



## **COVENANT OF CONDUCT for Parish/Church Councils**

***In order for the parish and the church council to deal effectively with issues of the parish, the following guidelines are suggested:***

1. All members affirm their right to express their opinions about the life and ministry of the parish.
2. The parish operates with a direct democracy form of government that allows members to share their opinions directly with the pastoral leader(s), church council, committees/task forces/boards, and at official parish meetings.
3. When members of the parish express an opinion to a member of the council, the council person shall ask, "What would you like me to do with this information?"
4. If the member desires to have the information transmitted to the council, the member shall be invited to bring the information/opinion to the next council meeting. The time and dates shall be given.
5. If the member does not wish to appear in person, the council member shall ask the member for permission to use their name in reporting. If permission is not given, the council member shall say, "I'm sorry, but I will not be able to report this to the council since we do not deal with anonymous letters or comments." \*
6. If permission is given, the council member shall report the information/opinion to the council and use the member's name.
7. At his/her discretion, a council member may ask that the member refer the issue to another council member for presentation.
8. Each issue shall be placed on the agenda and written in the minutes along with the action taken by the council. Action may include: "Received as information," "Pastor and/or President to visit member and report at next meeting," etc.
9. Opinions may be shared in writing with the council and shall be handled in the above-mentioned manner if the letter or statement is signed.

*\*Anonymous complaints create undercurrents that threaten to divide the gathered congregation and disturb its health. Further, anonymous comments can become breeding grounds for gossip and speculation that leads to further division. Conversely, bringing requests, concerns and information to the leadership in a spirit of openness builds trust and creates an atmosphere of accountability and faithfulness.*