

The Church of St. Augustine
Denver, CO

Constitution

Adopted June 26, 2005

Preamble

We, as founding members of the Church of St. Augustine, hereby adopt this Constitution and pledge ourselves to be governed and guided by its provisions to assure our continual fidelity to the principles, values, and religious faith which comprise the shared communal foundations that have brought us together.

Name, Incorporation and Affiliation

The name of this entity shall be: Church of St. Augustine.

Hereinafter, the Church of St. Augustine may be referred to as the “church,” or the “parish,” or the “community” or the “community of faith.”

The Church of St. Augustine shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Colorado.

The Church of St. Augustine will be affiliated as a member congregation of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion.

Mission Statement

We come together as a community of faith for this reason: to reach out with the love of Christ to every person, and especially to anyone who has been turned away from or is without a spiritual home. We will always invite, welcome and embrace every person who wishes to join with us as we seek to live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We know ourselves in baptism as Christians, and in our distinctive beliefs, practices, worship and communion with one another as Catholics. We are disciples within the ancient, continuing Catholic Church. Knowing we are imperfect in ourselves and in our communion of faith, we seek by grace to continually reform ourselves and our Church. Our mission is the great commandment to love God and one another in Christ.

Our vision is of the eventual unity of all Christians, and the ultimate reconciliation of all peoples in God’s love, through Jesus Christ by the help of the Holy Spirit. We devote ourselves and our Church to this vision, knowing our communion to be imperfect and provisional, and gladly willing to sacrifice any particular form or identity no matter how dear to us, in the service of that unity which God intends.

Articles of Faith and Distinctives of the Church

The Church is a community of Catholic Christians. We in the Independent Catholic movement joyfully consider ourselves sisters and brothers in Catholic faith with all Roman Catholics, the Orthodox, Anglicans, Old Catholics and other Christians who name themselves Catholic. Like them, we treasure the heritage of Catholic faith handed down through the centuries, and we accept the Divine Revelation that is present in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. We recognize that diverse traditions have interpreted these sources in varying ways; we trust that the Holy Spirit informs and abides with all who through these gifts earnestly seek to know and follow Jesus Christ and his Gospel.

We celebrate the Sacraments, as Catholic Christians have done in ever-evolving forms since the beginnings of the Christian era. Among these the highest is the Eucharist, through which Christians celebrate and proclaim their faith and oneness in and through Jesus Christ, and the coming of his Kingdom. We bow in awe at the consecration of bread and wine which by the power of the Holy Spirit become his sacred Body and Blood. We believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

We embrace the teaching of the undivided Church of the first millennium, including the ancient Creeds (Apostles Creed, Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed), and the pronouncements of the first seven Ecumenical Councils of the Church.

We respect the dignity of the Papal Office, and regard the Roman Pontiff, the Bishop of Rome, as *primus inter pares*, the first among equals of the Catholic bishops of the world. We are not in communion with Rome, though we seek the unity of all Catholics and all Christians and all people of faith throughout the world.

We embrace and respect our forebears in the independent Catholic movement, the Churches of the Utrecht Union, and we incorporate by reference the Declaration of Utrecht as an indispensable element of this Constitution. We seek communion with the Old Catholic Churches who are members of the Utrecht Union.

Membership

Our members are baptized Christians or catechumens who name themselves Catholic or are anticipating reception into this Catholic Church; who regularly attend and worship at this Church; who support the church by their stewardship of time, talent and treasure; and who pledge themselves as disciples of Jesus Christ living according to his Gospel.

Membership in the parish entitles one to be elected or named to positions of leadership including the Parish Council and other committees of the Church, and to serve the community in its worship and activities. Members are invited to commit themselves by signing the Parish Covenant, which embraces our Mission, Articles of Faith, this Constitution, and the principles of Stewardship, Ministry Participation, and Prayer Life.

The worship services of the Church shall always be open to all who desire to worship with us, both members and non-members.

For the purposes of decisions to be taken by any vote of the Parish Members, a quorum shall be comprised of 60% of the registered members of the Parish, present and accounted for or represented by authorized Proxy ballots.

Clergy

Pastor

The Pastor of the Parish will be selected by the people and clergy of the parish from among candidates found to be duly qualified by the Parish Council according to the norms established by the Ecumenical Catholic Communion. Lay and clergy members of the parish will vote with equal rights to elect a Pastor from among applicant finalists nominated and screened by the Parish Council.

The Pastor provides spiritual leadership for the community of faith, according to the evolving Catholic understanding of the Gospel mandate to “teach, govern and sanctify” the people of God. The role of governance shall be broadly interpreted to mean the facilitation, guidance and mediation of consensus decision making in collaboration with the community’s elected representatives, the members of the Parish Council. The Pastor does not dominate or rule by authority, but rather serves the community as its spiritual leader, guiding the parish in seeking the leadings of the Holy Spirit in all decisions. Ultimate decisional authority rests with the people through their Parish Council except in matters of spirituality, worship, and religious education, for which the Pastor is primarily responsible. The Pastor serves at will, that is, at the pleasure of the Parish, through its elected Parish Council, by virtue of a written Employment Agreement. The Council may not interfere in the Pastor’s primary role of providing spiritual leadership, overseeing the worship and religious education of the Parish; however, the Council may find the Pastor wanting in these regards, and may seek to replace the Pastor on such account at any time.

Selection of a Pastor: Upon a vacancy in the office of Pastor, the Parish Council will appoint a Search Committee which will make known the vacancy and issue a Call for Pastor through established Church and Communion channels, including appropriate advertisements. Candidates will be interviewed by the Search Committee according to the criteria established by the Council and by the Ecumenical Catholic Communion. The Search Committee will present the names and applications of candidates to the Diocese for pre-qualification and approval by the diocesan vocational board and the Bishop. If possible, three finalists for the position will be named by the Search Committee, and presented to the entire parish membership for their introduction and personal presentations, including leading the worship and preaching the Gospel at a regular Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. The members of the Parish will gather in a special meeting to vote for one candidate who, if she/he accepts, will become the Pastor of the Parish.

Other Clergy

Other, assisting clergy may be selected and appointed by the people and clergy of the parish from among candidates found to be duly qualified by the Parish Council according to the norms established by the Ecumenical Catholic Communion. Lay and clergy members of the parish will vote with equal rights for an assisting clergy, to be known as “Assistant Pastor” or

“Associate Pastor,” from among applicant finalists nominated and screened by the Parish Council.

Once appointed, assisting clergy serve at the pleasure of the Pastor, who will consult with the people of the Parish in decisions regarding any modifications to the role, or the continued engagement of the clergy.

Compensation of the Pastor and other Clergy. The Pastor and any other Clergy will be hired subject to the provisions of an Employment Agreement acceptable to the Clergy and the Parish Council. Compensation will be based upon the professional and ministerial experience of the Clergy, the just and fair salary suggested by a careful review of clergy salaries in the Parish’s market area, the earning needs of the Clergy, and the financial wherewithal of the Parish. A good faith negotiation of compensation shall include consideration of providing health insurance, disability coverage and other employment benefits. These shall be determined in the light of the Clergy’s needs and the Parish’s financial wherewithal.

Removal of Pastor. In the event of a conflict between the Pastor and the Council or the members of the Parish, a process of mediation and conflict resolution will first be entered into by all parties, at the direction and with the facilitation of the Bishop. If good faith attempts at reconciliation of the differences are unsuccessful, the Pastor may be removed from office and discharged from employment by the Parish Council if any of the following conditions are found to exist:

- Gross incompetence of the Pastor; behavior in violation of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Parish or the Ecumenical Catholic Communion;
- Physical, mental or emotional impairments which prevent the individual from carrying out the role of Pastor;
- Criminal misconduct;
- Serious doctrinal error divergence from the Articles of Faith or the Mission Statements of the Parish or the ECC;
- Abuse of power or position

Removal of the Pastor will require a vote of 3/4 of all the members of the Parish Council, upon which the matter will be referred to a special meeting of the members of the Parish, whose vote in favor of removal of the Pastor must be not less than 3/4 of a quorum present.

The Parish Council

The Parish Council (hereinafter, “the Council”) is the highest decision-making authority of the Parish. Elections to Parish Council will be held at the Annual Meeting of the Parish, to be held each year in January. The Pastor is a voting member of the Council. No fewer than five (5) other members of Council shall be elected by the members of the Parish. Council members shall be elected to serve in staggered terms of not more than two (2) years, subject to re-election for not more than three (3) consecutive terms. Each year, two or more Council seats will be up for election.

The Council delegates authority to the Pastor for her/his able performance of pastoral oversight of the Parish, mindful of the Pastor’s mandate to “teach, govern and sanctify” the Parish. The Pastor also provides appropriate, necessary direction and supervision for any other

church employees, including assisting clergy, collaborating with the Parish Council in these matters.

The Parish Council shall meet at least bi-monthly, or no fewer than six meetings per year, and as often as necessary beyond this.

The Council is charged with fiduciary responsibility on behalf of the Parish, and is authorized to govern, oversee, manage all the affairs of the Parish with the exception of those specifically delegated to the Pastor by this Constitution. In particular, the Council must oversee such elements of Parish life as these:

- Financial accountability; fundraising; bookkeeping and accounting; disbursements.
- Stewardship from the community of faith and to the ECC and the Parish's designated charitable recipients and outreach ministries.
- The physical needs of the parish environment, including provision of safe, dependable, suitable worship and meeting space; religious elements of worship, ritual and celebration; adequate supplies for social fellowship.
- Capital acquisitions of property and equipment.
- Active involvement in the neighborhood and outside community; Public relations.
- Hospitality.

The Council may appoint whatever Committees it deems useful for the better life and management of the Parish. Each Committee should have at least one Council member among its own members to assure effective liaison with the Council.

The Council may select and appoint, in consultation and collaboration with the Pastor, a Parish Administrator who will attend to the Parish's office administration, bookkeeping, payroll, governmental and other reports due, and other duties as designated by the Pastor and the Council. Once appointed, the Administrator will serve at the pleasure of the Pastor, who will consult with the Parish Council in decisions regarding any modifications to the role, or the continued engagement of the Administrator.

Officers. The Officers of the Parish Council shall be as follows, all positions elected by the elected members of the Council, immediately following each year's election.

- Two Co-Chairs who will in turn preside at Parish Council and other meetings, and who will be legally empowered to act in the name of and on behalf of the Parish.
- A Secretary, who will also serve as the official Corporate Secretary of the Parish, and who will be legally empowered to complete and submit documents and reports required by government agencies or Communion or other offices. The Secretary shall maintain accurate minutes of Parish meetings, decisions, elections and other matters in the official Parish files.
- A Treasurer, who will be legally empowered to collect, deposit, and disburse Parish funds in collaboration with the Pastor under the oversight of the Council. The Treasurer may also, if qualified, be hired by the Parish through its Council to provide bookkeeping services, at a compensation agreeable to both. In the role of bookkeeper, this person would serve at the pleasure of the Pastor, who will consult with the Parish Council in decisions regarding any modifications to the role, or the continued engagement of the

bookkeeper. However, the Pastor may not unilaterally discharge the elected Treasurer, whose appointment and duties are determined by the Parish Council in consultation with the Pastor.

Amendment of the Constitution and By-Laws

Any proposed amendment to the Constitution shall be submitted by a Parish Council member to the full Council at least one month prior to the regular Council meeting at which it will be considered.

Adoption of any constitutional amendment will require a $\frac{3}{4}$ affirmative vote by all the members of the Parish Council, upon which the matter will be referred to a special meeting of the members of the Parish, whose vote in favor of must be not less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of Parish Members, including those represented by authorized Proxy ballots.

An adopted amendment will take effect immediately unless otherwise provided by its terms.

Initial Ratification. This Constitution shall be ratified by an affirmative vote of not less than 75% of Parish Members attending a special meeting for its consideration, including those represented by authorized Proxy ballots.

Separation From The Church

Denial of the Christian faith, or of the Articles of Faith or Mission Statement set forth herein by the Church or by the ECC, shall be cause for the discipline or separation of a member from the Church. So too shall conduct unbecoming a member of the Church, including the protracted engagement of bitter dispute, the refusal to mediate or reconcile differences, or the persistent, intemperate disrespect for other members or clergy of the Church. In the event of such unpleasantness, the Parish Council will seek to reconcile the dispute or to curtail the offensive behavior, in accordance with the Gospel model provided in Matthew 18:15-17.

- First, private admonition and counseling by the Pastor.
- Next, admonition and counseling by the Pastor, Council leaders and other appropriate members of the Parish.
- Failing this, the Pastor will respectfully request that the offending member depart the membership of the Church.
- The Pastor will duly document each step of this process.
- Reinstatement to membership in the Parish is to be sought whenever it appears likely or fruitful. Above all, reconciliation is to be desired and sought.

Dissolution

The property of the Church is irrevocably dedicated to religious purposes, and no part of the net income or assets of the Church shall ever inure to the benefit of any director, officer, Pastor or member of the Church, or to the benefit of any private person. Upon the dissolution or winding up of the Church as a corporate entity, its assets remaining shall be distributed to a non-profit fund, foundation or corporation which is organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes and which has established its tax exempt status under Section 501©(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.