

Southwest Michigan Episcopal Covenant Operating Principles

1. Each Parish is responsible for its own administration by its Vestry and the Rector as defined in the Canons of the Episcopal Church.

2. **Covenant Leadership Council**

General responsibilities of the Leadership Council

- a. Financial oversight of funding and payments for Covenant clergy needs
- b. Financial oversight of Covenant Operating Fund used for approved Covenant related expenditures
- c. Organize Covenant communication and fellowship activities
- d. Coordinate consensus decisions on matters concerning member parishes that support and enhance our Covenant ministries.
- e. Parish positions will be recorded at the Leadership Council meeting by a roll call of parishes and documented responses.

Consensus is defined as:

a: general agreement; the judgment arrived at by most of those concerned

b: group solidarity in sentiment and belief

c. consensus may be determined by a vote of those present

- f. Following annual meeting one representative from each parish is replaced on the Leadership Council for a two-year term. Each successive year the alternate representative is replaced. One representative from each parish should be a warden, preferably the Senior Warden. At minimum the representative should be a vestry member.
 - g. The Leadership Council Convenor is appointed by the Rector but would not be considered a parish representative. The Convenor serves ex-officio except in the case of a tie.
 - h. The Covenant Treasurer may be a parish representative or serve ex-officio.
3. Leadership Council representatives will provide a monthly report to the Vestry of their parish and be a communication link reporting vestry input back to the Leadership Council.
 4. The financial records and payments of the Covenant will be the responsibility of a Covenant Treasurer to be appointed by consensus between the Rector and the Leadership Council.
 5. The Leadership Council and Covenant Treasurer will present a proposed budget for the Covenant in the fall, to be approved by the Vestries of each parish. Vestries of each parish will submit a pledge toward the required budget, adjusting their pledge as needed so that the proposed budget is covered.

6. Parishes will submit their agreed contribution at least one month in advance of needed disbursements. Quarterly payments are preferred, as some expenses (pension and insurance) are billed quarterly.
7. The Covenant Treasurer will submit a monthly report to the Leadership Council and the Vestry of each parish. This will serve both as information and financial oversight. An annual audit and report to all members will be required.
8. Any changes to the Covenant Agreement and Operating Principles must be approved by the Vestry of each parish.

An amendment process is as follows:

- a. Information presented to vestry
- b. Vestry presents information to parish, holding meetings as needed for discussion with concerns presented to Leadership Council for consideration and response.
 - i. Covenant wide meeting is arranged if deemed necessary with concerns considered and addressed
- c. Consensus decision of the parishes represented with the parish position being recorded.
(This process was previously presented to the Covenant parishes and approved.)

Approved 6/2/19; Amended 9/8/19.