

Book of Common Life

American Apostolic Catholic Church

MISSION STATEMENT

As part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, our mission is rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We provide an affirming, evangelical, and sacramental presence to all in their diversity. We as an ecumenical community strive for the prophetic work of fostering unity while celebrating the various faith traditions among Christians in accord with Jesus' prayer "... that we may all be one." As a servant people of God, we are called to ministries that are loving, inclusive, and justice bearing for the sake of God's reign by breaking down the divisions among the human family.

DECLARATION OF UTRECHT

This church subscribes to the Declaration of Utrecht without addition or subtraction.

CANON LAW AND BYLAWS

PREAMBLE

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Remembering the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ that the disciples might be one just as Jesus Christ and God are one,

And believing that the Spirit is ever leading God's people toward unity in the household of God, We are persuaded that the time has come for us to make a united profession of faith and work together in unity for a more effective stewardship of God's divine gifts to us.

We yearn for God to gather us together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings.

Thus, after prayer and reflection, it seems good to the Holy Spirit and to us that we adopt these canons to proclaim and govern our common life in Christ and our united witness to our God, praying that the One who is Sovereign of the Church may thereby lead us toward a more inclusive union of all people who bear witness to the Gospel.

We entreat our God to nurture us with the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and reverence of the Sovereign One, and the spirit of joy in the presence of the Holy One.

We implore our God to comfort us as a mother comforts her children, and bless us with the gifts of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, so that living and guided by the Spirit we may see to fulfill the call of the Creator: to serve all people, for all are one in Jesus Christ.

[John 17:22; Matthew 23:37; Acts 15:28; Isaiah 66:13; Galatians 5:22-26; Galatians 3:28]

Canon I – Name and Incorporation

1. The name of this church shall be the American Apostolic Catholic Church.
2. The American Apostolic Catholic Church shall be incorporated in the State of Michigan.
3. For the purpose of these Canons and the accompanying bylaws, the American Apostolic Catholic Church shall hereafter be referred to as "this church."

Canon II – Confession of Faith

1. This church confesses Jesus Christ as Sovereign of the Church. The Holy Spirit creates and sustains the Church through the Gospel and thereby unites believers with their Sovereign and with one another in the household of faith.

2. This church confesses that the Gospel is the revelation of God's sovereign will and saving grace in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Word Incarnate, the Word of God, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.
3. This church confesses the ecumenical creeds, Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed, as true declarations of the faith of the Church.
4. This church confesses the Holy Scriptures as the norm for the faith and life of the Church. The canonical Scriptures of the Prime Covenant (Old Testament) and the Christian Covenant (New Testament) are inspired by the Spirit and record God's redemptive acts, which reveal and announce God's covenants with the children of God. The Scriptures bear witness to God's love and redemptive acts for the children of God in every generation. The canonical books of the Christian Covenant (New Testament) proclaim the revelation and covenant centering in Jesus Christ. Through all of the Scriptures God's spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and call us to service in the world. In the continuation of the proclamation of the Church, God speaks through the Scriptures and realizes the Gospel's redemptive purpose generation after generation.
5. This church confesses that it acknowledges the Spirit's gift of the ecumenical tradition of the Church. This church will, as we are able, by reason and mutual consultation, mediate that tradition anew in each generation, always seeking the aid and guidance of the Spirit.
6. This church confesses that the Gospel revealed in Jesus Christ, transmitted by the Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds, to which the ecumenical tradition bears witness, is the treasure of the Church, the substance of its proclamation, and the basis of its unity and continuity. The Holy Spirit uses the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments to create and sustain Christian faith and unity, to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.
7. This church confesses the oneness of all humanity, for each person has been made in the image of God, created by God and breathes with the breath of life given by God. In the Gospel we all are one in Jesus Christ. The Church, for the sake of the Gospel and for its own sake, is called to regard each human being as a person created and loved by God, a person for whom Christ is Incarnate. The Gospel is to be proclaimed to all people. The evangelical mission of the Church is to all people. Each person is called by the Spirit to receive the welcome, comfort, shelter, and redeeming love of the Church; to partake in the gifts of Word and Sacrament as a member of the family of faith in response to and faith in the Gospel; and share in the mission and ministry of the Church. In accordance with the Gospel, this church rejects distinctions amongst people for reasons of race, ethnicity, color, gender, physical challenges, sexual orientation, cultural heritage, or any other false dichotomy when these distinctions result in divisions in the family of God, for the very diversity of humanity reflects the image of God.
8. This church confesses that it is but a portion of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church which is, will be, and remain forever. This is the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the Holy Sacraments are administered according to the Gospel. For it is sufficient for the true unity of the Church that the Gospel be preached in accordance with a pure understanding of it and that the Sacraments be administered in accordance with the divine Word, which is Jesus Christ.
9. This church confesses that it is mindful of Jesus Christ's prayer that the Church be one. This church confesses that the multitude of individual church bodies, of which this church is but one, is a scandal and a sin against Christ and the evangelical mission of Christ's Church. Accordingly, this church shall not exist for its own sake or seek to perpetrate its existence in human history. This church shall endeavor to work with other church bodies in the proclamation and mission of the Church. This church shall endeavor to dialogue with other church bodies regarding the common faith we share and the differing insights into the

- fullness of the Gospel that God has granted to the various church bodies and faith-traditions. All are called to be a part of the catholic unity of the people of God, a unity which is harbinger of the universal peace it promotes. This church, seeing itself as catholic, shall take steps necessary, in conformance with this confession of faith, to acknowledge as one in faith and doctrine other church bodies for the furthering of the ecumenical and evangelical witness. With integrity to the Spirit's calling of this church into being and without forsaking our own history and confession, this church shall seek organic unity with other church bodies as we are able, and where unable, to have communion with other church bodies in the fullest measures that are possible. It will be the continuing fulfillment of this church's purpose and witness when its clergy and laity can unite with other church bodies in organic unity in our faithful and obedient response to Jesus Christ's prayer that the Church be one.
10. We confess that we do not have the option of keeping the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to ourselves. The uncommunicated gospel is a patent contradiction. Evangelism is rooted in gratitude for God's self-sacrificing love, in obedience to the Risen One. Confessing Christ must be done today. It cannot wait for a time that is comfortable for us. We must be prepared to proclaim the Gospel when human beings need to hear it. But in our zeal to spread the Good News, we must guard against fanaticism which disrupts the hearing of the Gospel and breaks the community of God. The world requires, and God demands, that we recognize the urgency to proclaim the saving word of God – today. God's acceptable time demands that we respond in all haste.
 11. This church acknowledges and accepts the unaltered Augsburg Confession of the Lutheran Church (1525) as a true witness to the Gospel.
 12. This church acknowledges and accepts the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (1964) of the Roman Catholic Church as a true witness to the Gospel.
 13. This church acknowledges and accepts the Articles of Religion (1801) of the Episcopal Church as a true witness to the Gospel.
 14. This church acknowledges and accepts the Articles of Religion (1784) of the Methodist Church as a true witness to the Gospel.
 15. This church acknowledges and accepts the Westminster Confession of Faith (1646) of the Presbyterian Church as a true witness to the Gospel.
 16. This church acknowledges and accepts the Second Helvetic Confession (1566) of the Reformed Churches as a true witness to the Gospel.
 17. This church acknowledges and accepts the Statement of Baptist Faith and Message (1925) as a true witness to the Gospel. (to be voted upon by this church at the 2004 Assembly)
 18. This church shall seek, at assemblies of this church in 2005 and thereafter to acknowledge other confessions of other church traditions where we recognize a true witness to the Gospel.

Canon III – Membership

1. This church shall consist at its organization of the congregations and clergy who subscribe to these Canons and Bylaws. The word "clergy" is understood to mean persons ordained in one of the three forms of ordained ministry: bishop, presbyter (pastor, priest), and deacon. The clergy and the congregations are constituent to this church.
2. Additional congregations and clergy may be received as set forth elsewhere in these Canons and Bylaws.
3. Congregations and clergy, when organized into a diocese, may through such diocese unite with this church upon application for membership, subscription to these Canons including the Confession of Faith, and acceptance by a two-thirds vote of the delegates present and voting at an assembly of this church.

Canon IV – Nature of the Church

1. All power in the Church belongs to our Sovereign, our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this church are to be carried out under Christ's rule and authority.
2. The Church exists both as an inclusive communion and as local congregations and ministries gathered for worship and Christian mission. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. This church derives its character and powers from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader communion of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the community of believers and congregations in this our day.
3. The Church is the community of believers in which Jesus Christ presently works in the Word and Sacraments through the Holy Spirit. With the Church's faith and obedience, with the Church's message as well as her ordinances, the Church has to witness, in the midst of the world of sin, as the Church of forgiven sinners, that the Church belongs to Christ alone and lives and wishes to live only by Christ's comfort and Christ's counsel in expectation of Christ's appearance.
4. The Church is one because it belongs to Jesus Christ. The Church is holy because the Holy Spirit dwells in it, consecrates its members, and guides them to do God's work. The Church is catholic because it proclaims the whole faith to all people to the end of time. The Church is apostolic because it continues in the teaching and community of the apostles and is sent to carry Christ's mission to all people. The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ. The Church pursues its mission as it prays and worships, proclaims the Gospel and celebrates the Sacraments, and promotes justice, peace, and love. The Church carries out its mission through the ministry of all of its members.
5. The Church is called to make the Gospel real in human history. The Church does not exist for itself; the Church exists for the sake of its mission to incarnate justice, mercy, liberation, reconciliation, and healing, to feed the hungry, to act with and on behalf of the poor and dispossessed, and to proclaim the prophetic word of God.
6. The Church possesses the right to call, elect, and ordain individuals to the offices of the ordained ministry, which are instituted for the sake of good order in the Church. This right includes the practice of requiring each of its actively serving ordained clergy to be under a call to service. This is a gift given exclusively to the Church and is attested to by Scripture and tradition. This right is vested in the whole Church for all who are baptized are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation. (I Peter 2:9) Thus the ministry of the Church is vested in all of the baptized members of the Church, for it is they who comprise the royal priesthood, the priesthood of all believers. The offices of ordained ministry are for service of and not to the Church; there is no rule of one office of ordained ministry over the other, nor of those who are ordained over the laity. The ministry of all the baptized is the essential and real ministry of the Church, for the baptized have been called to live out their baptismal covenants in the doing of the mission of the Church.

Canon V – Objects and Powers

1. This church lives to be the instrument of the Holy Spirit in obedience to the commission of Jesus Christ, its Sovereign, and specifically:
 - a. to proclaim the Gospel through Word and Sacrament, to relate the Gospel to human need in every situation, and to extend the ministry of the Gospel to all people.
 - b. to gather into the household of God through the congregations, missions, and ministries of this church those who respond in faith to the call of the Gospel and to nurture them in the faith.

- c. to affirm its unity in the true faith and to give outward expression of that unity.
 - d. to safeguard the pure preaching of the Word of God and the right administration of the Sacraments by its bishops and presbyters and in all congregations, missions, and ministries in conformity with its Confession of Faith.
 - e. to strive for the unification of all with whom we are one in faith and doctrine within the boundaries of one church body and to take constructive measures leading toward that goal when such action will extend the mission of Christ's reconciling love.
 - f. to foster Christian unity and to serve humanity by participating in ecumenical Christian activities, contributing its witness and work and cooperating with other church bodies which confess the Trinity as we understand it in the ecumenical creeds.
 - g. to develop relationships with communities of other faiths for dialogue and common action.
 - h. to lift its voice in concord and to work in concert with forces for good, cooperating with religious and other groups participating in activities that seek justice, promote justice, liberate the oppressed, relieve misery, and reconcile the estranged.
2. To achieve these ends, this church shall:
- a. establish and receive congregations, missions, and ministries.
 - b. further missions in America and throughout the world.
 - c. prepare and ordain deacons for service to this church and its people and be responsible for the discipline of the deacons in its membership.
 - d. prepare and ordain presbyters of the Gospel, for the office of Word and Sacrament and be responsible for the discipline of the presbyters in its membership.
 - e. discern and elect bishops for the dioceses and this church, consecrate bishops with episcopal hands, for the humble ministry in service to this church in shepherding the faithful, exhorting its members to greater faithfulness and fidelity to the Gospel, and preserving the true faith in accordance with this church's Confession of Faith; and this church shall be responsible for the discipline of the bishops in its membership.
 - f. to establish missions for chaplaincy service, to serve the spiritual needs of people including but not limited to students in schools of higher learning, hospital patients, residents of care facilities, those who are imprisoned.
 - g. provide institutions and agencies to minister to human need in the name of Christ our Sovereign.
 - h. study contemporary society in the light of the Gospel and witness to the truth of God in relation thereto.
 - i. issue study materials setting forth Christian truth and disseminate knowledge concerning the teachings, practices, history, and life of this church.
 - j. establish and be responsible for the discipline of religious orders and monasteries.
 - k. cultivate edifying practices of worship and prepare and publish books of worship for congregational, family, and personal use.
 - l. decide all questions of doctrine and life on the basis of the Holy Scriptures, with reference to the ecumenical tradition and reason in accordance with the Confession of Faith of this church.
 - m. act in and through the dioceses for the proper administration of this church's work entrusted to them.
 - n. establish such churchwide structures and agencies as are deemed appropriate to carry out assigned responsibilities.
 - o. estimate financial needs for support of the approved work of this church and solicit and disburse funds for such work.

Canon VI – The Holy Sacraments

1. Baptism means participating in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Baptism is the sign of new life through Jesus Christ. It unites the one baptized with Christ and with Christ's people. The Christian Covenant (New Testament) scriptures and the liturgy of the Church unfold the meaning of baptism in various images which express the riches of Christ and the gifts of salvation. Baptism is participation in Christ's death and resurrection (Romans 6:3-5, Colossians 2:12); a washing away of sin (I Corinthians 6:11); a new birth (John 3:5); an enlightenment by Christ (Ephesians 5:14); a reclothing in Christ (Galatians 3:27); a renewal by the Spirit (Titus 3:5); the experience of salvation from the flood (I Peter 3:20-21); an exodus from bondage (I Corinthians 10:1-2), a liberation into a new humanity in which barriers of division whether of sex or race or social status are transcended (Galatians 3:27-28; I Corinthians 12:13). The images are many but the reality is one.
2. The Eucharist is the gift which God makes to us in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Every Christian receives this gift of salvation through communion in the Body and Blood of Christ. In the Eucharistic meal, in the eating and drinking of the bread and wine, Christ grants communion with Christ's own self. God acts, giving life to the body of Christ and renewing each member. In accordance with Christ's promise, each baptized member of the body of Christ receives in the Eucharist the assurance of the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28) and the pledge of eternal life (John 6:51-58). The true Body and Blood of Christ are really present in the Supper of our Lord under the form of bread and wine and are there distributed and received.
3. This church body recognizes Christian baptisms performed with water in the Name of the Trinity in accordance with Matthew 28:19. To knowingly rebaptize a person who has been baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is an act of unfaith and a denial of God's infinite grace.
4. The reception of the Eucharist is open to all baptized believers. It is the practice of this church to commune all who are baptized.
5. Other sacramental Rites of this church are confirmation, ordination, holy matrimony, reconciliation of a penitent, and anointing of the sick.
 - a. Confirmation is the sacrament in which a person expresses a mature commitment to Christ by affirming the vows made in Baptism, and receives strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by a bishop or presbyter.
 - b. Ordination is the sacrament in which God gives authority and the grace of the Holy Spirit to those being made bishops, presbyters, and deacons, through prayer and the laying on of episcopal hands.
 - c. Holy Matrimony is the sacrament of Christian marriage in which two people make their vows before God and the Church to enter in a life-long union and receive the grace and blessing of God to help them fulfill their vows.
 - d. Reconciliation of a Penitent, or penance, is the sacrament in which those who repent of their sins may confess them to God in the presence of a presbyter and receive the assurance of pardon and the grace of absolution, spoken in God's stead and by God's command. This is the power of the keys, and is comforting and necessary for the relief of troubled consciences.
 - e. The sacrament of Anointing of the Sick with oil by a bishop or presbyter is the means by which God's grace is given for the healing of spirit, body, and mind.

Canon VII - Mission Imperative of this Church

This church, its dioceses, parishes, agencies, missions, orders, and other expressions understand that the call of God to do mission is upon us, and that the time to do mission is now, for the eschatological expectation of the Gospel does not allow for us to know the end-time of our

ministry. Therefore, this church forsakes spending precious time or resources on that which is peripheral to the Gospel and the labor we have been called to do.

Canon VIII – Reception Into This Church

Congregations and clergy may be received into this church as congregations or as individual clergy through the dioceses in accordance with adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church and acceptance of the Canons and Bylaws of this church.

Canon IX – Congregations

1. A congregation of this church is a worshipping, learning, witnessing, and serving community of baptized persons among whom the Word is proclaimed and the Sacraments are celebrated according to the Gospel, and whose corporate existence is recognized by this church.
2. Congregations of this church retain authority in matters that have not been committed to the American Apostolic Catholic Church or its dioceses in these Canons and Bylaws or by subsequent enactments.
3. After the organization of this church, admission of a congregation into this church's membership shall be by action of the diocese on whose territory it is located. Each congregation shall, in application for admission to this church, covenant to abide loyally by the enactments of this church and of the diocese of which it becomes constituent.
4. The lay delegates who represent congregations in diocesan assemblies shall be chosen by the congregations themselves. Each diocese shall act for its member congregations in electing delegates to represent them in assemblies of this church.
5. Congregations shall have the right to petition this church by petitions addressed to the diocese or the annual assembly of this church.
6. The bishop of the diocese is the chief pastor, advisor, shepherd, servant, and teacher of the congregation. The presbyter of the congregation is the spiritual leader, and the professional-in-residence in matters pertaining to the life of the local Christian community, including such areas as worship, theology, evangelism, and Christian education.
7. Authority to call a presbyter shall be in the congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting regularly called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the offers or a committee elected by the Parish Council shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the diocese, and interview only those candidates recommended by the bishop.
8. The presbyter of the congregation may be known as pastor or as priest as local custom and the presbyter's preference coincide. A congregation may have a pastor or a pastoral team.
9. The powers of the congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose and are vested in the Congregational Meeting called and conducted as provided in the congregation's constitution and bylaws.
10. Each congregation shall be incorporated and adopt a constitution and bylaws which shall affirm specifically the Confession of Faith of these Canons and those portions of this church's Canons and Bylaws as designated by the Church Council and ratified by the national assembly.
11. Each congregation shall keep its own financial records, control its receipts and expenditures, and conduct an annual audit, all of which shall be fully reported to the congregation at the Congregational Meeting and copies of which shall be forwarded to the Secretary of the diocese for publication in the annual reports of the diocese to be available at the diocesan assembly.
12. Each congregation is authorized to approve its annual budget; acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means; hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose; sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means; and elect its officers, Parish Council, boards and

committees, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution and bylaws of the congregation.

13. Each congregation shall support the wider work of the Church through, among other means, financial support ("benevolence") to the diocese, and thus by extension, this church and the wider Church through this church's ecumenical, evangelical, and relief activities. The amount of each congregation's benevolence will be locally and individually determined, taking into account the financial situation of the congregation, and set in consultation between the presbyter and Parish Council and the bishop of the diocese. Benevolence is a goal for which a congregation strives; it is not a legalistic requirement. The diocese will assist the congregation with benevolence by educational and stewardship program support.
14. Other duties, powers, and mission responsibilities of the congregation are described in other portions of these Canons and Bylaws.

Canon X – Additional Matters Regarding Congregations

1. Congregations shall by ballot extend a call to a presbyter on the roster of this church to serve as its priest/pastor. The call-ballot shall require a majority of those members of the congregation present and voting at a call meeting. Congregations shall be given by its diocesan bishop the name of a single presbyter or a list of names of several presbyters to be considered when a vacancy in the pastoral/priestly office occurs in the congregation, as the various dioceses choose to operate. If the congregation does not want to pursue a relationship with the presbyter(s) recommended by its bishop, it shall so notify the bishop and request further recommendations. A congregation shall not seek a presbyter outside the recommendations of its bishop, nor call a presbyter who is not on the roster of this church.
2. The Congregational Meeting shall be held once a year at a time and place set by the congregation's constitution and bylaws and the Parish Council, with notice to all members of the congregation at least 60 days in advance.
3. Members of a congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of this congregation at the time when these Canons and Bylaws are adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have declared and maintained their membership in accordance with the provisions of these Canons and Bylaws.
4. Members shall be classified as follows:
 - a. Baptized members: those persons who have been received by Baptism in this congregation or having been previously baptized have been received by letter of transfer or by affirmation of faith.
 - b. Confirmed members: those persons who have been confirmed in this congregation or having been previously baptized and confirmed have been received by letter of transfer or by affirmation of faith.
 - c. Voting members: those confirmed members who have communed and made a contribution of record during the current or preceding year.
5. A presbyter who is called to the pastoral/priestly office of a congregation shall, upon taking up that call, be a member of that congregation.
6. Membership in a congregation shall be terminated by: a. death; b. resignation; c. transfer; d. disciplinary action by the Parish Council; e. removal from the congregational role due to inactivity; f. a presbyter taking a call at another congregation.
7. Inactivity as a grounds for removal from a congregation's roll is defined as a member's failure to commune and make a contribution of record in a five-year time period.
8. Disciplinary action shall be defined as a member's denial of the Christian faith as described in the Confession of Faith of this church, conduct grossly unbecoming of a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in the congregation to which a member

- belongs. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, including a) private admonition by the pastor/priest; b) admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses; c) citation to appear before the Parish Council; and, d) consultation and approval of the diocesan bishop.
9. Each congregation at its annual Congregational Meeting shall approve an annual budget for the congregation and elect a Parish Council of at least five lay members, according to the congregation's constitution and bylaws; the priest/pastor shall by virtue of the office be a voting member of the Parish Council. Any voting member of the congregation shall be eligible. The Parish Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of the congregation to the end that everything done be in accordance with the Gospel and the Canons and Bylaws of this church. The tasks of the Parish Council shall include:
 - a. lead the congregation in stating its missions, doing long-range planning, setting goals and priorities, and evaluating its activities in light of its mission and goals;
 - b. seek to involve all members of the congregation in worship, learning, witnessing, service, and support;
 - c. overseeing and providing for the administration of the congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission;
 - d. maintain supportive relationships with the pastor/priest;
 - e. be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized people;
 - f. promote a climate of congregation peace and good-will, and, as differences and conflicts arise, endeavor to foster mutual understanding;
 - g. emphasize partnership with the diocese and this church as well as cooperation with other congregations of other churches, consistent with the policies of the diocese and this church;
 - h. recommend and encourage use of program resources produced by this church or approved by this church;
 - i. be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation under the laws of this state in which the congregation is located and incorporated, and in overseeing the financial and property matters of the congregation. The Parish Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real estate unless specifically authorized to do so at a meeting of the congregation, in consultation with the diocesan bishop. The Parish Council shall prepare and submit the proposed annual congregational budget to the annual Congregational Meeting for adoption, supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance with the approved budget; the Parish Council shall include in the proposed annual budget the congregation's benevolence goal for the year to support the mission of the diocese and this church; and not incur obligations of more than 25% of the anticipated receipts unless specifically authorized to do so at a meeting of the congregation;
 - j. be responsible for the employment and supervision of salaried lay workers of the congregation;
 - k. submit a comprehensive report to the annual Congregational Meeting;
 - l. elect a president of the Parish Council, who may be ordained or lay;
 - m. normally meet once a month, and meet when a special meeting is called, with notice given to all Parish Council members at least 48 hours in advance, such special meeting being called by the pastor/priest or Parish Council president;
 - n. have a quorum of a majority of the members of the Parish Council, expect that the Parish Council shall not meet without the presence of the priest/pastor of the congregation unless the priest/pastor consents in advance in writing to be absent, and in that situation, the only business to be transacted shall be as on the printed agenda that the pastor/priest has approved prior to giving consent to be absent.

10. A congregation is but a part of this church, which is but a portion of the Church. A congregation shall use the term "Parish" or "Congregation" in its incorporated name and refrain from using the word "Church" other than in reference to this church. [For example: St. Michael's Parish of the American Apostolic Catholic Church; the Congregation of St. Barbara, American Apostolic Catholic Church.]
11. A congregation's membership in this church may be terminated if the congregation takes action to dissolve, ceases to exist, is removed from membership in this church by the procedures of this church's Canons and Bylaws, or, by a resolution approved by two-thirds majority of the voting members present at a specially, legally called meeting for the purpose of considering terminating membership. The latter action shall happen only after consultation with the diocesan bishop at least ninety days prior to the scheduled vote.
12. If a congregation takes action to dissolve or ceases to exist, its property shall pass to the diocese to which it belonged.
13. If a congregation is removed from membership in this church by the procedures of this church's Canons and Bylaws, title to the congregation's property shall continue to reside in the congregation.
14. If a congregation desires to consider termination of membership in this church, it shall consult with the Presiding Bishop and diocesan bishop at every step in its considerations. A congregation may vote on a resolution to terminate membership at a special, legally-called meeting for that purpose, such a meeting only being valid with the presence of the Presiding Bishop and one other member of the Church Council. Such a resolution terminating membership shall be approved only by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present at such a special, legally-called meeting. The Presiding Bishop and member of the Church Council shall attend such a meeting so as not to frustrate the purpose of such a meeting by not attending. If a resolution to terminate a congregation's membership in this church is approved at a special, legally-called meeting which is held in accordance with the Canons and Bylaws of this church, title to the congregation's property shall pass to the departing congregation only with the consent of the diocesan board; without such consent, title shall continue with the congregation that remains and who wish to retain membership in this church. The diocesan board shall be guided in its decision by the practical considerations of the viability of the congregation that remains and what is good for the departing congregation, this church, and for the whole Church.
15. Each congregation of this church shall adopt the required portions of this church's Canons and Bylaws as stated in Canon IX.10. Failure to adopt this church's Canons and Bylaws in accordance with Canon IX.10 shall constitute cause for discipline and removal of the congregation from the membership of this church, such discipline and removal to be acted upon by the diocese to which the congregation belongs.
16. The provisions or portions thereof in these bylaws for an annual congregational meeting and an elected parish council may be waived by an individual parish upon annual application to and approval of the diocesan board if the size or style of the parish lends itself to the parish having a regularly-established monthly parish meeting open to all members of the parish for the sake of conducting parish business and fulfilling the mandates for the parish council and the annual meeting.

Canon XI – Clergy

1. The word "clergy" in these Canons and Bylaws is understood to be persons ordained in one of the three forms of ordained ministry: bishop, presbyter (pastor, priest), and deacon.
2. The various offices of ordained ministry in this church establish no rule of one over the other or over the laity but do establish the exercise of the service entrusted and commanded to the whole Church.
3. Ordination to one or more of the three forms of ordained ministry is indelible.

4. Presbyters and bishops shall preach and teach and administer the Sacraments in conformity with the Confession of Faith of this church and shall lead lives worthy of the holy offices of the ordained ministry. Deacons shall assist in the life of congregations and ministries and this church's mission in conformity with the Confession of Faith of this church and shall lead lives worthy of the holy offices of the ordained ministry.
5. Clergy shall exhibit commitment, fidelity and faithfulness in their entire lives by demonstrating commitment, faithfulness and fidelity to the Church and this church, to the specific ministry to which they are called, in their relations with others in this church, and with those with whom clergy minister, and in their personal lives and relationships.
6. Clergy are subject to the discipline of this church, exercised through the diocese, with appeal to the national assembly, in accordance with these Canons and Bylaws. Clergy shall be responsible to the bishop and diocese in which their congregational membership resides.
7. Each member of the clergy shall be a member of this church. Failure to retain membership in this church shall constitute resignation from this church by that member of the clergy.
8. Each member of the clergy has the right to petition this church by petitions addressed to the diocese of which that member of the clergy belongs, for response by the diocese or, at the discretion of the diocese, for forwarding to the assembly of this church.

Specifics for Deacons

9. Deacons represent to the Church its calling as servant in the world. By struggling in Christ's name with the myriad needs of societies and persons, deacons exemplify the interdependence of worship and service in the Church's life. They exercise responsibility in the worship of the congregation, for example by reading the Scriptures, preaching, and leading the people in prayer. They exercise a ministry of love within the community. They fulfill certain administrative tasks and may be elected to responsibilities for governance. They may serve in the educational and social ministry life of the congregation and this church.
10. A candidate for ordination as a deacon shall have the recommendation of that candidate's diocesan Commission on Vocations and the approval of that diocese in assembly, or if the diocesan assembly so chooses in the case of certain candidates, by that diocese's diocesan Council.
 - a. A candidate for ordination as a permanent deacon shall be required to complete suitable theological training of at least two years duration as approved by the diocesan Commission on Vocations following mandates and guidelines established by this church in assembly.
 - b. A candidate for ordination as a transitional deacon shall meet the requirements for the ordination as a presbyter. The minimal time-period for services as a transitional deacon shall be six months and normally not exceed eighteen months except with the approval of the diocesan bishop and diocesan Council.
11. The ordination of a deacon shall normally take place at a congregation but may take place elsewhere if circumstances obtain and the bishop of the diocese consents. The ordination shall be performed by the bishop of the diocese, with a presbyter, deacon, and secretary of the diocesan council assisting in the ordination services. If circumstances obtain and the candidate's bishop consents, another bishop of this church may serve as the ordinator.

Specifics for Presbyters

12. Presbyters serve as pastoral ministers of Word and Sacraments in a local eucharistic congregation or in a mission, order, monastery, chaplaincy, institution, agency, or other work of this church as provided in these Canons or approved by the diocesan bishop and the diocesan board of the diocese to whom the presbyter is responsible. They are preachers and teachers of the faith, preside at the Sacraments, exercise pastoral care, and, if called by a congregation, bear responsibility for the task of discipline within that congregation to the end that the world may believe and that the entire membership of the Church may be renewed, strengthened, and equipped in ministry. The presbyter is shepherd and servant of the parish or

the mission. Presbyters have particular responsibility for the preparation of members for life and ministry.

13. A candidate for ordination as a presbyter (pastor, priest) shall have the recommendation of that candidate's diocesan Commission on Vocations and the approval of that diocesan assembly. A candidate for ordination as a presbyter shall be required to possess a Masters of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary, or two years of an approved theological course of study and a bachelors degree.
14. Ordinations of presbyters shall normally take place at an annual diocesan assembly but may take place elsewhere if circumstances obtain and the bishop of the diocese consents. The ordination shall be performed by the bishop of the diocese, with a presbyter, deacon, and secretary of the diocesan board assisting in the ordination services. If circumstances obtain and the candidate's bishop consents, another bishop of this church may serve as ordinator.

Specifics for the Episcopacy

15. Bishops preach the Word, preside at the Sacraments, and exercise leadership in such a way as to be representative pastoral ministers of oversight, community, and unity in this church and in the Church. Bishops are shepherds and servants of this church and to their respective dioceses. Bishops have pastoral oversight of the area to which they have been called. They serve the apostolicity and unity of the Church's preaching, worship, and sacramental life. They have responsibility for leadership in the Church's mission. They, in communion with the presbyters and deacons and the whole community, are responsible for the orderly exercise of and orderly transfer of ministerial authority in this church.
16. A candidate for ordination and consecration as a diocesan bishop shall have been elected by the diocese that bishop shall serve as provided in the Bylaws to these Canons and the Bylaws of the diocese and shall be approved by this church in assembly in order to be consecrated and take office. A candidate for election as a diocesan bishop or presiding bishop shall normally possess (1) a Masters of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary, and (2) one-quarter of Clinical Pastoral Education or a Masters degree in counseling, clinical psychology or related field, but in all cases shall be a presbyter or bishop of this church, and have served a minimum of three years in ordained ministry in this church or in another Christian church body prior to this church's ratification of these Canons.
17. Ordinations and consecrations of bishops shall normally take place on Sundays or on feasts of Jesus Christ or on feasts of apostles and evangelists. The Presiding Bishop of this church, or a diocesan bishop appointed by the Presiding Bishop, shall serve as ordinator, with at least two other bishops serving as co-consecrators. Representatives of the bishops, presbyters, deacons, and laity shall serve in appropriate roles in this service.
18. The installation of a Presiding Bishop of this church shall normally take place on a Sunday or on a liturgical feast day of Christ or apostles or evangelists. Representatives of the bishops, presbyters, deacons, and laity shall serve in appropriate roles in this service.
19. A Presiding Bishop may serve as a diocesan bishop until the number of dioceses in this church reaches ten, or a lesser number if determined by a 75% vote of all delegates attending a national assembly of this church.
20. The Presiding Bishop convenes and chairs the Council of Bishops. The Presiding Bishop shall be this church's leader and counselor in matters spiritual and temporal. The Presiding Bishop is shepherd and servant of this church. The Presiding Bishop shall make policy recommendations to the national assemblies of this church and is charged with seeing that these Canons and Bylaws are observed and the enactments of this church are carried out. The Presiding Bishop shall coordinate the work of the church-wide agencies; nominate executive directors subject to election by the Church Council; consult with chief staff officers regarding individual staff appointments; appoint committees for which no other provision has been made; and perform other such duties as are delegated to the Presiding Bishop by the assembly or the Church Council.

Canon XII – Additional Matters Regarding Bishops

1. The 1996 assembly of this church, serving as the organizational assembly of this church, shall elect a Presiding Bishop at the conclusion of the assembly in accordance with these Canons and Bylaws. The initial term for the Presiding Bishop will be for two years, ending with the conclusion of the assembly of this church in 1998. Beginning with the 1998 church assembly, the term of office shall be for four years in accordance with these Canons. Retention and/or election balloting for the office of Presiding Bishop shall occur every four years thereafter at an assembly of this church.
2. The Presiding Bishop will be the chief spokesperson for this church and shall participate with the leaders of other church bodies in such forums, dialogues, and colloquies as are appropriate. The Presiding Bishop shall articulate the faith and theological and other understandings of this church as are delineated in the Confession of Faith of this church, these Canons and Bylaws, the social statements, and other positions of this church which may from time to time be adopted by the assemblies of this church.
3. If the Presiding Bishop is unable to serve due to death, disability, resignation, or other cause as defined in the Canons and Bylaws of this church, the president of this church shall assume temporary leadership of this church and call a special assembly of this church to convene within 120 days following the vacancy in the office of the Presiding Bishop, such assembly to elect a successor to complete the current term.
4. At the conclusion of any assembly of this church in which a diocese is formed, the members of that diocese present shall elect a bishop, officers, and diocesan board for their respective dioceses in accordance with these canons and Bylaws.
5. A diocesan bishop will be the chief spokesperson for the diocese and shall participate with the leaders of judicatories of other church bodies in such forums, dialogues, and colloquies as are appropriate. A diocesan bishop shall articulate the faith and theological and other understandings of this church as are delineated in the Confession of Faith of this church, these Canons and Bylaws, the social statements, and other positions of this church which may from time to time be adopted by the assemblies of this church.
6. If a diocesan bishop is unable to serve due to death, disability, resignation, or other cause as defined in the Canons and Bylaws of this church, the president of the diocese shall assume temporary leadership of the diocese and call a special assembly of the diocese to convene within 120 days following the vacancy in the office of the diocesan bishop, such assembly to elect a successor to complete the current term.
7. A diocesan bishop is expected to visit each congregation in the diocese at least annually.

Canon XIII – Additional Matters Regarding Presbyters

1. The pastor/priest of a congregation shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, and shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the secretary of the diocese for publication as part of the annual reports for the annual diocesan assembly. Such reports shall be submitted by the following March 31st.
2. Each presbyter shall submit to the diocesan bishop a written report of the presbyter's ministry in the prior calendar year. Such reports shall be submitted by the following March 31st.
3. The call of a congregation to a presbyter to serve as its priest/pastor shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which, except in the case of the death of the presbyter, shall be terminated only following consultation with the diocesan bishop and for the following reasons:
 - a. resignation of the presbyter, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;

- b. inability to conduct the pastoral, priestly, office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the presbyter;
 - c. the physical or mental incapacity of the presbyter;
 - d. disqualification of the presbyter through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty;
 - e. the dissolution of the congregation;
 - f. suspension of the congregation as a result of discipline proceedings.
4. When allegations of physical or mental incapacity of the presbyter or ineffective conduct of the pastoral/priestly office have come to the attention of the diocesan bishop, the bishop, with discretion, may investigate such conditions personally in company with a committee of two members of the clergy and one layperson. The bishop shall initiate such an investigation following an official recital of allegations by the Parish Council or a petition signed by one-third of the voting members of the congregation.
 5. In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity, competent medical testimony shall be obtained. When such disability is evident, the diocesan bishop with the advice of the committee shall declare the pastorate vacant. Upon the restoration of a disabled presbyter to health, the diocesan bishop shall act to enable the presbyter to resume active service, either in the congregation last served or in another field of labor.
 6. In case of it becoming apparent to the diocesan bishop and the committee that the pastoral/priestly office cannot be conducted effectively in the congregation due to local conditions, the diocesan bishop may temporarily suspend the presbyter from service without prejudice. The bishop and committee shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the presbyter and the congregation. If either party fails to assent, the bishop may declare the pastorate vacant without prejudice to the presbyter; the diocesan bishop shall act to enable the pastor to resume active service.
 7. In case of the diocesan bishop and the committee concluding that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the bishop may bring charges in accordance with the Canons and Bylaws of this church.
 8. At the time of a pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor/priest shall be appointed by the diocesan bishop until the vacancy is filled. During interim service, the presbyter shall have all the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor. The presbyter performing interim service shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of the new pastor/priest.
 9. A congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor/priest before calling a successor.
 10. Presbyters who are not called by congregations and serving in other work of this church as defined in these Canons and Bylaws or as approved by the diocesan bishop and diocesan board shall be members of a congregation of this church.
 11. Presbyters may request the status of "on leave from service" of the bishop and diocesan board; when on leave, they continue to share in the duties and privileges of the presbyteral office (including voice and vote at diocesan and church assemblies) and are responsible for complying with all applicable portions of these Canons and Bylaws, including being a member of a congregation of this church and submitting annual reports to the diocesan bishop. A presbyter on leave shall keep the diocesan bishop informed of activities, address, and future plans, and receive counsel from the bishop.
 12. Presbyters shall not serve a full-time call after attaining the age of seventy. Presbyters who retire for reasons of age or disability continue to share in the duties and privileges of the presbyteral office (including voice and vote at diocesan and church assemblies) and are responsible for complying with all applicable portions of these Canons and Bylaws, including being a member of a congregation of this church and submitting annual reports to the

diocesan bishop. A retired presbyter shall keep the diocesan bishop informed of activities, address, and well-being.

13. Presbyters may resign from this church by written letter to the diocesan bishop or, in accordance with these Canons and Bylaws, be considered to have resigned by reason of not having membership in a congregation of this church.
14. For the purpose of Canon XIII.3(d), examples of continued neglect of duty by a presbyter which make a presbyter subject to discipline shall include but not be limited to the failure of a presbyter to abide by any of the directives and mandates of these Canons and Bylaws.

Canon XIV – Further Matters Regarding Presbyters

1. The Presiding Bishop, after consultation with the diocesan bishop and with the president of the Church Council, may place a presbyter or deacon of this church on leave of absence status until the following Annual Assembly of this church. Written act of such assignment shall be transmitted to all members of the Church Council.
2. Leave of absence may be voluntary or involuntary.
3. Voluntary leave of absence is a status requested by a presbyter or deacon for reasons of health, conscience, or other personal situations discussed in confidence with the Presiding Bishop and diocesan bishop. The terms of voluntary leave shall be mutually agreed upon by the presbyter and the diocesan bishop, and is governed by the provisions of Canon VIII.11.
4. Involuntary leave of absence may be assigned when a presbyter or deacon is accused of serious misconduct, such as a felony under the appropriate legal jurisdiction or an ecclesiastical act of disobedience to the Canons of this church. Involuntary leave of absence may also be assigned when a presbyter or deacon consistently refuses to respond to written inquiries of the Presiding Bishop or diocesan bishop when such inquiries are a part of the bishop's pastoral oversight of the clergy, parishes, missions, and ministries of this church.
5. Involuntary leave of absence entails the loss of voting privileges and the suspension of those faculties as designated by the Presiding Bishop.

Canon XV - Reserved for Future Canon

Canon XVI – Dioceses

1. This church may be organized into dioceses, whose number and boundaries are to be determined by this church in its bylaws.
2. Each diocese shall be incorporated upon the terms of appropriate documents ratified by this church in assembly or by the Church Council. Amendments thereto shall be subject to ratification by the Church Council.
3. Each diocese shall have a constitution and bylaws, ratified by this assembly or by the Church Council. The constitution and Bylaws shall affirm specifically the Confession of Faith of these Canons. Amendments thereto shall be subject to ratification by this assembly or by the Church Council.
4. Each congregation shall belong to the diocese on whose territory it is located.
5. Every diocese will have an annual assembly, convened and chaired by the president of the diocesan council.
6. Congregations and clergy of each diocese are entitled to representation with voice and vote at assemblies of the diocese, by the clergy of the diocese, and lay delegates of the congregations elected by each congregation according to the rules of the various dioceses, provided that each congregation shall be entitled to at least two lay delegates.
7. A majority of delegates to the diocesan assembly shall constitute a quorum.

8. Every diocese shall have the right to petition the assembly of this church on any subject. Such petitions must be adopted by the diocese in assembly. Such petitions shall be placed on the agenda of the assembly of this church.
9. Each diocese in assembly eligible to elect a bishop shall elect its own bishop from the roll of eligible presbyters and bishops as described elsewhere in these Canons and Bylaws. Eligible presbyters and bishops must be members of this church through membership in this church.
10. Each diocese in diocesan assembly shall elect a president, vice president, a secretary, a treasurer, and a parliamentarian, any of whom may be either a presbyter, deacon, or layperson. Each officer shall make a written report to the annual diocesan assembly. An audit of the treasurer's report shall be presented at each diocesan assembly.
11. These officers shall function for the diocese in the same manner as the Church Council functions for this church as described in these Canons and Bylaws. They shall approve the missions, ministries, orders, chaplaincies, and other forms of service of the active presbyters and deacons of the diocese who are not under the call of a congregation.
12. Each diocese will act for this church in the care, shepherding, and approval of candidates for ordination.

Canon XVII – Initial Diocese of This Church

The initial diocese of this church at its organization shall be all the parishes, missions, and members of the church. The Presiding Bishop of the church shall serve as diocesan bishop until such time as dioceses shall be formed by this church.

Canon XVIII – Assemblies of This Church

1. The annual assembly of this church shall constitute its highest legislative authority. Congregations, clergy, dioceses, the Church Council, and churchwide agencies shall be bound by all actions pertaining to them taken by an assembly in conformity with these Canons.
2. Assemblies of this church shall be held annually at such time and place as determined by the Church Council.
3. Congregations and clergy of each diocese are entitled to representation with voice and vote through the diocese at assemblies of this church, by the clergy of the dioceses, and lay delegates of the diocese elected in proportion to the number of congregations in the diocese as determined by the Bylaws; each diocese is entitled to a minimum of five lay delegates. The total voting membership of the assembly shall consist of the delegates elected by the dioceses, the clergy of the dioceses, and the constitutional officers of this church who shall serve as delegates ex officio.
4. A majority of the delegates of the dioceses shall constitute a quorum.
5. Special assemblies shall be called for specified purposes by the Presiding Bishop or the president of the Church Council of this church at the request in writing of two-thirds of the members of the Church Council or of the bishops of a majority of the dioceses.
6. The delegates at a special assembly shall be those who were seated in the preceding regular assembly provided they have not been disqualified by termination of membership in the diocese or its congregations or removal from the clergy roster of this church. Vacancies in delegations shall be filled according to the rules of the various dioceses.
7. A. The President of this church shall convene and chair the assemblies of this church and the Church Council/Board of Directors.
B. The Vice President of this church shall appoint chairpersons and committees for elections, resolutions, reference and counsel, nominations, minutes, memorials from the dioceses, report of the bishop, arrangements, and other such functions as may be needed for the assembly. These appointments shall be ratified by the assembly.

8. This church in assembly shall elect its Presiding Bishop from the roll of eligible presbyters and bishops as described elsewhere in these Canons and Bylaws, except that the first and second assemblies of this church may adopt another procedure. Eligible presbyters and bishops must be members of this church through membership in a congregation of this church. The election of the Presiding Bishop shall be by secret ecclesiastical ballot: each delegate shall have one vote in each round of balloting. The first ballot shall constitute a nominating ballot. Every eligible candidate who has received at least one vote shall be listed on the second ballot, except if on the first ballot one eligible candidate received three-fourths of the votes cast, and shall be declared elected. On the second ballot, two-thirds of the votes cast shall be required for election. On the third ballot, the voting shall be limited to the four persons receiving the highest vote totals on the second ballot, and a majority of votes cast shall be needed to elect. On the fourth ballot, the voting shall be limited to the three persons receiving the highest vote totals on the third ballot, and a majority of the votes cast shall be needed to elect. On the fifth ballot, the voting shall be limited to the two persons receiving the highest vote totals on the fourth ballot, and a majority of votes cast shall elect.
9. This church in assembly shall elect the following officers: a president, a secretary, and an at-large members, all of whom may be either a presbyter, deacon, or layperson, each to serve a one year term. These three shall constitute the Board of Directors of this church and the corporation and serve as the Church Council. A treasurer will be elected by the Church Council, but does not have to be a member of the Church Council or the American Apostolic Catholic Church.
10. This church in assembly, by a minimum vote of 60% of the delegates present and voting, may issue social statements on matters where this church feels that it must speak in fulfillment of its mission and in accordance with these Canons. A social statement will reflect the policy and understanding of this church and be used for teaching and pastoral purposes; it will not obligate the binding of the consciences of all members of this church.

Canon XIX – Additional Matters Regarding Assemblies

1. A proposed social statement may originate from any member or agency of this church. A proposed social statement shall be circulated throughout this church to all clergy and congregations at least six months prior to the commencement of the church assembly. A 60% vote of the delegates present and voting at an assembly of this church shall be necessary for passage. The assembly may also refer to the proposed social statement to an appropriate venue within this church for further study and report, and possible revision, to be made available throughout this church and acted upon at a later assembly.
2. The 1997 assembly of this church shall elect a president. The term for the president will be two years and run from the 1997 assembly through the 1999 assembly. Balloting for the office of president shall occur at the 1999 assembly and every two years thereafter at an assembly of this church.
3. The 1997 assembly of this church shall elect a vice president. The term for the vice president will be two years and run from the 1997 assembly through the 1999 assembly. Balloting for the office of vice president shall occur at the 1999 assembly and every two years thereafter at an assembly of this church.
4. The 1997 assembly of this church shall elect a secretary. The term for the secretary will be two years and run from the 1997 assembly through the 1999 assembly. Balloting for the office of secretary shall occur at the 1999 assembly and every two years thereafter at an assembly of this church.
5. The 1997 assembly of this church shall elect a treasurer. The term for the treasurer will be two years and run from the 1997 assembly through the 1999 assembly. Balloting for the

office of treasurer shall occur at the 1999 assembly and every two years thereafter at an assembly of this church.

6. The 1997 assembly of this church shall elect a parliamentarian. The term for the parliamentarian will be two years and run from the 1997 assembly through the 1999 assembly. Balloting for the office of parliamentarian shall occur at the 1999 assembly and every two years thereafter at an assembly of this church.
7. The 1997 assembly of this church shall elect two at-large members of the Church Council. The term for the at-large members will be two years and run from the 1997 assembly through the 1999 assembly. Balloting for the two at-large members shall occur at the 1999 assembly and every two years thereafter at an assembly of this church.

Canon XX – Church Council

The Church Council, as described in these Canons and Bylaws, shall meet at least four times a year, with the Presiding Bishop as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Church Council, on a quarterly basis (two of these meetings may be by telephone conference until such time as the finances of this church allow) to conduct the necessary business of this church between assemblies, and:

- a. be the board of directors of the corporation and exercise trusteeship responsibilities for this church.
- b. represent this church and carry out its decisions.
- c. attend to the business of this church in the interim between assemblies.
- d. recommend annual budgets to the assembly.
- e. fill vacancies until the next assembly unless as otherwise provided in these Canons and Bylaws and determine the fact of any incapacity of an officer of this church, which includes ceasing to be a member of a congregation of this church.
- f. report its actions to the national annual assembly.
- g. select the dates and location of the assembly of this church at least twelve months in advance and announce the same to this church, and work with the host parish for the practical matters relating to the convention.
- h. recommend an agenda to the annual assembly.
- i. perform other duties as are set forth in these Canons and Bylaws and as established by the assembly.

Canon XXI – Officers

1. Other duties for the officers of this church, who are the president, vice president/treasurer, and secretary, may be assigned in these Canons and Bylaws and by the Church Council.
2. An officer of this church shall be a member of this church.
3. The officers of this church shall make detailed written reports to the annual assembly of this church, submitted to the delegates thirty days prior to the assembly, and shall be present at the assembly.
4. The annual report of the treasurer shall be subject to an audit by an independent agency which shall make a report to the annual assembly of this church.
5. The secretary of this church shall prepare and keep a correct roster of all clergy and congregations of this church, as submitted by the secretary of each diocese.
6. The secretary is authorized and empowered in the name of this church to attest all instruments of writing ordered by this church or required by the constitution or necessary in carrying on the business of the corporation and signed and sealed by the Presiding Bishop.
7. The secretary shall have all the usual duties of secretary and issue promptly the minutes of the assembly, Church Council meetings, and other such reports as are needed.

Canon XXII – Periodical

1. This church shall have a periodical which shall be available throughout this church. The periodical shall report on the official business of this church, print official notices of this church, and contain other such material as is necessary for dialogue, a forum of ideas, education, inspiration, and other spiritual and practical matters as is necessary for the life of this church.
2. The editor of the periodical shall be elected by the assembly for a two-year term.

Canon XXIII – Court of Adjudication

This church may establish a Court of Adjudication to serve in matters involving discipline of clergy, with particular responsibility for the discipline of bishops, congregations, or laity.

Canon XXIV – Council of Bishops

All bishops on the clergy roster of this church shall be invited by the Presiding Bishop to gather for the purpose of considering matters which are before this church or which the bishops collectively feel should be before this church. The Council of Bishops as they so choose shall issue letters to this church which set forth their advice on these matters for the use of this church. A letter from the Council of Bishops shall be advisory in nature and not binding upon this church, but an expression of the teaching component of the office of bishop.

Canon XXV – The Seal of This Church

This church shall have a seal for attestation of documents purposes. The Secretary of this church shall be the custodian of the seal. The design of the seal shall be designated in the Bylaws of these Canons.

Canon XXVI – Bylaws and Amendments

1. This church in national assembly may adopt Bylaws not in conflict with these Canons. Such Bylaws may be suspended or amended at any assembly of this church by a two-thirds vote of the delegates present and voting.
2. Amendments to these Canons must be presented in writing to the president of the Church Council over the signatures of no fewer than two delegates at least 60 days before the national assembly, for dissemination within thirty days to this church's membership. Adoption of an amendment to Canons I through VI inclusive shall require passage at two successive assemblies by a two-thirds vote of the delegates present and voting. Adoption of an amendment to the balance of the canons shall require passage by a two-thirds vote of the delegates present and voting.

Canon XXVII – Diocese

1. All diocesan membership within the AACC is on a voluntary basis, and continued membership within the AACC requires a yearly statement sent forty-five (45) days before the Annual Assembly of the AACC stating that "The diocese of X accepts and will abide by the Canons and Bylaws of the AACC". The diocese must also produce at this time proof of incorporation as well as a current clergy roster for that diocese.
2. To bring the AACC up to date, within thirty days of the passage of this Canon, all diocese must present to the President of the AACC proof of incorporation, a clergy roster for the diocese and a statement that the diocese accept and will abide by the Canons and Bylaws of the AACC.

Bylaw 1 – Worship

1. The liturgy of the Church, as it has come to us in both the Eastern and Western traditions of the Church, is the liturgy of this church, although it is the more usual custom in this church to follow the Western tradition.
2. Pastors, lay or ordained, are responsible for the worship of the congregations which they serve and must diligently connect the experience of worship, the public proclamation of Word and Sacrament, the people's shared experience of its life in community, with sound theology, local congregational tradition, and the call of the Spirit to speak through Word and Sacrament to the time and moment in which worship happens.
3. This church shall endeavor to cooperate in such ecumenical work as it has opportunity, such as the International Consultation on English Texts, the Consultation on Common Texts, and the Consultation on Common Hymnody, for the purposes of unity in the Church of Jesus Christ and bearing witness to that unity.
4. This church shall have as its common use for Sundays and Major Holidays, the Revised Common Lectionary, produced by the Consultation on Common Texts. Other celebrations outside of Sundays and Major Holidays may be based on existing standards of other church bodies, or may be set by the local diocese.

Bylaw 2 – Seal

The provisional seal of this church shall be as follows:



Bylaw 3 – Diocese of the AACC

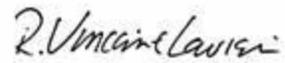
At this time this church consists of one diocese.

Bylaw 4 – Lay Ministry

This church authorizes the dioceses to allow lay ministry in mission situations where local conditions prevail. Lay ministry will operate under the direct supervision of the diocesan bishop and diocesan council. Specific ministerial acts normally performed by deacons may be done by a lay minister in extraordinary circumstances on a case by case basis as approved by the diocesan bishop.

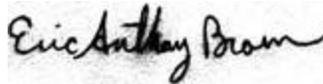
These Canons and Bylaws were adopted at the Second Assembly of the American Apostolic Catholic Church, a Michigan ecclesiastical corporation, held in Sandwich, Massachusetts, 24 July through 26 July, 1997, and are as amended by the eighth assembly, held in Chicago, Illinois, 8 November 2003. We certify that the above is a true and correct copy of said Canons and Bylaws.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Vincent Lavieri". The script is cursive and somewhat stylized.

R. Vincent Lavieri, President
18 November, Feast of Saint Luke the Evangelist

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Anthony Brown". The script is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Eric Brown, Secretary
18 November, Feast of Saint Luke the Evangelist