

Proposed Changes to St. John's Lutheran Church By Laws– 2015

Current By Laws

PART I COMMUNION PARTICIPATION:

1. Participation in Holy Communion shall be open to members of this and other Christian congregations.

PART II PASTORAL CARE OF MEMBERSHIP:

1. Members who move away shall be encouraged to transfer their membership to a Lutheran congregation which can serve them more effectively. Confirmed members who have moved out of the geographical area of the congregation because of active military duty or enrollment in an institution of higher learning shall be considered exempt from this section and will be retained on the active membership list until they leave such institution. At that time they will be subject to the process of the following section of this bylaw. Should the member fail to request a transfer, the pastor and/or council will encourage the member to seek a new church home. A confirmed member in good standing desiring to change his membership to another Lutheran congregation shall, upon request, receive a Letter of Transfer.

2. A confirmed member still residing in the geographical area of the congregation who does not, for a period of one year, participate in Holy Communion, support the church with his/her offerings, and does not appear to desire to participate in the life and worship of the congregation shall be contacted by the pastor and/or congregational representative.

The member shall be encouraged to take part in congregational life, or to transfer elsewhere, as the situation may indicate. If, during the second year the confirmed member does not resume active participation as described above, he/she shall be visited by the pastor. If at the end of two years of congregational and pastoral efforts and encouragement, the confirmed member does not enter into congregational participation, he/she will be notified that his/her name has been removed from the

Proposed By Laws *(Note: Changes are in italics)*

PART I COMMUNION PARTICIPATION:

1. Participation in Holy Communion shall be open to members of this *congregation* and other *Christians*.

PART II PASTORAL CARE OF MEMBERSHIP:

1. Members who move away shall be encouraged to transfer their membership to a Lutheran congregation which can serve them more effectively. Confirmed members who have moved out of the geographical area of the congregation because of active military duty or enrollment in an institution of higher learning shall be considered exempt from this section and will be retained on the active membership list until they leave such institution. At that time they will be subject to the process of the following section of this bylaw. Should the member fail to request a transfer, the pastor and/or council will encourage the member to seek a new church home. A confirmed member in good standing desiring to change his membership to another Lutheran congregation shall, upon request, receive a Letter of Transfer.

2. A confirmed member still residing in the geographical area of the congregation who does not, for a period of one year, participate in Holy Communion, support the church with his/her offerings, and does not appear to desire to participate in the life and worship of the congregation shall be contacted by the pastor and/or congregational representative.

The member shall be encouraged to take part in congregational life, or to transfer elsewhere, as the situation may indicate. If, during the second year the confirmed member does not resume active participation as described above, he/she shall be visited by the pastor. If at the end of two years of congregational and pastoral efforts and encouragement, the confirmed member does not enter into congregational participation, he/she will be notified that his/her name has been removed from the

membership roll of the congregation, therefore, losing the rights and privileges of membership.

A member who has been removed from active membership may be restored to membership after consultation with the pastor, approval of the church council, and a public reaffirmation of his his/her faith. Number 2 of this bylaw shall be in effect only if the responsibilities pertaining to visitation by the pastor and the congregational representative have been fulfilled.

PART III CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

1. Quarterly meetings of the congregation will be held the third Sundays of January, April, July and October. For the January meeting, in case of inclement weather or lack of quorum, the meeting will be held the 4th Sunday of that month. If there is no quorum at the April, July or October meetings for the enactment of business, then the meetings shall be used as informational forums.

2. The order of business at the January Meeting shall be:
- a) opening devotion
 - b) approval of minutes of previous quarterly meeting
 - c) annual treasurer's report
 - d) written reports of the Pastor, Council, committees and others
 - e) elections
 - f) budget presentation and approval
 - g) old business
 - h) new business

3. The order of business at the April, July and October Meetings shall be:
- a) opening devotion
 - b) approval of minutes of previous quarterly meeting
 - c) oral reports of the Pastor, Council, committees and others
 - d) elections (if needed)
 - e) old business
 - f) new business

membership roll of the congregation, therefore, losing the rights and privileges of membership.

A member who has been removed from active membership may be restored to membership after consultation with the pastor, approval of the church council, and a public reaffirmation of *his/her faith*. Number 2 of this bylaw shall be in effect only if the responsibilities pertaining to visitation by the pastor and the congregational representative have been fulfilled.

PART III CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

1. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held on a Sunday in late January. In case of inclement weather, the meeting will be held on the next available Sunday. The order of business shall be:

- a) opening devotion
- b) approval of minutes of previous annual meeting
- c) annual treasurer's report
- d) written reports of the Pastor, Council, committees and others
- e) elections
- f) budget presentation and approval
- g) old business
- h) new business

2. Informational meetings may be held as needed, or upon the request of the pastor, congregation council, or the written request of 10 or more members of the congregation.

4. In the following cases, voting shall be by written ballot:
 - a) to elect the members of the Church Council
 - b) to adopt or amend the articles of incorporation of the constitution, or bylaws of the congregation.
 - c) To call a pastor or to request his/her resignation
 - d) to cease membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 - e) to dispose of, encumber, or purchase real property
 - f) when requested by twenty (20) or more voting members present

5. Except as otherwise provided in the constitution and bylaws, all matters shall be decided by majority vote of those present and voting.

6. No one shall be declared elected unless he/she has received a majority of the votes cast.

7. 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 candidates receiving the highest number of votes on the first ballot; and after the second ballot to limit the balloting to the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes.

PART IV THE CHURCH COUNCIL:

- A. Membership and Meeting of the Church Council
 - 1) To serve on the church council or church committees one must be a voting member of the congregation.
 - 2) The Church Council shall consist of nine (9) members, elected each for a term of three (3) years, but elected in such a manner that after the first election approximately one-third are elected each year.
 - 3) After the Annual Meeting of the congregation, the Church Council shall elect the following officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. In case of emergency, officers of the previous year shall execute all necessary measures until a new council is constituted (but not longer than 15 days).
 - 4) The Church Council shall not transact any business unless a majority of its members is present.

3. In the following cases, voting shall be by written ballot:
 - a) to elect the members of the Church Council*
 - b) to adopt or amend the articles of incorporation of the constitution, or bylaws of the congregation.*
 - c) To call a pastor or to request his/her resignation*
 - d) to dispose of, encumber, or purchase real property*
 - e) when requested by twenty (20) or more voting members present*

4. Except as otherwise provided in the constitution and bylaws, all matters shall be decided by majority vote of those present and voting.

5. No one shall be declared elected unless he/she has received a majority of the votes cast.

6. 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 candidates receiving the highest number of votes on the first ballot; and after the second ballot to limit the balloting to the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes.

PART IV THE CHURCH COUNCIL:

- A. Membership and Meeting of the Church Council
 - 1) To serve on the church council or church committees one must be a voting member of the congregation.
 - 2) The Church Council shall consist of nine (9) members, elected each for a term of three (3) years, but elected in such a manner that after the first election approximately one-third are elected each year.
 - 3) After the Annual Meeting of the congregation, the Church Council shall elect the following officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. In case of emergency, officers of the previous year shall execute all necessary measures until a new council is constituted (but not longer than 15 days).
 - 4) The Church Council shall not transact any business unless a majority of its members is present.

- 5) Meetings of the Church Council shall be held monthly.
- 6) A special meeting of the Church Council may be called by notice given at a public service or by notifying each member three days in advance.
- 7) A member having two (2) consecutive unexcused absences from regular meetings shall be notified thereof by the secretary. The President and/or Pastor shall have a clarifying conversation with the council member.
- 8) Officers or Council members who fail to fulfill the requirements of Chapter 8 of the Constitution shall forfeit the right to serve in their elected or appointed capacity.
- 9) The treasurer of the congregation is chosen by the council and may be a council member.

B. Committees of the Congregation:

- 1) The Church Council shall appoint from its own membership liaisons to the Evangelism, Stewardship, on Worship, Education/ Youth, Buildings & Grounds, Interiors, and Memorial Committees, and shall also have the authority to appoint Task Forces and other committees as may from time to time be necessary or advisable.

- 5) Meetings of the Church Council shall be held *regularly, at least nine times per year.*
- 6) A special meeting of the Church Council may be called by notice given at a public service or by notifying each member three days in advance.
- 7) A member having two (2) consecutive unexcused absences from regular meetings shall be notified thereof by the secretary. The President and/or Pastor shall have a clarifying conversation with the council member.
- 8) Officers or Council members who fail to fulfill the requirements of Chapter 8 of the Constitution shall forfeit the right to serve in their elected or appointed capacity.
- 9) The *financial secretary* of the congregation is chosen by the council and may be a council member.

B. Committees of the Congregation:

- 1) *The Church Council shall appoint members to serve on the standing Committees: Executive, Nominating, Audit, Mutual Ministry and, when necessary, a Call Committee. Specific duties of each standing committee are listed below:*

Executive Committee:

- 1) shall be composed of the current officers of the church council (president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary).
- 2) The committee shall recommendations to the church council related to staffing, employment, review and compensation of all paid staff and the pastor.
- 3) The Executive Committee shall meet as necessary to address concerns that do not require a meeting of the church council.

Nominating Committee:

- 1) The nominating committee shall be composed of three (3) members, one of whom shall be elected by the Church Council from its own membership and two (2) of whom shall be elected by the congregation at the annual meeting. The pastor or congregational president shall serve as convener.

- 2) The members of the nominating committee shall serve for the year following their election. They shall nominate one or more candidate for each office to be filled and shall secure the consent of each candidate to serve if elected.
- 3) The candidates of the nominating committee shall be made known to the congregation in conjunction with the announcements of the special or annual meeting at which the election is to take place.
- 4) In addition to the candidates submitted by the nominating committee, additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- 5) A vacancy in the membership of the nominating committee shall be filled by council appointment.
- 6) The nominating Committee shall meet at least 60 days before the Annual Meeting to nominate congregation members to be candidates for the following positions:
 - a) Congregational Council
 - b) Nominating Committee for the following year
 - c) Synod Assembly Delegates for the year.
- 7) The Committee shall prepare a slate of candidates in time for the Annual Meeting and shall serve as or appoint the tellers for the election.

The *Audit Committee* composed of three (3) persons shall be appointed by the president with the approval of the Congregation Council. The committee shall audit all accounts of the congregation before each annual Meeting *and shall provide a written letter of audit for inclusion in the Congregation's Annual Report.*

The *Mutual Ministry Committee* shall be responsible for affirming and strengthening the mission of the congregation and the ministry of the staff. Members of this committee shall be jointly appointed by the council president and pastor.

The *Call Committee*: *the duties of a Call Committee are outlined by the Synod office.*

- 2) The Church Council shall oversee the appointment or election of additional congregational members to committees.
- 3) The Church Council may at least once a year invite the full membership of its regular committees together with representatives chosen by the organizations of the congregation to review the entire program of the congregation.
- 4) Each committee shall elect a chairperson from its members to organize and lead the committee in its work.
- 5) Each Congregational committee shall submit a written annual report of their work for the previous fiscal year (the fiscal year begins January 1 and ends December 31). In addition, each committee shall report to the Congregational Council after each committee meeting. Specific duties of each committee are listed below:

Nominating Committee:

- 1) The nominating committee shall be composed of three (3) members, one of whom shall be elected by the Church Council from its own membership and two (2) of whom shall be elected by the annual meeting. The pastor or congregational president shall serve as convener
- 2) The members of the nominating committee shall serve for the year following their election. They shall nominate one or more candidate for each office to be filled and shall secure the consent of each candidate to serve if elected.
- 3) The candidates of the nominating committee shall be made known to the congregation in conjunction with the announcements of the special or annual meeting at which the election is to take place.
- 4) In addition to the candidates submitted by the nominating committee, additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- 5) A vacancy in the membership of the nominating committee shall be filled by council appointment.

- 2) *The Church Council shall also have the authority to appoint Task Forces and other committees as needed to insure the efficient and effective operation of the church. These may include, but are not limited to: Evangelism, Building and Grounds, Worship, Youth, Christian Education, Stewardship and Memorial committees.*
- 3) *The Church Council shall oversee the work of all committees, determine their specific duties and request written and/or oral reports from the committees as needed.*
- 4) Each committee shall elect a chairperson from its members to organize and lead the committee in its work.
- 5) *Each Congregational committee shall submit a written annual report of their work for the previous fiscal year (the fiscal year begins January 1 and ends December 31).*

- 6) The nominating Committee shall meet at least 60 days before the Annual Meeting to nominate congregation members to be candidates for the following positions:
 - a) Congregational Council
 - b) Nominating Committee for the following year
 - c) Synod Assembly Delegates for the year.
 - d) Endowment Trust Board

The Committee shall prepare a slate of candidates in time for the Annual Meeting and shall serve as or appoint the tellers for the election.

The Auditing Committee shall audit all accounts of the congregation before each annual Meeting.

The Buildings and Grounds Committee

- 1) The Buildings and Grounds Committee shall be responsible for the proper maintenance of all church property.
- 2) The committee has authority to expend its annual budget. Any necessary maintenance or improvements exceeding the budget shall be brought to the attention of the Congregation Council.
- 3) The Committee shall be responsible for keeping files containing a property inventory, maintenance records, blueprints and maintenance manuals, deeds, product warranties, etc.

The Christian Education/Youth Committee is responsible for assessing the educational needs of the congregation and for implementing the congregation's education programs. It is also responsible for organizing and supervising activities for the youth of this congregation which will foster their Christian growth and participation in the Body of Christ.

The Evangelism Committee shall motivate the congregation to witness to their faith at every opportunity in daily life. The committee shall try to restore those who have lapsed from active membership, bring new members into the fellowship of the church, and recruit, equip, and support members of the congrega

- tion for these activities. The committee shall provide for the communication of the Gospel through fellowship in wider Christian community.

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the current officers of the church council (president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary). The purpose of this committee is to make recommendations to the church council related to staffing, employment, review and compensation of all paid staff and the pastor. The Executive Committee shall meet as necessary to address concerns that do not require a meeting of the church council. Committee must meet a least once annually.

The Finance Committee is responsible for overseeing the financial activities within the church as well as preparing and reviewing operational budgets of the church. The committee shall consist of the Treasurer, one member of the church council and at least two other members of the congregation.

The Mutual Ministry Committee shall be responsible for affirming and strengthening the mission of the congregation and the ministry of the staff. Members of this committee shall be jointly appointed by the council president and pastor.

The Stewardship Committee shall educate and motivate the members of this congregation to practice faithful stewardship of their time, talents, and possessions. The Committee shall conduct an annual stewardship drive for the congregation. The Committee shall seek ways for members of the congregation to express their faith through outreach into the community.

The Worship Committee shall be responsible for the scheduling and content of the congregation's worship services as well as oversight of the Altar Guild.

C. Duties of Officers and Committees of the Church Council:

- 1) The president shall preside over meetings of the Church Council and of the congregation unless the meeting decided otherwise.

C. Duties of Officers and Committees of the Church Council:

- 1) The President shall preside over meetings of the Church Council and of the congregation unless the meeting decided otherwise.

- 2) The Vice president shall preside in the absence of the president, unless the meeting decides otherwise.
- 3) The secretary shall keep the minutes of the Council and of the congregation.

D. Duties of the Treasurer:

- 1) The treasurer shall be bonded and shall be custodian of all funds of the congregation, and shall disburse all such finds in accordance with the decisions of the congregation or the Church Council. He/she shall present an audited report to the Annual Congregational Meeting and such other reports to the Church Council as may be required.

E. Other Responsibilities of the Church Council:

- 1) The Church Council shall be empowered, acting on the recommendations of the Executive Committee, to secure such help as is needed to carry on the work of the congregation, such as organist, choir director, parish worker, pastor's secretary, office secretary, intern, custodian, etc. and shall set their salaries.
- 2) Adjustments in the salary of the pastor shall be the responsibility of the Church Council, upon recommendation of the Executive Committee, subject to the congregation's approval of the budget.
- 3) The Church Council shall as far as possible operate within the limits of the approved budget of the congregation.
- 4) An auditing committee composed of three (3) persons shall be appointed by the president with the approval of the Church Council. The auditing committee shall audit all financial records of the congregation proper, and shall present its report to the Annual Meeting. The auditing committee shall carefully examine any insurance policies to determine the amount and kind of insurance in force and include this report in its statement.

Reports of Organizations:

All committees handling funds must submit a budget statement 30 days prior to the year end.

- 2) The Vice President shall preside in the absence of the President, unless the meeting decides otherwise.
- 3) The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the Council and of the congregation.
- 4) *The Treasurer shall oversee all financial aspects of the congregation.*

D. Duties of the *Financial Secretary*:

- 1) *A Financial Secretary shall be appointed by the Congregation Council.*
- 2) The *Financial Secretary* shall be bonded and shall be custodian of all funds of the congregation, and shall disburse all such finds in accordance with the decisions of the congregation or the Church Council. He/she shall present an audited report to the Annual Congregational Meeting and such other reports to the Church Council as may be required.
- 3) *The Treasurer of the congregation may serve as the Financial Secretary.*

E. Other Responsibilities of the Church Council:

- 1) The Church Council shall be empowered, acting on the recommendations of the Executive Committee, to secure such help as is needed to carry on the work of the congregation, such as organist, choir director, parish worker, pastor's secretary, office secretary, intern, custodian, etc. and shall set their salaries.
- 2) Adjustments in the salary of the pastor shall be the responsibility of the Church Council, upon recommendation of the Executive Committee, subject to the congregation's approval of the budget.
- 3) The Church Council shall as far as possible operate within the limits of the approved budget of the congregation.