

COVENANT OF THE AREA PARISH OF THE LAURENTIANS KNOWN AS THE LAURENTIAN REGIONAL MINISTRY

PREAMBLE

In the fall of 2013, a committee of lay people from the seven parishes in the Laurentians came together to discuss a plan for Regional Ministry. In their meetings over the course of a year, they formalized a plan, and the Laurentian Regional Ministry (LRM) came into effect in July 2015.

Their primary achievement was finding a way that all parishes together could pay for two full-time priests. This resulted in the Fair Share agreement, which included the shared costs of priests, rectories, travel and replacement priests. This formula for sharing a centralized budget for Ministry is based on three factors: annual Sunday attendance, the annual Diocesan Assessment of each Parish and the number of regular Sunday services.

They also agreed to the setting up of an elected council with members from each parish to represent that parish and to oversee the LRM.

At the request of the Bishop, a review was undertaken after three years, and a report, based on a survey and workshops held in each of the seven parishes, was presented in January 2019. Follow-up meetings were held with the Bishop in June 2019 and May 2020.

The review and the discussions highlighted the need to draft a document providing a clear understanding of how the LRM would function for sustainable and stable ministry in the future. This document is called “The Covenant” and this “Preamble” is an integral part of that document.

The clergy team having been appointed, the clergy and lay leadership across the Region continue to develop how best to manage all aspects of the LRM. The purpose is to ensure sustainable ministry and to find efficiencies through working together.

The Covenant includes content and guidance from:

- The Laurentian Regional Ministry Plan 2015;
- The Diocese of Montreal “Policy on Sustainable and Strategic Ministry” of March 2016;
- The Bishop, following the presentation of the report in January 2019 and the review in May 2020.

Direction for the Future

- We acknowledge that as a group of churches, our priority is:
 - to spread and share the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; and
 - to maintain and strengthen our collective ministry and mission to the Laurentian Region.
- We know very clearly from the workshops in 2018 that each church is in survival mode.
- We acknowledge that we are all in the middle of change.
- We acknowledge that each congregation wants to retain its own autonomy.
- We recognize that the LRM and the elected LRM Council have an important guidance, administration and facilitation role, to be carried out with Christian, brotherly and sisterly love.

THE COVENANT

1. The Laurentian Regional Ministry (LRM)

The LRM is a grouping together, under a formalized plan created in 2015, of ten churches (in seven parishes) located in the Laurentians of Quebec, as part of the Deanery of St Andrews in the Anglican Diocese of Montreal.

The churches included in the LRM are, from north to south:

Holy Trinity, Ste Agathe

Grace Church, Arundel

St John the Baptist in the Wilderness, Kilkenny

Trinity, Morin Heights

St Francis, St Sauveur

Four churches comprising the Parish of the Lower Laurentians (PLL)

- Christ Church, Milles Isles
 - Holy Trinity, Lakefield
 - St Aidan's, Louisa
 - St Paul's, Dunany
- St Simeon's, Lachute

2. Purpose of the LRM

- a) To spread and share the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;
- b) To maintain and strengthen our collective ministry and mission to the Laurentian Region;
- c) To support the member churches in achieving "Sustainable and Strategic Ministry" (see **Appendix A**). The word "support" in this Covenant does not imply financial support.

3. Purpose of this Covenant

The purpose of this Covenant is to provide a structure for carrying out ministry in the LRM and to ease the administrative burden of the churches, especially of the incumbent and the wardens, so that our ministry may be both sustainable and stable.

4. Responsibilities

- d) The churches of the LRM are expected to be self-sustaining and self-governing. Given the benefits and responsibilities of being a member of the LRM, it is understood that they share the responsibility and obligation for caring, mutual support and guidance for each member church. This is done in collaboration with the Diocese as a whole, in ways that best serve God's mission in our world. Each church retains responsibility for its financial obligations.
- e) Under this arrangement, each parish:
 - remains responsible for the oversight and management of its property, buildings and finances, including any funds held in trust by the Synod and any liabilities;
 - forms its own corporation (clergy and churchwardens), elects a Parish Council, and elects its lay delegates to the Diocesan Synod;

- remains responsible for ensuring the remittance of its annual apportionment to the Synod, including Fair Share and Insurance.

f) If one of the parishes ceases to function, the disposal of its assets and liabilities will be in accordance with the regulations of the Diocese of Montreal.

5. Clergy Team

g) A Clergy Team, comprising an Incumbent (who is Team Leader) and one or more Associate(s), is appointed by the Bishop to the LRM as a whole.

h) The Team Leader is responsible for building teamwork, for delegating and for sharing the leadership of the LRM Council.

i) Each member of the Clergy Team is assigned to specific churches/congregations for which he/she has primary responsibility. They share, along with the local active laity, the responsibility for all churches and for the LRM as a whole.

6. LRM Council

Composition of the LRM Council

j) Each parish elects, at their Annual Vestry Meeting, one voting representative to the LRM Council, with the exception of the PLL which appoints two representatives but has only one vote. To ensure good communication, it is recommended that this representative should be a warden or a member of Parish Council.

k) Members of the Council serve two-year terms. Their terms are staggered so that at the time of Annual Vestry Meetings, the terms of approximately one-half (1/2) of all members of the Council expire:

i) The members of the Council representing the congregations of St Simeon's, Lachute; Grace, Arundel; St John the Baptist, Kilkenny; and one of the members representing the PLL have their term come up for election during even numbered years;

ii) The members of the Council representing Holy Trinity, Ste Agathe; St Francis, St Sauveur; Trinity, Morin Heights; and one of the members of the PLL have their term come up for election during odd numbered years.

l) The Incumbent and Associate Priest are full voting members of the Council.

m) All members of Council shall be subject to Police and Security checks as outlined in the Diocesan policy.

n) Should any member of the Council, except the Clergy, be unable to participate for an extended period of time, that person may be temporarily replaced by another person, appointed by the Corporation of their local parish, until the member is able to resume participation. In the case of a resignation, the Corporation of the local parish shall appoint a

replacement for the balance of the term. If no one is appointed to replace them the position remains open for the balance of the term.

Responsibilities of the LRM Council

- o) The LRM Council has an important role to carry out regarding “Sustainable and Strategic Ministry” in the Laurentians. It is charged with providing guidance and facilitation for shared ministry to the individual churches and to the Clergy Team, in a Christian, brotherly and sisterly fashion.
- p) If requested, this may include:
 - Helping parishes and churches make major decisions;
 - Assisting parishes and churches in resolution of major issues.
- q) The LRM Council has a responsibility to maintain a reasonable overview of the financial and administrative situations of all churches in the LRM, using the Diocese of Montreal “Policy on Sustainable and Strategic Ministry” as a guide (see **Appendix A**).
- r) The Council has the responsibility to support the Clergy Team.
- s) Each year, the Council will establish annual goals for the LRM. After the year has been completed, the Council will review the achievement of those goals.

Duration of a Member’s Duties

- t) The members of the LRM Council, upon being elected or appointed, commence their duties immediately and continue in office until the end of their term.

The Role of a Lay Council Member

- u) To present the views of the Parish they are from to the Council.
- v) To act in the best interest of the LRM as a whole.
- w) To communicate the discussions and decisions of the Council to their Parish Corporation or Council, respecting confidentiality where appropriate.

Quorum

- x) A Quorum for a meeting of the members of the Council consists of a majority of the voting members including a priest.

Decision Making

- y) Decisions of the LRM Council are made after discussion, seeking consensus, and a recorded majority vote.

Clergy Search Committee

- z) The lay LRM Council members shall become full voting members of any Clergy Search Committee that is assembled for the LRM Ministry. If the search is for an Associate Priest, the Incumbent is also a full voting member of the Search Committee. If the search is for the Incumbent, neither the associate priest nor a curate is on the Search Committee.

Chairperson

- aa) The members of the LRM Council, at their first monthly meeting following the conclusion of all the individual church AVM's, shall elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson for the year from among the lay members. The Chairperson presides at meetings of the Council and the Vice-Chairperson will preside when the Chairperson is absent.

Secretary

- bb) The LRM Council appoints a Secretary from among its members. The Secretary attends all meetings of the Council. In the event that the Secretary cannot attend a meeting, the members of Council present shall appoint a temporary Secretary for that meeting. The Secretary's duties consist of:
- Recording all votes and minutes of all proceedings in a book kept for that purpose;
 - Sharing the Minutes of the Council meetings with the corporations of all parishes, once approved by the members of Council;
 - In concert with the Chairperson and the Incumbent, making the arrangements for all meetings of the Council;
 - Sending notices of all meetings to the members of the Council;
 - Performing all official correspondence from the Council, as may be prescribed by the Council, the Chairperson or the Incumbent.

Treasurer

- cc) The Council appoints a Treasurer. The Treasurer prepares the annual Fair Share calculations for the costs of shared Ministry for presentation to the Council by May 1st of each year. The Council will approve the Fair Share at the May Council meeting, for implementation on July 1st annually.
- dd) The Fair Share agreement is an integral part of the Covenant (see **Appendix B**).
- ee) The Treasurer, in collaboration with the LRM Council, prepares the annual LRM Budget for all costs of shared Ministry. The Budget must be presented and approved at the November Council meeting, and shared with the Parishes by November 30th annually.
- ff) The LRM Budget must be presented to and approved by each parish of the LRM at a Vestry meeting (either the Annual Vestry Meeting or a Special Vestry Meeting) by the end of February annually.
- gg) Once the budget for the costs of shared ministry is approved by the parishes, the Treasurer and the Council are responsible for the sound management of the LRM Budget.

7. Withdrawal from the LRM

If any parish decides at a Vestry Meeting that it no longer wishes to be a member of the Laurentian Regional Ministry, it must give, in writing, twelve (12) months notice of its intention to the Incumbent, the Chairperson of the LRM Council and the Bishop. The effective date of the notice is the date of the receipt of said notice by the Chairperson of the LRM Council.

8. Making amendments to the Covenant

- For any amendment to this Covenant to come into effect, it must first be approved by the Council and then adopted by all parishes.
- If there is conflict between the amendment and the Covenant or any earlier amendment, the terms of the most recent amendment will prevail.
- Except as set forth in this amendment clause, the Covenant is unaffected and shall continue in full force and effect in accordance with its terms.

Glossary

- **Bishop** means the Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Montreal.
- **Consensus** means having the agreement of a majority of parishes or members of the LRM Council, depending on the context, where those who are not in full agreement can nonetheless live with the proposal.
- **Covenant** in this document means agreement.
- **LRM** in this document means Laurentian Regional Ministry.
- **Team Leader** in this document means Incumbent.

Appendices

A – Diocese of Montreal “Policy on Sustainable and Strategic Ministry”.

B – Fair Share Agreement.

Revised on August 6, 2021.