

# Bylaws Of Our Savior's Lutheran Church

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# 1 COMMUNION PARTICIPATION

- 1.01** Our Savior's Lutheran Church, hereinafter the "Congregation", invites all Christian believers to participate regularly in Holy Communion and would encourage training for those who have not yet received it.
- 1.02** Instruction for Holy Communion will normally be provided for persons in the fourth grade or as requested.
- 1.03** It shall be made known to prospective participants that the belief of this Congregation is:

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."

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."

# 2 MEMBERSHIP

## 2.01 Baptized Members

- a) A person, upon receiving Baptism, becomes a baptized member.
- b) A child, neither of whose parents or guardians is a member of the Congregation, shall, upon receiving Baptism, become a baptized member of the Congregation unless for good reason the child is to be a baptized member of another congregation, in which case his/her membership shall be transferred to that congregation.
- c) A child baptized in another congregation shall be received as a baptized member in this Congregation when a letter of transfer has been received or when his/her family has been received as members of this Congregation.
- d) An unbaptized adult who has received instruction and has given evidence of understanding and acceptance of the teachings of the Word of God as confessed by the Lutheran Church, shall, upon confession of faith and Baptism, become a baptized member of the Congregation.
- e) When the parents of a baptized child are not members of the Lutheran Church, but desire to have their child within the pastoral care of the Congregation, the child may be received as a baptized member.

## 2.02 Confirmed and Voting Members

- a) A baptized adult, not previously a confirmed member of a Lutheran congregation, shall become a confirmed and voting member of the Congregation after receiving instruction, giving evidence of understanding and acceptance of the teachings of the Word of God as confessed by the Lutheran Church, and publicly affirming his/her faith.

**Comment [TMD1]:** This is not presently being done nor has it been asked for by the congregation, staff, or Synod.

- b) A baptized member of the Congregation shall become a confirmed member through the Affirmation of Baptism; except that an adult who has become a baptized member in accordance with the provisions of 2.01(d) of the Bylaws shall be considered a confirmed member without participation in the Affirmation of Baptism.
- c) An applicant for membership who presents a letter of transfer that certifies that he/she is a confirmed member in good standing of a Lutheran congregation shall become a confirmed member of this Congregation upon approval of the pastors. The acceptance of the applicant shall be reported to the Congregation.
- d) An applicant for membership who presents evidence of confirmation in a Lutheran congregation, but does not have a letter of transfer, shall be admitted to confirmed membership when the pastors have determined that he/she meets the standards of Christian faith and life indicated in the Constitution and Bylaws, and when the applicant has affirmed that faith before the Congregation.
- e) The Council shall determine the roster of confirmed and voting members of the Congregation in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws. The roster of voting members shall be available upon request at all regularly called meetings of the Congregation.
- f) Assuming the above specifics are in order, this Congregation welcomes all children of God irrespective of race, ethnicity, socio-economic background, sexual orientation or any other such distinction.

### **2.03 Associate Members**

A person holding membership in another Lutheran congregation may become an associate member of this congregation with all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Council of this congregation.

### **2.04 Discontinuance of Membership**

- a) The Congregation shall, in the event of the departure of a member from the community it serves, encourage the member to request a transfer to a Lutheran congregation that can serve him/her effectively.
- b) A confirmed member in good standing desiring to change his/her membership to another Lutheran congregation shall, upon request, receive a letter of transfer.
- c) Members who have been dismissed, or who have resigned or transferred to other Lutheran congregations, or who are definitely known to have become members of other congregations without transfer, have thereby terminated their membership in this Congregation and have surrendered all membership rights but could return upon completion of the steps outlined in section 2.02d.
- d) A child, neither of whose parents or guardians is a member of the Congregation, may upon approval of the pastors be removed from the roster of baptized members if the child fails to participate in the life and worship of the Congregation.

### **3 THE PASTORAL CALL**

- 3.01** In the event of a vacancy in the position of pastor, the Nominating Committee shall nominate and the Congregation shall elect a Call Committee of not more than ten (10) voting members of the Congregation.
- 3.02** Before a call is issued, the Call Committee shall seek the advice and help of the Synod bishop.
- 3.03** When the Congregation has voted to call a pastor, it shall issue a Letter of Call to the pastor-elect signed by the President and the Secretary of the Congregation and attested to by the Bishop of the Synod.
- 3.04** A Call to a pastor shall normally be for an indefinite time.
- 3.05** When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the Call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors and the Council. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- 3.06** If a pastor receives a Call to another ministry, the pastor shall consult the Council, or, if desired, the Congregation, before reaching a decision. The pastor shall announce a decision as quickly as possible, normally within three weeks. The pastor shall also notify the Bishop of the Synod of the decision. When a Call has been accepted, the pastor shall terminate his/her ministry as soon as feasible, normally within a month.

### **4 THE ANNUAL MEETING**

- 4.01** 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 services to be at least a week apart, and in such publication as the Congregation or the pastor may periodically issue, including email; or by written notice to the voting members mailed at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting.
- 4.02** The date of the Annual meeting shall occur prior to the next fiscal year allowing budget approval for that fiscal year.
- 4.03** The order of business at the annual meeting shall be:
  - a) Opening prayer.
  - b) Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting.
  - c) Written and/or oral reports of Pastor(s), Council, Treasurer, committees, and others.
  - d) Elections.
  - e) Approval of budget.
  - f) Unfinished business.
  - g) New business.
  - h) Closing prayer.

- 4.04** In the following cases voting shall be by written ballot:
- a) When there is more than one nominee per vacancy;
  - b) To adopt or amend the articles of incorporation, Constitution, or Bylaws of the Congregation;
  - c) To call a pastor or to request his/her resignation;
  - d) To remove a member from an elected position in the Congregation;
  - e) To sever membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
  - f) To dispose of, encumber, or purchase real property;
  - g) When requested by ten or more voting members present.
- 4.05** Except as otherwise provided in the Constitution and Bylaws, all matters shall be decided by the majority vote of those present and voting.
- 4.06** If more than one ballot is required in an election, a motion shall be in order to limit the balloting after the first ballot to the three (3) candidates receiving the highest number of votes on the first ballot; and after the second ballot to limit the balloting to the two (2) candidates receiving the highest number of votes.

## **5 THE PLANNING COUNCIL**

The members of the Congregation believe that we are “a people created by God in Christ, called and sent to bear witness to God’s creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.” (Chapter 3.01, Constitution of Our Savior’s Lutheran Church). We operate in a system that empowers the membership and involves strong leadership from the staff. This system is designed so that all decisions and activities shall be in keeping with the congregation’s identity / purpose statement.

### **5.01 The Planning Council (referenced in the Constitution as the Congregation Council)**

Council shall consist of nine (9) voting members and the pastoral staff as non-voting members, one of which shall be the Lead pastor.

The nine (9) voting members will each serve three (3) year terms. Three (3) new members will be elected each year at the Annual Meeting. Only the Treasurer will be elected to a specific Planning Council office. All other members will be at-large members. During the first council meeting following an Annual Meeting, the council will elect from within its members a President, Vice President, and Secretary.

The Council shall primarily be concerned with the mission of Our Savior’s and recommend mission goals and objectives to the congregation. The Council will monitor the progress of Ministry Teams, task forces, etc. toward those goals and offer counsel.

#### **a) Eligibility:**

Any voting member of the Congregation, except pastoral or full-time lay staff and their immediate family members, may be nominated to serve as an officer or Council member.

A council member can be re-elected to a successive term. After two successive terms, the member must wait at least two (2) years before being elected to the council again.

**b) Term of Office:**

The Council shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation according to paragraph 5.01.

**c) Vacancy:**

A member's place on the Council shall be declared vacant by a vote of the Council if the member:

1. Ceases to be a voting member of the Congregation.
2. Is absent from three (3) consecutive regular meetings of the council without cause, or
3. Resigns from a Council position.

If a vacancy occurs on the Council, the Council shall, by majority vote, fill the vacancy for the remaining portion of the term. An unexpired term shall not preclude the incumbent member from being elected to the number of terms as prescribed by 5.01.

**5.02 Officers**

**a) President**

The President shall prepare the agenda for, and preside over, the business meetings of the Congregation, and the Council. The President, as presiding officer, does count as one of the voting members of the Council as outlined in section 5.01 but shall have a vote only in case of a tie. The President also shall be a non-voting member of all Ministry Areas and organizations of the Congregation including the Call and Nominating Committees. The President shall provide signature on documents as required.

**b) Vice President**

The Vice-President shall assume the duties of the President during the absence or disqualification of the President, and shall assist the President in preparing the agenda for Council meetings and in carrying out the President's duties. The Vice-President shall attend the meetings of the Council as a voting member unless serving in the place of the President, when (s)he shall have a vote only in case of a tie.

**c) Secretary**

The Secretary shall be responsible for the minutes of the Congregation and Council business meetings and shall be a voting member of the Council. The Council meeting minutes shall be available for review to all members of the Congregation upon request at the church office. The Secretary shall, in cooperation with the Lead Pastor and church office staff, preserve the Congregation's archives at a secure location. The Secretary shall provide signature on documents as required.

**d) Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall review the disbursement of such funds in accordance with the approved budget and resolutions of the Congregation and shall be a voting member of the Council and a member of the financial review team.

**5.03 Meetings**

In addition to the provisions of the Constitution and general provisions above, the following shall govern the conduct of the Council meetings:

- a) A quorum for any regular or special meeting shall be six (6) members and one (1) non-voting member.
- b) Business brought before the Council for approval must be approved by a majority of the voting members present in order to be considered passed.
- c) A special meeting of the Council may be called by the President, the LeadPastor, or by agreement of six (6) members of the council. Notice of such meeting shall be given to each Council member not less than five (5) days prior to the meeting and shall be announced at a public service if one is held during that period.
- d) The Council shall meet at least six (6) times per calendar year and shall be announced not less than seven (7) days prior to the meeting in the bulletin, parish newsletter, and/or email. Meetings shall be open to members and staff of the Congregation, who shall have the right to speak, but shall not have a vote.

#### **5.04 General Duties of Council**

The Council shall carry out the duties and responsibilities as provided in the Constitution with the major efforts being directed towards mission planning and implementation.

- a) Receive a financial review report from the Treasurer and determine if expenditures are within the priorities and spending authorizations set by the Congregation and Council.
- b) Set priorities for spending, including staff salaries, and communicate these priorities to the Director of Operations for preparation of the budget assuring that no less than 10% of general fund income be spent on benevolent causes.
- c) Assure that a financial audit is conducted per the Congregation's Financial Policy Manual.
- d) Exercise discipline in accordance with the provision of the Constitution and Bylaws.
- e) Have authority between meetings of the Congregation to ratify delegates to any group or meeting in which the Congregation is entitled to representation.
- f) The Council shall annually evaluate the lead pastor in light of his/her letter of call job description, and constitutional duties, and ensure that the pastoral and lay staff are evaluated by their supervisors.
- g) The Council shall review the bylaws, with input from the pastoral and lay staff, at least every three years, and recommend appropriate revisions if any.
- h) The Council shall prepare, evaluate and review plans to further the mission and vision of the Congregation.

## 5.05 Ministry Teams

- a) The Congregation shall have Ministry Teams which will function as committees or task forces within particular ministry areas. Suggestions include:
  - i) **Social Ministry** – Develop and implement social ministry programs including advocacy for the poor and oppressed or neglected people in our society.
  - ii) **Evangelism** – Oversee outreach to the community, contacting of visitors, and the integration of new members into the life of the congregation.
  - iii) **Global Ministry** – Enhance awareness and involvement by all members of the congregation, including children, in global mission efforts, and focus attention on world hunger, peace, and justice issues around the world.
  - iv) **Stewardship** – Shall assist the congregation in understanding the concept of biblical stewardship as commitment of and money for the furtherance of God's work in our world, and be responsible for the reception and follow up of financial commitments
  - v) **Worship, Music and the Arts** – Responsible for the coordination of ushers, readers, greeters, all musicians and equipment, communion (preparation and servers) care of altar area, banners, and all worship supplies. Also works with pastors and Director of Music in discussing possible changes in or additions to worship.
  - vi) **Youth Ministry** – Oversee youth ministry programs and goals for students from 6-12<sup>th</sup> grades. Serve in partnership with youth ministry staff, parents, and youth and raise awareness of the value of youth ministry within our congregation and community.
  - vii) **Children's Ministry** – Responsible for overseeing educational programs for families with young children through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. This includes Sunday School, Youth Club, Vacation Bible School, Faith Stepping Stones and the nursery.
  - viii) **Education** – Shall provide for educational opportunities for all ages of the congregation.
  - ix) **Properties and Facilities** – Assist the Director of Operations providing recommendations to the Planning Council regarding capital improvements and replacement needs and priorities, selection of bids, loss control and security issues.
  - x) **Financial Review Team** – Work collegially with the Director of Operations and the Treasurer regarding regular review of areas of finances and practices to ensure that the Financial Policies are followed.
  - xi) **Human Resources Team** – Assist the Director of Operations reviewing information and recommending to the Planning Council HR issues including



employee compensation, implementing recruiting and hiring procedures, reviewing and updating the HR Manual, and other various human resource issues.

- b) Each Ministry Team shall elect a chairperson who may be the staff person, if appropriate, and meet as required.
- c) Each Ministry Team is assigned a staff liaison that has the responsibility of overseeing, supporting and facilitating the team's activities.
- d) Ministry Teams are encouraged to organize task groups that will have limited job assignments and limited terms.

## **6 THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

- 6.01 At the Annual Meeting, the Congregation shall elect at least a three person Nominating Committee who has been nominated by the prior year's Nominating Committee. No person shall serve more than two successive years on the committee.
- 6.02 The Nominating Committee shall nominate persons for:
  - a) All vacancies to be filled at the Annual Meeting.
  - b) All Call Committee members.

## **7 PARISH RECORDS**

- 7.01 The records of the Congregation shall be and remain the property of the Congregation. The Lead Pastor shall be responsible for the maintenance of the records, except as otherwise provided herein. Upon the termination of his/her service to the Congregation, the Lead Pastor shall have brought the records up to date prior to departure. The records shall consist of:
  - a) The roster of baptized, confirmed, and voting members.
  - b) The ministerial acts performed by the pastor(s).
  - c) The minutes of the meetings of the Congregation and Council, for which the Secretary of the Congregation is responsible.
  - d) The financial records of the Congregation, for which the Treasurer of the Congregation is responsible.

The Lead Pastor shall report to the EvangelicalLutheranChurch in America such statistics as may be required and shall annually report to the Congregation a summary of ministerial acts.

## **8 OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN FOUNDATION ENDOWMENT FUND**

- 8.01** The Congregation shall have an Endowment Fund that shall be governed by the Resolution to Implement the Our Savior's Lutheran Church Foundation as adopted January 25, 2000, by the congregation; as such resolution shall be amended or modified from time to time by subsequent congregational resolutions.