serves as the regional leader of the ECC in our ecumenical, interfaith and secular relationships.

The Bishop is an employee at will of the Region. The Regional Council is empowered on behalf of the Region to act in the role of the employer. The Regional Bishop has no employment or management responsibility regarding the clergy or laity of the region.

#### **Section 1. How is the Bishop Called and Affirmed?**

##### **A. Duties of the Regional Council**

- Determines that a Bishop needs to be called and forms a Call Committee, comprised of lay and ordained members from each community of the Region.
- Reviews and approves process developed by the Call Committee and works to ensure a fully transparent and prayerful process.

- The Council and the Call Committee confer with the Office of the Presiding Bishop before the list of candidates is published, to promote full transparency.
- Meets with all candidates.
- Calls two members from each community to serve on the Regional Election Team
- Determines if any one candidate has received two thirds of total membership votes. If no one candidate as received at least two thirds of total membership votes, the Council may schedule another election where candidates are listed in descending order of votes received on the first ballot.
- Presents the Bishop-Elect for affirmation at the next ECC Synod. If said Synod is more than one year away, the alternate procedures for affirmation detailed in the ECC Constitution are followed.

#### **B. Duties of the Bishop Call Committee**

- Develops a draft Bishop Ministry Description utilizing information from appropriate sections in the Regional Constitution detailing the qualifications for and responsibilities of this ministry.
- Creates a cover letter detailing the nomination and election processes, including the process calendar and submits it to the Regional Council for approval.
- Following approval by the Regional Council, the Call Committee publishes the Cover Letter, Ministry Description, Nomination Form, and the process calendar. This information is sent to all Communities in the Region, opening the call for nominations.
- Receives nominations and notifies prospective candidates of the nomination as is received. Each prospective nominee is asked to pray about, discern, and formally accept or decline their nomination.
- Compiles the list of candidates and forwards it to the Regional Council.
- Works with the Regional Council to set the date for voting for the Bishop-Elect.
- Designs and creates the initial and all subsequent ballots and forwards draft to Regional Council for approval. Approved ballots are forwarded to the Regional Election Team.

#### **C. Duties of the Membership**

- Prayerfully consider who among us may have the qualifications, charisms and calling to fulfill this ministry of service for the Region.
- The candidates and members of the Region enter a period of communal discernment for a stated period of time, during which communities have opportunities to interview candidates.
- Each community determines who among those in the community is a member in good standing, eligible and/or invited, and encouraged to participate in voting for a bishop.
- To acknowledge the call to participate and serve on the Regional Election Team.
- All community eligible/invited members vote for the bishop at a time determined by the Regional Council.

- Each Community distributes ballots to eligible/invited voters according to Regional By-Laws (see detail below).
- All communities' cast ballots and official lists are forwarded on to the Regional Election Team.
- Regional Council determines if any one candidate has received two thirds of total membership votes. If no one candidate has received at least two thirds of the total membership vote, the Council shall instruct the Call Committee to revise the ballot for subsequent vote.

**Section 2. Confirmation** by the National ECC Synod is necessary for affirmation of the election of the candidate for episcopacy as prescribed in applicable canons of the ECC constitution.

**Section 3. Elected Term of Office** - Six years and not to exceed two consecutive terms. A Bishop may be re-elected after a period out of office of at least 2 years.

**Section 4: Filling an Episcopal Vacancy before the Bishop's term expires.** If the current Ordinary leaves office before their term expires, the Council carries on with the administration of the region. A new Bishop Call Committee is formed to begin a search and coordinate a new election. The Council in consultation with the Presiding Bishop determines a path forward to address the spiritual needs of the Region during this period of transition.

## **Section 5. Duties**

A detailed and current version of the Regional Bishop's duties is maintained on the Region's website. It can be found under the title of [Regional Bishop's Ministry Description](#). The duties listed below are a summary of the more detailed document.

### **A. Decision-Making:**

- The authority of the Regional Bishop is grounded in a relationship with the People of God in this place. Bishops, then, exercise spiritual authority within the Christian community, not juridical power over the members of the community.
- Honoring the principle of subsidiarity, the Bishop promotes decision-making on the least-centralized level to empower local communities.
- The Regional Bishop is the ultimate authority on matters pertaining to the responsibilities of the Episcopal Office, particularly with regard to our common faith and the moral, liturgical and sacramental life of the Regional Church. The exercise of this authority necessarily entails the education of those impacted, working toward broad understanding so that decisions are not being dictated.
- Collaborating with and having a voice on the Regional Council, the Bishop guides and coordinates the holy conversation, with consensus as the Council's goal.

### **B. Shepherding:**

- The Bishop knows and is known by the people, is aware of their needs and addresses their concerns. The Bishop also serves as an arbiter and bridge-builder to further our common identity and mission.
- Bishops exercise spiritual authority within the Christian community, not juridical power over its members.<sup>4</sup>
- The Bishop is a Pastor to the priests, deacons and lay leaders of the **Region**, celebrating their gifts, supporting them in their challenges, encouraging their continuing education and deepening faith, and empowering the People of God as they address the needs of the world.

**C. Relational:**

- The Bishop maintains unity of the Region with the national ECC, provides teaching and guidance on matters of faith and ethics in keeping the unifying central tenets of the ECC.
- The Bishop serves as the Region’s voice on the Episcopal Council of the ECC, that we might share our gifts and insights with the wider Church and learn from others.
- The Bishop develops collaborative relationships with other faith and civic leaders to increase the visibility of the ECC and better live into our ecumenical identity.

**Section 6. Compensation of the Bishop**

- Nominal housing allowance and reimbursement of approved expenses.
- The Bishop and Council negotiate future compensation and expenses.

**Section 7. Removal of Bishop.**<sup>5</sup> The ECC Presiding Bishop, or their representative, is a non-voting observer of these proceedings, to insure due process. The Regional Bishop may be dismissed for reasons determined valid by a three fourths vote of the Regional Council (minus the Bishop) while observing steps below to assure a fair process.

**A. Criteria / reconciliation**

- In the event of serious impropriety by the Regional Bishop, the Council by three fourths vote (minus the Bishop) may suspend the Regional Bishop’s duties pending investigation. The length and terms of the suspension is at the Council’s discretion.
- In the event of a serious conflict of governance or spirituality between the Regional Bishop and the Council, the Council meets with the Regional Bishop at least twice, at least one week apart, to seek reconciliation.
- If appropriate to the circumstances, the Council and/or the Bishop will seek mediation.

In the event that all attempts at reconciliation have failed, the following procedure will be followed.

**B. Procedures for removing a Regional Bishop**

- The Regional Council reports to the membership of the Region relevant and appropriate information about the removal and the efforts made toward reconciliation.
- In the event that the Regional Council has not utilized mediation by a representative of the ECC Presiding Bishop, and the Regional Bishop chooses to contest termination, they may choose to ask the Presiding Bishop to review the termination.
- Removal or termination must be reported to the Office of the Presiding Bishop of the ECC.
- A three-fourths vote of the Regional Council (minus the Bishop) in favor of terminating the Regional Bishop's employment is required. At least two council members will be selected by the Regional Council to negotiate the terms of separation with the Regional Bishop. The final terms of separation must also be approved by a three-fourths vote (minus the Bishop) of the Regional Council.
- In the event that the Regional Bishop wishes, for their own reasons, to leave the Region or step down from their position, the Bishop and the Regional Council then determines a process for a good and blessed separation of the Regional Bishop from their responsibilities. Allowance may be made for the former Bishop to continue participation as a member of an individual community.

## V. The Regional Council

The Regional Council has been active in the region since 2008. The Regional Council is composed of one ordained and one lay delegate from each member community. Where this is not practicable, lay delegates may serve as ordained delegates as needed for community representation. Each community determines their own procedure for how their delegates are selected. The Regional Bishop once called to service, becomes an ex-officio, voting member of the Council.

**Section 1. Description of the Council:** The Council is a body of discerners and decision-makers who, in many cases, may be implementers of their own decisions, i.e., a working council. In addition, the Council is a collegial, consensus-building body, wherein its collegiality is derived from our Baptismal call and the bonds of affirmational love within the Body of Christ. Council members are not compensated due to their membership on the Council.

**Section 2. Purpose:** The purpose of the Council is to serve the relational, social, and organizational needs of the people of the Region, in collaboration with the Regional Bishop. Its representative authority to serve derives from the Spirit present in the Region's faith communities and the communities' delegation to act on their behalf. The Council is accountable both to the faith communities whom it represents in Regional, fiscal, and administrative matters, and to the ECC Constitution and By-laws.

**Section 3. Affirmations:** The Council attests that its responsibility to serve derives from these beliefs:

- The Baptismal call to serve arises from the Gospel example of Christ;

- All good authority in the ECC manifests itself in service to the People of God;
- Discerning the will of the Holy Spirit is more likely when the collective voices of the group are heard rather than any single voice; therefore, Regional ECC members are always welcome to attend and participate in meetings as guests.

**Section 4. Functions** of the Council shall include the following:

- Defining policies and developing procedures for the efficient operation of the Region as representatives of their respective communities;
- Identifying and securing human resources from the Region's communities to support the activities of the Region;
- Engaging possible new communities interested in learning more about the ECC;
- Initiating and facilitating the work associated with calling forth a Bishop when appropriate;
- Promoting ecumenical relationships within the Region;
- Facilitating relationships among the Regional member communities, such as retreat opportunities, social outreach, and educational events;
- Sustaining ongoing communications by all available means;
- Fostering relationships with other ECC communities outside the Region;
- Administering special projects related to growth, including hiring employees, writing job descriptions, reviewing performance, and obtaining funding;
- Receiving and processing formal requests for constitutional amendments;
- Suggesting a standard tithing percentage as an expectation from each of its constituent communities. These regional responsibilities are in addition to the tithe to the Office of the Presiding Bishop.
- Wisely distributing contributions from member communities<sup>2</sup> for the Bishop's compensation and other expenses on the business side of the RM Region such as periodic Region-wide gatherings, continuing education / retreat opportunities, resources for conflict resolution, reimbursement for accounting services, etc.

**Section 5. Officers:** For the purpose of conducting its business, the Regional Council selects a Chair, a Secretary and a Treasurer / Budget Officer whose duties and period of service are determined by the Council. The Council may appoint other officers or committees, as needed. The Regional Bishop is the official representative of the Rocky Mountain Region of the ECC, and as such shall function as the President of the Corporation as recognized by the State.

**Section 6. Composition and Terms of Service:** The Council is comprised of people of faith from within the Region who are committed to the ECC. Each faith community in the Region selects two members, where practicable, one lay person and one member of the clergy. In addition, the Regional Bishop also serves on the Council.

Lay members hold two-year terms. Terms are staggered so that a majority of the lay council members are not rotated out of office in the same year. In the event of unanticipated

departures from the Council, the respective faith community selects a replacement to serve for the duration of the term.

**Section 7. Call and Discernment of Members:** As terms expire, each community invites members who are interested in serving the Region. These prospective members accept the call to fulfill the purpose and the function of the Council, in the spirit of the affirmations. If there is more than one prospective member, it is the responsibility of each faith community to discern and select their own Regional Council member.

**Section 8. Decision Process:** The goal for all decisions made by the Council is to form consensus. This requires open discussion, willingness to compromise, and prayerful consideration of fellow members' points of view. If a decision is necessary, but consensus is not reached at a first or second attempt, the Council chooses a course of action from the following:<sup>6</sup>

- Table discussion of the issue for a set period of time, two weeks or one month, so that members can consult with members of their community, pray, and have off line discussions with other Council members. Then, when the time period has elapsed, make another attempt at forming consensus.
- Table the discussion indefinitely and see if the issue persists, grows or diminishes.
- Determine that consensus cannot be reached and vote on the issue.

**A. Voting:** When voting is chosen, a two thirds majority is required. Each member and the Bishop have one vote. For the vote to be valid, a quorum is required. A quorum is two thirds of the total membership from communities in good standing and able to staff their participation on the Council, and must include the Bishop.

**B. Subsequent Actions:** It is important for all parties to recognize that one of the most important duties of leaders is to promote and maintain unity within the region. If the Council and/or the Bishop find that an impasse to their moving toward consensus threatens to disrupt the unity of the region, the following options may be followed:

- The Bishop or two thirds of the Regional Council may call a Regional Synod to discern, through the Spirit, the *sensus fidelium*, the sense of the faithful.
- If the issue at hand involves the faith, moral, liturgical and sacramental life of the Regional Church, the Bishop and/or the Council may request the ECC Episcopal Council serve as a Court of Review for the matter.

## VI. Regional Gatherings / Synods

The ultimate authority in the Regional Church is the Spirit moving among the people. Purposeful gatherings of the Regional Church for Holy Conversation may be called by the Bishop and/or the Council. All the membership is encouraged to participate.

**Section 1.** Gatherings may consist of, but are not limited to, regional liturgies, seminars, retreats, holy conversations and formal meetings of the Regional Church. Such gatherings are supported by the Regional Council and Bishop.

**Section 2. Preparing for Synod:** The Regional Council, by a two-thirds vote, and/or the Bishop may call a Regional Synod to discern the *sensus fidelium, sense of the faithful*, on important issues as needed for the direction of the Regional Church and for the purpose of regional decision-making in which an actual vote by community delegates is required. The Office of the Bishop chairs the assembly. The Bishop may act as the Synod Chair or may appoint a person, or persons, to perform as Synod Chair to conduct Synod business and to chair all or part of the assembly.

- Communities discern and discuss the agenda in advance and communicate their views to their delegates so that they may make an informed vote on their behalf.
- Regional Synods meet as one assembly. Such assembly is constituted of House of Laity and House of Pastor voting delegates.
- The number of voting delegates is proportional to the membership of the respective communities.
- When a Regional Synod is called, the Regional Council determines how many delegates in addition to one lay representative and one pastoral representative is called from each community.
- Missions and other ministerial affiliates may send representatives to Synod as determined by the Council but have no vote in Regional decision-making.

**Section 3. Decision Making Process:** steeped in prayer, held in prayer - begin, journey through and end in prayer.

- Many issues are resolved in a spirit of consensus and may be determined by voice vote. However, the chair or other voting member may call for a count, a division, show of hands.
- Approval by a two-thirds majority of both the HOL and HOP voting members at Synod are required for any matter that requires a vote, including Constitutional Amendments.

## VII. Relationships of Service

The relationships within a Synodal Church are relationships of service. It is much more democratic than hierarchical church models. The laity, clergy, and bishops define their roles as how they provide service to one another. They recognize and respect differences in roles between lay and ordained but treat each other as equals in the eyes of God. The attitude in a Synodal Church is that leaders are to serve the whole church, not to exercise authority over them.

**Section 1. Bishop’s Service to Communities and Council:** The Regional Bishop is keeper of the faith to all the communities in the Region. The Bishop serves all the communities of the Region in many ways, among them the following:

- Being the primary servant leader and shepherd of the Regional Church. Fostering and celebrating the sacramentality of the Word, the Eucharist, and the community.
- Preside or co-preside at confections and ordain individuals called to the priesthood or diaconate.
- Leading collaborative testing of new movements and understanding of the Spirit.
- Providing teaching and guidance while preserving the faith and guarding against heresy.
- Being a pastor to all pastoral leaders, lay and ordained, of the Region.
- Being counselor and mentor to candidates for ordination.
- Being the voice of our Region on the ECC Episcopal Council.
- Representing all of our communities to other religious organizations within our Region.

The bishop provides additional services to the Regional Council as follows:

- Provides theological and sacramental leadership
- Assists in setting agendas and priorities for the Regional work

**Section 2. Council’s Service to Bishop and Communities:** The Council is the Bishop’s employer, and provides services to the Bishop in the following ways:

- Provides the human resource necessary to implement much of the Region’s work.
- Provides context and detail to the Bishop for issues within each community.

The Council provides services to the communities in the following ways:

- Makes decisions on behalf of the communities they represent
- Provides communications about Regional events and issues.
- Identifies and provides educational needs for the communities.
- Provides leadership for coordinated Regional initiatives, such as calling a Bishop.
- Organizes regional gatherings to promote unity and mission.
- Coordinates initial gatherings of the Region’s national delegates in preparation for ECC Synods.

**Section 3. Communities Service to Bishop and Council:** The communities serve both the Bishop and the Council primarily with resources. These include:

- Human resources to fill committees and councils.
- Financial resources to fund the Council’s initiatives and the Bishop’s compensation.
- Prayer, primarily for the leadership of the ECC and the whole church throughout the world.
- Members of faith communities acknowledge and embrace serving within their own faith community as their primary obligation, along with serving those in the larger communities in which we live.

**Section 4. Communities' Service to the Bishop's Home Church:** In the event that the Regional Bishop also serves one of the Regional Churches as pastor, the other communities will support said church with resources (e.g., substitute presiders' stipends) and in other ways to share their sacrifice and enable their mission.

This is what God Commands of us: to serve one another.

## VIII. Organization and Corporate Records<sup>6</sup>

**Section 1. Organization:** The RM Region and its communities are organized exclusively for religious and charitable purposes. No part of the net earnings of the Region will benefit or be distributed to its members, to members of its constituent faith communities or other private persons, except that the Region shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth above.

No substantial part of the activities of the Region will be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. It will not participate or intervene in, or contribute money to, any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office, including the publishing or distribution of statements. As the religious leader of the RM Region, the Regional Bishop shall not make public statements, or publicly participate in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. Nothing here shall prohibit the Regional Bishop from doing so privately, or from any clergy or member of the Regional Council from doing so in their own name, while announcing that their opinion or action does not reflect the position of the RM Region. Notwithstanding any other provision of these Articles, the Region will not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any power that are not in furtherance of the purpose of this Region.

**Section 2. Board of Directors:** The Council acts as the Board of Directors of the corporation for legal purposes. No member of the Board of Directors, (i.e. the Council) or any officer will be personally liable for the debts, liabilities or other obligations of the Region if the member or officer conducted themselves in good faith, and they reasonably believed that their conduct was in the Region's best interest and not a violation of the Region's Conflict of Interest Policy; and in the case of any criminal proceeding, the member or officer had no reason to believe their conduct was unlawful.

**Section 3. Maintenance of corporate records:** The Corporation will keep at its principal office and make available to members of its constituent faith communities at all reasonable times during office hours:

- Minutes of all meetings of the Council.
- Adequate and correct books and records of account, including accounts of its properties and business transactions and accounts of its assets, liabilities, receipts, disbursements, gains and losses.

- A copy of the Corporation’s Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and Bylaws as amended to date.

**Section 4. Accounting** of all funds should reflect standard business practice in accordance with federal and state laws. All contributions and expenditures should be recorded in a timely fashion, and the treasurer should publish a summary of its activities on a regular basis as determined by the Regional Council.

**Section 5. Signature Authorities:** At a minimum the following have signature authority on the Region’s banking accounts. One signature only is required for budgeted expenditures. Two signatures are required for unbudgeted expenditures exceeding an amount specified by Council.

- Council treasurer;
- Two other Council members named by the Council

**Section 6. Reports required by Law:** The Regional Council will cause any annual or periodic report required under law to be prepared and delivered within the time limits set by law.

**Section 7. Conflict of Interest Policy:** The Organization shall adopt a Conflict of Interest Policy to protect the Organization when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of the Bishop or a member of the Council.

## IX. Region Property<sup>7</sup>

**Section 1.** The Region shall not hold title to lands, real estate, or any other property of the member parishes of the Region.

**Section 2.** The Bishop, shall not purchase, lease, encumber, alienate, or convey any lands or real estate without the consent of the Regional Council.

**Section 3.** In the event of the dissolution of the Diocese, assets will be divided among the communities of the region who have 501 (c) (3) status.

## X. Adoption of this Constitution

**Section 1. Holy Conversations.** The ratification process for this Constitution is being accomplished through holy conversations that occur over an extended period of time. Conversations include prayer, education, discussion and celebration. Most of the preliminary work was completed by the two ad hoc teams, to prepare documents to stimulate and sustain the holy conversation. All parties with a vested interest in this process have various opportunities to contribute to the conversation.

**Section 2.** Parties included in the conversation are:

- Laity and clergy of the Rocky Mountain Region communities;
- The Regional Council;
- The Regional Vicar;
- Two temporary ad hoc committees known as the Bishop Call Team Committee and the Polity Team;
- The Office of Presiding Bishop;
- The Regional Bishop-Elect.

**Section 3. Ratification and Adoption.** The Constitution shall become effective and be considered adopted when ratified by a two-thirds majority vote taken of community members - laity and clergy - within the four of the Region's five communities. Such votes within a community may be taken through private ballot or counted show of hands. The timeline and administration of the process will be determined by the Council.

## **XI. Amendments to the Constitution**

Over time, the Constitution will need amending, a very deliberate process that must be conducted with a high degree of transparency. An amendment can be initiated by any individual community member, a community, the Regional Council or the office of the Regional Bishop. The Regional Council is responsible for administering the amendment process. There are three distinct phases to implementing a Constitutional change.

- Initiation
- Deliberation and Determination
- Affirmation

**Section 1. Initiation** The initiation step includes all of the work required to get an amendment ready to present to the Regional Council. The Proposal for Change must include, in writing, the following criteria.

- The names of the organization(s) requesting the amendment;
- A goal or reason for the amendment;
- A statement assessing the urgency of making this amendment;
- A marked-up version of the existing Constitution showing words, paragraphs, or articles to be removed and/or added.

**Section 2. Deliberation and Determination** When the Council receives the proposal, they enter into a discussion and deliberation period. Council members may need to discuss the proposal with their community leadership. The Council determines if the proposal should be accepted, rejected, or modified. If the work of modification is substantial, Council may delegate the work to a committee. If the proposal is rejected by the Council, the submitter has the option of bringing it to the next Regional synod.

**Section 3. Affirmation** Major changes to substance or meaning demand a process whereby every community affirms or rejects the change to the Constitution.

- Amendments may be ratified by a two-thirds majority vote taken of community members - laity and clergy – within the Region. Such votes within a community may be taken through private ballot or counted show of hands. The timeline and administration of the process will be determined by the Council.
- It is also possible that the affirmation take place at a Regional Synod. Approval by a two-thirds majority of both the HOL and HOP at Synod is be required for a Constitutional Amendment.

Footnotes and endnotes will be deleted upon ratification and adoption of the constitution. They are included for now as part of the process.

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<sup>1</sup> The preamble is a modification of Light of Christ by-laws, which, in turn, were heavily influenced by St Francis and Claire’s constitution.

<sup>2</sup> *Constitution of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion*

<sup>3</sup> Orders of ministry from Bishop Rafe’s draft document, *Guidelines for the Ordination of Bishops*.

<sup>4</sup> Bishop Rafe’s *Recovering and Revisioning the Office of Bishop*

<sup>5</sup> The procedures here for removal of the Regional Bishop are modeled after similar procedures developed by Light of Christ for removal of a Pastor.

<sup>6</sup> Jack Wolfe, *Talking Points Outline of Possible Rocky Mountain Region Constitution*

<sup>7</sup> *Constitution and Canons of the Ecumenical Catholic Diocese of Mid-America*