

**HOPE
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

BY-LAWS

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace, as you trust in him, so that you may
overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
Romans 15:13*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document, By Laws, is one of three documents that contain information necessary to the organization of the Hope Lutheran Church Congregation. In sequence, each document is a guiding framework for the next, each increasing in detail. The three documents are as follows:

- **Constitution**
- **By-Laws, and**
- **Plan of Ministry**

The significance of this increasing detail lies in the degree of flexibility for change. Much like the United States Constitution, change is a serious matter and does not come easily. Our constitution is a foundation for our existence together in performing God's will here in the Hope community. Our conditions of ministry will change over time as our resources change and the opportunities for ministry they change with the dynamic world we live in. Thus, our guiding principles need to change as required without jeopardizing our fundamentals as a Lutheran congregation.

The By-Laws are easier to change than the constitution but similarly, contain the type of language that represents a successful enterprise based on the experience of many congregations that have gone before us. The theme for the three guiding documents of Hope Lutheran Church is therefore, keep the Constitution and By-Laws as simple as possible; place the required detail for day-to-day operations in the Plan of Ministry - which will change in the particulars whereas the other two will not.

The Hope Lutheran Church By-Laws are addressed in the following six sections:

- **Membership**
- **Congregational Meetings**
- **Church Administration**
- **Church Council**
- **Boards and Committees, and**
- **Organizational Principles**

2.0 MEMBERSHIP

2.1 Baptized Member - Any person baptized in the name of the Triune God and coming under the spiritual ministry of this Congregation.

2.2 Confirmed Member - Any person who has been accepted by the Congregation by affirmation, by rite of confirmation, or by transfer from another Lutheran congregation.

2.3 Voting Member - Any confirmed member

Responsibilities (Expectations) - Persons seeking membership will attend appropriate sessions to understand expectations. This includes adults by way of transfer or affirmation, and youth by way of confirmation.

Inactivity - As a minimum, a member not participating in Holy Communion during a significant length of time without extenuating circumstances or response to counseling, shall be deemed inactive and will be subject to Pastoral/Council review for continued membership in the Congregation.

2.4 Council Member - Council functions are presented in Section 5.0. Council members shall be eligible voting members, and elected at the annual meeting of the Congregation specified for this purpose.

2.5 Board Member - Board functions of the Congregation are presented in Section 6.0. Board members shall be eligible voting members demonstrating spiritual maturity, and nominated by a committee appointed by the Council.

2.6 Transfer or Release from Membership

Membership in this Congregation may be terminated by:

- Death of the member,
- Request of the member,
- Congregational action in accordance with the By-Laws.

3.0 CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

All meetings of the voting membership shall be conducted with proper parliamentary procedure and Christian clarity.

3.1 Regular Meetings - Regular meetings of the Congregation shall be held during the calendar year at such times as the Church Council determines.

3.2 Special Meetings - Special meetings of the Congregation may be called by the Church Council or upon petition for it from at least 20 percent of the voting members of the Congregation.

3.3 Right to Vote - Voting at any Congregational meeting requires eligibility as a voting member as defined in Section 2, paragraph 2.3 above. In addition, eligibility to vote at Special meetings shall require participation at a minimum of one Congregational meeting within the past year prior to the date of the special meeting.

3.4 Notification - The dates for all Congregational meetings (regular and special) shall be announced in advance in the Congregational newsletter or special mailing, and in two subsequent Sunday bulletins prior to the date of the meeting.

3.5 Council Meetings - The Church Council will meet monthly (with exception of those months in which a regular Congregational meeting is held), and more often as required. A schedule of intended Council meetings shall be published for Congregational Member use as desired. Congregational members may attend Council meetings in an observer status without rights of discussion unless invited by the Council.

3.6 Quorum

- **Congregational Meetings** - A quorum of twenty five (25) percent of the voting members shall be required before any official business of the parish can be conducted at a meeting of the Congregation.
- **Council Meetings** - A simple majority will constitute a quorum for the official conduct of Council meetings.

3.7 The Calling of a Pastor

The Call Process to fill a pastoral vacancy shall be initiated by the Call Committee established for this specific purpose by the Church Council. This process begins with notification to the President, SELC District.

4.0 CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

Beyond that authority acknowledged in our God above, the Congregation shall have complete authority in the administration of its program. The delegation of this authority shall be accomplished in accordance with the Constitution, By-Laws and Plan of Ministry.

4.1 Duties of Pastor - The Pastor shall be called by action of the Congregation. The Pastor:

Must be qualified, endorsed by, and be a member of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

Shall be the spiritual head of the Congregation, responsible for the public proclamation of the Word, and administration of the Sacraments as well as the other rites of the Church.

Fosters harmony, fellowship, stewardship and outreach efforts to bring all people to a knowledge of Christ.

Provides leadership in developing the Christian educational programs and other programs of ministry, designed to stimulate the spiritual growth and faith of all members of the Congregation and the greater parish community.

Shall be an **ex officio, non-voting member** of the Church Council and its subsidiary committees and boards, but shall be a voting member of the Hope Lutheran Church congregation.

Shall provide regular reports to the Church Council on his activities and the health of the church and congregation.

4.2 Duties of Other Staff

Other Staff as defined in these By-Laws are persons receiving regular compensation from the Congregation for services in support of administrative and Plan of Ministry activities.

These positions and respective duties shall be described in the Plan of Ministry and approved by the Council prior to establishing the position and soliciting candidates.

Misconduct or lack of position performance shall be the basis for Council dismissal action.

5.0 CHURCH COUNCIL

5.1 Responsibilities

The Church Council has two primary functions: provide management for the secular, business aspects of the Congregation; and provide orchestration and integration of the ministries (Plan of Ministry) that meet the spiritual purpose. Training shall be provided to Council and required committee members, to support these responsibilities. In particular, these Church Council responsibilities include the following functions:

Administer affairs of this Congregation in accordance with the Constitution, By-Laws and resolutions of this Congregation.

Permanent boards are: Congregational Care, Outreach Services, Education and Growth, and Elders Board.

Election at the Spring Congregational meeting. Church Council and Board-committee members shall be voting members of the Congregation.

Prior to January 1, review and approval of the program of ministry to include the associated budget, for the following year, and

No person may serve the elected Church Council in more than one position at a time, although he/she may serve as a member of more than one other board or committee.

Conflict of interest will deny acceptance of any elected or appointed officer position, by a family member of a Church Council member. This does not preclude membership on various boards or committees.

5.2 Council Composition

The Council shall consist of seven voting members in addition to the Pastor who is a non-voting member, as follows:

- **President**
- **Vice President**
- **Treasurer**
- **Secretary**
- **Head Elder**
- **Outreach Director**
- **Trustee**

5.3 Boards

The ministries of the Hope Lutheran Church are described in the Plan of Ministry. Each area of the plan falls under the direction of the Council with division of duties as indicated below in paragraph 5.4. In general, the Boards of this Congregation shall fall into four mission areas of our purpose for existence, as God would have us serve under His grace.

Each of these mission areas are mutually reinforcing as follows:

Board of Congregational Care - The foundation of our ability to be an action entity for God. We, the elements of the Body of Christ, must be spiritually healthy, connected in purpose to the Head of the Church and each other, and enabled by the Holy Spirit to carry out the Great Commission. The Vice President chairs this board.

Boards of Outreach Services - The components of carrying out the Great Commission are the individual tasks of outreach ministry that provide service to the Community at large. The Outreach Director chairs this board.

Board of Education and Growth - Arming those within and outside the Congregation with the message of Christianity and its purpose in daily life. The Head Elder chairs this board.

Board of Elders – The Elders provide the Pastor and the Council input on the spiritual health of the Congregation. The Head Elder chairs this board.

5.4 Duties of the Council

The Church Council shall establish areas of responsibility for its members and standing committees. In general, the duties of the Church Council members shall be:

5.4.1 President - The President shall be the presiding officer and Chair of the Church Council and the Congregation.

- The President shall carry out duties normally associated with this position and the Church Council, and as depicted in the Plan of Ministry.
- The President shall be an ex-officio member of all permanent and standing committees/boards of the Church Council, and work in concert with the Pastor to achieve the purpose of the Congregation.
- The President shall report directly the Church Council on the following:
 - **Church staff (non-called)**
 - **Seminar and Presentation Events**

5.4.2 Vice President - In the absence of the President, the VP shall act in the President's stead. Additionally, the VP shall perform any duties assigned by the President. The VP shall report directly to the Church Council on the following:

- **Worship (such as ushering, altar care, music, greeters, etc)**
- **Fellowship Program**
- **Men's and Women's Programs**

5.4.3 Treasurer - The Treasurer shall pay the bills of the Congregation, and maintain an accounting of budget expenditures in accordance with accepted accounting practices. The treasurer shall administer the health and retirement (Concordia) plan and oversee the counting of contributions.

5.4.4 Secretary - The secretary also serves as recording secretary of the council. The Recording Secretary shall be the secretary of the Church Council and the Congregation and shall keep minutes of all meetings. He/She shall be responsible for the official papers and congregational and Church Council correspondence.

5.4.5 Head Elder -The Head Elder provides the Pastor and the Council input on the spiritual health of the Congregation. The Head Elder shall report directly to the Church Council on the following:

- **Christian Education (Sunday School, Bible Studies, Youth, etc.)**
- **Pastoral Relations – oversees all called positions**

5.4.6 Director of Outreach Services – The Director of Outreach Services shall report directly to the Church Council on the following:

- **Evangelism Program**
- **Outreach Program**
- **Mission Opportunities**
- **Community social concerns**
- **Public Relations**

5.4.7 Trustee – The Trustee shall be responsible for the property and maintenance of facilities and shall reported directly to the Church Council.

6.0 BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Boards may establish an appropriate number of committees to oversee their respective activities. These committees may consist of two or more persons as required. In addition to the functional committees of standing boards, the Council may establish a number of standing committees to meet its periodic requirements for it.

6.1 Standing Boards

- **Church Council**
- **Board of Congregational Care**
- **Board of Outreach Services**
- **Board of Education and Growth**
- **Board of Elders**

6.2 Standing Committees

- **Elder/Deacon Committee** - Chaired by the Head Elder, provides lay ministry for the members of the Congregation under the direction of the Pastor and the Church Council. Regularly contact the members of the Congregation for the purpose of spiritual encouragement and to demonstrate Christian caring and concern. Work with the Pastor in a process of reconciliation when conflict arises in the Congregation. Maintain a process of exit interviews for departing members regardless of reason. Suggest policy to the Church Council in the areas of membership, spiritual care and worship. Support the Pastors and staff by prayer and encouragement.
- **Planning Committee** - the Vice President shall chair The Planning Committee. The committee shall consist of the Pastor, the past President of the Congregation, and others as deemed necessary. The committee shall operate under the auspices of the Church Council. It shall be concerned about the future ministry of our Congregation and its shape. It shall receive input from a variety of sources and maintain a body of information concerning our Congregation ministry, providing guidance to the Church Council. The committee shall undertake any other assignment given by the Church Council.
- **Finance Committee** - This committee, chaired by the Treasurer, shall consist of the Congregation Financial Secretary, the Stewardship Chair, and others appointed by the Church Council. Its function is to prepare the annual budget in concert with the Plan of Ministry, and present it to the Church Council for review and approval. The committee shall make recommendations concerning salaries of congregation staff.
- **Audit Committee** - This committee shall consist of three members appointed by the Church Council. Its function is to examine the financial books and records of the Congregation annually or as often as requested by the Church Council. The committee

shall report to the Church Council, which in turn shall report to the Congregation.

- **Nominating Committee** - This committee, chaired by the Council VP, shall consist of three members plus the Pastor. The other two members of this committee shall not be members of the Church Council. The Committee shall nominate at least one person for each Church Council position in advance of the annual meeting and notify the Congregation of its selections. The Committee must obtain verbal consent of the nominee after acquainting him/her with the duties of the office before announcing his/her nomination.

- **Call Committee** – This committee, chaired by the Head Elder, shall consist of three members, plus the Pastor. The other two members of this committee shall not be members of the Church Council. The Committee shall be charged with interviewing and evaluating potential Pastoral candidates. The Committee shall make recommendations to the Congregation for official calling.

- **Others as Required** - To initiate and maintain periodic areas of ministry included in the Plan of Ministry, not covered by a standing board.

6.3 Responsibilities of Boards and Committees

Are responsible to administer all funds set aside for its work by budget appropriation or by special resolution of the Voters' Assembly. Voting Membership may, at its discretion, restrict such expenditures to conform to the actual financial condition of the Congregation at any given time. Each Administrative Board and Committee shall be responsible to the Church Council for all expenditures not authorized either by the budget or by special resolution of the Congregation.

Initiate and carry out activities and programs within the Congregation as will enable it to effectively perform the functions and duties assigned to it by the Constitution and By-Laws, or by specific resolution of the Voting Membership.

Submit a report of its activities at each regular meeting of the Voting Membership, and on other occasions as the Voting Membership shall require. Reports shall include specific recommendations (if any) for Congregational action and/or approval.

6.4 Elected Officers

6.4.1 Method of Election

- **During the first quarter** of each year, the Vice President shall appoint a Nominating Committee, consisting of at least two voting members in addition to the VP chair. No member shall be appointed to the Nominating Committee for two successive years.
- **The Nominating Committee** shall select at least one candidate for each office to be filled by election in that year; shall publish the names of all nominees for

elected offices in the parish bulletin for two Sundays prior to the date of election.

- **Additional nominations** for elected offices may be made from the floor at the election meeting of the Congregation, provided there is reasonable assurance that the person nominated is willing to run for elected office and serve if elected. The nominator at the meeting of election shall give such a testimony.
- **The candidate receiving** a majority of the votes cast on the first ballot shall be elected. If no candidate receives a majority of all votes cast on the first ballot, further ballots shall be taken until a majority for one candidate is obtained, the candidate receiving the least amount of votes being eliminated in each succeeding ballot.

6.4.2 Elected Term of Office

The term for elected offices designated in Section 5.2 of these By-Laws is two years:

- Beginning on July 1 for a period of two years.
- Treasurer and Financial Secretary (appointed position - see 6.5.2) shall be from February 1 for a period of two years.
- Persons elected to these offices shall not succeed themselves more than once.

6.4.3 Installation

Prior to serving, all persons filling elected offices shall be duly installed under the oaths prescribed by The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, subject to Hope Lutheran Constitution and By-Laws, at a regular worship service.

6.5 Appointed Officers

Appointed Officers are as follows:

- **Financial Secretary** - Maintain records of member contribution, bequests and other received income. Oversee money-counting process.
- **Sunday School Superintendent** - Identify teachers; procure materials, host regular teacher training and evaluation meetings.

6.5.1 Method of Appointment

- Persons to fill offices of Financial Secretary and Sunday School Superintendent shall be appointed from the voting membership by the President in consultation with the Pastor and the Church Council.
- The Chairpersons of the standing committees established by the Congregation or the respective elected officers in consultation with the Pastor and the Church Council shall appoint the Church Council.

6.5.2 Appointee Term of Office

- The term for an appointed office (except financial secretary - see 6.4.2) is one year, beginning on July 1 and ending the following June 30.

6.5.3 Vacancies and Removals

- In the event of concurrent vacancies in the Offices of President and Vice President, the Church Council Secretary shall, within a two-week period, call and chair a special meeting of the Congregation to elect members to fill these offices. A Nominating Committee may conduct this election without action.
- In the event of a vacancy in the office President, the VP will immediately assume those responsibilities.
- In the event of a vacancy in any office other than the President, the President, in consultation with the pastor, and with the approval of the Church Council, shall appoint a successor to complete the unexpired term.
- The Congregation shall have power to remove an elected or appointed officer from office for either of two circumstances:
 - Inadequate performance of duties, or
 - Delinquent Christian living after the Church Council has given the offender written notice that such action is under consideration and has provided the opportunity to defend the conduct in question.

7.0 ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES

7.1 Bonding

The Church shall be bonded for dishonesty coverage and for loss inside and outside the premises coverage.

7.2 Legal Ownership

The Congregation may acquire, use, and sell real estate and other property to accomplish its started purpose. Should this Congregation dissolve without disposing of its assets, or a

division of the Congregation takes place on account of doctrine or non-doctrinal reasons, Article IX of the Constitution shall govern procedure.

7.3 Doctrinal Literature Usage

The hymns, prayers and liturgies used in public services and ministerial acts of this parish, as well as the literature used for instruction in Christian knowledge, shall conform to the confessional standard of Article II of the Constitution.

7.4 Rules of Order

The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall govern in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with this Constitution and By-Laws.

7.5 Changing the by-Laws

These By-Laws may be changed by action of the Congregation in meeting assembled.

- Advanced notification in accordance with Section 3, Meetings, shall serve as basis for all concerned.
- The proposed amendment shall be offered at a meeting of the Congregation.
- Any and all Bylaws may be repealed or amended by a majority of the voting members present at any Voter's meeting, provided notice of this proposed action be given to the congregation at least two Sundays prior to the time of meeting, and provided the substance of the proposed amendment has been submitted to the church council for its study and recommendation.
- There shall be no temporary amendments to the By-Laws.