

## **BYLAWS – PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

### **PART I - COMMUNION PARTICIPATION**

Participation in Holy Communion shall be open to confirmed members of this congregation, other members of this congregation who have received instruction regarding Holy Communion, and other Christians who accept the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in regard to Holy Communion.

In the sacrament we receive "the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ given with bread and wine...a person is well prepared and worthy who believes the words given and shed for you for the remission of sins." (From Luther's Small Catechism)

### **PART II - THE COVENANT**

The Covenant shall be signed initially upon membership and reaffirmed yearly, and shall demonstrate sincere intent that:

Accepting one another, unconditionally, in love, with gentleness and honesty, and seeking to be God's servants in His word, we make this covenant, uniting each of us to the other in the family of Christ:

To regularly worship and commune together;

To participate in learning and study opportunities as they meet our needs of the congregation;

To find a personal means of service, in the name of God, in the community, and to support and assist the servant ministry of others;

To share, according to our ability, a proportion of our time, talent and financial substance to support the ministry of this congregation, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and other charitable and benevolent work in God's world;

To pray faithfully for the people and needs of the congregation.

### **PART III - MEMBERSHIP**

1. Members shall be those who have been baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

a) A member may be a child, one or both of whose parents or guardians are members of the congregation.

b) A baptized person shall become confirmed after receiving instruction in the faith as confessed by the Lutheran Church, by making confession of this faith, by

participating in the Affirmation of Baptism and by affirming the Covenant relationship.

2. Voting members shall be confirmed members who have affirmed the Covenant. Voting on matters of legal substance shall be limited to confirmed participants whose age confirms to the requirements of Maryland State Law.

### 3. Care of Membership

a) In the event that a member moves from the area served by the congregation, the member shall be encouraged to transfer membership to a Lutheran congregation which can effectively serve the member. In such a case, the secretary shall make as effort to notify a congregation in the area to which the member has moved, of the member's presence.

b) A confirmed member desiring to change his membership to another Lutheran congregation shall, upon request, receive a Letter of Transfer.

## PART IV - THE PASTOR

1. When the congregation has voted to call a pastor, it shall issue a Letter of Call to the pastor-elect, in a form approved by The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It shall be signed by the president and secretary of the meeting at which the Call was issued, and shall be attested by the signature of the Bishop of the Synod. A call to be co-associate or assistant pastor shall be issued only with the concurrence of the pastor of the congregation as well as in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph.

2. A call may be to serve the congregation as pastor for either a definite or an indefinite period of time, which must be specified in the Call.

3. If a pastor receives a Call to another ministry, he/she shall inform the Congregation Council, and shall announce his/her decision as soon as practical. The Synod Bishop shall be notified of the decision. When a Call has been accepted to another ministry, or decision reached to otherwise terminate the pastoral relationship with the congregation, the pastor's ministry shall be terminated as soon as practical, normally within one month.

## PART V - MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION

1. Announcement of the time and place for the annual meeting of the congregation shall be made at two public services immediately preceding the meeting, said services to be at least one week apart, and in such publications as the congregation may periodically issue, or by written notice to the voting members distributed not less than ten days before such meeting.

2. The current roster of voting members shall be available at each meeting of the congregation.

3. The annual meeting shall receive reports from the Congregational Council and from the Standing Committees of the congregation. This shall include the financial statement. All reports shall be submitted in writing to the congregation's secretary not less than twenty days before such meeting.

4. A Nominating Committee, appointed by the Congregation Council at least one month prior to the semi-annual meeting, shall nominate candidate(s) for each position to be filled, and shall secure consent of those so nominated. The names of the nominees shall be part of the announcements concerning the semi-annual meeting. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.

5. Unless otherwise ordered, parliamentary procedures shall be in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

#### PART VI - STANDING COMMITTEES & TASK FORCES

1. The following Standing Committees shall, with the advice and guidance of the pastor(s), assist in ministering to the needs of the congregation and of the community: Education; Evangelism; Property Management; Social Action and Community Concerns; Stewardship and Finance; Worship and Music; Fellowship; Communications; and Mutual Ministry.

2. Upon first meeting, and yearly thereafter, each Standing Committee shall develop and/or reconsider a Task Description of the work of the Ministry, and a procedure for replacing inactive and transferred members. The Task Descriptions shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following:

a) Education -- supervise the education programs of the congregation; supervise calls and appointments to superintendents, teachers, etc.; develop procedures for teacher training; supervise an ongoing youth program and choose sponsors for same; supervise funds for this area of Ministry and report on all work done and funds expended to the Congregation Council and congregation.

b) Evangelism -- Develop and maintain an ongoing program of evangelism both within and outside of the congregation; supervise funds for this area of Ministry and report on all work done and funds expended to the Congregation Council and congregation.

c) Property Management -- Devise and maintain a program for maintenance and care for all real property of the congregation; make recommendations and develop plans for the use of property; supervise use of facilities by groups outside of the congregation; supervise funds for this area of Ministry and report on all work done and funds expended to the Congregation Council and congregation.

d) Social Action and Community Concerns -- Devise a method for the identification of social needs; enlist others to help meet these needs; maintain data so as to identify persons with particular interests and skills pursuant to the congregation's goals; supervise funds for this area of Ministry and report on all work done and funds expended to the Congregation Council and congregation.

e) Stewardship and Finance -- Coordinate salary recommendations; supervise creation of annual budget; be responsible for adequate insurance coverage; appoint a financial secretary to keep records of congregational stewardship and provide givers with a record of their offerings; conduct stewardship education and programs within the congregation to encourage giving as response to God's love; receive regular reports from the Treasurer, Financial Secretary and others charged with fiscal management; supervise funds for this area of Ministry and report on all work done and funds expended to the Congregation Council and congregation.

f) Worship and Music -- Secure staff necessary to assist the congregation and the pastor(s) in meaningful worship; develop a program for meaningful worship experiences; develop and oversee guidelines for services that may involve non-members (weddings, funerals, etc.); lead in the creation of an atmosphere in which Word and Sacraments become central to the life of the congregation; supervise funds for this area of Ministry and report on all work done and funds expended to the Congregation Council and congregation.

g) Fellowship -- Develop, organize and implement a program for meaningful fellowship for the congregation; e.g. to include progressive dinner, church picnic, tree trimming, new members receptions, etc. and supervise funds for this area of Ministry and report on all work done and funds expended to the Congregation Council and congregation.

h) Communications -- Develop or implement an ongoing and effective congregation communication program. Responsibilities include but not limited to advertisements, promotion of programs, temple talks, newsletters and other means; supervise funds for this area of Ministry and report on all work done and funds expended to the Congregation Council and congregation.

i) Mutual Ministry -- Advises, informs, supports the Pastor; encourages communication within congregation; make Pastor's salary recommendation to Congregation Council; provide ongoing feedback to Pastor about what is going well, and what needs changing.

3. The pastor(s) shall be an advisory member of all Standing Committees, but shall not vote.

4. The Congregation Council may add/delete to the number of Standing Committees, or combine two or more committees into one, at its discretion, providing that such additions and combinations be reviewed annually by the congregation.

5. Task forces must vote on a final recommendation prior to issuing a report. Any report issued by a task force committee to the congregation must be voted on and supported by a majority of the committee prior to the report being presented to the congregation. The vote totals should be part of the report.

## PART VII - CONGREGATION COUNCIL

In addition to the provisions of the Constitution, the following bylaws pertain to the Congregation Council:

1. The Congregation Council shall serve as close advisor and counsellor to the congregation's pastor(s). The members are to be of assistance to him/her; and vice versa. Mutual Ministry is the goal.

2. Officers of the congregation (President, Vice President and Secretary) serve as the Trustees, empowered to act legally on behalf of the congregation.

3. The officers of the congregation shall be the officers of the Congregation Council. Their duties shall include:

a) The President shall preside at meetings of the Congregation Council and of the congregation.

b) The Vice-President shall preside at meetings in the absence of the President.

c) The Secretary shall keep minutes of the Congregation Council meetings and meetings of the congregation, and shall have custody of the congregation's archives.

4. The Congregation Council is empowered to transfer funds from one Ministry to another from the annual budget, if, in its judgment, such transfer is necessary for adequate ministry. Said transfer may not increase the total voted budget of the congregation.

5. A quorum for the Congregation Council shall be one-half of its membership.

## PART VIII - PARISH RECORDS

The records of the congregation shall be and remain the property of the congregation. The pastor shall be responsible for the maintenance of the records, except as otherwise provided herein. Upon the termination of a pastor's service to the congregation, the records shall have been brought up to date prior to departure. The records shall consist of:

1. A roster of members.
2. The ministerial acts performed by the pastor.
3. The minutes and reports of the Synod and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The pastor shall report to the secretary of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America such statistics as may be requested and shall annually report to the congregation a summary of ministerial acts.

Should the congregation be dissolved, the official records of the congregation shall become the property of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.