

The Bylaws

Part I – Communion Participation **(CF. Chapter 2 of Constitution)**

1. This congregation invites all of its members who have been prepared to receive the Sacrament, to participate regularly in Holy Communion.
2. Preparation for Holy Communion will normally be provided for persons as young as seven (7) years of age or in the second (2nd) grade.
3. Participation in Holy Communion shall be open to members of other Congregations who accept the Lutheran teaching in regard to this Sacrament.
4. It shall be made known to perspective participants that the belief of this Congregation is:
 - A. Participation in the Lord's Supper is the reception of "The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ given with bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself for us to eat and drink."
 - B. We hold that a "person is well prepared and worthy who believes these words, given and shed for you for the remission of sins. But anyone who does not believe these words, or doubts them, is neither prepared nor worthy, for the words for you require simply a believing heart."
5. A record of participation in Holy Communion shall be maintained. If a member of another congregation communes, notice shall be sent to the pastor of that congregation.

Part II – Conflicting Loyalties **(Cf. Chapter 2)**

1. While the building of the Congregation shall be open to all people to share in its worship, instruction, Pastoral care, and fellowship, the Congregation reserves the right to reject all fellowship with organizations, secret or open.
2. Ceremonies with conflicting loyalties: we further reserve the right to permit or deny in the buildings or premise of the Congregation, along with the right of its Pastor(s) or Lay Assistant(s) to take part in any such ceremonies wherever they are conducted.

Part III – Membership
(Cf. Chapter 8, 01-05)

1. Baptized Members
 - A. Children shall, upon receiving Christian baptism, be received as baptized members of this congregation.
 - B. Children that have been baptized by another congregation will be received as baptized members of this congregation by transfer, consent of parent(s) or guardian(s), or placed in our care by another congregation.
 - C. Unbaptized adults who have received instruction and have given evidence of having an adequate understanding and acceptance of the teaching of the Word of God as confessed by the Lutheran Church, shall, upon confession of faith and Christian Baptism, be received as Baptized and Confirmed members of the Congregation.
2. Confirmed Members
 - A. Baptized persons shall become confirmed members of the Congregation after having received instruction, having given evidence of adequate understanding of the Word of God as confessed by the Lutheran Church, and having publicly affirmed their faith.
 - B. Applicants for membership presenting Letters of Transfer certifying them as confirmed members on good standing in other Lutheran congregations shall be admitted to confirmed membership upon acceptance of the letters of Transfer by the Church Council. The acceptance of the applicant shall be reported to the Congregation.
3. Voting Members

The Church Council shall ensure that a roster of voting members of the Congregation in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and bylaws is maintained. This roster of members in good standing shall be available at all regularly called meetings of the Congregation. The term “in good standing” shall be defined to include:

 - A. Those who partake of Holy Communion.
 - B. Those who contribute to the congregational treasury according to their abilities.
 - C. Those who participate in the life and worship of the Congregation.
4. Pastoral Care of Membership
 - A. The congregation shall, in the event of the removal of a member from the community it serves, encourage the member to request a transfer to a Lutheran congregation which can serve that member effectively. Should

the member fail to request a transfer, a Lutheran congregation in the community of that person's residence shall be notified.

- B. A confirmed member in good standing desiring to change his membership to another Lutheran congregation shall, upon request, receive a Letter of Transfer.
 - C. A confirmed member who does not, for a period of one year, partake of Holy Communion, support the church with his offerings, and does not appear to desire to participate in the life and worship of the Congregation shall be visited by the Pastor and the Congregation's officers and be encouraged by them to return to active membership. If, during the second year, the confirmed member does not actively participate, that member's name shall be removed from the membership roster of the congregation but be retained on a responsibility list as one who is in special need of the congregation's prayer and concern list.
 - D. A child, neither of whose parents nor guardians are members of the congregation, may be removed from the roster of baptized members if that child fails to participate in the life and worship of the congregation.
5. Discipline (Cf. Chapter 15 of Constitution .01-.05)
In exercising discipline as provided in the constitution, the following shall be the procedure:
- A. A person, who is requested to appear before the church Council for possible discipline, shall be advised in writing no less than ten days prior to the hearing. The written notice shall include the time and place of the hearing and shall specify the exact reason for the possible discipline. If that person fails to appear at the time and place without valid excuse, the Church Council may proceed with the hearing and may reach its conclusion in the absence of that person.
 - B. Should the person be found guilty by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Church Council, the Council shall impose one of the following actions:
 - (1) Censure before the church Council or the Congregation;
 - (2) Suspension from membership until proof is given of sufficient repentance and amendment;
 - (3) Exclusion from membership and denial of the Sacraments.

In the event of the imposition of (2) or 3) above, the action of the Church Council shall be in writing.

Part IV – The Pastor

(Cf. Chapter 9, .01-12)

1. When the congregation has voted to call a pastor, it shall issue a Letter of Call to the Pastor-elect, in a form approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (E.L.C.A.). It shall be signed by the Chairperson and the Secretary of the meeting at which the Call was voted, and shall be attested by the signature of the President of the Southwestern Texas Synod. A call to a member of the clergy to be an Assistant Pastor shall be issued only with the concurrence of the Pastor of the congregation and in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph.
2. The Call shall normally be for an indefinite time. A Call issued to an Assistant Pastor may be for a definite time.
3. If a pastor receives a Call to another ministry, the Pastor shall consult the Church Council, or, if desired, the Congregation, before reaching a decision. The Pastor shall announce a decision to quickly as possible, normally within three weeks. The Pastor shall notify the Synod President. When a Call has been accepted, the Pastor's ministry in this congregation shall be terminated as soon as feasible, normally within a month.

Part V – Meetings of the Congregation

(Cf. Chapter 10)

1. Announcement of the time and place of the annual meeting of the congregation shall be made at two public services immediately preceding the meeting, said service to be at least a week apart; and in such publications as the Congregation or the Pastor may periodically issue, or by written notice to the voting members mailed not less than ten days in advance of the meeting.
2. The current rosters of voting confirmed and baptized members shall be available at each meeting of the Congregation.
3. The annual meeting shall receive reports from all the organizations of the congregation. Such reports, including a financial statement, shall be submitted in writing to the Council President not less than 30 days before such meeting.
4. The Annual meeting of the congregation shall elect a nominating committee of 6 members. The Pastor shall serve as convener and as advisory member. The term of office of the members of the nominating committee shall be one year (Cf. C13.02).

The nominating committee shall nominate one or more candidates for each office to be filled and shall secure the consent of each candidate.

The list of nominees shall be announced to the Congregation in conjunction with the announcements of the meeting of the Congregation at which the elections are to take place.

In addition to the candidates submitted by the nominating committee, additional nominations may be made from the floor, but with prior consent of the person being nominated from the floor.

The Church Council shall fill vacancies on the nominating committee.

5. Unless otherwise ordered, parliamentary procedures according to the latest issue of Roberts Rules of Order, shall be observed at all meetings of the Congregation and its departments/

Part VI – Officers and Boards
(Cf. Chapter 11 .01-.03

Officers and Church Council

1. The following Officers of the Congregation shall be elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting for a term of two (2) years and shall serve as the Church Council: President, Secretary, Evangelism Chairperson, Stewardship Chairperson, Education/Youth Chairperson, Property Chairperson, Worship Chairperson, Social Ministry Chairperson, Fellowship Chairperson and a Youth Representative eighteen (18) years of age or younger
2.
 - A. Five Officers shall be elected in odd numbered years, and four officers shall be elected in even numbered year.
 - B. Newly elected Council Members shall assume office at the first Council Meeting in January following their election.
2. Only a voting member of the congregation shall be eligible to be an Officer of the Congregation.
3. Membership on the Church Council shall not exceed two successive terms. An unexpired term of less than one year shall not be considered a term of office.
4. A vacancy on the Church Council shall be filled by action of the Church Council for the remainder of that unexpired term.
5. The pastor shall be a member of the Church Council.
6. The Church Council shall not transact any business unless a majority of its members are present.
7. Meeting of the church Council shall be held monthly on the day decided upon by the members of the council.

8. Special Meeting of the church Council may be called by notifying each member of the Council. Special meetings may be called by the pastor, the Council President, or four (4) members of the Council.
9. If a member of the church Council is absent from four consecutive regular meetings without an excuse acceptable to the Council that person has forfeited membership. A member having two consecutive unexcused absences from regular meetings shall be notified in writing thereof by the Secretary.

Duties of the Officers

1. The President shall serve as Chief Lay Person of the Congregation and shall preside over meetings of the Congregation and the Church Council.
2. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the Congregation and of the Council and shall preserve its archives.
3. The Evangelism Chairperson shall preside over the Evangelism Committee and coordinate its activities. The Evangelism chairperson shall also serve as Vice-President of the Congregation and preside in the absence of the President.
4. The Stewardship Chairperson shall preside over the Stewardship Committee and coordinate its activities.
5. The Education/Youth Chairperson shall preside over the Education/Youth committee and coordinate their activities.
6. The Property Chairperson shall preside over the Property Committee and coordinate its activities.
7. The Worship Chairperson shall preside over the Worship committee and coordinate its activities.
8. The Fellowship Chairperson shall preside over the Fellowship committee and coordinate its activities.
9. The Social Ministries Chairperson shall preside over the Social Ministries Committee and coordinate its activities.

Duties of the Church Council

1. Elect a Treasurer who is not to be a voting member of the Church Council. The Treasurer shall be bonded and shall be the custodian of all funds of the Congregation and Church Council. The Treasurer shall present an audited report at the Annual Congregational meeting and such other reports to the Church Council as may be required.

2. Elect a Financial Secretary of the Congregation who may or may not be a member of the Church Council.
3. The Church Council shall be empowered to secure such help as is needed to carry on the work of the Congregation, such as Organist, Choir Director, Parish Worker, Secretary, Intern, Custodian, etc. and shall review and fix their salaries annually.
4. Annually, review the salary of the Pastor and make adjustments from time to time within the budget as approved by the congregation.
5. The Church Council shall operate within the limits of the approved budget of the congregation. Any expenditures in excess of the total voted budget must be approved by the Congregation.
6. The President with the approval of the Church Council shall appoint annually an Auditing committee of three persons who shall audit all financial records incident to the budget of the Congregation annually and report its findings in writing at the annual meeting. Members shall not be members of the Church Council. Term of office shall be one year, and any member may be eligible for reappointment.

The Auditing Committee shall carefully examine all insurance policies in force at least once each year to determine adjustments on the amount and kind of insurance required and report their findings to the Church Council (Cf. C13.03).

7. The Church Council shall be responsible for the buildings and premises of the Congregation so that their use is limited to the normal functions of the Congregation. Should groups or individuals not associated with the Congregation desire to use such property, application shall be made to the Church Council.

Committees of the Church Council

1. The Church Council shall annually appoint the following committees and ensure their effective operation.
 - A. A Committee concerned with Evangelism which shall have special responsibility for the development of a sound program of Evangelism and for the general spiritual care of the congregation, and shall make recommendations thereon to the Church Council.
 - B. A committee concerned with Worship which shall have special responsibility in matters pertaining to the Congregation's worship, and shall make recommendations thereon to the Church Council
 - C. A committee concerned with Stewardship which shall have special responsibility for the congregation's development in accordance with scriptural principles of Stewardship, the raising of funds, preparing a

budget for review by the Church Council which shall make recommendation for submissions to the Annual Congregational meeting.

- D. A committee concerned with Education/Youth which shall have special responsibility under the supervision of the Pastor to operate the Sunday school, to promote adult education, youth activities and shall make recommendations thereon to the Church Council.
- E. A committee concerned with property and its management which shall have special responsibility for care of the church property, and shall make recommendations thereon to the Church Council.
- F. A committee concerned with Fellowship of the Congregation which shall have special responsibility for all matters related to the fellowship activities and functions of the Congregation and shall make recommendations thereon to the Church Council.
- G. A committee concerned with Social Ministries which shall have responsibilities for all activities deemed to be a social service and shall make recommendations thereon to the church Council.

Part VII – Parish Records

The records of the Congregation shall be and remain the properties of the Congregation. The Pastor shall be responsible for the maintenance of the records, except as otherwise provided herein. Upon the termination of a Pastor's service to the Congregation, the records shall have been brought up to date prior to departure. The records shall consist of:

1. The roster of baptized, confirmed, and voting members,
2. The ministerial acts performed by the pastor,
3. The minutes and reports of the Synod and the Handbook of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
4. The minutes of the meetings of the Congregation and the Church Council, for which the Secretary of the Congregation shall be responsible, and
5. The financial records of the Congregation, for which the Treasurer of the Congregation shall be responsible.

The Pastor shall port to the General Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America such statistics as may be requested and shall annually report to the congregation a summary of ministerial acts.

Should the Congregation be dissolved the official records of the Congregation shall be deposited in the archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor.

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