



Church of the Holy Communion  
Cathedral Chapter Webinar

“Parish Councils”



Presenter:

The Rt. Rev. Walter R. Banek  
Suffragan Bishop  
Diocese of Mid-America

Rector, Good Shepherd  
Reformed Episcopal Church & School  
1993-present



## Sources:

- 2017 REC Constitution & Canons v. 3.5, Canons 5 & 50
- 2019 Constitution & Canons of the Diocese of Mid-America
- Diocese of Mid-America Model Bylaws
- Diocesan Customary of the DMA, 2019, v. 3.2b
- A Short Manual for Vestries and Parish Councils, DMA
- 2019 DMA, Constitution and Bylaws for Church of the Holy Communion Cathedral

# The Parish Council – Its Members



- ❖ The Parish Council shall consist of:
  - the **Rector** (REC Constitution and Canons, Canon 50)
  - the **Rector's (Senior) Warden**, the congregation ratifying the appointment by the Rector (REC Constitution and Canons, Canon 50)
  - and the **People's (Junior or Accounting Warden)** elected by the congregation
  - provision to add **1 to 3 additional communicant members** by amendment to bylaws, nominated by the Rector of at least age 25, with a vote to approve by the congregation at a meeting Canonically assembled (REC Constitution and Canons, Canon 50)

# The Parish Council – Warden's Term of Service



## ❖ **Term of service** on the Parish council:

- Canon 49, Section 1 In every Parish of this Church **the number, mode of election, and term of office** of Wardens and Vestrymen, with the qualification of voters, shall be such as the State or Provincial or **Diocesan Canon Law** may permit or require, and as required by the **By-Laws of the Parish**. The Wardens and Vestrymen elected under such law shall hold office until their legal successors are elected and have qualified.

➤ (2017 REC Constitution and Canons, Title IV, Canon 49, Section 1; cf. 2019 DMA Constitution & Canons, Title IV, Canon II, Section 2)

- Normally members of the Parish Council **serve on an Annual basis** though charter and bylaws of a parish may determine otherwise

➤ (DMA Sample Bylaws ; 2019 DMA Constitution & Canons, Title IV, Canon II, Section 2)

- Whenever practicable, no Warden or other Vestry member shall be elected for more than **two consecutive terms** (DMA Sample Bylaws ; 2019 DMA Constitution & Canons, Title IV, Canon II, Section 2)

# The Parish Council - Wardens



## ❖ **Rector's Warden** (Sr. Warden)

- Chief lay leader, nominated only by Rector, ratified by congregation at Annual Parish meeting. (2019 DMA Constitution & Canons, Title IV, Canon II, Section 6)
- Represents the interests of the Rector to the Vestry and the Congregation
- In absence of a Rector, he is the custodian of the Parish Register, chairs meetings of the Vestry, and provides supply for the pulpit.

## ❖ **People's Warden** (Jr. Warden, Accounting Warden)

- Represents the interests of the congregation to the Vestry & Parish Council, keeping them apprised of the people's needs, desires, and concerns
- Oversight of physical & real parish property
- In absence of a Rector and Sr. Warden, he is the custodian of the Parish Register, chairs meetings of the Vestry.

# The Parish Council - Wardens



## ❖ **Wardens must be:**

- DEVOUT, ORGANIZED and of EXEMPLARY Christian character
- LOYAL in particular to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the REC
- PRACTICAL and WISE in the financial, structural, and spiritual aspects of parish life

## ❖ **Duty of Wardens**

- Provide for the elements for the Lord's Supper
- Oversee the care of communionware
- Provide suitable vestments for the clergy
- In the absence of a minister, the wardens see that orderly and worshipful Divine services are conducted (2019 DMA Constitution & Canons, Title IV, Canon II, Section 9)
- Exercise supervision over the Parish records and ledgers (2017 REC C&C, Canon 50, Section 1)
- The lay members of the Parish Council shall provide such advice and counsel to the Rector, as he shall deem important in matters of spiritual oversight and discipline in the reception and dismissal of communicant members.

(2017 REC C&C, Canon 50, Section 2)

# The Parish Council – Revising the Parish Roll

**From 2017 REC Constitution & Canons, Title IV, Canon 50, Section 3,4**

- **Revision is by NOTATION, never by erasure**
- **Remove name of anyone that has**
  - Died
  - Been Dismissed
  - Excommunicated
  - Failed to commune at least once in the year (or if by parish bylaws, 2-3 years)
  - Been ordained to Diaconate or Presbyterate with name transferred to clergy roll of Diocese
- **Remove from ACTIVE list anyone that has for at least one year**
  - Disappeared
  - Ceased to attend Divine Services
  - Ceased to contribute to the support of the Parish and its benefices

*PROVIDED THAT* All reasonable efforts shall have been made to reclaim such members





# The Parish Council – Revising the Parish Roll

**From 2017 REC Constitution & Canons, Title IV, Canon 50, Section 3,4**

➤ **Exceptions to Removal from Active list:**

- Non-resident members who continue to contribute to the parish and wish to remain active
- Aged persons and invalids
- Persons financially unable to contribute
- Military personnel which are not resident locally

All who are place on the *INACTIVE LIST* shall be notified, if their address is know

➤ **Restoration to Active List if the person has**

1. Resumed regular attendance at Divine services
2. Renewed support
3. Partaken of the Lord's Supper



# Certificate of Transfer or Letter Dimissory

**From 2017 REC Constitution & Canons, Title IV, Canon 50, Section 5,6**

➤ **Certificate of Transfer**

- Every Parish Council shall issue to any Communicant Member in good standing, at his own request, a certificate of transfer to any other Parish of this Church

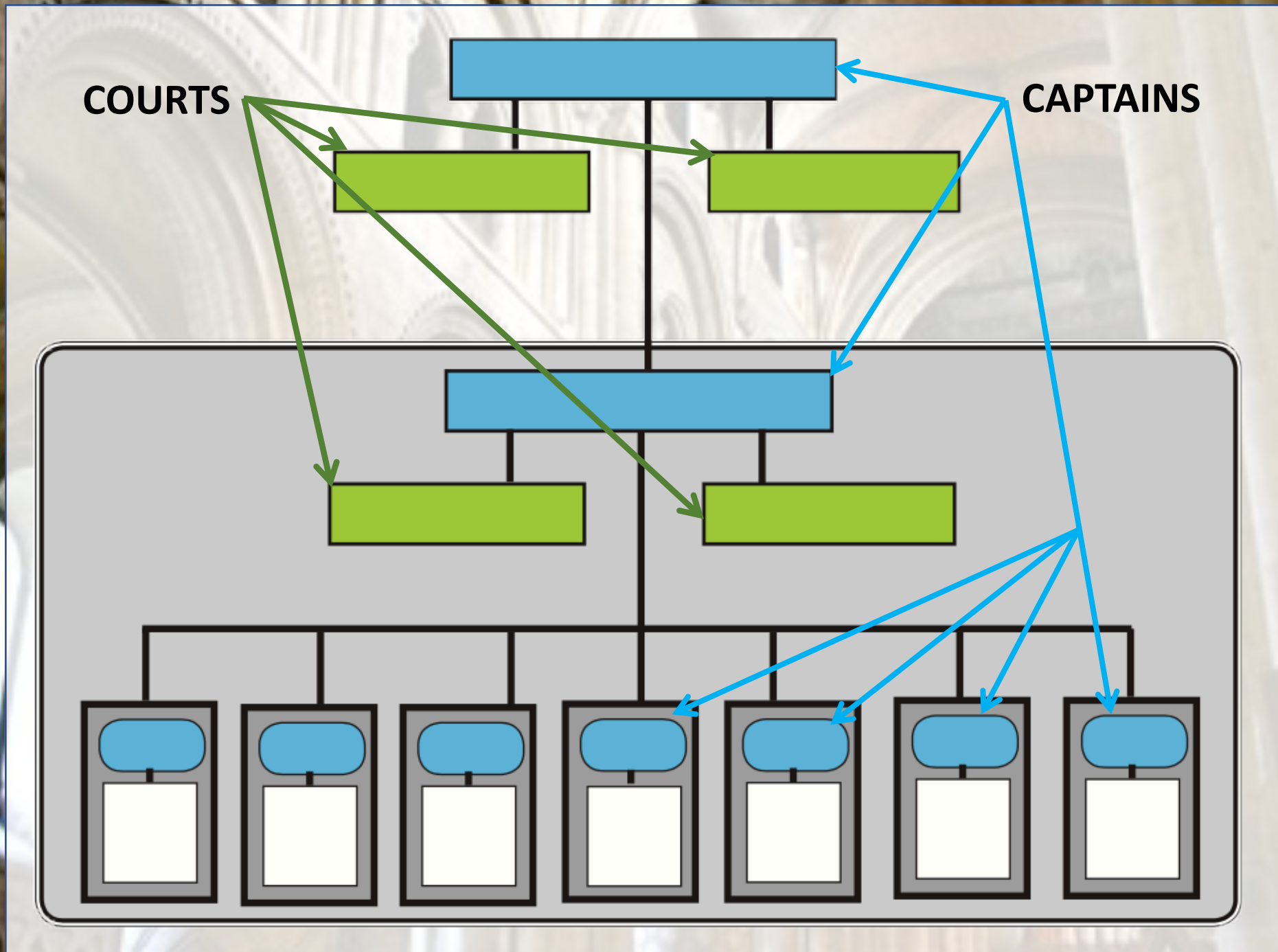
➤ **Letter Dimissory**

- Every Parish Council shall issue to any Communicant Member in good standing to any Congregation of any other evangelical Church.
- Every Parish Council shall issue to any Communicant Member on the INACTIVE LIST by the person's request, a Certificate of Transfer or a Letter Dimissory, ***which shall specify that person's status as recorded in the Parish Register.***



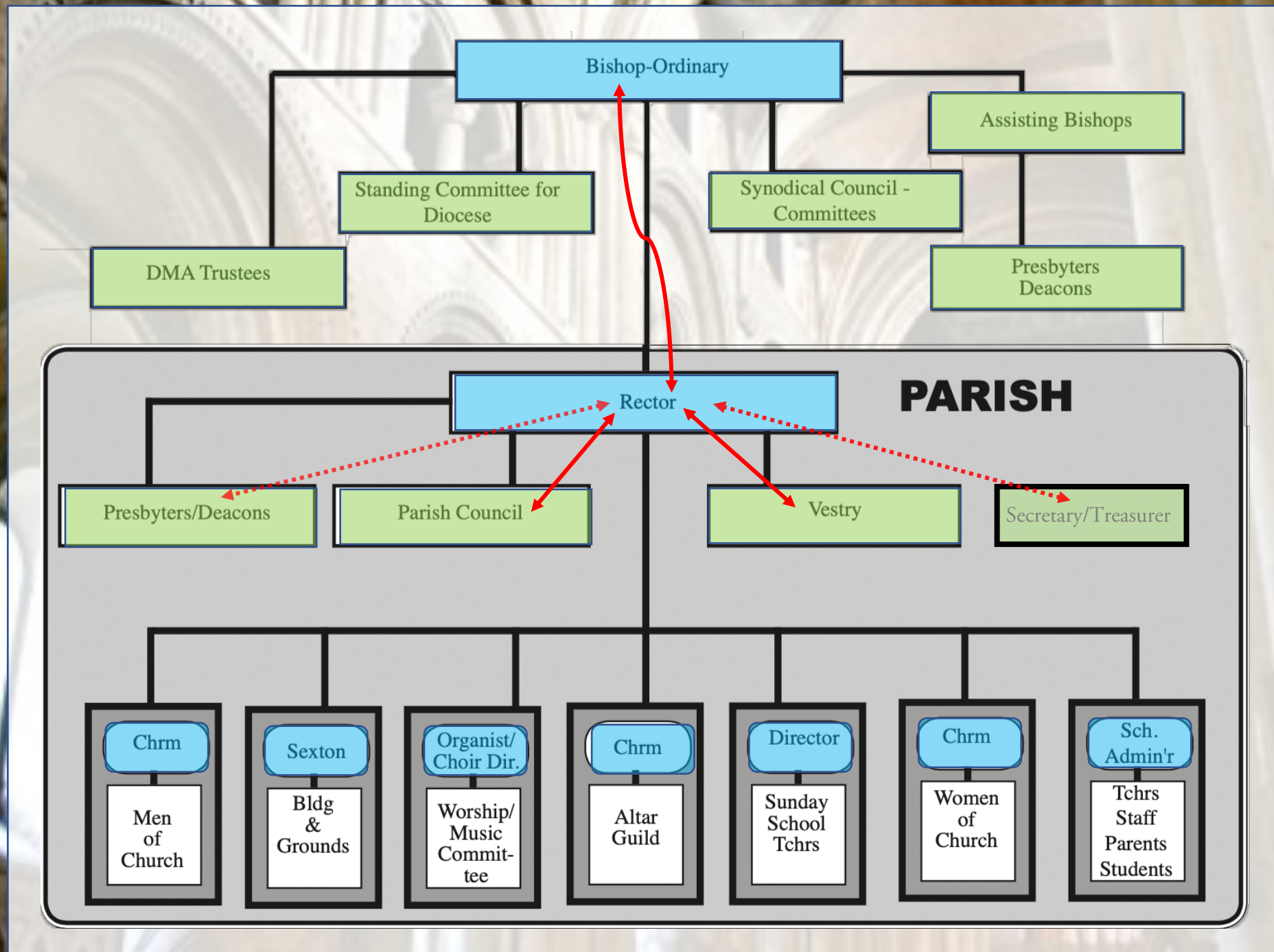
# CAPTAINS & COURTS

Basic church  
Organization

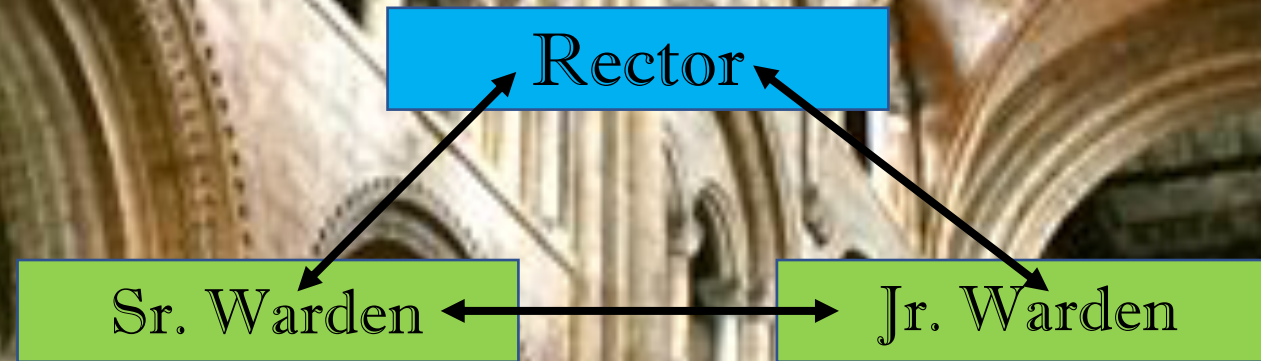


# CAPTAINS & COURTS

## Basic PARISH Organization



# The Parish Council – Ministerial Counselors

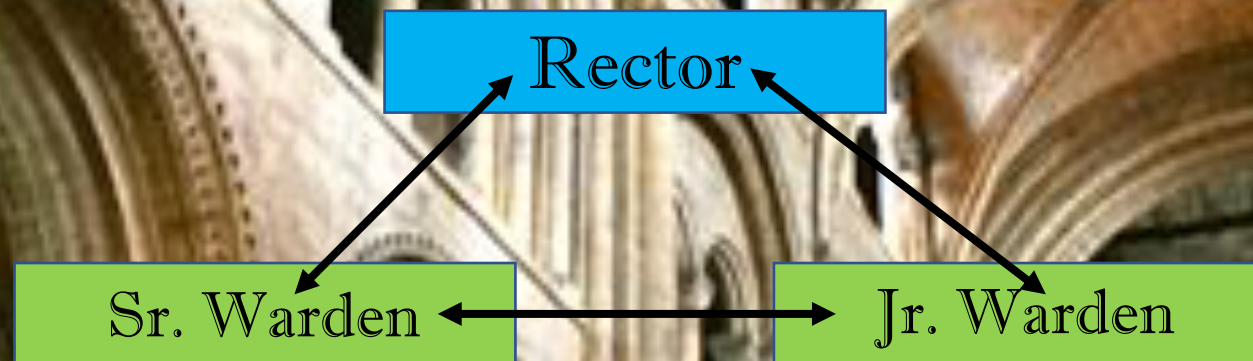


## **From A Short Manual for Vestries & Parish Councils**

### ***Spiritual Oversight of the Parish***

- The Parish Council shall meet at the discretion of Rector or Wardens. (REC 2017 C & C, Canon 50.)
- Preferably, they should meet monthly to pray and discuss parish concerns.
- There is a dynamic interchange of the Rector's concern and the respective interests of the Sr. and Jr. Wardens.
- Needs, concerns, problems should be freely discussed within the Parish Council, confidentially.
- Some things of necessity need to be kept "under the stole", especially counseling with parishioners, and may not be revealed by the priest.

# The Parish Council – Ministerial Counselors



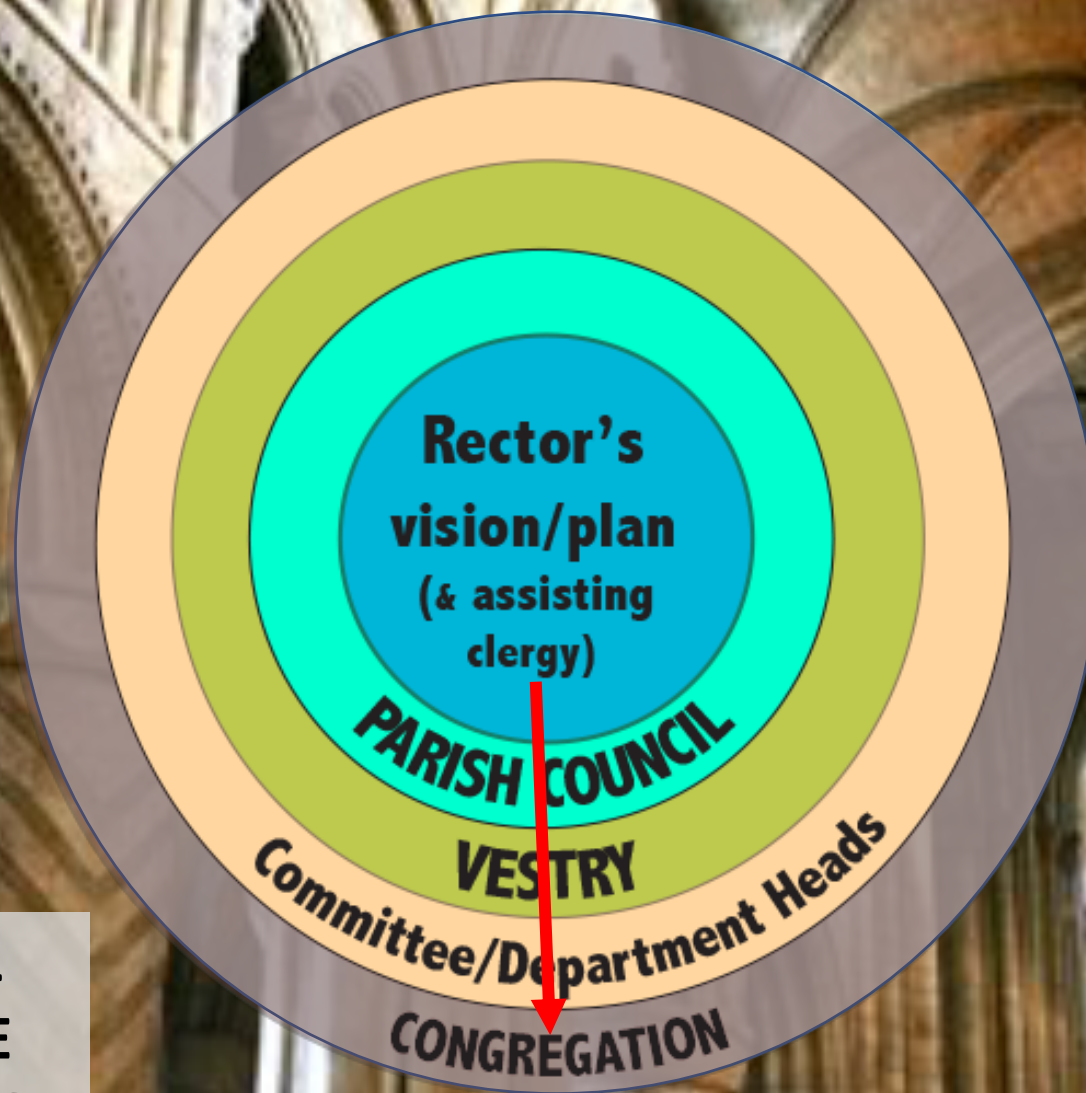
## **From A Short Manual for Vestries & Parish Councils**

### ***Spiritual Oversight of the Parish***

- The job of the Wardens is give opinions, the Rector must then make his decision.
- The Parish Council in which the members complement each other become a powerful force in overseeing the affairs of the parish.
- As such many potentially explosive situations can be defused
- They also serve as checks and balances in the oversight of the parish, which can help protect the Rector from undue or unfair criticism.
- If disagreements arise in the Parish Council, the Bishop as senior pastor of the parish may be consulted.

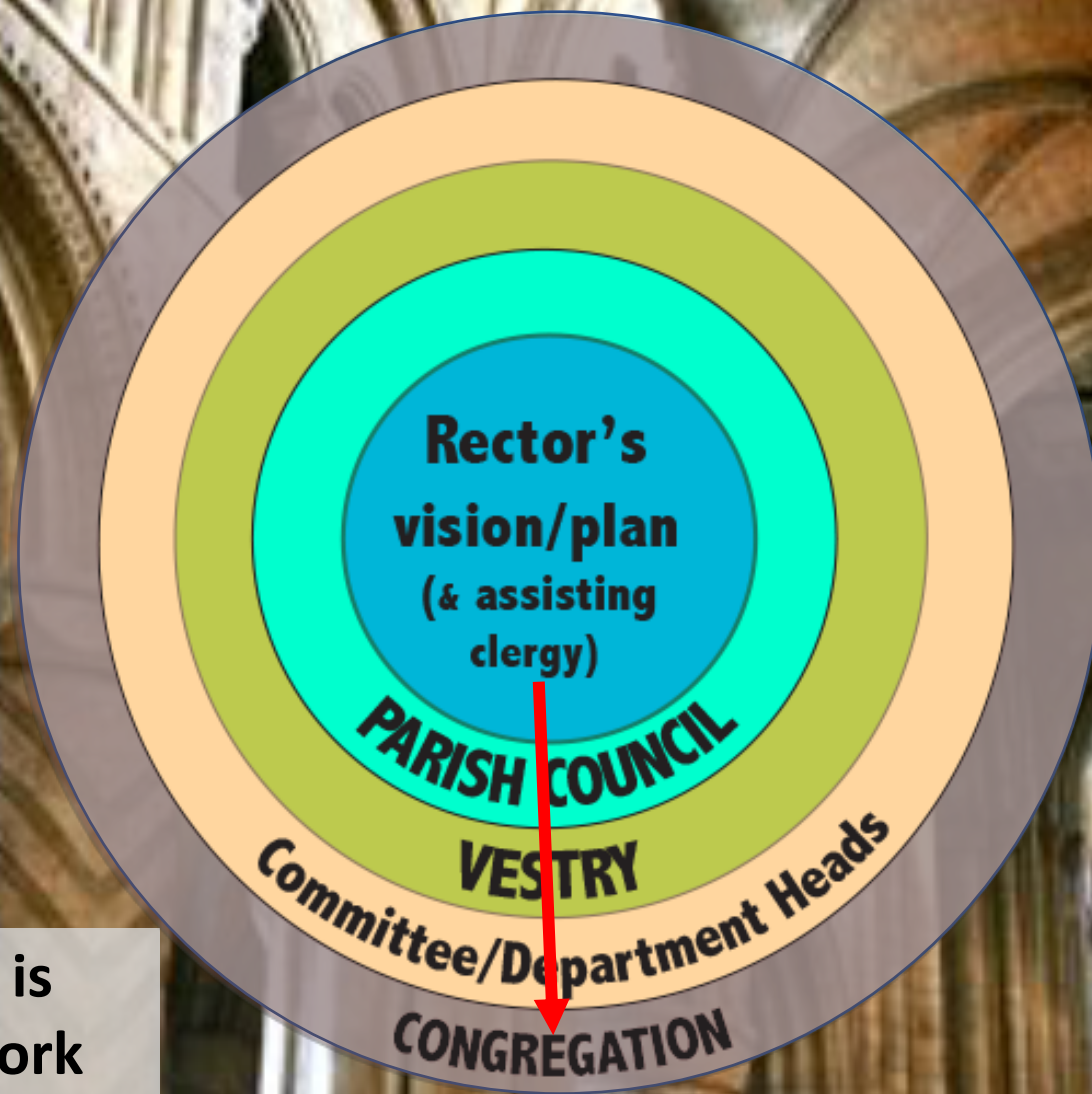


**PARISH COUNCIL  
HELPS PROMOTE  
RECTOR'S VISION &  
PROPOSALS**



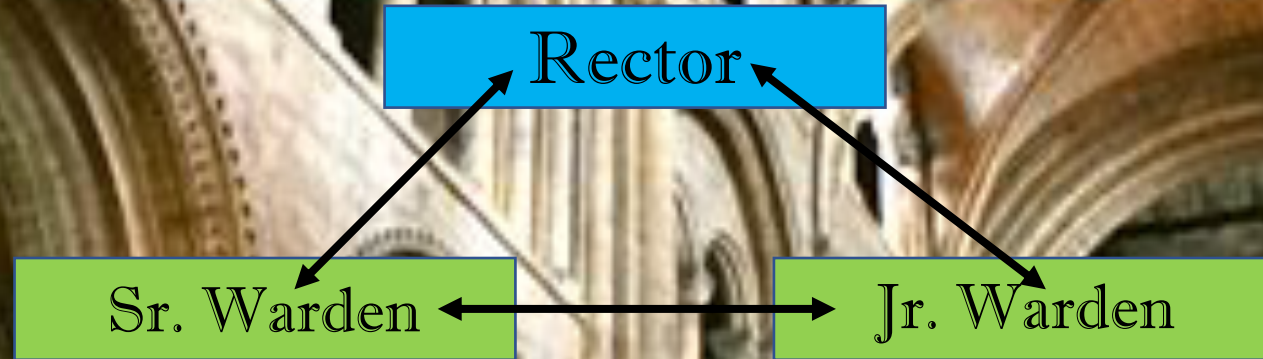


The Parish Council is critical in helping work proposals through the hierarchy of the church.





# The Parish Council – Court of the Laity



**From 2017 REC Constitution & Canons**

**CANON 27**

***Of the Establishment of Courts and Their Jurisdiction***

**Section 1. (3) The Court of Laity:** This Court shall have initial jurisdiction for any presentment preferred against any Communicant/Lay Person. It shall consist of the Rector or Vicar and **Wardens of the Parish** to which such Communicant belongs. The accused shall have the right to challenge one member of the Court in which case the Bishop shall appoint a substitute from among the communicant laity of the Parish or the Diocese, if such be challenged, or from among the Presbyterate of the Diocese if it be the Rector or Vicar who is challenged.

**Section 3** All decisions of any Court must be delivered, in written or typed form, to the subject of the presentment within fifteen days next following the date of the conclusion of the hearing.