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Parish Constitution

of Swedish Church Australia

Adopted by the Parish Meeting (insert date)

Chapter 1

Applicability of the Church Order

Section 1

The Parish belongs to the Church of Sweden.

Section 2

The following provisions of the **Church Order of the Church of Sweden** apply to the Parish:

1. **Division One**, concerning the Church of Sweden as an Evangelical Lutheran Church.
2. **Chapter 2, Section 1**, first paragraph, concerning the Parish's fundamental mission.
3. **Chapter 2, Sections 8 and 9**, and **Chapter 5, Sections 1 and 2**, concerning the Parish Council as the governing body of the Parish and the responsibilities of the Vicar.
4. **Chapters 18–24, 28 and 29**, concerning authorised service books, Baptism, Holy Communion, Confession, Confirmation, Marriage, Services of Blessing, Funeral Services, the Church Year and Church Membership.
5. **Chapter 42, Section 7**, first sentence, providing that Baptism shall be free of charge.

The remaining provisions of the Church Order that specifically apply to the Church of Sweden Abroad shall also apply.

Chapter 2

Area of Responsibility

Section 1

The Parish's principal geographical area of responsibility and ministry is Australia.

The Parish is based in Melbourne. Sydney and Brisbane are also centres of ministry.

Separate **Local Ministry Councils** shall be established for the ministries in Sydney and Brisbane.

Section 2

The Parish's pastoral responsibility extends at all times to persons who belong to the Church of Sweden and who reside or are temporarily present within the Parish's area of responsibility.

Chapter 3

Membership

Section 1

Any person who belongs to the Church of Sweden and resides permanently, or for an extended period, within the Parish's area of responsibility is eligible to become a member of the Parish.

Family members, meaning a spouse, de facto partner or child of a member referred to in the first paragraph, may also be granted membership.

Section 2

Applications for membership shall be determined by the Parish Council.

Applications for membership shall be submitted to the Vicar.

Section 3

A person who does not satisfy the requirements set out in Chapter 3, Section 1 may, upon application, be admitted as a **Supporting Member**.

Chapter 4

Membership Fee

Section 1

A Membership Fee shall be payable in accordance with the resolution of the Parish Meeting.

The Membership Fee shall be determined according to the following membership categories:

- Individual
- Family
- Pensioner
- Pensioner Couple
- Student

The Vicar may waive all or part of the Membership Fee.

Chapter 5

The Parish Meeting

Section 1

The Parish Meeting is the Parish's highest decision-making body.

Functions of the Parish Meeting

Section 2

The Parish Meeting shall decide matters of principle and other matters of major importance, including:

1. the objectives and strategic direction of the Parish's ministry;
2. the budget, Membership Fees and other significant financial matters;
3. the election of members and deputy members of the Parish Council;
4. the election of auditors;
5. the principles governing remuneration of elected representatives and auditors;
6. the adoption of the annual financial statements, including the Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Financial Performance; and
7. the granting of discharge from liability.

Right to Participate in the Deliberations and Decisions of the Parish Meeting

Section 3

Voting members of the Parish are entitled to participate in the deliberations and decisions of the Parish Meeting.

Supporting Members may participate in the deliberations but are not entitled to vote.

Meetings

Section 4

The Parish Meeting shall meet at least once each calendar year.

The Parish Meeting shall determine the date of its Ordinary Meetings.

An Extraordinary Parish Meeting shall also be convened where requested by the Parish Council or where the Chair considers it necessary.

Chair

Section 5

The Parish Meeting shall elect a Chair from among those members of the Parish who are both entitled to vote and eligible for election.



Notice of Meeting

Section 6

The Chair shall give notice of each Parish Meeting.

The notice shall specify the date, time and place of the meeting together with the matters to be considered.

Notice shall be displayed on the Parish noticeboard, or communicated by another appropriate means, no later than one week before the meeting.

Where a matter is so urgent that notice cannot be given in accordance with the first paragraph, supplementary notice setting out that matter shall be published no later than four days before the meeting by an appropriate means.

Participation by Electronic Means

Section 7

A person entitled under Section 3 to participate in the deliberations and decisions of the Parish Meeting may participate remotely where the Parish Meeting has so resolved.

Remote participation shall take place by means of real-time audio and video communication enabling all participants to see, hear and communicate with one another on equal terms.

The Chair of the meeting may not participate remotely.

Where remote participation has been approved, the Parish Meeting shall determine the extent to which such participation is permitted.

A participant attending remotely shall be deemed to be present at the meeting.

Conflict of Interest

Section 8

A person entitled under Section 3 to participate in the deliberations and decisions of the Parish Meeting shall not participate in the consideration of any matter that personally concerns that person, or the person's spouse, de facto partner, parent, child, sibling, another close relative, or any interest closely associated with that person.

A person who is aware of circumstances giving rise to a conflict of interest shall immediately disclose those circumstances.

Where a question of conflict of interest arises, the Parish Meeting shall determine the matter without delay.

The person concerned shall not participate in the determination of that question.

Participation by the Vicar and Others

Section 9

Where the Vicar is not otherwise entitled to participate in the deliberations and decisions of the Parish Meeting under Section 3, the Vicar shall nevertheless be entitled to participate in the deliberations, but not in the decisions, and may request that a dissenting opinion be recorded in the minutes.

Matters to be Determined by the Parish Meeting

Section 10

The Parish Meeting shall determine matters submitted by:

1. the Parish Council;
2. a person entitled to vote at the Parish Meeting by way of a motion;
3. the Church Council or the Cathedral Chapter; and
4. the auditors, where the matter relates to the performance of their duties.

Preparation of Matters

Section 11

Before a matter is determined by the Parish Meeting, it shall first have been prepared by the Parish Council.

As part of its preparation, the Parish Council shall consider the impact of the proposed decision on children.

The Parish Council shall submit a recommendation for decision.

Chapter 5

The Parish Meeting (*continued*)

Section 12

The Parish Meeting may consider the Auditor's Report without prior preparation by the Parish Council.

Where an elected representative has been refused discharge from liability, the Parish Meeting may also, without prior preparation, resolve to revoke that person's appointment.

An urgent matter may be determined without prior preparation where all voting members present unanimously agree.

The Parish Meeting may appoint a **Nominations Committee** to prepare elections conducted by the Parish Meeting.

The Parish Meeting shall determine the term of office of the members of the Nominations Committee.

The Parish Meeting may determine the number of members and deputy members of the Parish Council and the Nominations Committee, and conduct elections for those positions, without prior preparation.

Section 13

A motion should be prepared within such time that the Parish Meeting can determine it within one year of the date on which it was submitted.

Where this is not possible, the Parish Meeting shall be informed, within that same period, of the reasons why preparation has not been completed and of the progress made.

The Parish Meeting may then resolve to discontinue further consideration of the motion.

Deferral of Matters

Section 14

A matter shall be deferred where at least one-third of the voting members present so request.

However, the deferral of an election, or of a matter that has previously been deferred, requires the agreement of more than half of the voting members present.

Unless otherwise resolved by the Parish Meeting, a deferred matter shall be considered at the next Parish Meeting.

Public Access

Section 15

Meetings of the Parish Meeting shall be open to the public.

Conduct of Meetings

Section 16

The Chair shall preside over meetings of the Parish Meeting and shall be responsible for maintaining order.

The Chair may require any person behaving in a disruptive manner to leave the meeting if that person fails to comply with a warning.

Decision-making

Section 17

An urgent matter may be determined without prior notice under Section 6 where all voting members of the Parish Meeting unanimously so resolve.

When debate has concluded, the Chair shall put each proposal to the meeting in a form capable of being answered "**Yes**" or "**No**".

The Chair shall then announce the decision and confirm it by striking the gavel unless a vote is requested.

Voting

Section 18

Where a vote is requested, voting shall take place openly except in elections.

A proposal shall be carried where it receives the support of more than half of the voting members present.

In the event of an equality of votes, the Chair shall have the casting vote.

In elections, however, a tied vote shall be decided by lot.

Reservation Against a Decision

Section 19

A person who has participated in a decision may record a formal reservation against that decision.

Notice of such reservation shall be given before the meeting concludes.

Where the person making the reservation wishes to provide written reasons, those reasons shall be submitted no later than the time at which the minutes are approved.

Minutes

Section 20

Minutes shall be kept of every meeting of the Parish Meeting under the responsibility of the Chair.

Section 21

The minutes shall record the voting members who attended the meeting and all matters considered by the Parish Meeting.

For each matter, the minutes shall record:

1. all motions and proposals that were submitted and not withdrawn;
2. any votes taken and their results;
3. the decision made;
4. the persons participating in the decision;
5. any formal reservations recorded against the decision; and
6. any dissenting opinion recorded by the Vicar under Section 9.

Section 22

The minutes shall be approved no later than fourteen days after the meeting in the manner determined by the Parish Meeting.

Following approval, the minutes shall be made available on the Parish noticeboard, or by another appropriate means, for a period of three months.

Chapter 6

The Parish Council

Section 1

The Parish Council is the governing body of the Parish.

Functions of the Parish Council

Section 2

The Parish Council shall oversee the life and ministry of the Parish and, together with the Vicar, is responsible for ensuring that the Parish fulfils its fundamental mission.

Section 3

The Parish Council shall closely monitor matters that may affect the financial position of the Parish.

The Parish Council shall adopt Standing Orders governing its work.

Section 4

The Parish Council shall:

1. prepare matters to be considered by the Parish Meeting;



2. be responsible for the financial administration of the Parish and for the management of its property;
3. implement the decisions of the Parish Meeting, unless responsibility has been assigned to another body; and
4. perform such other duties as are prescribed by the Church Order and by regulations made pursuant to it.

In carrying out these responsibilities, the Parish Council shall act in the best interests of children and undertake child impact assessments before making decisions.

Election of the Parish Council

Section 5

The Parish Meeting shall elect the members of the Parish Council, other than the Vicar, together with any deputy members.

The number of elected members shall be determined by the Parish Meeting but shall not be fewer than six.

The Parish Meeting shall determine the length of the term of office.

Where an elected member or deputy member resigns before the expiry of the term of office, a by-election shall be held for the remainder of that term.

The Vicar as a Member

Section 6

The Vicar shall be an **ex officio** member of the Parish Council.

Section 7

The Vicar shall, whether or not a member of the relevant body, have the right to attend meetings of any committee or body to which the Parish Council has delegated decision-making authority or assigned responsibility for preparing matters.

The Vicar may participate in deliberations but not in decisions and may request that a dissenting opinion be recorded in the minutes.

Section 8

The Vicar may appoint a priest serving within the Parish to act on the Vicar's behalf as a member of a Local Ministry Council.

Such appointment shall apply for the same term of office as the other members of the Local Ministry Council.

The Vicar shall notify the Chair of the Local Ministry Council of the appointment.

Where the appointed priest is unable to attend a meeting, the Vicar may attend in that person's place.

The Vicar may revoke the appointment at any time.

Chair

Section 9

The Parish Meeting shall elect a Chair from among the elected members of the Parish Council.

The Parish Meeting shall determine the term of office.

If neither the Chair nor a Deputy Chair is able to attend a meeting, the Parish Council shall appoint one of its elected members to preside over that meeting.

Meetings

Section 10

The Parish Council shall determine the time and place of its meetings.

A meeting shall also be convened where requested by at least one-third of the members of the Parish Council, by the Vicar, or where the Chair considers it necessary.

Quorum

Section 11

The Parish Council may transact business only when more than half of its members are present.

Participation by Electronic Means

Section 12

The Parish Meeting shall determine whether, and to what extent, members may participate remotely in meetings of the Parish Council.

Remote participation shall take place in accordance with Chapter 5, Section 7.

A member participating remotely shall be deemed to be present at the meeting.

Conflict of Interest

Section 13

A member shall not participate in the consideration of any matter concerning that member personally, or the member's spouse, de facto partner, parent, child, sibling, another close relative, or any interest closely associated with that member.

The same applies where any other circumstance exists that may reasonably call the member's impartiality into question.

The provisions relating to conflicts of interest in Chapter 5, Section 8 shall otherwise apply.

Section 14

The provisions concerning conflicts of interest shall also apply to employees and to any other person handling matters on behalf of the Parish Council.

Decisions and Minutes

Section 15

The following provisions governing the Parish Meeting shall apply correspondingly to the Parish Council:

- Chapter 5, Section 17 concerning decision-making;
- Chapter 5, Section 18 concerning voting, the Chair's casting vote and decisions by lot;
- Chapter 5, Section 19 concerning the right to record a dissent;
- Chapter 5, Section 20 concerning responsibility for the minutes;
- Chapter 5, Section 21 concerning the contents of the minutes; and
- Chapter 5, Section 22 concerning approval and publication of the minutes.

Where an appointment to office is made, the provisions concerning secret ballots and decisions by lot shall apply.

Churchwardens

Section 16

The Parish Council shall appoint Churchwardens for each term of office.

A person is eligible for appointment as a Churchwarden if that person:

1. belongs to the Church of Sweden;
2. has been baptised; and
3. has attained the age of sixteen years.

At least one Churchwarden shall be a member or deputy member of the Parish Council.

Chapter 7

Voting Rights and Eligibility for Election

Section 1

Any person who is a member of the Parish and has attained the age of sixteen (16) years no later than the date of the Parish Meeting shall be entitled to vote at the Parish Meeting.

Section 2

A person is eligible for election to the Parish Council if that person:

1. is a member of the Parish;
2. belongs to the Church of Sweden;
3. has been baptised; and
4. has attained the age of eighteen (18) years no later than the date of the election.

Section 3

An employee of the Parish is not eligible for election to the Parish Council.

Cessation of Office

Section 4

If an elected representative ceases to be eligible for election, that person's appointment shall terminate immediately.

Section 5

The Parish Meeting may revoke the appointment of an elected representative elected by the Parish Meeting if that person:

1. has been refused discharge from liability; or
2. has been convicted by a final judgment of an offence for which the prescribed penalty is imprisonment for two years or more.

Chapter 8

Worship

Section 1

Following consultation with the Parish's clergy and church musicians, the Parish Council may determine which authorised forms of principal worship, in addition to the **High Mass**, shall be used within the Parish.

Kommentar: Jag har här valt att behålla High Mass som översättning av *högmässa*. Det är den etablerade engelska termen inom lutherska och anglikanska kyrkor och ligger närmare originalet än *Eucharist*, som jag använde i ett tidigare utkast.

Section 2

Following consultation with the Parish Council, the clergy and church musicians of the Parish, the Vicar shall establish a plan for the Parish's worship services.

In the event of disagreement between the Parish Council and the Vicar concerning the worship plan, the matter may be referred to the Cathedral Chapter for determination.

Section 3

The Archbishop, the Diocesan Bishop, or a bishop authorised to perform episcopal duties on behalf of the Diocesan Bishop may use the Parish church for worship services and episcopal acts.

Section 4

The Parish church may be made available for purposes other than the Parish's worship services and ecclesiastical acts only where it can be assumed that both the church building and its furnishings will be treated with due reverence and care.

The church shall not be made available for any purpose that is inconsistent with the sacred character of the church.

Nor shall it be made available in a manner that interferes with the worship or other activities of the Parish.

Section 5

The Parish Council shall determine applications for the use of the church under Section 4.

Before making such a decision, the Parish Council shall, where the Vicar is unable to participate in the decision, provide the Vicar with an opportunity to express an opinion, where practicable.

The Parish Council may delegate authority to determine such matters to the Vicar or to a special committee consisting of the Vicar together with other members or deputy members of the Parish Council.

Section 6

A decision of the Parish Council concerning the use of the church shall take effect immediately.

Section 7

A decision made under Section 5 may be appealed to the Cathedral Chapter.

The following persons have standing to appeal:

1. a person whose application for use of the church has been refused;
2. a member of the Parish Council, in respect of a decision approving the use of the church;
and
3. the Vicar, in respect of a decision approving the use of the church.

A decision of the Cathedral Chapter is final and may not be appealed.

Chapter 9

Parish Registers and Ecclesiastical Records

Section 1

The Parish shall maintain parish registers for Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages and Funerals.

The registers shall contain the information required under the regulations governing parish registers issued by the Church of Sweden Board.

Section 2

Baptisms and Confirmations conducted in accordance with the rites of the Church of Sweden shall be reported directly to the Church of Sweden Board.

Section 3

The Vicar is responsible for ensuring that entries are made in the parish registers and that the required information is submitted to the Church of Sweden Board.

Chapter 10

Finance

Section 1

The Parish shall maintain sound financial management in all its activities.

The Parish shall maintain a financial position that provides an adequate reserve against financial risks and unforeseen circumstances.

Section 2

The Parish shall manage its funds in a manner that provides both an appropriate return on investment and a satisfactory level of security.

The Parish's funds shall also be managed in an ethically responsible manner consistent with the fundamental values of the Church of Sweden.

The Parish Meeting may adopt additional policies governing the management of the Parish's funds.

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Section 3

The Parish shall prepare an annual budget for each financial year.

The financial year shall coincide with the calendar year.

The budget shall include a plan for the Parish's ministry and finances during the financial year.

The budget shall also include a financial plan covering the following three-year period.

Section 4

Offerings may be received during worship services to support the ministry of the Church of Sweden or any other purpose considered appropriate by the Parish.

The Parish Council shall determine both the purpose of each offering and the worship service at which it is to be received.

If no such decision has been made and the Parish Council is unable to determine the matter in time, the Vicar may decide the purpose of the offering for that particular service.

If the Vicar has not made such a decision, the officiating priest may determine the purpose of the offering.

Before making such a decision, the serving Churchwardens shall be given the opportunity to express their views.

Any decision made under this Section shall be reported to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

Chapter 11

Amendment of this Parish Constitution

Section 1

Amendments to this Parish Constitution shall be made by resolution of the Parish Meeting.

An amendment shall take effect only after being adopted in identical form by two Parish Meetings, one of which shall be an Ordinary Parish Meeting.

A simple majority shall be sufficient for adoption.

This Parish Constitution shall not come into effect until it has been approved by Church of Sweden Board, following the Cathedral Chapter of the Diocese of Visby having been given the opportunity to express its opinion.