

ECC DISCERNMENT TEAM



WHAT DOES AFFILIATION MEAN? WHAT WOULD CHANGE?

WHAT DOES AFFILIATION MEAN?

Webster's Dictionary defines *affiliation* as the process of connecting yourself with something as a member or partner. For us, Mary Magdalene Church, affiliation with the Ecumenical Catholic Communion (ECC) would represent a partnership, relationship, and communion with a group that shares our theology and beliefs. This partnership will benefit all communities involved. We will continue to work with our local groups as well.

WHY AFFILIATE WITH THE ECC?

After vetting other communities, it was obvious to the discernment team that if we were to affiliate with any other community, the ECC would be the only choice for MMC. We share the basis of a Catholic theology while being inclusive and recognizing the divine presence in every human heart. (Please refer to our previous handout "What is the ECC?" for additional information.)

WHY ARE WE DISCUSSING AFFILIATION AT THIS TIME?

The possibility of affiliating with a larger spiritual community has been on MMC's "to-do" list for quite some time; however, we had other items that took precedence, such as owning our worship home, growth, and a salary for our Pastor. But with those items "checked-off", it is now time to begin this process, discuss it as a community and make a decision.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS OF AFFILIATION?

- MMC would help support the basic needs of the ECC Communion. This would consist of support in the amount of 5% of our weekly Sunday offering. The 5% is not taken from special collections or designated gifts. To put the monetary figure in perspective, last fiscal year MMC took in \$56,076 which would make our payment to the ECC Communion \$234/month. This 5% is an extremely modest figure which contributes to the viability and sustainability of the ECC, its Bishops, and opportunities to connect with people who are searching for a "church home" similar to MMC.
 - We know many of you were part of MMC from the very beginning when we were a BYOC (Bring your own Chair) Church. But we are no longer that poor, struggling church. We now have the means to have our own building, pay a salary to Pastor Denise, and be involved in community outreach. This affiliation is an extension of our community outreach.
- There is a bi-annual SYNOD in which the House of Laity and the House of Pastors gather. MMC would be encouraged to participate by having both clergy and laity attend these gatherings.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF AFFILIATION?

- MMC would be officially connected with a like-minded, warm and loving community
- MMC would maintain her autonomy – no changes would be required in our worship, events, or outreach; but now MMC would have a peer group to branch off of, learn with and grow with.
- The ECC would have MMC church here in New York. We would be a representative church if there was future interest in having more ECC churches in this area. More importantly, if someone was familiar with the ECC and was looking for a church in this area – we would be here for them to visit.
- Mary Magdalene's sustainability and viability are the largest advantages of this affiliation. In the future when MMC is searching for pastors, we would have a connection to an organization that shares our values, theology, and practices. Your Discernment Team and Board of Trustees wants to put a process in place so that when the time comes that Reverend Denise retires, we have the resources to find clergy to succeed her. (Do Not Panic! Denise has assured us that she has no plans to retire, but we have to be realistic that it will happen ... one day).
 - When that time comes, being affiliated allows the MMC Congregation along with the Board of Trustees the ability to search within the ECC for viable candidates whom we could interview. Then we would choose who came to MMC. Additionally, if member of MMC felt a call to ordination, we would be connected with an organization through which these future leaders would be able to pursue ordination. The ECC does not have any authority to appoint someone; MMC would have complete and final say on who would succeed Denise as our Pastor.

If you have questions regarding these FAQ flyers, please feel free to reach out to your Discernment Team:

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