

# Bylaws of St. Luke Lutheran Church

## I. Membership

A. Confirmed members shall no longer qualify for voting membership when they have neither communed nor made a contribution of record to the congregation within the preceding two (2) years. Such person shall be classified as inactive and shall remain within the continuing concern of the congregation and be given conscientious pastoral care. An inactive member shall be restored to the voting roll by the Congregation Council when such person again communes and makes a contribution of record to the congregation.

B. At the request of a confirmed member, a certificate of standing or of transfer of membership to another Lutheran or other Christian congregation shall be issued.

C. This church shall baptize persons of all ages. Parents who wish to have their child baptized will be charged, together with the congregation, with nurturing the life and faith of their child. Adults who wish to be baptized shall have a sponsor who commits together with the congregation, to nurturing such person's faith.

## II. Nomination of Congregation Council

The congregation as a committee of the whole shall make nominations for the Congregation Council at the regularly scheduled worship services in the last three (3) Sundays of September. In addition, the Congregation Council shall appoint a Nominating Committee comprised of (1) the Congregation Council Vice-President, serving as chairperson, (2) two voting members of the congregation, selected by the Vice-President and approved by Congregation Council, and (3) the pastor. Permission must be secured from all persons being placed in nomination.

## III. Election of Congregation Council

A. Election of members of the Congregation Council shall be held at the regularly scheduled worship service on the first Sunday of October, and each succeeding Sunday as needed.

B. Election shall be by simple majority of votes cast.

C. Election tellers shall be appointed by the Congregation Council in its September meeting or before.

## IV. Annual Congregation Meeting

A. An annual meeting of the congregation shall be held each year no later than the

fourth Sunday of January.

B. Only confirmed members who have attained eighteen (18) years of age may vote on matters of purchasing, selling or encumbering real estate, or on other matters requiring legal capacity to contract.

V. Duties of Officers

A. The Congregation Council President shall:

1. Serve as President of the congregation and Congregation Council, and convene and preside over the meetings of the Congregation Council and the congregation;
2. Make an annual report to the congregation; and,
3. Perform any other duties assigned by the Congregation Council.

B. The Congregation Council Vice-President shall:

1. Perform the duties of the Congregation Council President in his/her absence;
2. Serve as Chairperson of the Council Nominating Committee (Section II); and,
3. Perform other duties as assigned.

C. The Congregation Council Secretary shall:

1. Keep minutes of all meetings of the Congregation Council and the congregation, arrange for recording such minutes in the archives of the congregation, and arrange to distribute copies to the pastor, all members of the Congregation Council, and chairs of standing ministries and special committees, task groups and others as directed by the Congregation Council; and,
2. Conduct all correspondence of the Congregation Council.

D. The Congregation Council Treasurer shall:

1. Receive, disburse and account for all the funds of this church;
2. Promptly pay all bills incurred and forward all benevolence monies;
3. Be responsible for the safekeeping of the insurance policies, deeds,

abstracts, mortgages, securities and other legal instruments of this church;

4. Furnish monthly reports concerning the financial condition of this church to the pastor, Congregation Council, and chairpersons of standing ministries as directed;
5. Be an ex officio member of the Finance and Stewardship Committees; and,
6. Submit all financial records for yearly audit.

E. The Congregation Council Financial Secretary shall:

1. Maintain the records of individual giving and all other incoming monies;
2. Submit to individual member(s) quarterly statements of such gifts;
3. Furnish monthly reports of all accounts to the pastor, Congregation Council, and all standing ministries as directed; and,
4. Be an ex officio member of the Finance and Stewardship Committees.

## VI. Standing Ministries

A. At its first meeting in each congregational year, the Congregation Council shall appoint the standing ministries set forth in these bylaws. The Congregation Council shall also appoint such other committees or task groups as required to accomplish its goals. Each ministry group shall be comprised of one (1) or more members of the Congregation Council and other persons on the active roll of the congregation. Although appointed by and responsible to the Congregation Council, these ministry groups shall represent the interests of, and perform services for, the congregation as a whole.

B. Except as stipulated in the following paragraphs, the duties of all such ministries shall be assigned by the Congregation Council with such instructions as appropriate to advance the best interests of the congregation. All actions of such ministries shall be subject to review by Congregation Council, and the chairpersons shall be responsible for an oral or written report to the Congregation Council as requested.

C. Each ministry shall be responsible for regular publicity to the congregation regarding the work of that ministry.

D. There shall be a Learning Ministry. This ministry, in association with the pastor, shall be responsible for leading instruction in the Christian faith for a life of discipleship; nurturing spiritual growth; and providing opportunities for faith formation, growth in knowledge and experience, and inspiration for lifelong learning. Functions shall include Christian Education and Youth Ministry.

E. There shall be an Outreach Ministry. This ministry shall be responsible for reaching out to share the Gospel and inviting others to join in the family of faith; developing programs to extend Christian compassion, helpfulness, and generosity to those in need of aid in body or soul. Functions shall include Evangelism, Social Ministry, and Stephen Ministry.

F. There shall be a Sharing Ministry, of which the Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be ex officio members. This ministry shall be responsible for guiding members to an understanding that everything is a gift from God, and calling forth a careful and prayerful sharing of time, talent and financial resources. It shall prepare a draft budget for the succeeding year, including this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in its behalf by the ELCA and the Virginia Synod, and shall submit such draft budget to the Congregation Council for its action and later presentation to and approval by the congregation. The Finance Committee shall exercise oversight of all the financial affairs of the congregation to ensure they are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies to the Virginia Synod. This ministry group shall, subject to the approval of the Congregation Council, be responsible for the congregation's investments and its total insurance program. It shall also provide for the annual audits of the accounts of the Treasurer and the Financial Secretary, as well as of the financial accounts of other organizations within the congregation. Functions shall include Finance and Stewardship.

G. There shall be a Worship and Music Ministry. It shall be responsible for selecting all liturgies and orders of worship in accordance with the Word of God and faith and practice of the ELCA; planning all worship services; and recruiting and training all those who serve in worship, including acolytes, assisting ministers, ushers, and nursery staff. Working in conjunction with the Director of Music, it shall provide appropriate music to the glory of God (including choral, instrumental, and other music types), procure and maintain music, musical supplies and instruments, oversee the function of the Altar Guild (including sanctuary preparation before and after worship, and care and maintain worship furnishings). Functions shall include Worship and Music, Altar Guild and coordination and planning of concerts.

H. There shall be a Supporting Ministry which shall be responsible for providing fellowship and social opportunities; sponsoring Men's Group and Women's Group activities; providing support for members; overseeing parish administration; maintaining and improving property; and scheduling building usage. Functions shall include Men's Group, Women's Group, Interiors/Memorials, Fellowship and Property.

I. There shall be a Mutual Ministry Committee which, through listening, advising, interpreting, conferring, recommending and affirming, shall support and strengthen the ministry of the pastor and staff serving as a personal and confidential support group to the pastor, lay professionals and staff; maintaining open communications about the expectations, attitudes, and concerns within the congregation, the church community and the staff; and being a confidential "listening post" for the pastor, the staff and the congregation. The committee shall consist of four (4) members. Nominations will be made by the Congregation President, Congregation Council, and the pastor. Term of committee service will be two (2) years, with two (2) members

appointed each successive year. The committee chair will be elected by the committee at their first annual meeting. Committee members may serve two (2) consecutive terms. A member must be off the committee for one (1) year prior to eligibility for re-appointment.

VII. Mission Endowment Fund

A. Fund Purpose and Operation; Unrestricted Gifts

1. A separate St. Luke Mission Endowment Fund ("the Fund") shall be established and maintained for this congregation.
2. The purpose of the Fund is to enhance the mission outreach of this church strictly apart from the general operations of the congregation. In accordance with the principles of Christian stewardship, the Fund is established to receive gifts for use in carrying out God's work at and through this congregation.
3. An unrestricted gift to the church is one which is not part of a church service offering or is not specifically designated by the donor for the general fund, the operating budget of the congregation, or any other designated fund or purpose of the church. All such unrestricted gifts of any kind or nature having a value of \$5,000 or more, if acceptable to the church, shall be distributed as follows: (a) ten percent (10%) of the total shall be paid to the Virginia Synod; (b) up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the total shall be utilized by this congregation as determined by Congregation Council; and, (c) the balance of such total shall be paid to and made part of the Fund.
4. In addition to deposits to the Fund resulting from unrestricted gifts to the church, donors may also designate specific gifts to the Fund and, if acceptable to the church, the entire value of any such gift designated for the Fund shall be made part of the Fund.
5. Without limitation, gifts to the church may be in the form of transfers of property (cash, stocks, bonds, real estate); bequests and other transfers through will; assignment of life insurance, charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder and other trusts; assignment of certificates of deposit; and gifts designated as endowment or memorials according to the intent of the donor.
6. The Mission Endowment Fund Committee ("the Committee") shall be the custodian of the Fund and shall manage and operate the Fund in accordance with these bylaws.

B. Committee Membership

1. The Committee shall consist of five (5) members, all of whom shall be voting members of the congregation. Except as limited herein, the term of each member shall be three (3) years. The congregation shall elect five (5) initial members to the Committee as follows: two (2) for a term of three (3) years; two (2) for a term of two (2) years; and one (1) for a term of one (1) year, and at each annual meeting thereafter, the congregation shall elect the necessary number of committee members for a term of three (3) years, maintaining such staggered terms. No member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive three (3) year terms. After a lapse of one (1) year, former committee members may be re-elected. The pastor and President of the congregation shall be ex officio members of the Committee. The Congregation Council shall nominate persons for election to the Committee. In the event of such vacancy on the Committee, the Congregation Council shall appoint a member to fill the vacancy until the next annual meeting of the congregation, at which time the congregation shall elect a member to fulfill the remaining term of the vacancy. Any member of the Committee shall continue to serve until his/her successor is elected or appointed.
2. The Committee shall meet at least quarterly.
3. A quorum of the Committee shall consist of three (3) members. When only three (3) members are present, a unanimous vote shall be required to carry any motion or resolution.
4. 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.
5. The recording secretary of the Committee shall maintain complete and accurate minutes of all meetings and supply a copy thereof to each member of the Committee. The recording secretary shall also supply a copy of such minutes to the Congregation Council.
6. The financial secretary of the Committee shall work with the congregation's Treasurer in maintaining and coordinating complete and accurate accounts for the Fund and sign checks and all other necessary documents on behalf of the congregation in furtherance of the purposes of the Fund. The financial records of the Fund shall be audited annually by a certified public accountant or other appropriate person who is not a member of the Committee.
7. The Committee shall report on a quarterly basis to the Congregation Council and, at each annual or duly called special meeting of the congregation, shall render a full and complete audited account of the

administration of the Fund during the preceding year. The chairperson of the Committee shall file a yearly report for inclusion in the annual report to the congregation.

8. The Committee may request other members of the congregation to serve as advisory members and, at the expense of Fund income, may provide for such professional counseling on investments or legal matters as it deems necessary or in the best interest of the Fund.
9. Members of the Committee and/or Congregation Council shall not be liable for any losses which maybe incurred with respect to the investments of the assets or other management decisions regarding the Fund, except to the extent such losses shall have been caused by bad faith or gross negligence. No such member shall be personally liable as long as he/she acts in good faith and with ordinary prudence. Each such member shall be liable only for his/her own willful misconduct or omissions, and shall not be liable for the acts or omissions of any other such member. No such member shall engage in any self-dealing or transactions with the Fund in which the member has a direct or indirect financial interest, and each such member shall at all times refrain from any conduct in which his/her personal interests would conflict with the interest of the Fund.
10. Title to all assets of the Fund that are not required to be held in the name of the church may be held in the name of the Fund.
11. Recommendations to hold, sell, exchange, rent, lease, transfer, convert, invest, reinvest, and in all other respects to manage and control the assets of the Fund, including, without limitation, stocks, bonds, debentures, mortgages, notes, or other securities, as in the judgment and discretion of the Committee are deemed wise and prudent, are to be made by the Committee for approval by the Congregation Council, with subsequent execution by the authorized member of the Committee. The Fund assets shall be invested with the primary objective of preserving principle and the secondary objective of realizing a reasonable return on such investment.

C. Distribution of Fund Income

1. The Committee shall determine what is principal and income according to accepted accounting practices. Gifts and bequests to the Fund shall accumulate until the principal amount of \$50,000 is achieved, after which the income generated from the investment of the principal may be expended. The Committee must provide an annual recommendation to the Congregation Council regarding distribution, if any, of the Fund income.
2. Income from the Fund shall be distributed annually, and at such other

times as deemed necessary and/or feasible to accomplish the following purposes:

- a. Minimum of 25 percent (25%) for outreach into the community and Synod, including, but not limited to, grants to Evangelical Lutheran Church in America seminaries, colleges or students attending such school, social service agencies, institutions and agencies to which this congregation relates, and to special programs designed for those persons in this congregation's parish area who are in spiritual and/or economic need.
  - b. Minimum of 25 percent (25%) for missions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in this continent and worldwide including, but not limited to, grants to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for new congregational development in North America, professional leadership, educational ministries, global mission, ecumenism, evangelism, social ministries, and capital financing.
  - c. Minimum of 25 percent (25%) for capital improvements, debt reduction and/or a building program of the congregation.
  - d. Up to 25 percent (25%) for any one or all of the above- designated purposes in any proportions determined by the Committee, or for such other causes and programs which at the discretion of the Committee are deemed consistent with the Fund purpose of enhancing the mission outreach of the church.
3. Programs for support shall be recommended by the Committee and approved by the Congregation Council for funding.
  4. Disbursement of income from the Fund need not occur annually in the event causes and programs have not been approved by the Committee sufficient to utilize total income available or, if in the judgment of the Committee, total annual disbursement of income is not recommended.

D. Distribution of Fund Principal

1. Except as provided herein, only the income from investments may be expended annually from the Fund. Any Fund income not expended at the end of the calendar year shall be added to the principal of the Fund.
2. When, in the opinion of the Committee, circumstances are of such an unusual or emergency nature that the future of the congregation is at stake and the use of the Fund principal is deemed necessary, the Committee



may recommend to the Congregation Council expenditure of some or all of the Fund principal; provided, however, that no such principal shall be expended without prior authorization of the congregation at a congregational meeting duly called for that purpose.

E. Amendments of Bylaws Relating to Fund

Any amendment to these bylaws which will change, alter or amend the purpose for which the Fund is established, or the foregoing provisions relating to the Fund's management and operation, shall be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at an annual meeting of the congregation or at a special meeting called specifically for the purpose of amending such bylaws.

F. Disposition or Transfer of Fund

In the event that this congregation ceases to exist, either through merger or dissolution, the Committee shall distribute or transfer the assets of the Fund in conformity with the congregation's constitution and bylaws and in consultation with the bishop of the Synod or its successor body with which the congregation is affiliated at such time.

The foregoing Bylaws were approved and adopted by vote of the Congregation on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2023.

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Secretary