

BYLAWS

as approved by congregation, July 2001

**I. Organizational Structure of the Congregation**

The constitutional provision regarding the Congregation Meeting is reprinted here for reference.

*C5.02. The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregation Meeting called and conducted as provided in the constitution and bylaws.*

(See also Constitutional References C4.04, 5.03, 11.01, 12.01, and chapter 13)

**A. Officers of the Congregation**

1. The officers of the congregation are elected by the church council at the first council meeting following the annual meeting of the congregation. All officers of the congregation shall support the mission of the congregation as outlined in the constitution, bylaws, other official statements of the congregation. They shall faithfully attend the worship services of the congregation and fulfill the duties of their offices with the help of God through prayer and Bible study.

**2. Duties of Officers**

**a. Congregational President**

The president shall convene meetings of the council and the congregation, establish the agenda and preside at the meetings. The president will represent the congregation with other organizations that have relations with the congregation. The president of the council shall serve as an advisor to the pastor and, at his or her option, serve as an ex-officio member of all committees. The president of the congregation shall bring official statements (mission, vision, etc.) to the annual meeting each year (with any changes recommended by the church council) asking for approval and/or suggestions for revision.

**b. Congregational Vice-president**

The vice-president shall assume the duties of the president in case of the absence or incapacity of the president.

**c. Congregational Secretary**

The secretary shall record the minutes of all meetings of the council and the congregation, cause the same to be entered into the permanent archives of the congregation, and make them available to members of the congregation on request. The secretary will also be responsible for correspondence required as necessary to accomplish church's mission.

**d. Congregational Treasurer**

The treasurer shall make disbursements from the funds of the church at the direction and approval of the church council or in accordance with standard procedures under the supervision of the council. The treasurer shall make monthly and annual reports to the council and congregation and shall make any financial records of the church available to auditors or examiners at the direction

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of the church council and as provided for in the constitution and by-laws of the congregation.

- B. The Duties of Congregational Committees (Executive, Nominating, Audit, Staff Support, Call) and any other committees or task forces formed as the need arises shall be determined by the Congregation Council (continuing resolutions).

**II. The annual meeting**

The annual meeting of the congregation shall be held on a date to be determined by the Congregation Council. (Constitutional Reference C10.01)

**III. Mission Statement**

(Constitutional Reference C4.05)

The congregation council shall review the mission statement of this congregation each year, recommending approval and/or revisions to a meeting of the congregation.

The president of the congregation shall bring the mission statement to the annual meeting each year (with any changes recommended by the church council) for approval and/or suggestions for (further) revision.

Changes to the mission statement shall be approved by both the church council and the congregation meeting.

**IV. Membership**

A. Baptized Members

The constitutional provision regarding Baptized members is reprinted here for reference.

*C8.02a. Baptized members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.*

1. Baptism in this congregation

- a. Persons of any age may be baptized in this congregation.
- b. Baptism is always accompanied by affirmation of faith--by the one being baptized and/or by their parents and sponsor(s).
- c. Prior to the Baptism, the pastor and/or another appointed representative of the congregation shall meet with the person to be baptized (or, in the case of young children, the parents and/or baptismal sponsors) in order to make sure that they
  - i. have heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ,

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- ii. understand that the promises of baptism are given not in the water but in "God's Word with the water and our trust in this Word" (quote from Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*),
  - iii. understand that baptism is part of a life-long relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church.
- d. Because baptism is a part of a life-long relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church, the pastor shall normally baptize only those individuals (or the children of those) who have attended worship at this or another Christian church on a regular basis for several months prior to the baptism.
  - e. Because these practices regarding baptism in our congregation may delay baptism in some cases, the pastor and/or another appointed representative of the congregation shall assure individuals (and the parents and sponsors of young children waiting for baptism) of God's unconditional love through Jesus Christ.
2. Baptized persons who can neither obtain a certificate of transfer nor make affirmation of faith due to age or disability can also be received as baptized members of this congregation when
- a. their parent(s)/guardian(s) has been received into membership by certificate of transfer, affirmation of faith or is restored to membership (see section E. below) or when a confirmed member of this congregation agrees to serve as their "new member sponsor,"
- and
- b. they attend at least one worship service of our congregation or receive a visit from the pastor, another appointed representative of the congregation, or their "new member sponsor."
3. At the time of baptism, parents and sponsors of baptized children promise that they will help their children grow toward making their own affirmation of faith by "faithfully bring[ing] them to the services of God's house, teach[ing] them the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments... plac[ing] in their hands the Holy Scriptures and provid[ing] for their instruction in the Christian faith." (see Lutheran Book of Worship, page 121)
4. The pastor and/or another representative of the congregation shall encourage unconfirmed adults to be confirmed through the procedures outlined in the section on "confirmed members" below.

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B. Confirmed Members

The constitutional provision regarding Confirmed members is reprinted here for reference.

*C8.02b. Confirmed members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.*

1. Baptized persons who have been baptized as children are normally confirmed in this church through "completion of the congregation's program of confirmation ministry, a period of instruction in the Christian faith as confessed in the teachings of the Lutheran Church" (see Lutheran Book of Worship, page 198) **and** Affirmation of Faith.
2. When baptized persons to be confirmed are older than the age of those involved in the congregation's confirmation program, they can be confirmed by
  - a. regularly attending worship over a period of several months **and** Affirmation of Faith.
  - or
  - b. completing a period of instruction in the Christian faith as confessed in the teachings of the Lutheran Church **and** Affirmation of Faith.
3. Baptized persons may make Affirmation of Faith by publicly speaking the words of the Apostles' Creed (or similar creed of faith in the Triune God) at a worship service of the congregation or by using another means to communicate their faith in the Triune God before the pastor and/or another appointed representative of the congregation and at least one other member of this congregation.

C. Voting Members

The constitutional provision regarding voting members is reprinted here for reference.

*C8.02c Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members shall have communed and made a contribution of record during the current or preceding year.*

- a. The pastor and/or another appointed representative of the congregation shall either keep record of those communing or those attending worship.
- b. In the event that the record is of those attending worship rather than communing, the pastor and/or another appointed representative of the congregation shall
  - i. make a list of those members who, to the best of his/her knowledge, have attended worship at least twice during the current or preceding year.
  - ii. add to that list the names of members who, to the best of his/her knowledge, have *not* attended twice but have communed.

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- c. We will assume that those on this combined list have made a contribution of record.
- d. This will constitute the list of voting members.

D. Activity and Inactivity of Members

- 1. The members of the congregation, especially its church council, shall lead by example and encourage all members to participate in the mission of this congregation as outlined in constitutional provision C8.04 and in the congregation's official statements.
- 2. In cooperation with other Christian ministers (chaplains, lay ministers, etc.) the pastor and/or another appointed representative of the congregation shall help those who cannot attend the regular services of this congregation learn about and participate in other means of hearing the Word of God and receiving the Lord's Supper (at nursing homes, hospitals, colleges, on military bases, at special services of this congregation, through home visits, etc.).
- 3. Members who, over a period of five years, do not participate in or support the mission and ministry of this church, may be removed from the rolls of this church. Such members may be restored to membership in this congregation through the procedure below.

E. Restoration to Membership

- 1. The pastor or church council of this congregation may, at his/her or their discretion, restore a persons name to the roll of voting members when, having been removed from the rolls of this or another Lutheran congregation for any reason, a former member has
  - a. made it known that he or she wishes to be restored to active membership, and
  - b. has previously been confirmed in this or another Lutheran congregation or is completing the process of confirmation outlined in section B. above, and
  - c. has attended a worship service of this congregation or has otherwise participated in hearing and believing God's Word.
- 2. Unconfirmed baptized persons who cannot yet be confirmed and who have been removed from the rolls of the congregation may be restored to membership following the procedure for baptized members in section A. above.

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**V. Memorial/Mission Endowment Fund**

- A. There shall be a Memorial/Mission Endowment Fund of First Evangelical Lutheran Church which shall receive, hold, and administer and distribute, as provided in the Bylaw, all gifts of money or property to the congregation which are designated for the Fund by a donor; all gifts of money or property to the congregation which become effective upon or after the death of a donor (whether pursuant to will, trust, beneficiary designation, remainder, gift annuity agreement or otherwise) which are not designated by the donor for another use; and all money or property of the congregation, which may be designated for the Fund by the congregation or congregation Council. The funds shall be separated into two general categories:
1. Memorial Funds shall be gifts given for a specific purpose designated at the time of the gift, with a schedule of distribution established at the time of the gift.
  2. Mission Endowment Fund shall be funded by undesignated gifts and used to enhance the mission outreach of First Evangelical Lutheran Church apart from the general operation of the Congregation.
- B. A Memorial/Mission Endowment Fund Committee of Trustees (Trustees) consisting of 7 (seven) members of this Congregation, 6 (six) of whom shall be elected by the Congregation, at the first Congregational meeting after passage of this bylaw. Every attempt shall be made to achieve on the Committee of Trustees an accurate representation of the composition of the Congregation with respect to age and length of membership in the Congregation. The pastor of the Congregation shall serve in an ex-officio non-voting capacity to the Trustees. All Trustees shall serve without financial compensation. The term of office shall be 3 (three) years, with the first slate of members serving staggered terms (two members serving one year, two members serving two years, and two members serving three years). Length of term of the first slate of members shall be determined by drawing of lots. Each year following the initial election two members shall be elected. A Trustee member may serve the initial term, plus 1 (one) additional term. After at least a 1 (one) year absence from the Committee of Trustees, a person shall again be eligible for membership. The seventh member of the Committee of Trustees shall be the Treasurer of the congregation, or a representative selected by the Congregation Council to sit on the committee in place of the Treasurer. The Treasurer of the Congregation shall maintain the account of the Memorial/Mission Endowment Fund. The purpose of the Committee of Trustees shall be to implement the guidelines of the Memorial/Mission Endowment Fund.
- C. The committee shall meet at least quarterly, or more frequently as deemed by it in the best interest of the fund.
- D. The committee shall elect from its membership a chairperson, recording secretary and financial secretary. The chairperson, or member designated by the chairperson, shall preside at all committee meetings. The financial secretary of the committee shall work with the congregation's treasurer in maintaining and coordinating complete and accurate accounts for the fund. The recording secretary of the committee shall

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- maintain complete and accurate minutes of all meetings and supply a copy thereof to each member of the committee and to the congregation council.
- E. A quorum shall consist of 4 (four) members.
- F. The Congregation is given the authority / responsibility to elect Trustee members and to ensure that the Committee of Trustee's responsibilities are carried out. The Committee of Trustees of the Fund shall have the sole authority and the duty to manage the assets and affairs of the Fund, including the sole authority and the duty to carry out the actions described in the following sub paragraphs:
1. A representative from the Trustees in consultation with the pastor, representatives from the facilities area; faith in action area; learning, communication and training area; a representative of the Congregation Council with input from other interested members of the Congregation shall establish and maintain a "wish list" to assist families wishing to make a gift to the church in honor of a loved one or for any other special purpose.
  2. The Trustees shall either accept or decline to accept any gift to the Funds pursuant to paragraph 1 and in accordance with the constitutional purposes and other officially adopted guiding statements of the congregation.
  3. The Trustees shall promote and encourage gifts to the Fund. The Fund shall seek major lifetime gifts, and gifts which become effective upon or after the death of a donor, but shall not seek annual gifts because fundraising by the Fund should not conflict with annual stewardship giving.