

# HANDBOOK FOR CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS

## Welcome

On behalf of the Lord of the Church and the members of the Mount Cross, thank you for your willingness to serve as a leader of this congregation.

The first thing Jesus did after his inaugural address (“*The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the Gospel.*” Mark 1:15) was to ask people to help him with the spread of this Kingdom and its Good News (“*Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.*” Mark 1:17). The Holy Spirit has called us to be a congregation of believers, faithful to the commission Jesus has given us. As a Council member, your task is to help us stay true to our calling and commission.

This handbook will acquaint you with how Mount Cross is organized and to explain your responsibilities as a Council member.

If the answer to one of your questions is not contained in these pages, please ask it so that the answer will appear in the next addition.

## Getting Oriented

To get acquainted with why Mount Cross exists as a Christian congregation and how it has been organized, the first thing you should probably do is read the Constitution and Bylaws found on [www.mountcross.com/church-council](http://www.mountcross.com/church-council). Here is a summary:

### Chapter II. Confession of Faith

This is a good summary of the foundations of Scripture and tradition on which the Constitution is based.

### Chapter IV. Statement of Purpose

This is the basic job description of our congregation. As a Council member, one of your responsibilities is to see that we remain true to our calling.

### Chapter XI. Officers

This chapter helps to explain how the Council is organized.

### Chapter XII. Congregational Council

This chapter describes in general the structure and responsibilities of the Council and its members.

### Bylaws II. Congregational Council

The Constitution keeps things basic. The By-Laws, which are easier to change, are where the detail of the council structure is described.

## Council Basics

The general month-to-month leadership of the congregation and the tasks not exclusively reserved for the Congregational Meeting are the responsibility of the Church Council.

Church Council meetings are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every month at 7:00 PM, usually in the Parish Life Center.

The usual Council meeting agenda includes;

- Devotions (led by one of the members)
- A moment for *Caring Conversation*
- Approval of minutes
- Report from the recent *Church Council Listening Post* (see description below)\*
- Staff reports
- Treasurer’s report
- Other reports **as needed**. All committees and boards are expected to submit written reports to Council. If there are special items that require reporting and/or action at the council meeting, time will be given during for additional comment or action beyond what the written report provides.
- Action items.

· Adjourn with the Lord's Prayer.

Please try to submit items for the Church Council meeting agenda to the President (in writing, by phone or by e-mail) as early as possible.

All committee reports are sent to the Church Council "Web Page" on the Internet. You can find this by going to: [www.mountcross.com](http://www.mountcross.com), and click on the link to the church council page button. You can also go to the RESOURCES tab on the top, right of the page, and then click on the Church Council link. Council members can print their own copies of these reports as they need them. An agenda for each meeting will be posted on the website. If you do not have access to the Internet at home, you can make arrangements to use a computer at church. If you prefer, printed copies can be prepared for you and left in your folder in the blue Council box.

As soon as they are ready, please e-mail or leave in the church office all reports and especially action items for consideration at the next Council meeting. Minutes and reports received by the church secretary on or before Noon of the Friday before the next Council meeting will be posted as they are received. Minutes and reports received after that date will be posted as time allows.

Maintaining good communication is always a challenge. Please e-mail or give a copy of all minutes and reports for the church secretary so that a permanent record can be kept. Please also make sure that subcommittees are kept up to date on developments, especially the ones that affect them directly.

The Constitution and Bylaws allow the Council great flexibility in how it organizes to meet needs. Continuing Resolutions are the means by which the Council can define its structure in an easy to change manner. A running collection of these structure modifications will be maintained following the Constitution and By-Laws. One aim of this flexibility is to be able to place as many decisions in the Committees. The President will endeavor to keep off the Council agenda any items that should be handled by one of the Committees.

The duties of the Congregational Council shall include the following:

- a) to lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long-range planning to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals;
- b) to seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service and support;
- c) to oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.

#### **\*Listening Post**

In 2014 we instituted the Church Council Listening Post. On the first Sunday of each month, a different Council member sits at a table to receive information, concerns, feedback, etc. from members.

#### **Council Structure And Responsibilities:**

##### **A. Church Council members**

##### **B. Officers: President, Vice President, Recorder**

##### **C. Financial Officers: Treasurer**

Financial Secretary: Joan Brundage

##### **D. Standing Committees**

##### **Budget & Finance Committee**

1. Receive requests for annual budget from staff and the leadership of the congregation.
2. Prepare congregation's annual budget, for presentation to the January Council meeting and final approval at the Annual Meeting.
3. Monitor the budget during the year and report to Council.

4. Prepare a budget report for the congregation's newsletter every-other-month (e.g. odd months).
5. Suggested budget building timeline:  
 October 1 – Solicit budget requests from staff, Council members, Committee chairs, etc.  
 October & November – Shape preliminary budget  
 December Church Council meeting – present first draft of next year's budget  
 January Church Council meeting – present final draft of budget to be recommended to the Annual Meeting for approval.
6. Advise the Treasurer on the investing of church funds.
7. Advise the Treasurer on policies and procedures for disbursement of church funds (purchase orders, etc.).
8. Work with the Memorials Committee in disbursing memorial funds.

**Caring Committee** - Care and concern for the members of our church and support in time of need.

1. Attendance records
2. Support to families with special needs
3. Prayer Ministry.
4. Communion to home bound or hospitalized
5. Meals for new moms, those just home from the hospital, etc.
6. Card ministry
7. Telecare ministry
8. Rides to church
9. Child care
10. Home care for the elderly or those convalescing
11. Phone Prayer Chain
12. E-mail Prayer Chain
13. Deliver Sunday Flowers to homebound or hospitalized
14. Helping Hands - serve at funerals & receptions
15. Prayer Shawl Ministry

**Child Development Center (CDC)**

1. Represent the ministry of the Child Development Center
2. Bring to the Council and back to the CDC Board items of concern, information, action, etc.

**Endowment Committee**

1. Guide the congregation in the creation and maintenance of an endowment fund according to motion passed at the January 19, 2003 Annual Meeting and the by-law passed at the April 27, 2003 Congregational Meeting.
2. Help to provide education for the congregation on the matter of charitable giving, wills and estates, etc.
3. Advise the congregation regarding the sound investment of its own resources.

4. The documents relative to the formation of the Endowment Fund and Committee are found on the Council's web page: [www.mountcross.com/endow.htm](http://www.mountcross.com/endow.htm)

### **Welcome Team (currently not meeting at Mount Cross)**

1. Letting people know about the Good News and about Mount Cross:

Advertising (newspaper, yellow pages, direct mail, World Wide Web)

Canvassing the neighborhood

Intentional welcoming presence at CDC events: Back-To-School Night, Christmas program, Spring Sing, etc.

2. Other ways to extend "compassionate outreach."

3. Attention to visitors to our church

4. While they are here for the first time – The ministry of Greeters

5. Follow-up after their first visit – Sunday Visitation/Contacts

6. Helping the transition from visitor to confirmed member, including:

Working with the pastors to arrange orientation visits

Letters of transfer from other Lutheran churches

New member applications and identification of sponsors

Bring names to the Council for approval as confirmed members

New member reception

Guide sponsors in assisting new confirmed members to become rooted in the life of the church

Reports to Council – new member follow-up

### **Fellowship Committee**

The recreational and social life of the congregation including, but not limited to:

1. Annual Meeting (helping with the meal portion of the program)

2. Regular all-church fellowship events (for example: Fourth of July Fellowship)

3. Classical Concerts

4. Retreats

5. Sports

6. 3D - Dessert, Devotions & Discussion

7. Adult Fellowship

### **Adult Education (including House Missions and Small Group Ministries)**

1. Provide support for small group Bible study and fellowship groups

2. Adult Education (Sunday mornings, Bible studies, other learning opportunities)

3. Create new groups, including women's study/fellowship groups

4. Assist new confirmed members in identifying a small group to join or creating new ones

### **Learning Committee**

1. Oversee the learning & youth ministries of the congregation including:

2. Sunday School

3. Fun With Faith

4. Vacation Bible School

5. Teacher training

6. Safeguarding God's Children

### **Youth Leadership**

1. Ministry to middle school and senior high age youths.

2. Ministry to College age young people

### **Mutual Ministry Committee**

1. More than just support to the pastors, this committee looks at the mutuality of the ministry of pastors and congregation.
2. On behalf of the congregation and in conversation with the pastors, help them to shape their "Statement" for the coming year. The Statement outlines the areas where the pastor will give special emphasis or attention in the coming year. This Statement is supposed to be an agenda item at the Annual Meeting.
3. Help the pastors develop their Continuing Education Covenant to be sent to the Synod Bishop.
4. Provide the pastors a confidential sounding board for issues of personal or professional concern.
5. Provide a forum where, on behalf of the congregation, the committee members might share concerns of the congregation about the congregation's or the pastor's ministry.
6. Development of a sabbatical policy for pastors
7. Assist pastors in creating their sabbatical plan and help the pastor and congregation carry it out.

### **Personnel Committee**

1. Develop and maintain job descriptions for all non-called church staff (including Nursery).
2. Develop and administer a program for staff performance review and evaluation.
3. Make salary recommendations to the Budget Committee.

### **Property Committee**

1. Oversee the physical property of the church and the maintenance of the physical plant and, in general, the contents.
2. Periodic review of church holdings and their value for insurance purposes
3. Oversee janitorial service contract
4. Oversee operation and maintenance of church van

### **Service & Missions Committee**

#### **Service**

1. Help members participate and serve **directly** through programs Mount Cross develops and implements
2. Help members participate and serve **indirectly** by linking Mount Cross people with existing programs through other agencies.
3. Participate and/or sponsor programs to inform and educate members and the community regarding social needs or issues
4. Work with the Caring Committee and new member sponsors to assist new members in finding a place to "serve all people following the example of our Lord Jesus."
5. Serve the congregation in soliciting requests for the distribution of funds raised by the annual *Make It/Bake It* auction.

#### **World Missions**

1. Develop a wider sense of the Church's mission to the world, including: missionary sponsorship, educational events, support activities, prayer concerns

### **Stewardship Committee**

1. Develop year-round stewardship program and communicate this program to the congregation: Newsletters, Worship Folders/Bulletins, Displays, Speakers, Media, Letter to be included in quarterly financial statements, Offering envelopes (Financial Secretary usually orders annually), Simply Giving Program, Communicate and encourage each committee and ministry area to contact the volunteers from the Time and Talent sheets.

2. Prepare the congregation's annual pledge campaign. Suggested target dates:
  - a. August – set dates for special events: launch of pledge campaign, dinner, receiving of pledges, mailings, newsletter articles, etc.
  - b. September – solicit changes in the *Time & Talent Report* from staff and leadership of the church Time and Talent Volunteer Sheet, Planned Giving Card, Brochures, Resource Handbook, Giving Charts, Route or Mailer Items such as: Pony Express had saddle bags, garden theme had baskets, Directions for using materials, have as much on the web as possible as well as paper copies, Membership list, Routes, Route Leaders, Other Volunteers, Map out homes if necessary
3. Revise stewardship materials and submit to church secretary in timely manner for printing and distribution
4. Follow-up with those who did not respond to the pledge campaign, Thank you Letters to those involved in Stewardship Program, Thank congregation for participating
5. Work with Financial Secretary on reports
6. Incorporate a regular (monthly) form of Stewardship education and/or emphasis (newsletters, worship folders, etc.)
7. Prepare every-other-monthly stewardship reports for the congregation's newsletter (e.g. even months)
8. Work with the Caring Committee and new member sponsors to assist new members in finding a place to put their talents to work in the church and identify the gifts they may have that are not yet being put to use.
9. Other ideas to work on: Include children and youth, Coordinate with Budget and Finance Committee, Coordinate with other special giving concerns of the church.

### **Worship And Music Committee**

1. Oversee the planning of Sunday morning services plus other special services
2. Oversee the music ministries of our church, including (but not limited to):
3. Sanctuary Choir
4. Bell choir
5. Contemporary Worship Team
6. Organist
7. Children's choir
8. Oversee the maintenance and possible enhancement/expansion of the instruments: organ, pianos, bells, etc.
9. Special concerts (Christmas, etc.)
10. Altar Guild
11. Training of worship assistants
12. Guide the congregation in using *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*

## **Guidelines For Our Committees**

**Core Values, Mission Statement & Ministry Branches** – The work that has been done by the Strategic Planning Committee is intended to help the congregation focus its efforts. We cannot be all things to all people. As much as possible use our core values, mission statement and ministry branches as a guide for deciding whether to initiate a new program or ministry (or continue one).

### **Core Values:**

*Intimacy With God + Inspiring Worship*

*Intentional Faith Development + Compassionate Outreach*

*Caring Community*

### **Mission Statement:**

*Rooted in God's grace to joyfully witness and serve.*

### **Ministry Branches:**

Worship & Music Committee

Learning & Youth Committee

Service & Missions Committee

Caring Committee

**Identity Statements** - As we work we will keep our Identity Statements in mind:

*Jesus is Lord!*

*Everyone is welcome.*

*Love changes people.*

*Everyone has something to offer.*

*The world needs what we have.*

### **Recruiting**

1. As often as possible have people serve on only one committee. Spread the leadership around.
2. As often as possible, Council members and committee chairpersons should consult with each other when looking for new people to serve on their committees, so the same person is not recruited for multiple committees.
3. When looking for people to serve on your committee, please contact the church secretary for listings from the latest *Time & Talent Reports* that pertain to your area of ministry. If there are names on the list that have not served before, please make an effort to enlist the help of those newest to the congregation first.
4. We will work with each other to identify names of those who would be well suited for service in a particular area of ministry.
5. When looking for people to serve on a committee, do not be limited to the names in the *Time & Talent Report*. Many people use it to indicate areas where they are *already* serving. Take your church directory and prayerfully walk through the names, asking if a person might have the gifts and interest for serving in your area. Then make a personal contact. Many people do not volunteer, but will say yes if asked.
6. When you ask someone to serve, let them know they are making a commitment for one year. At the end of the year they will have the opportunity to sign on for another year.

### **Meetings**

1. Standing committees will meet as needed to accomplish their tasks.
2. Standing committees will meet at another time than the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month and will try to

avoid Sunday mornings as a meeting time.

3. As often as possible, begin each meeting by lighting a candle – to honor the presence of Christ, the light of the world. Also include time for *Caring Conversations* or some other element from *Taking Faith Home* or other available resources.
4. As soon as possible after each meeting of the committee, minutes of that meeting should be sent to the church secretary for posting on the Council website.
5. The report for the September meeting of the committee should report on the committee's basic goals for the coming program year.
6. The report of the January meeting should report on the committee's progress and any mid-course adjustments.
7. The report of the June meeting should give a brief evaluation of accomplishments and an outline of possible goals for the next year.
8. As soon as possible after each meeting, any items that need action by the Church Council should be sent to the President of the Congregation for inclusion on the next Council meeting's agenda.
9. Committees are encouraged to set 90 minutes as a goal for their maximum meeting length.
10. All committee chairpersons, if they are not already members of the Church Council, are always welcome to attend Church Council meetings; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month.

### **End Of The Year Matters**

1. Provide those who serve a gracious way of completing their time of service without feeling guilty. We don't want to work those who are currently serving on a committee so long and so hard that they burn out.
2. By the start of every Council year (February 1), the chair or liaison should contact the members the committee and:
3. Thank them for their faithful service over the past year.
4. Review with them the things accomplished over the past year.
5. Outline the goals of the committee for this coming year.
6. Allow them an opportunity to graciously complete their term of service or to stay on for another year.
7. Prepare a report for the congregation's Annual report outlining the Board's goals and objectives achieved in present year and goals for the next year.

### **Other Responsibilities of Committee Chair or Liaison:**

1. Keep a current list of those who serve on the committee.
2. Monitor the work of any sub-committees or task forces.
3. Make sure that the committee meets.
4. Make sure the committees meeting minutes are taken and sent to the church secretary

### **Other Matters**

1. If a person serves on the Budget & Finance Committee, that is the only committee on which they can serve. Additionally, no paid staff shall serve on the Budget Committee.
2. No paid staff shall serve on the Personnel Committee or the Mutual Ministry Committee.

### **Other Committees Of The Congregation And Of The Council**

## **I. COMMITTEES OF THE CONGREGATION**

### **A. NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

Beginning in November of each year, prepare a slate of nominees for the next Annual Meeting. The goal is to have the ballot set in time for it to be included in the congregation's Annual Report (December



31). The proposed ballot will include nominees for the following positions:

- Church Council. At the November Council meeting, members whose terms are expiring should be polled as to whether they will agree to serve another term, if eligible. When the number of vacancies is determined, the Nominating Committee can begin to seek candidates to fill the vacant seats, up to a maximum of 13 members on Council.
- Mediation Board.
- Voting members to the annual Synod Assembly (total of three, two men and one woman or two women and one man; the pastors are automatic voting members).
- Nominating Committee.
- Endowment Committee.
- Audit Committee.

## **B. MEDIATION BOARD**

- Elected by the congregation at the annual meeting, this board is on stand-by until a dispute arises which will need their help. See By-Laws, Section IV.

## **C. CALL COMMITTEE**

- Elected by the Congregation as needed to guide the process of calling a pastor.

## **II. COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL**

### **A. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Constitution indicates the membership of this committee to be the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and pastors. This committee serves on behalf of the Council as needed.

### **B. AUDIT COMMITTEE**

- Using the guidelines provided by the Synod, the audit must be completed by the end of March each year.

## **III. Voting Members to the Synod Assembly**

### **Church Council Calendar**

#### **JANUARY**

- Committee reports should include update on how goals for the current program year are being achieved
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 7:00 PM - Council meeting
- Confirm annual meeting agenda
- Approve final budget recommendation to be brought to Annual Meeting
- Last Sunday of the Month: Annual Meeting. Agenda to include: election of council members, mediation board members, voting members to Synod Assembly, Nominating Committee, Audit Committee, and Endowment Committee, presentation of budget.
- Last Saturday of January or First Saturday of February: Leadership Retreat; Visioning for the future, orientation to the coming year and election of council officers.

#### **FEBRUARY**

- First Sunday - Install Council members at all services
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday – no Council meeting today; the Council Retreat was our meeting for this month.

#### **MARCH**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 7:00 PM - Council meeting
- An audit of the congregation's finances to be completed by March 31

## **APRIL**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 7:00 PM - Council meeting
- An audit of the congregation's finances should be done by now

## **MAY**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 7:00 PM - Council meeting

## **JUNE**

- Thursday-Saturday - Early June generally – Synod Assembly
- Committee reports should include summary of how plans for the program year were achieved and suggestions for the next year
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 7:00 PM - Council meeting

## **JULY**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 7:00 PM - Council meeting

## **AUGUST**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 7:00 PM - Council meeting

## **SEPTEMBER**

- Committee reports should include outline of plans for the coming program year
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 7:00 PM - Council meeting
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday – Rally Day

## **OCTOBER**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 7:00 PM - Council meeting
- Budget building process begins - solicit budget requests
- Stewardship: Launch Pledge Drive
- Begin working on Annual Reports; review of present year, goals for next

## **NOVEMBER**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 7:00 PM - Council meeting
- Make sure Nominating Committee begins work securing candidates for January Annual Meeting (Council, Mediation Board, Synod Assembly, Nominating Committee, etc.)
- Council to start planning Annual Meeting; work with Fellowship Committee for the food arrangements

## **DECEMBER**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 7:00 PM - Council meeting
- Budget Committee: First draft of next year's budget for Council review
- Receive report from Nominating Committee for inclusion in the Annual Report
- As appropriate, renew or conclude "sunset clauses" with various committee leaders and members.

When people are appointed to lead or asked to serve on a committee, the basic goals for the coming year will be outlined and they will be asked to serve for one calendar year, ending December 31. At the end of that year, they may choose to "retire," having fulfilled their commitment, or they may opt to serve for another year.

- Submit reports to be included in the congregation's Annual Report (by 12/31).