

# Hope Lutheran Church - Bylaws

## ARTICLE I

## COMMUNICANT MEMBERSHIP

### 1) Admission into Communicant Membership

#### a. By Confirmation

After extensive training and testing in the Word of God (catechesis), the youth in the Congregation shall be received as Communicant Members provided they have been rightly baptized.

#### b. By Transfer

Persons coming with a communicant letter of transfer from a congregation in fellowship with The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, upon the acknowledgement of the Senior Pastor, shall be presented to the Church Council for approval and installed before the Congregation.

#### c. By Profession of Faith

Other persons shall submit their request to the Senior Pastor; and having received instruction in all matters of faith and in the polity of this congregation, shall be presented to the Church Council for approval and installed before the congregation.

### 2) Termination of Communicant Membership

#### a. Transfer to Other Congregations

Communicant members desiring to join a congregation in fellowship with The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod shall present their request for transfer to the Senior Pastor, to whom authorization is granted to issue such a transfer. Such transfer of membership shall be approved by the Church Council in a subsequent meeting.

#### b. Joining Other Churches

In cases where communicant members have joined another congregation outside of fellowship with The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, they shall, upon the recommendation of the Senior Pastor, be considered terminated from membership. Upon approval from the Church Council their names shall be removed from the membership roster.

#### c. Whereabouts Unknown and Self-Exclusion

The names of members whose whereabouts are unknown and cannot be established, or who have excluded themselves from the fellowship of this congregation, shall be removed from membership after a time of one calendar year from last attended service of the church, meeting, or assembly.

- i. Shut-ins or those unable to regularly attend such services, meetings, or assemblies shall be exempt from this rule as long as regular contact continues between such members and the pastors or elders. Guidelines pertaining to the ministry of shut-ins or hospitalized shall be detailed in the Policy Manual.

d. Excommunication

Any member who conducts him or herself in an unchristian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20. A member who refuses to amend his or her sinful life after proper admonition shall be excommunicated according to the policies of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the Southern District.

## ARTICLE II

### THE VOTERS' ASSEMBLY

1) Responsibilities of the Voters' Assembly

- a. It shall be the duty of every voting member to attend the Voters' Assembly meetings. By failing to attend such meetings a member waives the right to cast a vote during that meeting. A voting member should be willing to serve in church offices, on committees, etc., and generally participate in the activities of the Voters' Assembly.

2) Admission into Voting Membership

- a. An applicant for voting membership shall present his or her application to either the senior pastor or president of the congregation, who shall bring the application to the Church Council for discussion and shall subsequently present the name at a meeting of the Voters' Assembly for approval. Approval will require a two-thirds vote of those present and voting.

3) Termination of Voting Membership

- a. Voting membership is automatically terminated upon termination of communicant membership.
- b. Voting members who miss two consecutive annual Voters' Assembly meetings will be removed from the list of voting members, and will need to apply for readmission according to the process outlined in Article II, section 2 of the Bylaws.

## ARTICLE III

### MEETINGS

1) Meetings

- a. Voters' Assembly Meetings are those in which matters requiring a vote are brought before the voting members for consideration. There shall be a minimum of one Voters' Assembly meeting per year, and special Voters' Assembly meetings can be called as necessary according the procedure set out in the Bylaws and the Policy Manual.
- b. Congregational Meetings may also be called as needed to inform the congregation of matters not requiring a vote.
- c. Voters' Assembly Meetings shall require a Quorum of 1/2 the total number of voting members.

## 2) Meeting Procedures

- a. The annual Voters' Assembly Meeting shall be held in accordance with the guidelines given in the Policy Manual.
- b. Congregational Meetings may be held at any time and may be called by the Senior Pastor and the Council President together.
- c. Special Meetings of the Voters' Assembly may also be called by the Senior Pastor and the Council President together.
- d. A delegation of not less than 10% of the communicant membership (being not less than five members total) may request special Congregational or Voters' Assembly meetings. Requests must be made to both the Senior Pastor and the Council President.
- e. Further details regarding meetings shall be provided in the Policy Manual.

## ARTICLE IV CALLING OF PASTORS AND CHURCH WORKERS

### 1) Call Committee

The Church Council shall elect individuals from the congregation to serve as the Call Committee. The number, work, and scope of the Call Committee shall be detailed in the Policy Manual. Any member of the congregation may recommend names to the Call Committee for consideration. Names must be submitted to the Committee in sufficient time for them to review the candidates fully before deciding on the final list of nominees.

### 2) Nominations of Pastors and Other Church Workers

At a Voters' Assembly meeting, the list of candidates provided by the Call Committee in conjunction with the District President shall be offered for consideration. All nominations for the office of pastor or another called church worker must comply with the rules of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the Southern District, and the Constitution and Bylaws of this congregation.

### 3) Elections

The election of a pastor or a called church worker from the list of candidates shall be by ballot. The candidate receiving the majority of all votes cast shall be considered elected. The election shall, if possible, be made unanimous by a rising vote, and the call shall be sent by the Call Committee to the pastor or church worker elect.

### 4) Further details and rules concerning the calling of pastors and other church workers shall be included in the Policy Manual.

## ARTICLE V ELECTION OF CONGREGATIONAL OFFICERS

### Nominating Committee

The Church Council shall select from the congregation those who shall serve on the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee, in accordance with the procedure set out in the Policy Manual, shall seek out and nominate members to run for positions on the Church Council. The

final slate of candidates shall be provided to the Voters' Assembly at least two weeks before the annual Voters' Assembly Meeting.

## ARTICLE VI

### OFFICERS

#### 1) Elected Officers

The elected officers of this congregation shall be: President; Vice-President; Secretary; Treasurer; Financial Secretary; Head Elder. Details regarding the terms, duties, and responsibilities of each elected office shall be provided in the Policy Manual.

#### 2) Other Committees

The Church Council may establish as necessary other congregational offices, auxiliary groups, planning groups, or committees, with details regarding such offices and groups to be included in the Policy Manual. Such officers, groups, or committees may report to the Church Council as necessary, but shall have no vote on the Council.

## ARTICLE VII

### CHURCH COUNCIL

#### 1) Council Members

The Church Council shall consist of the President of the congregation, the Vice-President, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, and the Head Elder. The Senior Pastor shall be a non-voting, ex officio member of the Church Council.

a. The President shall not vote except to break a tie.

b. The Vice President shall not vote except to break a tie in the event that he is presiding at a meeting in the President's absence.

c. No additional voting positions shall be added to the Church Council.

#### 2) Audits

The Church Council shall arrange for regular reviews of the church's finances in accordance with the procedures set out in the Policy Manual.

#### 3) Constitutional Review

The Church Council shall once every five years appoint a Constitution Committee to review and, if necessary, revise the constitution and bylaws of the church.

#### 4) Meetings

The Church Council shall meet regularly, in accordance with the guidelines in the Policy Manual. Two-thirds of all Council Members must be present at a Council Meeting in order for decisions to be made.

#### 5) Meeting Format

The Council shall use any format desired to conduct meetings (Robert's Revised Rules, Democratic Rules, Atwood, Parliamentary, etc.). Agreed format shall be listed in the Policy Manual, along with any exceptions or alterations to the rules.

#### 6) Other duties and responsibilities of the Church Council shall be provided in the Policy Manual.

## ARTICLE VIII

## POLICY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

### 1) The Policy Manual

The Church Council shall draft and maintain a Policy Manual that shall include detailed guidelines for conducting the congregation's regular operations and shall provide clear directions for congregational officers, called pastors and church workers, and all others tasked with handling the official business of the congregation in any capacity.

- a. The Church Council can review and revise the Policy Manual as necessary, with any revisions requiring the approval of a two-thirds majority. The Senior Pastor shall be able to vote on matters pertaining to revision of the Policy Manual.
- b. Specific policies in the manual cannot be changed more than once in an annual cycle. New policies may be added as needed but cannot override a previous policy. Policies may be removed as needed, but only after making reasonable accommodation for any group or church member affected directly by the removal of said policy.
- c. All policies must comply with the precepts of this Constitution and Bylaws, the Southern District's Constitution and Bylaws, the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod's Constitution and Bylaws, and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

### 2) Accountability

The Pastor and the Church Council shall hold an annual Accountability Meeting to establish goals for the Pastor and Council, and to establish clear guidelines to achieve the goals.

- a. A quarterly review of set goals may be performed by a meeting called by the Senior Pastor and the Council President.
- b. Accountability Meetings may be called, as needed, when a clear violation of policy is demonstrated by any member of the Church Council, the pastors, church workers, or any other leadership in the congregation. The Council President reserves the right to call an accountability meeting, as well as the Senior Pastor.

### 3) Further details about policy and accountability shall be provided in the Policy Manual.