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# Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

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## By – Laws



DECEMBER 1, 2020

## **BY-LAWS**

### **ARTICLE I –VOTER MEETINGS**

A. The voting members shall hold three meeting per year, one in the month of May (open forum meeting); one in the month of November (Presentation of nominees); and one in the month of December (Election of officers).

B. Special meetings may be called by the Church Council.

C. The voter meetings shall be conducted according to Robert’s Rules of Order, provided that they do not conflict with Christian practice or with any Article of the Constitution or By-Laws.

D. The meetings of the voters and Church Council shall be conducted in the following order:

1. Prayer.
2. Recording of attendance.
3. Reading and approval of minutes of the previous meeting.
4. Reception of new members.
5. Reports of officers and committees and action thereon.
6. Reports of the Church Council.
7. Unfinished business.
8. New business.
9. Adjournment with the Lord’s Prayer.

### **ARTICLE II – RECEPTION AND RELEASE OF MEMBERS**

A. Upon the recommendation of the Pastors, such persons as present a letter from a Sister congregation or have given evidence of their qualifications for membership to the Pastors, will be accepted into church membership.

B. The Pastors shall be empowered to present a letter of transfer of membership to a sister congregation for a member who, after consultation with the Pastors, has satisfactorily supported their request for such a letter of transfer. The Pastors shall then report such action to the Church Council at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

C. The names of new members shall be published for the information of the congregation.

### ARTICLE III – MEETING OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

The church council shall provide direction to the congregation on behalf of the voter assembly.

A. The Church Council shall consist of: The Pastors by virtue of their office, the President and Vice-President of the congregation, the Co-Chief Elders, the Trustees, the Treasurer, the Secretary and the Congregational Representative.

B. The Church Council shall meet a minimum of four times a year. Special meetings may be called by the chairman, the pastor, or any three members of the council by providing notice at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. A majority of the voting members of the council shall constitute a quorum. Each member of the council is expected to attend at least 50% of the meetings.

C. The principal duty of the Church Council shall be to coordinate the program and activities of the various departments of the congregation. It shall also have the power to act on behalf of the congregation between meetings of the voter assembly within limitations established by the voter assembly, which actions shall be reported to the next meeting of the voter assembly.

### ARTICLE IV – ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND CHURCH COUNCIL

The procedure for the nomination and election of elected and appointed officers and board members shall be as follows:

A. A nominating committee appointed by the President shall present a slate of candidates for each elected and appointed office. The slate shall normally provide one or two names for each office. In the case of elected positions, additional nominations may be made from the floor. No person shall be nominated without his or her consent. No person can be considered for multiple positions.

B. A majority of the votes cast shall be required for all elections. Candidates receiving the lowest number of votes shall be eliminated in each succeeding ballot.

C. All officers and other members of the Church Council and of boards and committees shall be elected or appointed for a term of one year.

D. Officers and board members shall be inducted into office in a public service of the congregation.

E. In case of a vacancy in an elective office, the Church Council shall appoint a successor to fill the unexpired term from a list of candidates provided by the nominating committee. Service for more than one-half of a term shall constitute a full term.

F. The Treasurer shall be appointed each year by the Nominating Committee. That Appointment shall be announced at the congregational meeting in November subject to ratification by the congregation at the December meeting.

#### ARTICLE V – DUTIES OF THE ELECTED OFFICERS

A. The President shall preside at all meetings of the congregation and the Church Council and shall perform such other duties as may be imposed upon them by the By-Laws or by resolution of the congregation or Church Council.

B. The Vice-President shall preside at the meetings of the congregation and Church Council in the absence of the President.

C. The Secretary of the congregation shall record accurately the proceedings of the meetings of the voters and shall submit their records for revision and approval at the following regular meeting of the congregation; and they shall act in the same capacity for the Church Council. They shall have under their supervision and shall be custodian of all minutes of the Church Council and congregational meetings and all correspondence pertinent thereto. They shall preserve all approved records made by them, and shall, at the expiration of their term of office, deliver them to this successor; and they shall perform such other duties as may be imposed upon them by the By-Laws or by resolution of the congregation or Church Council.

D. The Treasurer shall keep an accurate account of all funds received and disbursed and shall make a monthly report to the Church Council; submit their books at least annually for auditing, and shall perform such other duties as may be imposed upon the Treasurer by the By-Laws or by resolution of the congregation or the Church Council. An internal audit shall be performed by a member of the congregation for three years and an external audit performed every fourth year. The Treasurer shall keep a financial record of each member of the church and shall provide periodic individual statements to all contributing members.

#### ARTICLE VI – COMMITTEES

A. The Pastors, the President and the Vice-President of the congregation by virtue of their offices, shall be members ex-officio of all committees and boards.

B. Unless otherwise ordered, the President shall appoint such other committees as may be created or authorized by the congregation or Church Council.

## ARTICLE VII – CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

- A. The congregation shall offer regular Christian education for children, young people, and adults, under the general supervision of the Pastors.
- B. All literature, used for Christian education purposes, shall be under the general supervision of the Pastors.
- C. All volunteers in any capacity regarding children or youth must partake in an annual care and protection policy training, provided by the Pastors.

## ARTICLE VIII – MUSIC

- A. Music is a vitally important part of the spiritual life of the Church. In keeping with the rich heritage of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, traditional liturgies and hymnody will be maintained and gleaned from the Synod’s hymnal “The Lutheran Service Book.” Any contemporary liturgies or music that are used must be approved by the Pastors and adhere to Proper Doctrine.
- B. The Music Committee shall consist of the Pastors, the Director of Music and the Lead Organist.
- C. The Director of Music and the Organist shall be reviewed yearly either in person or by acclamation by the Church Council.
- D. The Director of Music and the Organist shall assist the Pastors in the advancement of the Music Ministry of the Church; enlisting choir and instrumental (Handbell and Wind Ensemble) members and in the selection of suitable music and in every way in which they can be helpful and aid in the beauty of worship. All selections shall receive approval of the Pastors who are ultimately responsible for the content of the entire worship.

## ARTICLE IX – Money Counting Teams

- A. Money Counting Teams for the purpose of counting Sunday offerings are to be selected either by the Senior Pastor or Treasurer. Members of the Money Counting Team must be members of the congregation.
- B. A member of the team will be responsible for depositing the Sunday Offering.

## ARTICLE X – BOARD OF ELDERS

- A. Appointed Elders of the congregation are to be male and attained the age of 21 years, potential Elders can be suggested for appointment by the pastor or a chief elder by any member of the congregation.
- B. A Chief Elder will be selected from the Elders by the Pastor to be responsible for the scheduling of the Elders at each Sunday Service, one for 9:15 and another for 11:00. They will also be responsible to ensure that all Elder positions have coverage for each Sunday Service. The Co-Chief Elders will work together to ensure there is coverage for any special services.
- C. The number of Elders appointed will be based on the number required to cover the scheduling of Elders for the Sunday worship services and any special services including but not limited to Lenten, Funerals, and other services as requested by the Pastors.
- D. If for any reason they are unable to serve, a written excuse must be submitted no later than the Monday before the Sunday they are scheduled either in person or through an e-mail to the Co-Chief Elders.
- E. In addition to their Sunday morning duties, Elders may be asked to serve as a Lay Reader, communion assistant or other duties as may be assigned.

## ARTICLE XI – CALLING OF A PASTOR

When this congregation calls a minister of religion, ordained or commissioned, the following procedure shall be followed:

- A. When a pastor or commissioned minister is to be called, every member of the congregation shall be provided opportunity to suggest one or more names for consideration.
- B. A call committee shall be appointed by the Chief Elders and the Counsel President to serve as a screening committee and shall submit all suggested names to the district president for information and evaluation. The committee shall then present to the congregation by public announcement its proposed list of candidates and their biographical sketches.
- C. At a voter meeting called for the purpose of calling a new pastor or commissioned minister, the proposed list may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the assembly. When possible, information regarding additional candidates shall be provided by the district president and/or his representative at the meeting.
- D. Ballot voting shall continue until a majority [or two-thirds] vote determines the disposition of the call.

## ARTICLE XII – AMENDMENTS TO THE BY-LAWS

These by-laws may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the voter assembly.

- A. Amendments shall be adopted by a majority of all votes cast, provided the proposed change has been announced in a previous meeting or has been submitted in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting to all communicant members.
- B. The revised by-laws shall, as a condition of continued membership in good standing of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, must be submitted to the President of the District for review.
- C. A printed notification of any change to the Constitution or By-Laws shall be furnished to all of the voting members within sixty (60) days of its final adoption.