

THE FOURTH COVENANT FOR
"PARTNERS IN MINISTRY"
IN THE EASTERN CONVOCATION OF
THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WEST TEXAS

This document evidences the Covenant of the following
Congregations, namely:

Grace Church, Cuero
Trinity Church, Edna
St. Stephen's Church, Goliad
St. James' Church, Hallettsville
St. Matthew's Church, Kenedy
Grace Church, Port Lavaca
Ascension Church, Refugio
Holy Communion Church, Yoakum

and the Diocese of West Texas to be Partners in Ministry, clearly committing as congregations, as Bishop's Committees, as Vestries, as orders of lay, as bishops, priests, and deacons, to each and all, to minister to the needs of all Episcopalians in the Partners group, to strengthen the Church, and to seek to spread the Gospel to those outside the Church.

In furtherance of our Covenant, we each adopt the following principles:

1. Our Vestry/Bishop's Committee is itself committed to regular prayer for Partners in Ministry in this Convocation in the

organizing phase and throughout the implementation period.

2. Our Vestry/Bishop's Committee and each congregation will commit to prayer on behalf of Partners in Ministry in this Convocation at every service conducted in our church.
3. We agree that Partners in Ministry will be served by the ministry of a team of clergy, who will be versed in approaches to area ministry and have the ability to meet diverse congregational needs.
4. It is agreed that for the duration of this covenant, each congregation will agree to be served collectively by the Clergy Team called forth and appointed with the Canon Missioner officially designated as Rector or Vicar of each congregation. All other canonical and fiscal responsibilities of the Vestry/Bishop's Committee will remain undiminished.
5. It is agreed that the Clergy Team called forth and appointed to this ministry will be composed of a minimum of one full-time clergy and the equivalent of one additional full-time clergy. Housing within the Eastern Convocation and other details will be negotiated by the Partnership Council. Other full-time or part-time clergy or lay staff will be appointed, subject to available funding.
6. It is agreed that the Canon Missioner, assisted by the clergy and lay team members, will have primary responsibility for the building of the appropriate team structure. The advice of the Partnership Council and congregations will be actively sought for the accomplishment of stated objectives.

7. It is agreed that the following functions for clergy responsibility are appropriate, though functions may vary in each congregation:
 - a. Be an evangelist
 - b. Administer the Sacraments
 - c. Provide the Eucharist every week in each congregation
 - d. Share in the intentional calling forth of lay leadership
 - e. Train the laity
 - f. Provide pastoral care
 - g. Provide spiritual direction and support
 - h. Lead liturgical planning
 - i. Continue a review of structure and program
 - j. Evangelism training and leadership

8. We agree that lay leadership in the churches who make up Partners in Ministry will be called forth and trained to serve with the clergy in the ministry of the church.

9. It is agreed that the following areas of lay responsibility are appropriate:
 - a. Evangelism of community
 - b. Share in the calling forth of lay leadership
 - c. Lay leadership
 - d. Renewal of lapsed members
 - e. Catechism training
 - f. Serving with clergy in pastoral matters
 - g. Conduct appropriate liturgy in absence of clergy
 - h. Various ministries in the community
 - i. Educational leadership
 - j. Ministries in church administration

10. In order to equip them for the ministry of the Partnership, leaders in the churches in the Partnership, and all members of the Partnership Council, agree to undertake such education, training, and preparation for licensing for ministry as the Bishop or his designees shall from time to time provide.

11. It is agreed that a Partnership Council will be established to plan, coordinate, and administer the work and corporate budget of Partners in Ministry in this Convocation. The Senior Warden or Bishop's Warden of each congregation and one other member designated by each congregation shall be members of the Council. The Canon Missioner will serve as the presiding officer of the Partnership Council.

12. Participating congregations agree to pay over to the Partnership Council such common percentage of their net disposable income as defined in the annual Parochial Report, toward the payment of clergy, lay staff, and other costs of Partnership Council Activities as is determined by the Partnership Council. These funds, plus whatever funds the Council obtains from the Diocese and other sources, shall be the basis for paying the Partnership Council's expenses.

13. It is agreed that the Partnership Council will establish its own rules of order and by-laws, and will have as its functions:
 - a. To call forth the Canon Missioner from a list submitted by the Bishop
 - b. To ratify other clergy and lay staff upon the recommendation of the Senior Priest
 - c. To prepare, define, and adopt a budget on behalf of all participating congregations inclusive of at least all staff expenses for the team

- d. To prepare, define, and adopt an income budget based upon an agreed common percentage of each congregation's net disposable income as established by the Council as defined in the Parochial Report
 - e. To define objectives for Partners in Ministry
 - f. To develop a structure for the Partnership Council for the proper administration of Partners in Ministry, including a set of written by-laws for the Partnership Council.
14. It is agreed that the Partnership Council, in the accomplishment of its functions above, will be empowered by Vestry/Bishop's Committee to act on their behalf.
 15. The Bishop or his designee shall be a member ex-officio of the Partnership Council and shall function in his own right or as the Bishop's designee.
 16. It is agreed that the member congregations of Partners in Ministry, in order to implement the objectives, will covenant *for a period of three (3) years* from the date of the signing of the Covenant. All congregations will commit themselves to active and determined participation for the duration of that period.
 17. It is agreed that the design and objectives for the Partners in Ministry will be reviewed annually by the Partnership Council and the Office of the Bishop, and the results communicated to each congregation.
 18. Six (6) months prior to the conclusion *of the three year period,* participating congregations through their representatives to the Council will review their relationship to the area ministry. The Council will be advised by member congregations no later than ninety (90) days prior to the termination date whether their participation in

Partners in Ministry is to be terminated, or continued into the future.

19. A congregation may withdraw from the Partnership before the end of the Covenant period providing they can demonstrate the fiscal independence of parish status and have the properly trained lay leadership, lay ministers, and administrative capability to function as a parish.
- a. At this time, a one year probationary period will be initiated, while still participating in the Partnership Covenant, in order to demonstrate the ability to become and remain a self-sustaining parish.
 - b. At the end of the probationary period, the congregation will withdraw from the Partnership Covenant and continue its life as an independent parish in the Diocese of West Texas.

This covenant is adopted on the 30th day of September, 2007, by the following Partner congregations, whose Senior Warden or Bishop's Warden signs below to evidence the consent of the respective Vestry/Bishop's Committee as incorporated into a Resolution duly passed at a meeting of such body, a copy of which is attached, and by the Bishop as evidencing the consent of the Diocese.

<u>CHURCH</u>	<u>NAME & POSITION</u>	<u>SIGNATURE</u>
Grace, Cuero		
Trinity, Edna		
St. Stephen's, Goliad		
St. James', Hallettsville		

St. Matthew's, Kenedy

Grace, Port Lavaca

Ascension, Refugio

Holy Communion, Yoakum

For the Diocese of West Texas

The Rt. Rev. Gary Lillibridge, Bishop

Design Team who created the form of the original Covenant:

Glen Naylor - Refugio	Pelinda Smith - Kenedy
Cathy Dawson - Refugio	Lillian Hester - Kenedy
George Dawson - Refugio	Jane Robisheaux - Goliad
Judy O'Neil - Port Lavaca	Beall Emmord - Goliad
Howard Hartzog - Pt. Lavaca	John C. Brooke - Goliad
The Rev. Allen Price - Port Lavaca	Brenda Johnson - Edna
Gwen Dugat - Victoria	Harrison Stafford - Edna
The Rev. William Dugat, Jr. - Victoria	Archdeacon C. Eugene Jennings
Robert Cheever - Yoakum	Bishop James E. Folts
Verna Cheever - Yoakum	The Rev. Canon Edmund L.
Mary Ann Pagel - Yoakum	Dohoney
Emma Williams - Yoakum	The Ven. Gary R. Lillibridge
Dorothy Anderson - Hallettsville	Donna S. Key, Secretary
John Simpson - Hallettsville	

First Canon Missioner selected by the Partnership Council:

The Rev. Canon Dr. Robert F. De Wolfe

1 November 1995