

Retired Clergy Association of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion (RCA-ECC)

CONSTITUTION

SECTION I – NAME

The official name of the organization shall be the
Retired Clergy Association of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion
(RCA-ECC) (RCA) (the Association)

SECTION II – LOCATION

The business address is:
Retired Clergy Association ECC
mailing address TBD

SECTION III – MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

1. MISSION

The RCA-ECC provides fellowship and support to its members.

2. VISION

The RCA-ECC seeks to

- a. honor the past ministry of retired clergy and their contributions to the Communion;
- b. affirm the on-going ministry of retired clergy as members of the Body of Christ;
- c. foster on-going camaraderie and support among peers as a faith community;
- d. enable retired clergy to maintain a relationship with the wider Communion, including their contributions of wisdom and experience as members of the House of Pastors (HOP).

3. VALUES

- a. One never retires from discipleship or membership in Christ's Body, the Church; this also applies to the ability of ordained persons to contribute to the Church's life and mission.
- b. The wisdom and experience of our elders is an essential gift of the Church.
- c. It is recognized that peers need a safe space to share their joys and frustrations. The Association not including retired lay ministers in no way diminishes the laity's value and on-going contributions to the Church.

SECTION IV – GOALS

The RCA-ECC will:

1. be recognized as an informal support ministry within the Ecumenical Catholic Communion;
2. establish a form of governance as is required by the By-Laws;
3. encourage its members to seek and maintain relationship with their respective local Ordinary;
4. help to facilitate virtual connections as needed;
5. seek funding to provide financial support to members in need (e.g., purchasing quality internet connectivity and equipment to enable virtual connections, et al.);

6. provide opportunities for on-going spiritual growth or tap into existing resources of the national or local communities.
7. develop spiritual and/or pastoral resources to be shared with our respective local communities and/or the wider Communion.

SECTION V – MEMBERSHIP

- 1) Inclusiveness and diversity are foundational values of the ECC. Therefore the RCA-ECC shall admit to membership and serve all qualified persons without discrimination regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, or religious practice.
- 2) To qualify for membership in the RCA-ECC an applicant must:
 - a) have been ordained in or incardinated into the Ecumenical Catholic Communion;
 - b) retirement status shall be self-defined and determined; generally to be “retired” from regular church ministry means no longer having official ministerial responsibilities (not including occasional stipend services or volunteer ministry);
 - c) have an interest in and be supportive of the objectives and goals of the Association;
 - d) submit an application for membership as a sign of willingness to participate fully;
 - e) agree to yearly membership dues (*if any*) starting at the time of acceptance into the RCA-ECC.
- 3) Expectations of RCA-ECC membership include:
 - a) supporting one’s peers in prayer;
 - b) regularly participating in virtual fellowship gatherings (frequency TBD by the initial cohort; members who have the Association as their primary faith community would be encouraged to meet every other week—it all depends on the group’s goals and self-identity);
 - c) agreeing to a consensus model of decision-making;
 - d) complying with the ECC Code of Ethics (violations may jeopardize member status pursuant to conversations with the RCA Leadership);
 - e) participating in elections of our officers and delegates;
 - f) being current with dues and tithing commitments, if any, or applying for a waiver.
- 4) BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP include:
 - a) enjoying the fellowship and support of peers;
 - b) belonging to a recognized faith community in the ECC;
 - c) sharing wisdom and experience with the HOP (while having no voting rights at the ECC National Synods unless said member is a delegate of another community);
 - d) on-going enrichment opportunities through shared resources, retreats and workshops;
 - e) maintaining connections with the wider Communion.

SECTION VI – PASTORAL COUNCIL or alternate form of Leadership

- 1) In the RCA’s initial stages of formation, a Facilitator and Chaplain may serve as its temporary governing team.
- 2) Should number of members warrant a more formal leadership, a Pastoral Council would be formed and serve as the governing board of the Association, comprised of the following positions elected from the general membership in-good-standing: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Chaplain.

- 3) All Council members shall fulfill their responsibilities as established in the By-Laws.

SECTION VII – GATHERINGS

- 1) Virtual gatherings of the members for prayer, fellowship and mutual support will use a video conferencing application (e.g., Zoom or similar platform), the time/day/frequency of which to be determined and periodically reevaluated by the members.
- 2) General Membership Meetings may be called by the Leadership at its discretion to conduct any business of the Association requiring discernment and the consensus of the members. Any Member may request such a meeting to discuss any decision of the Leadership made without adequate consultation and consensus of the membership.

SECTION VIII – LEGAL STATUS

- 1) If membership numbers suggest a more formal and legal structure, Specialized Ministry status and legal INCORPORATION may be pursued.
 - a) Per the ECC By-laws, 7.5 A specialized ministry... shall be legally incorporated and shall establish appropriate governing boards and finance committees.
- 2) TAX EXEMPT STATUS
 - a) It is not initially necessary for this Association to pursue 501(c)(3) status. If at some point Specialized Ministry status is acquired, contributions may be tax-deductible under the ECC umbrella.
 - b) Sales tax exempt purchases may be able to be made through the ECC or one of its communities.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE 1 – MEMBERSHIP

SECTION I – BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNION

To assist the Ecumenical Catholic Communion and maximize the on-going contributions provided by its retired clergy members, RCA-ECC will:

- a) facilitate communications, keeping retired clergy who are not affiliated with a community abreast of communications from the ECC 's Office of Presiding Bishop, the Leadership Council and the House of Pastors;
- b) assist local ordinaries by maintaining relationships with their retired clergy;
- c) help the Communion express how it values the voices and contributions of all its members.

SECTION II – BENEFITS TO MEMBERS

Refer to Section V of the Constitution.

SECTION III – DUES and TITHES

- a) The annual MEMBERSHIP DUES are set by the RCA Leadership after consultation with the membership. The fiscal year is the calendar year January through December. Dues shall be kept current in order to participate in the Association's programs and benefits (unless a waiver is granted).
- b) INDIVIDUAL TITHING—Members will individually determine the level of tithing on their income to be contributed to the Association. Consideration can be made of one's tithing commitments to their local faith community, if any.
- c) ASSOCIATION TITHING—In the event that Specialized Ministry status is established, the Association will collectively tithe 7% of any undesignated contributions annually to the ECC as a recognized Specialized Ministry in the ECC as required by its Constitution.
- d) WAIVERS releasing a member of their financial responsibilities to RCA-ECC may be issued upon request for reasons of financial hardship.

ARTICLE 2 – PASTORAL COUNCIL or alternate form of Leadership

SECTION I – TERMS OF OFFICE FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS

- a) In the RCA's initial stages of formation, a Facilitator and Chaplain may serve as its temporary governing team.
 - i. The Facilitator will serve a renewable term of two years.
 - ii. The Chaplain will serve for an unspecified term as determined by their availability/willingness and the consensus of the membership; the Chaplaincy role may be filled by a non-retired minister (lay or ordained).
- b) If a formal Council is established, the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Council will serve renewable terms of two years each.
 - i. The terms of the Chair and Treasurer shall change on alternate years from the Vice-Chair and Secretary to stagger terms so that a consistent body of leadership will remain on the Council as Council Members complete their respective terms.
 - ii. If an elected Council Member leaves during their term, a member in good standing will be selected to fill the vacated position for the balance of the term.

SECTION III – RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL

- 1) The Chair (or Facilitator) shall:
 - a) serve as the official spokesperson for the RCA-ECC;
 - b) prepare the agenda and chair all meetings;
 - c) provide leadership;
 - d) serve as a channel for communication with the Office of Presiding Bishop, the HOP and the HOL to the membership;
 - e) if a bank account is established, be one of the authorized signatures required on the RCA-ECC checks issued for disbursements approved by the simple majority of the Council.

- 2) The Chaplain shall:
 - a) hold the whole in prayer;
 - b) be attentive to spoken and unspoken needs of the members and reach out to them for clarification and assistance or referral if needed;
 - c) help the members through difficult or contentious discussions and consensus decision-making during meetings;
 - d) In the absence of a full Board, the Chaplain must be consulted and approve of any decisions of the Facilitator.
- 3) The Vice-Chair shall:
 - a) assist the Chair in the planning of agendas and as otherwise needed;
 - b) perform the duties of the Chair in-their absence.
- 4) The Secretary (or Facilitator) shall:
 - a) be responsible for recording and producing minutes of all meetings and distribute the minutes to Council members and general membership accordingly;
 - b) keep the membership roster current;
 - c) keep all important documents and minutes of the RCA-ECC filed.
- 5) The Treasurer (or Facilitator or designated Member) shall:
 - a) be responsible for the maintenance and documentation of all records relative to the RCA-ECC finances;
 - b) be one of the authorized signatures required on the RCA-ECC checks issued for disbursements approved by the simple majority of the Council;
 - c) update the Secretary each time a member pays their dues;
 - d) maintain an accurate and current balance of all funds and provide a report for the Council at each meeting;
 - e) assist members with questions about annual dues;
 - f) assist members with questions about collective annual tithing to the larger ECC;
 - g) provide the Council members with a working budget annually.

SECTION IV – RESPONSIBILITIES OF GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

- 1) General Members shall:
 - a) participate/lead prayer, faith-sharing and discussions;
 - b) serve on committees established by the Council;
 - c) nominate members for consideration to serve on the Council;
 - d) contribute to the holy conversations of the HOP and the wider Synod;
 - e) fulfill responsibilities established by the Council;
 - f) promote the activities and committees of the RCA-ECC.

SECTION V – MEETINGS AND QUORUMS

- 1) The Leadership will hold regular meetings throughout the year, the sequence and times to be established by the serving Council members.
- 2) Members will be notified of general membership meetings throughout the year;
- 3) A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of the registered membership.

SECTION VI – RESPONSIBILITIES AS PART OF THE HOP

- 1) The members shall:
 - a) fully participate in the business of the HOP (while having no voting rights at the ECC National Synods unless said member is a delegate of another community);
 - b) engage in conversations regarding any proposed Synod legislation;
 - c) coordinate discussions related to proposing new legislation originating in the Association, if any, to be presented to the ECC Leadership Council.

ARTICLE III – ACCOUNTABILITY

SECTION I – EPISCOPAL OVERSIGHT

- 1) Retired bishops are welcome to be members of the Association, lending their pastoral guidance.
- 2) If Specialized Ministry status is established, per the ECC By-Laws, 7.8 , the Association shall conduct a review with the appropriate and designated member of the Council of Bishops (COB) no less than once every two (2) years. The Association shall assume all costs involved with this visitation.
- 3) The membership being geographically dispersed, the Bishop’s visitation would be virtual to facilitate broad participation (unless a physical retreat-like gathering is feasible).

SECTION II – FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Treasurer and any other volunteer(s) (or none) shall constitute the Finance Committee. The assistance of non-members would be welcomed.

SECTION III – CODE OF ETHICS

- 1) Each member of the Association shall abide by a code of ethics appropriate to their active ministry and to the code of ethics established by the Communion for clergy.
- 2) Per the ECC By-Laws, 7.12, the Association is responsible for the investigation of any allegation of misconduct by its own members or staff. Allegations of misconduct and the findings of the investigation shall be reported, according to established guidelines, to the appropriate representative of the COB and the Office of the Presiding Bishop, and appropriate actions shall be taken by the representatives of the Communion.

SECTION IV – MAINTAINING SACRAMENTAL FACULTIES

- 1) In order to maintain sacramental faculties, clergy members must be “in good standing” with their Ordinary and fulfill all of the requirements thereof.
 - a) This includes being “connected” to a local ECC community, attending “Healthy Boundaries” training at least every two years, and pursuing continuing education, et al.
 - b) Membership in a non-ECC faith community may meet these requirements if approved by the Ordinary; in special cases, membership in the RCA may fulfill the community membership requirement.
 - c) The “Healthy Boundaries” training requirement stands.

ARTICLE IV – FUNDRAISING

- 1) While dues may cover some of the expenses of the Association, we may need to solicit funds to meet our goal of helping members with better internet connectivity.
- 2) Providing financial assistance to members suffering catastrophic illness or need may warrant the establishment of special fundraising campaigns which the Association could coordinate.
- 3) We may also wish to appeal to the Mary Magdala Society to expand their mission to include the needs of our retired clergy in this regard, the anticipated allotment being meager. (This may need OPB and MMS input, and Synod approval.)

ARTICLE V – AMENDMENTS AND DISSOLUTION

Section I – AMENDMENTS

The By-Laws may be amended by a simple majority affirmative vote by a quorum of the membership at a duly called meeting.

Section II – DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION

The Retried Clergy Association of the ECC may call a meeting of the membership specifically for the purpose of considering the dissolution of the Association. Notice shall be given to the entire membership at least thirty (30) days prior to the designated meeting. In the event that three-fourths of the members present vote affirmatively, the association may be dissolved. Any assets that remain after all liabilities have been satisfied shall be distributed to the Ecumenical Catholic Communion.

Approved by

Facilitator

Date

Chaplain

Date

FOUNDING MEMBERS

Fr. Scott Jenkins
Fr. Jim DeMuth
Rev. David Gerardot
*(possibly Bishop Francis Krebs
and Bishop Denise Donato?)*

ADVISORY CONSULTANTS

Fr. Michael J. Nicosia
Fr. Frank Quintana
Tom Moos
Bishop Kae Madden
George Von Stamwitz
Fr. Teri Harroun

REFERENCE:

ECC By-Laws

7.0 Specialized Ministries

- 7.1 A specialized ministry is a faith community independent of a parish or religious order devoted to the service of a particular need or population such as:
- a. An educational institution such as a school, college, university or seminary;
 - b. An association of chaplains to a school, hospital, prison, military service or other institution;
 - c. A ministry organization created by members of the Communion, for the purpose of developing particular missions of spiritual development or social need.
- 7.2 A specialized ministry shall adhere to the guidelines of the Communion for Specialized ministries as administered by an appropriate representative of the COB and/or the Office of the Presiding Bishop.
- 7.3 A specialized ministry shall receive the endorsement of the Communion according to guidelines established by the Communion as administered by an appropriate representative of the COB and/or the Office of the Presiding Bishop.
- 7.4 The institution at which a chaplain endorsed by the Communion serves shall be the employer of record for that chaplain. No financial obligation is assumed by the Communion for a chaplain in such service.
- 7.5 A specialized ministry, other than an institutional chaplaincy, shall be legally incorporated and shall establish appropriate governing boards and finance committees. The corporation established for the specialized ministry shall be the employer of record for all employed by the incorporated specialized ministry, and no financial obligation is assumed by the communion for that specialized ministry.
- 7.6 A specialized ministry shall be financially self-sustaining to be admitted to the Communion and form a finance committee prior to admission.
- 7.7 The specialized ministry shall uphold its financial obligations to the Communion by regular and appropriate contributions as established by the synod.
- 7.8 Each specialized ministry shall conduct a review with the appropriate and designated member of the COB no less than once every two (2) years. The specialized ministry shall assume all costs involved with this review.
- 7.9 Any individual engaged in a specialized ministry shall abide by a code of ethics appropriate to that ministry and to the code of ethics established by the Communion for clergy, if the individual is an ordained member of the Communion.

7.10 Each specialized ministry, as a legal corporation, is the responsible authority for the ministry and the employer of record for its staff. The Communion holds no legal responsibility or liability for the conduct of the members or employees of the each specialized ministry.

7.11 Specialized ministries shall be represented at the synod in the following manner:

- a. Educational institutions shall be represented in the HOP at the synod of the Communion by its senior administrative member and one additional member as selected by the institution. Representation in the HOL shall be the appropriate number of lay members of the educational institution, as prescribed by the formula for the representation of parishes.
- b. Chaplains shall be represented in the HOP, through an association of all chaplains, by two (2) ordained members.
- c. Each ministry organization shall be represented in the HOP by its senior administrative member and one additional member as selected by the ministry organization. Representation in the HOL shall be by the appropriate number of lay members of the ministry organization, as prescribed by the formula for the representation of lay members in parishes.

7.12 Each specialized ministry, (each educational institution, the associations of chaplains and each ministry organization), is responsible for the investigation of any allegation of misconduct by its own members or staff. Allegations of misconduct and the findings of the investigation shall be reported, according to established guidelines, to the appropriate representative of the COB and the Office of the Presiding Bishop, and appropriate actions shall be taken by the representatives of the Communion.