

*Last reviewed and revised 10/2019
Congregational Approval 11/2019*

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH BYLAWS

Part 1s

Communion Participation (cf. Chapter 2)

P1 Participation in Holy Communion is voluntary and shall remain open to all who personally desire.

Part 2

Membership (cf. Chapter 8)

P2.01. Admission to baptized membership:

- a. Children whose parent(s) or guardian(s) are members of this congregation, shall, upon receiving Christian baptism, be received as baptized members of this congregation.
- b. Children whose parent(s) or guardian(s) are not members of this congregation, shall, upon Christian baptism be received as baptized members of this congregation unless they are to be enrolled as baptized members of another congregation. Notice of the baptism shall be sent to that congregation.
- c. Children baptized in other congregations shall be received as baptized members of this congregation upon the admission to membership, or by consent, of a parent or guardian or by action of the Congregation Council.
- d. Unbaptized adults who have received instruction and given evidence of an adequate understanding and acceptance of the Confession of Faith (cf. Chapter 2) shall, upon Christian baptism, be received as baptized members of this congregation.

P2.02. Admission to confirmed and voting membership

- a. Baptized adults who have received instruction and given evidence of an adequate understanding and acceptance of the Confession of Faith (cf. 21 Chapter 2) shall be admitted to confirmed membership through the Affirmation of Faith.
- b. Adults received as baptized members according to the provisions of P2.01.d. shall be recognized as confirmed members.
- c. Children who are baptized members of the congregation shall be admitted to confirmed membership through participation in the Rite of Confirmation.
- d. Applicants for membership presenting Letters of Transfer showing them to be confirmed members in other Lutheran congregations shall be admitted to confirmed membership upon acceptance of their Letter of Transfer by the Congregation Council and the report of their names to the congregation.

P2.03. Discontinuance of membership

- a. Members who move away shall be encouraged to transfer their membership. A confirmed member in good standing, upon request, shall receive a Letter of Transfer.
- b. A confirmed member who has not attended church services or received communion, nor contributed to the congregational treasury for a period of one

year shall lose the right to vote, and not be counted in the membership statistics. However, the person's name and record will be kept in the inactive file for two years. Such a person shall be encouraged to take part in the congregational life, or to transfer elsewhere. Resumption of any activity within the two-year period will restore the person to active membership. Otherwise the person will be removed from the congregation and notified of this action.

c. Children whose parents or guardians are not active members of the congregation will be dropped from the baptized membership roll if they fail to participate in any of the activities of the congregation. However, the person's name and record will be kept in the inactive file for two years. Such a person shall be encouraged to take part in the congregational life, or to transfer elsewhere. Resumption of any activity within the two-year period will restore the person to active membership. Otherwise the person will be removed from the congregation and notified of this action.

Part 3

The Pastoral Call (cf Chapter 9)

P3.01. After the congregation has approved the call committee's recommendation, a Letter of Call shall be sent to the pastor-elect. It shall be signed by the chairperson, Congregation president and the secretary; and it shall be approved by the synodical bishop. Calls of clergy to positions to assist the pastor shall be issued after pastoral approval and in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph.

P3.02. The call shall be for an indefinite time.

P3.03. If the pastor of this congregation receives a call to another congregation, that pastor shall consult with this congregation or with the Congregation Council. If the pastor decides to accept the call, that pastor shall notify this congregation and the synodical bishop within three weeks. The pastor shall terminate the call with this congregation as quickly as possible, normally within one month.

Part 4

The Congregation Meeting (cf. Chapter 10)

P4.01. The annual meeting shall be held during the month of November each year. The purpose shall be elections and the approval of the budget for the subsequent year and other agenda items which are outlined in Bylaw P4.04. All committee reports shall be submitted for the annual report which will be made available for congregational review at the annual meeting.

P4.02. A quorum for a congregation meeting consists of ten percent of the voting members as determined by the synodical report from the previous year.

P4.03. The agenda for the annual meeting shall be:

- a. Opening devotional
- b. Reports of pastor, Congregation Council, treasurer, committees and others
- c. Elections
- d. Approval of the budgets
- e. Unfinished business
- f. New business

- g. Closing prayer
- P4.04.** At congregation meetings a written ballot is required
 - a. To elect the members of the Congregation Council.
 - b. To adopt or amend the articles of incorporation, constitution, or bylaws of the congregation.
 - c. To call a pastor or to request his resignation.
 - d. To excommunicate a member from the congregation or to remove a member from office 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.
- P4.05.** Except as otherwise provided in the constitution and bylaws all matters shall be decided by a majority vote of those present and voting.
- P4.06.** The minutes of the previous congregational meeting shall be reviewed and approved by the Congregation Council in a timely manner.

Part 5

The Congregation Council (cf. Chapter 12)

- P5.01.** Membership and meeting of the Congregation Council
 - a. The Congregation Council shall consist of not more than eight members, in addition to the pastor, elected each for a term of two years. Elected for terms beginning in even-numbered years are the president, secretary, and two at-large members. Elected for terms beginning in odd-numbered years are the vice president, treasurer, and two at large members.
 - b. In addition to the requirements of congregational membership stated in Chapter 8 of the constitution, qualifications for membership on the Congregation Council shall include such practical ability as is needful in promoting the various interests of the congregation as outlined in the duties of the various ministries of the congregation.
 - c. A member of the Congregation Council and Standing Committee Chairs may be considered for a consecutive term in office, but may serve no more than two consecutive terms in any one position. A member shall not serve more than four consecutive terms unless nominated from the floor. An un-expired term of less than one year shall not be considered a term of office.
 - d. In the September meeting of the Congregation Council all members serving the second year of their term will state if they wish to be nominated for a consecutive term. These members will then state their preferences for positions for the upcoming term. The President shall give this information to the Nominating Committee.
 - e. The slate for the Congregation Council and the Standing Committee Chairpersons shall be voted on at the annual congregation meeting.
 - f. A vacancy on the Congregation Council shall be filled by action of the Congregation Council by appointing a member to serve the remainder of the term.
 - g. The pastor shall be a member of the Congregation Council and ex-officio member of all committees.
 - h. The Congregation Council shall not transact any business unless a majority of

its members is present.

i. Regular meetings of the Congregation Council shall be scheduled monthly, the time to be determined by the Council.

j. A special meeting of the Congregation Council may be called by notice given at a public service or a written notice mailed to each member at least five days in advance of the meeting. A special meeting may be called by the pastor or any member of the Congregation Council.

k. If a member of the Congregation Council is absent from three consecutive regular meetings without an excuse acceptable by the Council that person has forfeited membership on the Council. A member having two consecutive unexcused absences from regular meetings shall be notified by the secretary.

P5.02. Committees of the Congregation Council

a. The Congregation Council shall elect from its own membership such committees as may from time to time be necessary or advisable.

b. The Congregation Council shall have authority to appoint or elect additional congregation members who are not members of the Congregation Council as members of its regular committees.

P5.03. Duties and Responsibilities of the Congregational Council (cf Chapter 11)

a. The president shall preside over meetings of the Congregation Council and the congregation. The president serves as the advisor to the Audit Committee and Call Committee.

i. The auditing committee shall audit all financial records of the congregation in accordance with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America audit report and shall present its written report to the Congregation Council before the end of the first quarter.

b. The vice-president shall preside in the absence of the president. The vice president shall be advisor Nominating Committee.

c. The secretary shall keep the minutes of the Council and of the congregation meetings and shall keep the archives of those minutes.

d. The treasurer shall be bonded and shall be the custodian of all congregational funds and shall disburse funds in accordance with the decisions of the congregation or the Congregation Council. He/she shall present a year-end report for the prior year to the congregation in the annual report. The treasurer shall present a monthly report to the Congregation Council.

e. The Congregation Council shall secure such help as is needed to carry out the work of the congregation by employing organists, choir directors, parish workers, office secretaries, interns, custodians, preschool directors, and other paid staff.

f. Salaries of the paid staff shall be the responsibility of the Congregation Council, subject to the congregation's approval of the budget.

g. The Congregational Council shall oversee the ministries of the church including, but not limited to: education, worship and music, stewardship, evangelism, facilities and maintenance, women's ministries, youth ministries, men's ministries, etc.

P5.04. Duties of the Financial Secretary

a. The financial secretary shall keep a record of all congregational pledges, collections, individual contributions, and special offerings for church expenses,

missions and other purposes. The financial secretary shall send three or four statements to all members showing a record of their contributions, as well as additional statements when so directed by the Congregation Council.

P5.05 Use of the property shall be at the approved by the Congregation Council.

Part 6

The Nominating Committee (cf Chapter 13)

P6.01 The members of the nominating committee shall serve for the year following their election. They shall nominate one or more candidates for all Congregation Council openings, annual synod convention delegates and alternates, Audit Committee, and Solheim Home representatives. They shall secure the consent of each candidate to serve if elected.

P6.02. 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.

P6.03. In addition to the candidates submitted by the nominating committee, additional nominations may be made from the floor with prior consent of the nominee.

P6.04. A vacancy in the nominating committee shall be filled by the Congregation Council.

Part 7

Report of Organizations

P7.01. All committees and organizations handling funds within the congregation shall submit accounts to the treasurer of the church. The treasurer shall include such accounts in the annual report to the congregation.

Part 8

Parish Records

P8.01. The pastor shall be responsible for keeping accurate records of membership and of his/her ministerial acts on forms provided by the congregation and which shall remain the property of the congregation. The pastor shall report these statistics to the congregation annually, and, when required, to the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Upon leaving the congregation he/she shall complete the records of the pastoral ministry up to the time of his/her departure.

Part 9

Amendments to the Bylaws

P11.01. Amendments

Any amendments to these Bylaws which will change or alter the purpose for which it is herein established, requires approval by a two-thirds vote of those present at a duly called meeting of the congregation, the notice of which is in compliance with the Grace Lutheran Church Constitution and Bylaws.