



Constitution & Code of Canons



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Constitution

Preamble

The Convergent Christian Communion is a place of convergence for the Christian Church with Jesus Christ as its head. Our Communion looks to the Word of God in Jesus Christ, the Scriptures as the witness to the Word, as well as the Sacraments and gifts of the Spirit as the foundation of our Christian faith. Our founding vision is to make visible the Kingdom of God to the nations of the world; to bring the rich sacramental life of the early church to evangelicals and charismatics; to carry the power of Pentecost to the family of God in the historic churches; and finally, to provide a home for all Christians who seek a place where Christian traditions meet to form a cohesive expression of a Church that is Affirming, Sacramental, Evangelical, and Charismatic.

Article 1 - Name and Jurisdiction

The name of this Christian Communion shall be THE CONVERGENT CHRISTIAN COMMUNION, often referred to as the CONVERGENT CATHOLIC COMMUNION (hereinafter referred to, in the following Articles, as 'Communion'). As a member of the universal Church established by Jesus Christ, this Communion has jurisdiction wherever individuals or communities of faith are established that are affiliated with this Communion.

Article 2 - Organizational Purpose and Limitations

The organizational purposes of the Communion are:

1. To bring honor to God and promote the advancement of the Kingdom of God. The Communion shall seek to attain its purpose by promoting public worship of God, preaching and teaching of the Holy Scripture, Christ like living by its members, mutual love and nurture, personal evangelism, missionary endeavor and cooperation with others having this same purpose.
2. To operate exclusively for religious, charitable and educational purposes within the classification of legal charities; and no part of the net earnings of the Communion shall inure to the benefit of any individual; and no part of the activities of the organization, or any receipt of its funds, shall be utilized for any other purpose except those purposes mentioned above.
3. To handle affairs pertaining to property and other temporal matters as required by the civil authorities.



Article 3 - Incorporation and Principles of Organization

This Communion shall be organized as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the State of Arizona. Recognizing that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church, the Communion shall establish a General Council which has the authority and responsibility to organize, guide and direct all Communion activities. This authority shall be in accordance with the witness of Holy Scripture and as prescribed in the Constitution and Canons for this Communion.

Article 4 - Governance

The government of this Communion shall be vested in our Para Church Ministries and Worship Communities through their lay delegates and duly qualified clergy, gathered at General Assembly.

Between meetings of the General Assembly, the administrative authority of the Communion shall reside in the Bishops Council and the General Council. The membership of the Bishops Council shall be all Bishops in good standing with our Communion. The membership of the General Council shall, at minimum, consist of the Presiding Bishop, the Moderator and a Secretary/Treasurer (the offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be separated upon approval of the General Council). All members of the General Council are elected as per the protocols outlined in Canons of our Communion.

Article 5 - Statement of Faith & Sacraments

Christianity is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is proclaimed as Savior by the Christian Church. This Communion is founded in the interest of offering a home to all who confess and believe.

Our faith is rooted in the ancient Creeds of the Church (Nicene & Apostles) and is expressed in the Phoenix Affirmations.

5.1 The Creeds

With Christians, everywhere, we affirm our faith as summarized in the two historic creeds: The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.

5.1.1.1 The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We



believe in one holy catholic* and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

5.1.1.2 The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic and apostolic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

5.2 The Phoenix Affirmations

The public face of Christianity in America today bears little connection to the historic faith of our ancestors. It represents even less our own faith as Christians who continue to celebrate the gifts of our Creator, revealed and embodied in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Heartened by our experience of the transforming presence of Christ's Holy Spirit in our world, we find ourselves in a time and place where we will be no longer silent. We hereby mark an end to our silence by making the following affirmations:

As people who are joyfully and unapologetically Christian, we pledge ourselves completely to the way of Love. We work to express our love, as Jesus teaches us, in three ways: by loving God, neighbor, and self. Matt 22:34-40 // Mk 12:28-31 // Lk 10:25-28; Cf. Deut 6:5; Lev. 19:18

Christian Love for God Includes:

1. Walking fully in the Path of Jesus without denying the legitimacy of other paths that God may provide for humanity.
2. Listening for God's Word, which comes through daily prayer and meditation, studying the ancient testimonies which we call Scripture, and attending to God's present activity in the world.
3. Celebrating the God whose Spirit pervades and whose glory is reflected in all of God's Creation, including the earth and its ecosystems, the sacred and secular, the Christian and non-Christian, the human and non-human.
4. Expressing our love in worship that is as sincere, vibrant, and artful as it is scriptural.

Christian Love for Neighbor Includes:

5. Engaging people authentically, as Jesus did, treating all as creations made in God's very image, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental ability, nationality, or economic class.
6. Standing, as Jesus does, with the outcast and oppressed, the denigrated and afflicted, seeking peace and justice with or without the support of others.
7. Preserving religious freedom and the church's ability to speak prophetically to government by resisting the commingling of church and state.



8. Walking humbly with God, acknowledging our own shortcomings while honestly seeking to understand and call forth the best in others, including those who consider us their enemies.

Christian Love for Self Includes:

9. Basing our lives on the faith that in Christ all things are made new and that we, and all people, are loved beyond our wildest imaginations—for eternity.
10. Claiming the sacredness of both our minds and our hearts, and recognizing that faith and science, doubt and belief serve the pursuit of truth.
11. Caring for our bodies and insisting on taking time to enjoy the benefits of prayer, reflection, worship, and recreation in addition to work.
12. Acting on the faith that we are born with a meaning and purpose, a vocation and ministry that serve to strengthen and extend God's realm of love.

5.3 Sacraments/Holy Mysteries

The Sacraments/Holy Mysteries are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual Grace, given by Christ to the Church. They are not restricted to any individual or group, by gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital state, or other socio-economic or demographic label.

5.3.1 Baptism

Baptism by water and the Spirit, as recorded in the Scriptures, shall be a sign of the dedication of each life to God and God's service. Through the words and acts of this sacrament, the recipient is identified as God's own child.

5.3.2 Holy Communion

Holy Communion is the partaking of blessed bread and fruit of the vine in accordance with the words of Jesus, "This is my body...this is my blood" (Matthew 138 26:26-28). All who believe, confess and repent and seek God's love through Christ, after examining their consciences, may freely participate in the communal meal, signifying their desire to be received into relationship with God in Jesus Christ and to commit their lives anew to the service of God in Jesus Christ.

5.3.3 Ordination

Ordination is the setting apart of duly qualified persons for the professional, vocational ministry of this Church. It is evidenced by the laying on of hands by authorized ordained clergy, pursuant to the canons of this Communion.

5.3.4 Confirmation/Chrismation

Confirmation/Chrismation in the Church shall be conducted by a member of clergy before the congregation at any regular worship service. Each local faith community may determine the instruction process needed for membership, with guidance from a bishop.

5.3.5 Holy Union or Holy Matrimony

Holy Union or Holy Matrimony is the spiritual joining of two persons in a manner fitting and proper by a duly authorized member Clergy. After both persons have been counseled and apprised of their responsibilities one toward the other, this rite of conferring God's blessing may be performed.



5.3.6 Anointing of the Sick

Anointing of the Sick or prayer for healing of the sick in mind, body or spirit is to be conducted upon request by the minister of the Church at their direction.

5.3.7 Confession and Absolution

The Rite of Confession and Absolution, sometimes called Reconciliation, is available for all who desire it. It is not restricted to time of sickness. Confessions may be made at any time and in any suitable place. The absolution is restoration to full fellowship: the minister declares the forgiveness which Christ has invested in his Church.

Article 6 - Structure

While this Communion was founded in the United States of America, it is recognized that we have the ability to bring the gospel to many places globally. All churches in the Communion are considered international churches.

It is recognized that as this Communion grows there will be a need for continued development of a geographic structure that will connect churches for ministry and fellowship. Geographic structures will be organized by the Bishops Council in consultation with the General Council.

Article 7 - Finances

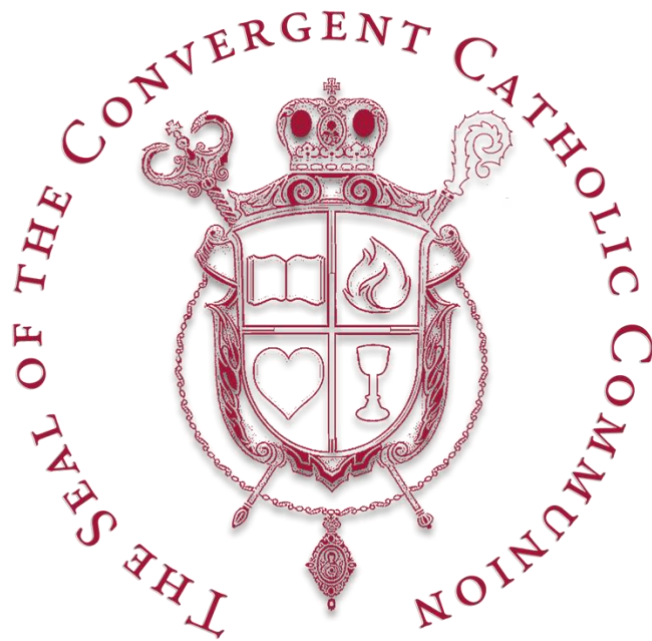
This Communion exists in order that the message and ministry of Jesus Christ to all people may be enacted through its local churches. Therefore, the monies received at the Communion level will be used to establish and grow local faith communities, resource existing communities to promote the gospel of Jesus Christ and do the work of ministry, and to support the work of the Communion.

Article 8 - Amendments

The Constitution of this Communion may be amended at a meeting of the General Assembly, if the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing for inspection by the Bishops Council and the General Council. Copies of the proposed amendment(s) must be distributed to each member at least 60 days prior to the meeting of the General Assembly. Proposed amendments to this Constitution must receive a two-thirds majority in 2 consecutive sessions of the General Assembly to be passed.

The correction of typographical and grammatical errors and the clarification of ambiguous passages in this Constitution and Code of Canons may be corrected at any time by the General Council and shall not be considered substantive amendment or revision as long as the meaning and intent are not altered by the correction.

The Bishops Council, with consent from the General Council may amend the Code of Canons with a 2/3 majority vote.



Code of Canons

Canon 1 - Order, Governance, Discipline, Identity & Polity

The order and governance of, and discipline within the Convergent Catholic Communion shall be vested in the General Assembly, the Bishops Council and the General Council. The distribution of the authority for the order and governance of, and discipline within, the Communion shall be as follows:

1. The Fundamental agencies of mission in the Convergent Catholic Communion are Communities, Parachurch Ministries, Orders and Societies.
2. The Pastoral Authority of the Communion will be vested in the Bishops Council.
3. Ordained ministry in the Communion shall be exercised by Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons.
4. The legislative and non-pastoral executive authority of the Communion shall be vested in the General Assembly, and in the time between meetings of the General Assemblies, by the General Council.
5. The judicial authority of the Communion shall be vested in the Judicial Council
6. Each Connexion may establish and maintain its own governance not inconsistent with the provisions of the Communion Constitution and Canons.
7. Each affiliated Community, Parachurch Ministry, Religious Order or Religious Society may establish and maintain its own governance not inconsistent with the provisions of the Communion Constitution and Canons.
8. The Communion may possess its own property and any such property shall be free of any claim of trust or ownership by the any other ecclesiastical entity. Communities, Parachurch Ministries, Orders and Societies of the Communion shall enjoy these same rights and privileges.

Canon 1.1 Convergent Catholic Identity

Founded out of fervent love for Christ and his Church, this Communion is a member of the Church catholic and as such our members commonly identify as Convergent Catholics. This Catholic identity is made evident in our embrace of the Historic Succession of Bishops (commonly known as Apostolic Succession), the holy mysteries/sacraments of the Church, and historical patterns of church worship and governance. It is therefore appropriate that this Communion be identified as the Convergent Catholic Communion on all publications and media.

Canon 1.2 Connexional Polity

The Convergent Catholic Communion organizes itself within a Connexional System. According to Connexionalism, the church is defined not by formal structures or doctrine or lines of authority. It's defined by connections between people: connections between cleric and cleric, between cleric and laity, and between laity and laity. These connections are the essence of the church; that is a diverse body connected together in purpose and mission.



Canon 1.2.2 Connexional Polity: Connexions

This connectedness may inspire members to organize themselves as Connexions, that is a grouping of members organized around a certain charism or expression. These Connexions may, with approval from the Bishops and General Council (or simply the General Assembly), call their own Bishops and Leaders. They may create formation paths and programs, craft their own governing documents, and plant or sponsor new Communities, Parachurch Ministries, Orders and Societies.

The governance of these Connexions would mirror the governance of our Communion in that those chosen to lead are elected to their role.

Canon 1.2.3 Connexional Polity: The Role of the Bishop

The role of the Bishop is not minimized or cast aside in our Connexional Model; instead the Bishop takes their proper place as first among equals. This is to say this model fully rejects the concept of the imperial episcopacy including the view that Bishops are princes of the church.

In this model Bishops are not the final authority, even in Council, the Bishops remains accountable to the Connexion, to the General Council and the General Assembly.



Canon 2 - Orders

2.1 The Universal Priesthood

We affirm the universal priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:5-10). All members of the Church Universal are called by God to a personal ministry of the Gospel of Christ in the Church and in the world. All persons are deemed ministers by their active participation in sharing Christ's Good News.

The Convergent Catholic Communion hereby proclaims that all people shall have equality of access and opportunity which is free from discrimination on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, race, age, physical challenge, health status, gender identification, nationality, or economic status.

This Communion affirms the belief that valid Ordination involves the laying on of hands by a Bishop, consecrated within Apostolic Succession.

2.2 The Clerical Orders

The ordained ministry is called chiefly to equip and lead the church which is the royal and priestly company, to administer the sacraments of the church, to proclaim the good news of salvation to all peoples, and to offer to God the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving through the stewardship of time, energy, finances, and spiritual gifts

The Clerical Orders of this Communion shall be: The Episcopacy, The Presbytery and The Diaconate.

2.2.1 The Episcopacy (The Order of Bishops)

A Bishop is called by God and the Church to be a shepherd who feeds the flock entrusted their care. A Bishop is an overseer of the flock and as such is called to propagate, to teach, and to uphold and defend the faith and order of the Church willingly and as God leads – not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording over those entrusted to their care but being a wholesome example to the entire flock of Christ (1 Peter 5:2-3). These requirements are in addition to the requirements set forth for Deacon and for Presbyter. Bishops are consecrated for the whole Church and are successors of the Apostles through the grace of the Holy Spirit given to them. They are chief missionaries and chief pastors, guardians and teachers of doctrine, and administrators of godly discipline and governance. All Bishops in the Convergent Catholic Communion are elected from among the Presbytery. Individuals in this category carry the title "Right Reverend" or "Right Reverend Father", "Right Reverend Mother" or more simply "Bishop".

Bishops shall administer the Rites and Sacraments (including Ordination) of the Church. They shall be teachers and preachers of the faith. Bishops carry full clergy responsibilities and privileges and may be elected to any office in our Communion.

Bishop shall serve this Communion until they reach the mandatory retirement age, resign or are removed from office.



2.2.2 The Presbytery (The Order of Presbyters):

The Presbyters of the Church are those persons who have been called by God to ministry, have successfully completed the necessary requirements for ordination to Presbytery and have been approved for Ordination by a Bishop of the Convergent Catholic Communion. Individuals in this category carry the title “Reverend” or “Reverend Presbyter” or “Reverend Father” or “Reverend Mother.”

Presbyters shall administer the Rites and Sacraments (except for Ordination) of the Church. They shall be teachers and preachers of the faith. Presbyters carry full clergy responsibilities and privileges and may be elected to any office in our Communion.

Collectively their "college" is referred to as the "presbyterium", "presbytery", or "presbyterate."

2.2.3 The Diaconate (The Order of Deacons):

As outlined in the New Testament, the office of deacon is a historic ministry of service and aid within the local Christian Church. Within the Convergent Catholic Communion, the Diaconate can be transitional and permanent. All individuals desiring to be an Presbyter must first be a Deacon. Often Deacons are

the administrators of the church, participating in the ordering of services or leading a ministry outreach to the community.

The Deacons of the Convergent Catholic Communion are those persons who have a recognized call of God to vocational ministry, have successfully completed the necessary requirements for ordination to the Diaconate and have been approved for Ordination by a Bishop of the Convergent Catholic Communion. Individuals in this category carry the title “Reverend”, “Reverend Deacon” or simply “Deacon”

Deacons are authorized to perform the Sacrament of Baptism and all rites. Those Deacons who are working toward Ordination into the Presbytery may be granted license to preside over the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Deacons are not eligible to hold the offices of Presiding Bishop or Moderator but may serve in any other office in leadership.

2.2.4 Aspirants for Holy Orders

This classification is provided for those newly called ministers who are in the process of answering a call to ministry. Those welcomed as Aspirants must be in good standing in their own local church and be living an exemplary life. They will be accountable to a ministerial mentor to be assigned by the Bishop overseeing their area. They will be expected to complete a course of study outlined by the Bishops Council. Typically, this will be a two-to-three-year program, unless progress merits graduation into the Diaconate sooner. During this time, segmented course material must be completed, and the Aspirant must be actively participating in public ministry. Aspirants may serve in any of the historical minor orders of Reader, Acolyte and Subdeacon while working toward Ordination into the major orders. Aspirants are permitted to wear a “seminarian collar”, which



distinguishes itself from the traditional clerical collar with a solid horizontal black stripe found in the middle.

Aspirants are not eligible to hold the offices of Presiding Bishop or Moderator but may serve in any other office in leadership.

2.3 Transfer Clergy or Individuals Seeking Dual Affiliation.

If an individual is already ordained by a Communion, local church or denomination, the Bishop charged with overseeing the candidate's geographic area may choose to recognize the ordination as valid. The transferring or dual affiliating minister must meet the minimum qualifications for office to which they are applying.

2.4 Rights and Privileges of the Ordained

Ordination by the Communion or recognition of an Ordination outside of the Communion or does not automatically grant membership privileges to the clergy. Clergy are asked to financially support the Communion through faithful giving. The Communion recognizes that it is not always plausible or feasible for members to give financially, if a member is unable to provide financial support, he/she should notify their Bishop so that the General Council can authorize continued membership benefits without fear of membership privilege suspension.

2.4.1 Rights and Privileges of the Ordained

The use of honorifics and titles shall be limited to those found within these canons, unless otherwise granted by the Bishops Councils of this Communion. Although outside organizations may grant titles and honorifics, these grants shall only pertain to said organization.

All honorifics and titles utilized within this Communion may be reviewed, by the Bishops Council, from time to time to ensure the usages are in alignment with norms, traditions, and charism of this Communion.

Canon 3 – Affiliated Communities, Ministries, Orders & Societies

The process for applying for affiliation will be set forth by the General Council. The growth of our Communion should be understood in terms of both Quality Growth and Quantity Growth.

Quality Growth is understood as the maturation of the members of the Church. This is exemplified in Saint Paul's concern that the Corinthian community develop from the infancy of spiritual milk to the solid food of faith.

Quantity Growth is understood as the increase of local communities, and the increase of members in each community. The scriptural model for such growth is found in Acts 2, concluding with the sentence: "Day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved."

While it is desirable to have both dimensions, the building of a community takes time and nurturing. While Quantity may be lacking, what is most important is Quality Growth which results in Quantity Growth over time.

3.1 Affiliation for existing Communities, Parachurch Ministries, Orders and Societies

Pre-existing Communities, Ministries, Orders and Societies, either within a denomination, a Communion, or as independent entities, may apply for affiliation. Once approved, the applicant immediately becomes a member of the Communion.

3.2 Parachurch Ministries Definitions

Parachurch organizations are Christian faith-based organizations that usually carry out their mission independent of church oversight.

Roles that parachurch organizations undertake include larger more national or international movements:

- Discipleship ministries
- Music and print publishers, radio and television stations, film studios, online ministries
- Study centers and institutes, schools, colleges and universities
- Political and social activist groups
- Welfare and social services, including homeless shelters, child care, and domestic violence, disaster relief programs, food pantries and clothing closets, and emergency aid centers.
- Self-help groups
- Bible study groups

3.3 The Roles and Responsibilities of Parachurch Ministries

Parachurch Ministries in the Communion have the right and responsibility to order themselves for good management, working with honesty and integrity to proclaim the Gospel of Christ through their service to the church and community. Parachurch Ministries may determine the best structure under which to operate, but must include the following:

1. Each Parachurch Ministry shall enter into a Covenant of Agreement with the Communion which includes affirming the Communion Statement of Faith.



2. Each Parachurch Ministry is encouraged to financially support the Communion through monthly, quarterly or yearly giving. When a ministry fails to financially support the Communion, the General Council may (after careful investigation) revoke the voting rights of the delegates for the ministry in question.
3. Financial Support is not a requirement of membership for Communion membership.
4. Each local Parachurch Ministry shall have in place a system or structure that calls leadership, whether lay or clergy, to be accountable. Such a structure, or system, shall be reviewed by the Moderator of the Convergent Catholic Communion for compliance with these canons.

3.4 Worship Community Definitions

The Convergent Catholic Communion views the Worship Community as nexus of Christian Worship. We classify Worship Communities in 3 categories – Faith Communities, Mission Congregations (Missions) and Parish Churches.

3.4.1 Faith Communities

Faith Communities are multisite communities that may be meeting in the form of cell groups, house churches, community groups, etc.

3.4.2 Mission Congregations (Missions)

Missions are churches that are establishing a worshipping community in a certain region or city. are also new worshipping communities that are less than two years old. New worship communities may be planted in one of two ways:

1. An individual or group may work with the Bishop for that area to develop a new worshipping body which from the beginning can designate itself as a potential affiliate;
2. A satellite or extension work may be developed by an existing congregation that will remain under the auspices of that congregation until such time that it is ready to become an independent affiliate.

3.4.3 Parish Churches

Parish Churches are established congregations with one central gathering point. These churches are more than two years old and have regular worship services or gatherings.

3.5 The Roles and Responsibilities of Worship Communities

Member communities in the Communion have the right and responsibility to order themselves for good local management, working with honesty and integrity to proclaim the Gospel of Christ through their worship services and day-to-day local governance and management. Worship Communities may determine the best structure under which to operate, but must include the following:

1. Parish Church and Faith Communities shall establish policies and procedures for the election of the lead. The winner of the election must garner a minimum of a 50% plus 1 of the total votes cast. All Pastor's serving Mission Congregations with fewer than 10 members shall be appointed by the Bishop with jurisdiction for that geographical area.



2. Parish Churches and Faith Communities shall adopt policies that require all Pastoral Candidates have official authorization from the Communion in one of the four recognized ministerial classifications. If the church or community is unable to elect a qualified candidate by a majority vote, the administrative body may ask the Bishop to appoint a Pastor.
3. Each Parish Church and Faith Community shall establish an administrative body including a Treasurer, Clerk (Secretary), and at least one other member.
4. All Worship Communities shall enter into a Covenant of Agreement with the Communion which includes affirming the Communion Statement of Faith.
5. Each Worship Community is encouraged to financially support the Communion through monthly, quarterly or yearly giving. When a Community fails to financially support the Communion, the General Council may (after careful investigation) revoke the voting rights of the lay delegates for the community in question.
6. Financial support is not a requirement of membership for Communion membership.
7. Worship Communities shall have members and set standards or requirements for membership.
8. Only members may vote, serve on the local administrative body, serve as Lay Delegates, hold office as a pastor or serve as a Communion official.
9. Each community must hold a regularly scheduled service for worship and learning, preferably on Sundays. (It is recognized that not all communities have access to locations that make this possible, but they are encouraged to meet on Sundays if possible.)
10. All communities shall offer the Sacrament of Holy Communion during the primary worship service but may set other services or meetings to fellowship or meet local needs.
11. Each community shall have in place a system or structure that calls leadership, whether lay or clergy, to be accountable. Such a structure, or system, shall be reviewed by the Moderator of the Convergent Catholic Communion for compliance with these canons.

Section 3.6 Religious Orders and Societies

A Religious Order or Society under this Canon is defined as a community or society of Christians who voluntarily commit themselves for life or a term of years in obedience to their Rule and Constitution. In some cases, Religious Orders may additionally hold their possessions in common or trust.

Section 3.6.1 Missionary Endeavors of Religious Orders and Societies

Religious Orders and Societies may form Worship Communities, however, these communities shall be subject to the norms and regulations found in these Canons pertaining to Worship Communities.



These Worship Communities would still be viewed as extensions of their Orders or Societies and therefore would not be afforded separate representation in General Assembly.

Section 3.6.2 The Abbatial Council

The primary leaders of the Religious Orders and Societies of this Communion may, from time to time, come together to form an Abbatial Council (each Order and Society would be afforded 1 seat). This Council would have the authority to review the Constitutions and Canons of any order and society covenanting with the Communion to ensure consistency and agreement with the Constitution and Canon of this Communion (a simple majority vote would be needed for those already in covenant). This authority would not supersede the authority granted to the Moderator in these canons, therefore any such findings would be submitted as recommendations for the Moderator to consider when taking action. Additionally, any Orders or Societies seeking membership with this Communion would first be reviewed by this Council so that a recommendation may be made to the Bishop holding jurisdiction.

Section 3.6 Disaffiliation

Member Communities, Parachurch Ministries, Orders and Societies can choose to withdraw from the Communion by notifying the Bishop of their intent. This Communion will not hold any claim to properties, monies or debts held by the ministry/community. The Communion retains full control over Communion branding and logos, the withdrawing entity shall cease using these items upon confirmation of withdrawal. This clause cannot be altered without the consent of at least 75% of eligible voting members at General Assembly.



Canon 4 - General Assembly

4.1 Powers and Duties.

The General Assembly, as the legislative body of the Communion, has the power to adopt and amend the Constitution and Canons; approve budgets; establish and oversee the programs of the Communion; elect members of the General Council and other elected positions as authorized by Canon.

4.1 Meetings of General Assembly.

A General Assembly shall be called by the Moderator every 2 years. When the Communion meets in Assembly all resolutions that are passed are considered the voice of the Communion. The Rules of Order and agenda shall be established by the General Council and will be distributed to all member churches within 60 days of General Assembly.

A quorum shall consist of 50% of all persons (Lay Delegates, and Clergy) eligible to vote at the General Assembly.

4.2 Membership.

The General Assembly shall consist of one voting house. Those eligible to sit in the house shall be:

1. One elected delegate for each affiliated Worship Community with a minimum of 5 members, excluding Communion rostered Clerics. Once a Worship Community attains 26 members, they shall be granted 1 additional delegate, with an additional delegate added for every 25 members thereafter. While the preference is for each delegate to be a member of the laity, clerics are also permitted to serve as a delegate. It is the responsibility of the delegate(s) to represent the congregation during the General Assembly, and to be the liaison between the congregation and the Communion. Should a lay delegate not be able to attend the General Assembly, they will be replaced by a duly elected alternate. Prior to the General Assembly, the Communion Secretary will verify the names of all lay delegates. The congregation should notify the Communion Secretary when a change in delegate(s) takes place.
2. One designated delegate for each Parachurch Ministry, Religious Order or Religious Society composed of at least 5 rostered ministry participants, excluding Communion rostered Clerics. Ministry participants are defined as members and/or employees.
3. All Ordained Clergy and Aspirants.
4. All delegates seated shall be members in good standing within their local churches.

4.3 Parliamentarian.

The Moderator may appoint a Parliamentarian to advise the co-chairs and the General Assembly on parliamentary issues. The ruling of the chair on any parliamentary matter may be overridden by a vote of two thirds of those present and voting at the General Assembly.



Canon 5 - The General Council

5.1 Powers and Duties.

The General Council shall undertake the day-to-day operation needed for the Communion. The General Council shall be that body of persons who are the elected stewards of the Convergent Catholic Communion and are accountable to the General Assembly. The General Council shall meet in formal session at least once annually, one meeting taking place before and, where needed, after General Assembly.

Fifty percent of the voting members of the General Council shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

5.2. Offices of the General Council

The membership of the General Council shall, at minimum, consist of the Presiding Bishop, the Moderator and a Secretary/Treasurer (the offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be separated upon approval of the General Council).

5.2.1 Presiding Bishop

The Presiding Bishop is the President of this Communion and shall be the public officer and official spokesperson for the Convergent Catholic Communion. This person shall be elected to have pastoral oversight for our Communion. This person will give vision and direction to the growth, development and maturing of the Communion and its leadership at Communion and local levels. The Presiding Bishop shall represent the Communion to the wider community. The Presiding Bishop shall act as Chair for all General Council and Bishops Council meetings and co-Chair for General Assembly.

Nominations for Presiding Bishop shall originate in the Bishops Council. The Bishops Council shall submit no less than 2 nominees to stand for election. The nominations should be submitted to the General Council no later than 90 days from the electing General Assembly. The General Council, may reject nominations and request alternatives by a 2/3 majority vote.

Section 5.2.1.1 Optional Honorifics and Titles of the Presiding Bishop

As a Communion of both Eastern and Western Christians, it is fitting and appropriate for the Presiding Bishop to also carry the ecclesiastical title of Metropolitan (befitting a senior hierarch in the Eastern Traditions) and Primus (befitting a senior hierarch in Western Traditions). In light of their status as most senior cleric in our Communion the Presiding Bishop may sometimes be addressed formally as “His/Her/Their Beatitude the Most Reverend Metropolitan [NAME] of the Convergent Catholic Communion”.

5.2.2 Moderator

The Moderator is the Vice President of this Communion and Co-Chair for General Assembly. The Moderator will have the right to appoint 50% of the members of any council formed for this Communion except for the Bishops Council. The Moderator may also, in consultation with the Presiding Bishop, work in focused areas with local churches as deemed necessary or requested by that church or the General Council. The Moderator shall act as President of this Communion if the Presiding Bishop resigns, is incapacitated or removed office. The Moderator will call a General



Council meeting within 30 days of the vacancy, the Council will then be charged to name an interim Presiding Bishop. The Moderator may be from the laity or clergy and must be in good standing with our Communion.

5.2.3 Communion Secretary

The Secretary is that person elected to keep and publish accurate records of all meetings of the General Council, and business deliberations of the General Assembly. The Secretary shall report to the local churches and members of the General Council, within 30 days of any business meeting.

5.2.4 Communion Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be that person elected to be a good steward of the finances of the Communion, to report regularly on financial matters and to give an accurate accounting of all financial transactions. The Treasurer shall, with the General Council, present to the General Assembly all financial reports and budgets for determination and vote by the General Assembly.

5.2.5 Communion Administrator

The Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Moderator, may expand the Council to diversify the voices heard. Individuals elected to the role of Communion Administrator will work with the Presiding Bishop and Moderator to establish responsibilities as deemed necessary.

5.2.6 Advisors to the General Council

Advisors are a vital part of our Communion. These persons provide our leaders with source of wisdom for leading out Communion in group and development. The office of Advisor shall be limited to those appointed by the General Council or Founding members only. Advisors may not serve as the Secretary or Treasurer unless appointed to fill a vacancy (with the appointment expiring at the next General Assembly). Communion Advisors serve at the discretion of the Presiding Bishop. Advisors are separated into 2 Categories – Communion Advisors and Founding Advisors.

5.2.6.1 Communion Advisor

The Communion Advisor post is filled by appointment only. The Presiding Bishop will nominate individuals to fill this role, their appointment is confirmed by a majority consent of the General Council. Communion Advisors can participate in the work of the General Council, but they do not have a vote. Their number shall be no more than 2 and their term shall expire when the appointing Presiding Bishop leaves office.

5.2.6.2 Founding Advisor

The original (3) members of the General Council and Founders (Drew Haywood-Larsen, Tom Weller, Kenny von Folmar) of this Communion shall be permanent members of the General Council. If the founding member should retire, they may take a seat on the council as an Advisor with the voice and vote of full members. This provision may be amended by a 3/4 vote by all 3 of the following governing bodies - the Bishops Council, the General Council and a regularly scheduled General Assembly. The purpose of this provision is for the historical knowledge that each of the founders can provide for future generations of leadership of this Communion. Upon expiration or resignation of all founding members this designation shall cease to exist.



5.3 Terms of Office

The Presiding Bishop and Moderator shall serve terms of eight years, with the first terms to be staggered, which may result in shorter or longer terms (the initial term of the Moderator shall be 6 years). All other General Council members shall serve terms of two years. There are no term limits for General Council offices.

5.4 Resignations

Any resignation shall become effective immediately unless the resigning party and General Council agree on a thirty-day extension from the date tendered. All resignations shall be presented in written form and presented to the Presiding Bishop. The vacant seat will be filled by appointment of the Presiding Bishop, that person shall serve until the next General Assembly when the vacant seat will be filled by election.

5.5 Retirement

The mandatory retirement age for a Presiding Bishop shall be 70 years of age. The Convergent Catholic Communion shall establish a retirement age for all other clergy that is fair and based on the needs of the clergy.



Canon 6 - The Bishops Council

Section 6.1 Powers and Duties.

This Council is charged with Pastoral Oversight of the Communion and shall provide doctrinal stability through preaching, teaching and mentoring the clergy. This body, in consultation with the General Council, shall establish baseline requirements for Holy Orders (Bishops, Presbyters, Deacons) within this Communion.

Nominations for Presiding Bishop shall originate in the Bishops Council. The Bishops Council shall submit no less than 2 nominees to stand for election. The nominations should be submitted to the General Council no later than 90 days from the electing General Assembly. The General Council, may reject nominations and request alternatives by a 2/3 majority vote.

Should there be an episcopal vacancy the Bishops Council will nominate no less than 2 duly ordained individuals to stand for election. As our Communion grows the nominating process will devolve to the regional and/or district level. The timing of this devolution will be determined by the General Council.

The Bishops Council shall meet no less than once per year.

Section 6.2 The Bishops Council Membership

Each Bishop of this Communion having jurisdiction and every Assistant Bishop shall have a seat and a vote on the Bishops Council. A majority of all Bishops entitled to vote, exclusive of Bishops who have resigned their jurisdiction or positions, shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.



Canon 7 - Ecclesiastical Discipline

As a temporal embodiment of the body of Christ, the Church is charged with being the prophetic voice of holiness and accountability. The inherent right of the church is to discipline the faithful who violate our holy relationship. The Convergent Catholic Communion takes holiness and accountability very serious and as such we have established mutually agreeable guidelines for journeying together.

Section 7.1 Charges against Bishops, Presbyters, or Deacons

The following are the charges or accusations on which a Bishop, an Presbyter, or a Deacon in this Communion may be presented:

1. divisive behaviors (i.e. creating doctrinal obstacles, discord in the Communion);
2. conduct giving just cause for scandal or offense, including the abuse of ecclesiastical power;
3. a conviction by a court of competent jurisdiction for felony or other serious offenses;
4. acceptance of membership in a religious jurisdiction with purpose contrary to that of this Communion;
5. violation of any provision of the Constitution of this Communion;
6. disobedience, or willful contravention of the Canons of this Communion or of the constitution or canons of the CCC Jurisdiction in which (s)he holds office;
7. habitual neglect of the duties of her/his Office;
8. habitual neglect of public worship, and the Holy Communion, according to the order and use of this Communion;
9. failing, without good cause, to cooperate with any investigation or proceeding conducted under authority of this canon;
10. willful refusal to follow a Godly admonition.

Section 7.1.1 Godly Admonition

A Godly Admonition is a written directive from a Bishop with jurisdiction to a member of the Clergy under her/his jurisdiction. Such admonition shall not be issued until the Bishop shall have met with the member of the Clergy – unless for valid reason the Bishop shall have delegated such meeting to another Bishop – and the issues have been clearly and fairly discussed. The written admonition shall be specific concerning the matter complained of and the canonical or theological basis for the complaint and shall provide a reasonable time for the required action to be taken.



Section 7.1.1 Default Judgment

Convictions regarding crimes against children will result in the immediate removal of the Bishop, Presbyter or Deacon.

Members that have ceased active, authorized and accountable ministry for more than 60 days may be removed from the membership roster at the discretion of the Bishop holding jurisdiction.

Section 7.2 Accusations against Presbyters, or Deacons

An accusation of conduct believed by the accuser(s) to be in violation of Canon 7.1 may be brought against an Presbyter or Deacon. The accusation(s) shall be in a writing that contains the facts supporting the allegations of wrongdoing and shall be signed and sworn to by the accuser(s) and delivered to the Bishop with jurisdiction. If the Bishop deems the accusation(s) not to be frivolous, (s)he shall cause an investigation to be made. During the pendency of the investigation, the details of the accusation(s) and the investigation shall be maintained in appropriate confidence.

At any time after the receipt of an accusation(s), the accused may confess to the truth of the allegation(s) and submit to the discipline of the Church.

Section 7.2.1 Concerning Investigations against Presbyters, or Deacons

The accused shall be entitled to notice of an ongoing investigation and to have the aid of counsel or an agent and may submit his defense in writing. The presenters also may be aided by counsel and be represented by any agent they may appoint.

Once an investigation is completed, the Bishop with jurisdiction over the Presbyter or Deacon shall issue a judgement.

No Presentment shall be made, or conviction had for any offense under canon 7.1 unless the offense shall have been committed within 5 years immediately preceding the time of the presentment. Such time may be extended with written permission of the Presiding Bishop.

Any charge or accusation concerning crimes against children shall be under the jurisdiction of the office the Presiding Bishop and shall not be limited to those committed within 5 years.

Section 7.2.2 Concerning Trials for accusations against Presbyters, or Deacons

If it is determined that a trial should occur, then a presentment shall be prepared, and procedures followed according to the norms of Communion discipline. The Bishop holding jurisdiction shall appoint an advisor to assist the Presbyter or Deacon who is the subject of an accusation and his or her counsel or agent. The advisor shall be knowledgeable of the disciplinary norms of the Convergent Catholic Communion and shall be available to advise the Presbyter or Deacon and his or her counsel or agent on issues relating thereto. All such advice as shall be given shall be confidential to the accused and his or her counsel or agent.



Section 7.3 Accusations against Bishops

A Bishop may be charged under Canon 7.1 by three Bishops of this Communion with jurisdiction, or by not fewer than five Presbyters, Deacons, or adult baptized members in good standing, of whom at least two shall be Presbyters. Such charges shall be in writing, signed and sworn to by all the accusers and shall be presented to the Presiding Bishop, the Presiding Bishop's delegate, or the Bishops Council. The grounds of accusation must be set forth with reasonable certainty of time, place and circumstance. The charges shall be referred to the Judicial Council.

Section 7.4 Concerning Investigations against Bishops

The accused shall be entitled to notice of an ongoing investigation and to have the aid of counsel or an agent and may submit his defense in writing. The presenters also may be aided by counsel and be represented by any agent they may appoint.

Once an investigation is completed, the Presiding Bishop shall convene the Judicial Council to decide if the charges shall move to trial.

No Presentment shall be made, or conviction had for any offense under canon 7.1 unless the offense shall have been committed within 5 years immediately preceding the time of the presentment. Such time may be extended with written permission of the Presiding Bishop.

Any charge or accusation concerning crimes against children shall be under the jurisdiction of the office the Presiding Bishop and shall not be limited to those committed within 5 years.

Section 7.5 the Judicial Council

When a clerical trial is necessary, a Judicial Council shall be formed to consider the charges.

Section 7.5.1 Judicial Council Membership

Each Judicial Council formed shall have at least one Bishop, one Presbyter and one additional member. The Presiding Bishop shall select a Bishop to Chair the Council. The Chair and the Moderator shall be entitled to appoint 50% each of the remaining seats. Should the trial involve the Moderator or Presiding Bishop, the General Council and/or the Bishops Council shall make the necessary appointments

Section 7.5.2 Removal of a Judicial Council Member

Judicial Council Members may be recalled by a majority vote of both the General Council and Bishops Council or majority vote of the General Assembly.

Section 7.6 Episcopal Trial

When a trial is initiated against a Bishop, the Presiding Bishop and Moderator shall join the Judicial Council with equal vote. Should the accusation involve the Presiding Bishop or Moderator, an alternate from the Bishops Council and/or General Council shall be appointed.

Section 7.7 Appeals

An appeal may be made within thirty days of the decision of the Bishop or trial.



Section 7.7.1 Appealing a Bishops decision

Appeals concerning accusations against an Presbyter or Deacon are referred to the Chief Justice of the Judicial Council. The Judicial Council can then, with a simple majority, decide to call a trial.

Section 7.7.2 Appealing Judicial Council and Episcopal Trial Decisions

The appeal shall be made in writing to the Presiding Bishop and Moderator, stating the nature of the case and the reason(s) for the appeal. The Presiding Bishop and Moderator shall call a joint session of the Bishops Council and General Council to consider the appeal. As President of both Councils, the Presiding Bishop's vote shall count as 2 votes for joint sessions concerning appeals of trials.

Section 7.7.3 Decisions on Appeals

A decision on the appeal shall be rendered within thirty days of the hearing. The expenses of the appeal shall be paid by the appellant, unless the appellant is successful or the joint councils orders otherwise. The joint session may refer matter back to trial with a majority vote, should they find the disciplinary action overly excessive or too lenient. The ruling may be overturned altogether by a two thirds majority vote by both the Bishops Council and General Council or two thirds majority vote of the General Assembly.

Section 7.8 Sentences

The Bishop alone has the authority to pronounce sentence on an Presbyter or Deacon convicted as indicated in these canons. If there is no Bishop, the Archbishop or another Bishop designated by the Presiding Bishop shall pronounce sentence. The Bishops Council, speaking through the Presiding Bishop or their designate, has the sole responsibility and authority to pronounce sentence on a Bishop.

Section 7.8.1 Range of Sentences

Sentences shall be:

1. Censure and/or admonishment;
2. Suspension, for a definite period, not to exceed five years;
3. Suspension for life; or
4. Deposition from sacred ministry

In addition, other measures for restoration of the accused may be required.

Section 7.8.2 Inhibitions

A Bishop may temporarily inhibit an Presbyter or Deacon from the exercise of public ministry when the Bishop believes, upon reasonable grounds, that the Presbyter or Deacon has engaged in conduct unbecoming of a cleric of the church. The Bishop must receive consent from the General Council to issue the inhibition. The Presiding Bishop or designate may modify or revoke the temporary inhibition. Such decision shall be rendered within 30 days.



The Presiding Bishop may temporarily inhibit a Bishop from the exercise of ministry by the majority vote of the Bishops Council.

Section 7.9 Notification of Disciplinary Action Taken

The Chief Justice pronouncing sentence shall within thirty (30) days after the sentence becomes final and not subject to appeal, notify the Office of the Presiding Bishop, who shall notify all Bishops with jurisdiction and shall maintain a permanent record of the action. Such notice shall be limited to the sentence pronounced. Should a sentence be amended or terminated, notification of such amendment or termination shall also be reported to the Office of the Presiding Bishop who shall promptly give notice to all Bishops with jurisdiction of and record the amendment or termination in the permanent record.

Section 7.10 Worship Community Conflict Resolution.

When there are conflicts or difficulties within a worship community, including apparent irreconcilable differences between the Pastor and congregation, the Bishop shall have the authority to interact with that community. S/he shall take appropriate measures, to provide resources and support, and to attend and have voice at any meeting of the local church body or its administrative body. A community must, where it has concerns over issues of conflict, consult with the Bishop before it takes any formal action.

The Communion is committed to resolving in a Biblical manner all conflicts that may arise in our body. [A conflict is any clash or divergence of opinion or interest.] This commitment is based on the teaching of Christ and the Apostles that Christians should strive earnestly to live at peace with one another (Matt 5:9; John 17:20-23; Rom 12:18; Eph 4:1-3) and that when conflicts arise, Christians should resolve them according to the principles set forth in Scripture (Prov 19:11; Matt 5:23-25, 18:15-22; 1 Cor 6:1-8; Gal 6:1). We believe that these commands and principles are required of all Christians and essential for the well-being and work of the Communion. Therefore, conflicts in this Communion shall be resolved according to Biblical principles, as provided by this Canon.

1. When a member of this Communion has a conflict with another member or group of members, the member shall attempt to resolve the matter as follows:
 - a. The member having the conflict shall prayerfully examine himself or herself and take responsibility for his or her contribution to the conflict (Matt 7:3-5), and shall prayerfully seek to discern whether the conflict is so serious that it must be addressed (Prov 19:11; see also Prov 12:16, 15:18, 17:14, 20:3; Eph 4:1-3; Col 3:12-15; 1 Pet 4:8).
 - b. If the conflict is so serious it must be addressed, the member with the conflict shall go, repeatedly if necessary, and talk to the other(s) in an effort to resolve the matter personally and privately, having first confessed one's own wrong-doing, if any, and asking forgiveness (Matt 18:15).
 - c. If the other(s) will not listen and if the conflict is so serious it must be addressed, the member with the conflict shall return with one or two other people who will attempt to help the parties resolve their differences (Matt 18:16); these other members may



be members or officers of the Communion, other respected Christians, or trained mediators or arbitrators (conciliators) from a Christian conciliation ministry. At the request of either party to the conflict, the Communion shall make every effort to assist the parties in resolving their differences and being reconciled.

- d. Should there be paid staff, employment disputes and performance issues shall be resolved according to the procedures set forth in the Employee Policy Manual of this Communion.

Section 7.11 Worship Communities and Para-church Ministries Arbitration

When a conflict reaches this point and cannot be resolved internally, it is necessary to get help from outsiders. The question is simply, 'which outsiders'? The Bible admonishes Christians to turn to other Christians, rather than to the civil court system - to solve our conflicts based on Biblical principles rather than by the ways and values of the world. (I Cor 6:1-8). Christian conciliation is a process for reconciling people and resolving conflicts out of court in a Biblical manner. The process is conciliatory rather than adversarial in nature, encouraging honest communication and reasonable cooperation rather than unnecessary contention, accusation and defense. The goals are not simply to resolve the dispute according to the law of the land, but to resolve it according to Biblical principles of honesty, accepting responsibility for one's actions and admitting wrongs, keeping one's word, being open to forgiveness and reconciliation, etc. The goals of Christian conciliation are not only to resolve the conflict, but to preserve and enhance relationships, encourage practice and growth in Christ-like character and conduct, provide a positive witness, avoid negative publicity, and reduce costs. In general, Christian conciliation includes individual counseling, mediation and arbitration. Mediation is a process in which one or more mediators (Christians committed to Biblical principles) meet with the parties in the conflict to promote constructive dialogue and encourage a voluntary settlement of differences. If settlement is not reached in mediation, the parties may proceed to arbitration, where arbitrators (Christians committed to biblical principles) will hear their case and render a legally binding decision. While mediation helps people to see what they should do as a matter of conscience, arbitration will determine what people must do as a matter of law. In both mediation and arbitration, the parties have a say in the choice of the persons serving as mediator(s) or arbitrator(s), and in both cases each party is welcome to have the counsel of their own private attorneys and other advisors. For further information, see *The Christian Conciliation Handbook*, published by the Institute for Christian Conciliation, 1537 Avenue D, Suite 352, Billings, MT 59102]. The Bishop is required to intervene when:

1. Invited by the Pastor or pastoral leader; or
2. Invited following a majority vote of the local church administrative body; or
3. Invited as a result of a petition signed by a minimum of one 51% of the voting members of the congregation.
4. Where a local church begins to become unstable (e.g., through sudden leadership changes, decrease in attendance or similar events) the Bishop shall have the authority to begin a process of engagement to help the local church and maintain the integrity of the Communion.



5. If a conflict arises between a member and the Communion, or between a group of members and the Communion, and cannot be resolved through the internal procedures described above, it shall be resolved through Conflict Resolution Committee as follows:

- a. The conflict must be submitted to mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Institute for Christian Conciliation.

[The Rules of Procedure have been created by the Institute for Christian Conciliation as a service to the Christian community. These Rules are a sequence, written in plain English, of Biblically based steps to be followed by a mature Christian, a local Christian conciliation ministry, a Communion, the Institute for Christian Conciliation or other parties to help bring conciliation between two parties in conflict. The Rules cover mediation, during which most conflicts will be resolved, and continue on through legally binding arbitration for those instances where necessary. The rules covering legally binding arbitration are approved and accepted in United States courts of law. The Rules of Procedure are included in The Christian Conciliation Handbook, referenced above.]

- b. All mediators and arbitrators shall be Communion members in good standing and shall be in agreement with the Statement of Faith, and form of government of this Communion, unless this requirement is modified or waived by all parties to the conflict. If a conflict involves an attempted revision of the Statement of Faith or form of government, the mediators and arbitrators shall be in agreement with those documents as they existed prior to the attempted revision.
6. The Conflict Resolution Committee shall be appointed by the Moderator. The Moderator is prohibited from appointing a Conflict Resolution Committee for a conflict they are involved in; in this case the next Senior member of Communion leadership shall appoint the committee members.

This section covers the Communion as a corporate entity and its agents, including its officers, staff, and volunteers with regard to any actions they may take in their official capacities.

This section covers any and all conflicts or claims arising from or related to Communion membership, doctrine, policy, practice, counseling, discipline, decisions, actions or failures to act, including claims based on civil statute or for personal injury.

By joining this Communion, all members agree that these methods shall provide the sole remedy for any conflict arising against the Communion and its agents, and they waive their right to file any legal action against the Communion in a civil court or agency, except to enforce an arbitration decision.

If a conflict or claim involves an alleged injury or damage to which the Communion's insurance applies, and if the Communion's insurer refuses to submit to mediation or arbitration as described in this section, either the Communion or the member alleging the injury or damage may declare that



this section is no longer binding with regard to that part of the conflict or claim to which the Communion's insurance applies.

Canon 8 - Gender Inclusive Terminology

The viewpoint of this Communion is that that gender-inclusive language, i.e., language that strives to include both sexes equally, should be regarded as standard in public discourse, and that gender-exclusive language should be avoided as much as possible. The American Academy of Religion defines gender-exclusive language as follows:

For the purposes of this Canon, exclusive language is defined as a consistent pattern of English usage where the male is taken to be the normative human person; i.e., the word “man” connotes both the male and the human as such. (Adopted from *The New Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, J. G. Davies, ed., SCM Press, 1986.)

This canon on gender-inclusive language applies public notices, Communion documents and Communion publications of all sorts.

Section 8.1 Application of this Canon

Language about human beings: The primary focus of this Canon is on terms that refer to people. Gender-inclusive language avoids the generic use of terms such as “man” (also “men,” “mankind,” “family of man,” “city of man,” “brotherhood,” “clergyman,” etc.). In their place, terms such as “human,” “human being,” “people,” “humanity,” “humankind,” “earthly city,” “mortals,” “member of the clergy,” etc. can be used to designate individuals and groups. The possibilities for gracefully rephrasing (both in writing and speaking), once one develops the habit of doing so, are amazingly diverse.

Pronouns may present special challenge. In particular, the pronoun “he” is no longer widely understood as generic. Gender-specific pronouns are appropriate when the antecedent is known, however, if the antecedent is not known it is best to utilize “they.”

Language about God: Scriptural witness speaks of God in (grammatically masculine) generic pronouns that—in Hebrew and Greek—have no sexual implications whatever. Rich scriptural images provide a wide range of personal metaphors, male and female, to convey God’s relationship to created beings. It is entirely appropriate to refer to God as Father, since the Christ also referred to the Father; however, it should be understood this does not denote gender but rather it denotes relationship. Therefore, words like Parent or even Mother would still be fitting. Language about the incarnate Son may also be male in orientation since the incarnation was in fact male. Areas where we, the Church, may employ more expansive language is areas referring to the Triune God and their reign.

Direct quotations from our Holy Ancestors and the Holy Scriptures: Direct quotations, should not be changed to make them gender-inclusive. This is an instance where the writer does not have full freedom of diction but must observe scholarly standards of accuracy. One should also respect the place of a text within its historical context, and not “fix” a writer’s language anachronistically.

If quoted matter is offensive or controversial, on the other hand, it is appropriate to comment in a footnote or to add the Latin (sic) (“thus”) to the quoted text to show one’s awareness of the anomaly. Note, however, that one addition of (sic) is sufficient for each quotation.



Canon 8.2 Implementation of this Canon

The Members and Leaders of this Communion commit themselves to work for clarity and consistency as they undertake to apply the principle of gender inclusivity in their own writing and speaking, and in their tending and teaching of those in our care. Council Members and Leaders will exercise personal judgment as they work out ground rules consistent with their best understanding of the ethical issues and linguistic options involved. Such ground rules, to be constructive and fair, should be stated clearly in the Member Handbook.

Additionally, the Councils of this Communion shall form a temporary committee to perform a comprehensive review and, if necessary, revision of the documents and liturgies currently in use by the Communion. Once this revision is complete, the committee will be dissolved and the responsibility for review and revision on any new publications will fall to the Communion Secretary or their delegate.

Canon 9 – On Christian Unity

The Convergent Catholic Communion in due exercise of its calling to be a place of convergence for Christian tradition and expression recognizes the calling of all the baptized to the sacred ministry of the church. This calling across the ages has led the church to express itself in new and innovative ways. Because of our human nature, this diversity of expression led to visible tangible division in the body of Christ. These tangible divisions led to war, murder and in many cases mutual excommunication and in every case deeper wounds to the body of Christ. The Convergent Catholic Communion rejects these divisions and calls for greater unity in the body of Christ. This unity does not require a monolithic organization, nor does it require that the expressions of the church be diminished; instead, it calls us to greater cooperation within our faith family. It is therefore resolved that the Convergent Catholic Communion declares itself ‘in communion’ with all baptized Christians.

9.2 – Common Ministry

Although this Communion views itself as ‘in communion’ with all baptized Christians, it is recognized that formalized exchange of clergy and sacraments requires mutual recognition of orders and sacraments. It is therefore, understood that this Communion will only pursue formalized full communion agreements with jurisdictions that embrace the sacraments and historic succession of Bishops. Should a friendly jurisdiction not have the historic succession, this Communion, after careful vetting, shall assist said jurisdiction in regularizing their orders.

9.3 – Common Pascha (Easter)

This Communion welcomes the work of the World Council of Churches and the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation put toward a common Pascha (Easter) celebration during the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. This vital work led our spiritual siblings in the Anglican Communion to issue a call for a common celebration of Easter with that the following procedures for achieving a commonly recognized date for the annual celebration of Pascha (Easter), as the day of resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, should be agreed upon by all Christian Churches:

- maintain the Nicene norms (*that Easter is observed on the Sunday following the first vernal new moon*);
- calculate the date of the vernal equinox from the data provided by the most accurate scientific and astronomical methods;
- use as the basis of reckoning the meridian of Jerusalem, the place of Christ's death and resurrection.

It is therefore resolved that this Communion shall join its voice with our siblings in faith, from both east and west, in calling for this method of calculating Pascha (Easter). It is further resolved that the Connexions and covenanted ministries/communities shall recognize and celebrate Pascha according to the norms established above. In our understanding of the ecumenical nature of the church we also grant each covenanted ministry and community; planted in an area where the majority of Christians celebrate according to the old calendar; the right to celebrate Easter according to the (Revised) Julian Calendar. To ensure an orderly alignment with this Canon, the Bishops Council may issue an exception to any new or existing covenanted community or ministry, said exception should not be open ended to prevent conflict with the intention of this canon.



Canon 10 - Interpretation of Scripture

Premise: The Communion will face many decisions in its future which will not be explicitly covered by a Statement of Faith. There will remain many areas uncovered which will require position statements, decisions and/or actions.

Basis: The Communion will look to the Holy Scriptures for its faith and practice. In its decision making, the Communion will take into consideration historic confessional statements, Church history and tradition, and the wealth of knowledge to be found within the writings of Church leaders and theologians.

Commitments: The Communion, its leaders, staff and members agree to strive to please God in all things and to abide by the teaching of Scripture. We will strive not only to understand the Scriptures, but when understood, to stand under its teaching and instruction. Both our individual and corporate lives will be placed under the authority of the Holy Spirit.

Freedom of Conscience: Only the Lord may bind the conscience of an individual. No council, statement, or decision has such authority over the conscience of an individual. However, all Communion members have the responsibility to understand and stand under the Holy Scripture. Where the Scriptures do not speak explicitly and/or clearly, the Church and its members will allow for appropriate different beliefs and practices. We will agree-to-disagree, agreeably showing grace, understanding, love and respect. At no time will the Communion require any member, staff person or leader to practice or endorse what he or she individually does not believe is taught in the Scriptures. However, at no time will the Communion permit any member, staff person or leader to promote any belief which contradicts the Statement of Faith.

Process: When difficult or controversial issues come to the attention of the Bishops Council, the Council will assess the seriousness of the matter in terms of the potential harm to the Communion members and potential displeasure to God. If two-thirds (2/3) of the Bishops Council indicate the issue should be investigated, the following process shall be followed:

1. The Presiding Bishop and the Moderator will appoint a balanced special study group representing the range of views on a given topic.
2. The Presiding Bishop will give the special study group a basic definition of the issue or question at hand, outline goals and objectives, and determine a time frame for completion of the work.
3. The special study group will consist of 3 to 10 persons and will include both lay and ordained participants.
4. The Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Moderator, shall appoint a Bishop to chair the study group.
5. The special study group will determine how it will do its work, report to the Bishops Council on a regular basis and submit a final report for discussion and resolution.



6. The special study group will always use the Scriptures as its ultimate rule for faith and practice.
7. As the special study group proceeds in its work to understand the Scriptures, it may call upon various resource persons and use sources other than the Scriptures such as commentaries, confessions, Bible dictionaries and study materials.
8. Study group reports will be sent to the Bishops Council for a final vote and recommendation. The Bishops Council will submit their final recommendation to the General Council and include a process of education of Communion Members on the issue.
9. The Bishops Council will present their final decision to the General Council for ratification. The General Council can decide to refer the matter to the General Assembly or may choose to adopt the recommendation. Any decision can be reversed by General Assembly if at least 2/3 (66%) of the voting delegates vote in favor or reversal.



Canon 11 - Finances

The General Council shall request that each faith community make a monthly, quarterly or monthly pledge of financial support. These pledges should not come from core finances, such as building fund monies, monies given for a specific purpose, or bequests.

The General Council shall set a budget for the operation of this Communion. on an annual basis, present to the General Assembly a draft budget for deliberation and adoption (as amended) by the General Assembly.

The Communion's fiscal year shall be January 1 through December 31. Accurate records and bank deposits into an account authorized by the General Council shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer.

All single non-budgeted expenditures exceeding 20% of the annual operating budget must have a two-thirds majority of the General Council for approval, including any contract whose lifetime value exceeds the 20% threshold.

Canon 12 - Conferences and Retreats

Conferences: The General Council of this Communion may organize General Conferences to coincide with the meeting of the General Assembly. The General Conferences shall be in line with the Communion's Stated Purpose and be offered to the General Public for the continued growth and betterment of the Communion.

Retreats: The Bishops of this Communion may organize Ministerial Retreats for the members of the Communion. These retreats will be open to members only and will be opportunities for learning and growth for our members. Retreats should not be held in the same year as the General Assembly.

Religious Holidays: In honor of our founding, June 15 shall be a religious holiday for all members. The Dates of General Assembly shall also be considered

Canon 13 - Elections

To hold an election in our Communion there must be present a majority of all who are to be summoned to vote. The majority in this case — the quorum — means more than half of the eligible electors. Office holders must receive at least 51% of the eligible votes. Should no candidate receive the required number of votes, the roster of candidates shall be reduced by removing the candidate with the fewest votes until 2 candidates remain.