

COUNCIL SELF GOVERNANCE POLICY

The congregation is led by the Congregation Council acting as a body, and the Council's actions, pronouncements, and policies always come from the Council as a body, not from individual members. The Council deliberates in many voices but governs in one.

- A. Outside of Council meetings, individual members are to publicly uphold the decisions of the Council. Exceptions to this policy are allowed if the member believes that the decision is clearly immoral, clearly contrary to Scripture, or not in accordance with the RLC Constitution and Bylaws. The dissenting member who believes the exception applies to a decision shall notify the Council of their position in advance of speaking against the decision outside of the Council.
- B. Within Council meetings, individual members must feel free to engage in frank discussions and to openly express disagreements with one another. Therefore, the specific content of all Council discussions is deemed confidential.
- C. The Congregation Council will use the Council/Staff Covenant to guide their work together and create healthy relationships for ministry and mission.

The Congregation Council primarily serves God and his church at RLC by setting policy and engaging in strategic planning that is in keeping with the stated mission of the congregation.

- A. The Congregation Council expects staff to attend to administrative detail under the direction of the Lead Pastor.
 - a. The Council will establish basic policies to guide the Lead Pastor and staff in handling day-to-day operations, establishing priorities, and responding to requests.
 - b. To maintain proper boundaries and foster healthy relationships between the Council and Staff, individual Council members will refrain from:
 - i. Directing staff members in carrying out their duties (formally or informally).
 - ii. Publicly expressing opinions on the performance or character of staff members.
 - iii. Placing themselves between staff members in their disputes or negotiations.
 - iv. Interpret Council actions, statements, or policy to staff members unless specifically directed by the Council to do so.

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- B. The Congregation Council will keep informed of the congregation's well-being, concerns, desires, and expectations.
 - a. The Council will determine for the Lead Pastor what specific information it needs each month to remain appropriately informed.
 - b. On an annual basis, the Council will formally solicit and evaluate input from the congregation regarding its concerns, desires, and expectations. (Methods may include but are not limited to: Congregation/Visitor Communications period at the beginning of every Council meeting, Congregation input requests published in the Weekly Bulletin or Preview, and the Annual Congregational Meeting.)
- C. The Congregation Council will keep informed about national and local trends that will affect the quality of ministry the church offers.
- D. The Council will cultivate a sense of group responsibility.
 - a. The Council will be responsible for excellence in governing itself.
 - b. The Council will initiate policy, not just react to requests.
 - c. The Council will use the expertise of individual members to enhance the ability of the Council to operate as a body, rather than substitute individual judgments for the Council's values.

The Congregation Council is most effective when all members participate in a proactive, future-oriented manner.

- A. All members are expected to attend monthly meetings and come prepared for the meetings.
 - a. Minimum preparation includes reading minutes and agenda beforehand as well as objecting in a timely manner to any "Common Consent Agenda" request
 - b. If a Council member does not attend 4 meetings in a row (or 6 meetings during the course of one year), shows a pattern of not following through on commitments, or demonstrates inappropriate behavior, a representative of the Council shall discuss the situation with the member to see if the situation can be rectified or if the member would prefer to resign.

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- B. To maintain the Council’s focus on planning and policy-setting, the Council and its members shall avoid taking on agenda items that have to do with day-to-day operations or other issues it has delegated to the Lead Pastor and the staff.
 - a. The Council may find that it has not been clear enough in its policy statements to give the Lead Pastor and staff sufficient direction in dealing with a particular issue. Should this be the case and the Council needs to address the issue, the Council shall at the same time clarify the policy so that the same kind of problem does not come up again.
 - b. In cases where Council approval is required for decisions ordinarily under the purview of the Lead Pastor and/or staff, it may be placed on the Common Consent Agenda.

The Congregation Council and Staff work together as partners and equals in fulfilling the ministry and mission of the congregation vis-à-vis the Ministry Matrix and are guided in their partnership by the Council and Staff Covenant.

- A. The members of the Congregation Council are encouraged to attend staff meetings, committee meetings and ministry team meetings. The purpose for attendance should be to:
 - a. Provide a supportive, encouraging presence.
 - b. Gain clearer understanding of the situation, opportunities and problems without direct interference for the purpose of reporting to the Lead Pastor and back to the Council if necessary.
 - c. If a Congregation Council member believes there may be a problem or some significant risk associated with a function, activity, project, or task, the Council member may ask the leader questions, in private, to obtain clarification. Any questions need to be made in the spirit of gathering information rather than in any accusatory tone. If the Council member still thinks there may be an issue, the Lead Pastor and any other appropriate staff may be contacted to resolve the problem. At this point, the Lead Pastor has the responsibility to take any re-directive action not the Council member.
 - d. If the Council member still has a concern, then the issue should be brought before the entire Council for consideration.
- B. Be a faithful team member in support of a ministry.