

# SIXTH COVENANT FOR PARTNERS IN MINISTRY IN THE EASTERN CONVOCATION OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WEST TEXAS

We, the Congregations of **Trinity Church, Edna; St. Stephen's Church, Goliad; St. James' Church, Hallettsville; St. Matthew's Church, Kenedy; Grace Church, Port Lavaca; Ascension Church, Refugio;** and the **Episcopal Diocese of West Texas**, in order to fulfill, with God's help, the Great Commission and our Baptismal Vows, do establish and ordain this Covenant to be *Partners in Ministry*; to mutually provide for each other so that together we, empowered by the Holy Spirit, have a greater opportunity to spread God's Good News of salvation and reconciliation through Jesus Christ by sharing our love for one another with our neighbors.

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

1. We agree that our Vestry/Bishop's Committees and each congregation are committed to regular prayer for Partners in Ministry in this Convocation. A prayer for Partners in Ministry will be included at every Sunday service conducted in our churches. (Exhibit A)
2. 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.
3. We agree to have each congregation served collectively by the Clergy Team called forth by and responsible to the Canon Missioner, who is officially designated as Rector or Vicar of each congregation.
4. We agree that all other canonical and fiscal responsibilities of each congregation's Vestry/Bishop's Committee will not be changed by this Covenant.
5. We agree to participate in a Partnership Council which will plan, coordinate, and administer the work and corporate budget of Partners in Ministry for the Eastern Convocation. The Senior/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.

The Bishop or his designee shall be a member ex-officio of the Partnership Council.

6. We agree that the Partnership Council will establish rules of order and by-laws, in addition to:
  - a. calling forth the Canon Missioner from a list submitted by the Bishop;
  - b. preparing, defining, and adopting a budget on behalf of all participating congregations inclusive of at least all staff expenses for the team;
  - c. preparing, defining, and adopting an income budget based upon an agreed common percentage of each congregation's net disposable income as established by the Council and as defined in the Parochial Report;
  - d. defining 3 year objectives for Partners in Ministry;
  - e. developing a structure for the Partnership Council for the proper administration of Partners in Ministry.
7. We agree that the Partnership Council will be empowered by Vestry/Bishop's Committee to act on their behalf in matters addressed in this Covenant.
8. We agree to pay to the Partnership a common percentage of net disposable income as defined in the annual Parochial Report, toward paying for clergy, lay staff, and other costs identified by the Partnership Council.

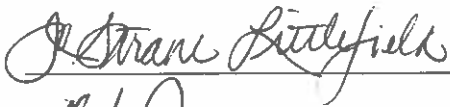
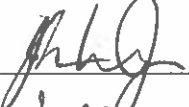




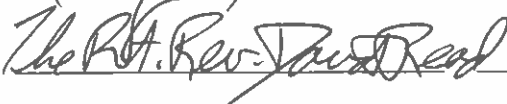
9. We agree to provide funding for a Clergy Team called forth and appointed to this ministry, being composed of a minimum of one full-time clergy with other full-time or part-time clergy or lay staff to be appointed, subject to available funding. Housing within the Eastern Convocation and other details will be negotiated by the Partnership Council, in consultation with the Bishop's office.
10. We agree that the Canon Missioner, assisted by the Council, the clergy and lay team members, will have primary responsibility for the building of the clergy and lay team structure.
11. We agree to the following ministries for clergy responsibility, though ministries and priorities 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 and Share in the discernment of laity being called for ordained ministry;
  - e. Equip the laity for their ministries;
  - f. Ensure annual Stewardship education;
  - g. Facilitate discipleship formation;
  - h. Provide pastoral care;
  - i. Offer spiritual direction and support;
  - j. Lead liturgical planning;
  - k. Review regularly the structure and program with lay leaders;
  - l. Provide evangelism training and leadership;
  - m. Develop and maintain connections with diocesan staff and resources in addition to participating in diocesan life.
12. We agree for lay leadership in the churches to be called forth and trained to serve with the clergy in the ministry of the church.
13. We agree to equip lay leadership for the ministry of the Partnership through education, training, and preparation for licensing for ministry.
14. We agree to the following areas of lay leadership and service, with God's help:
  - a. Evangelize our community;
  - b. Share in the discernment of laity being called for ordained ministry;
  - c. Share in the calling forth of lay leadership;
  - d. Seek the renewal of lapsed members;
  - e. Instruct in Catechism training;
  - f. Serve with clergy in pastoral matters, as appropriate;
  - g. Conduct appropriate liturgy in absence of clergy;
  - h. Imagine and support various ministries in the community;
  - i. Provide educational leadership;
  - j. Lead ministries in church administration;
  - k. Participate in diocesan life.

The member congregations of Partners in Ministry agree, in order to implement the objectives, for this Covenant to be for a period of five (5) years from the date of the signing of the Covenant. All congregations will commit themselves to active participation during the Covenant period.

Six (6) months prior to the conclusion of the five 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.

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.

This covenant is adopted on the 5 day of November, 2023, by the following Partner congregations, whose Senior/Bishop's Warden acknowledges the consent of the Vestry/Bishop's Committee as incorporated into a Resolution passed at a meeting of the Vestry/Bishop's Committee and by the Bishop Diocesan as consent of the Diocese.

Church	Signature	Printed Name and Position
Trinity, Edna		JO STRANE LITTLEFIELD
St. Stephen's, Goliad		John Yoder
St. James', Hallettsville		Sally Kolos
St. Matthew's, Kenedy		J.O. SARTWELL III SR WARDEN
Grace, Port Lavaca		RUSSELL CAIN
Ascension, Refugio		Manuel Govella
Diocese of West Texas		BISHOP COADJUTOR