

# **BY-LAWS**

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

*January 17, 2010*

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## **SECTION I**

### **The Means of Grace**

- A. Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Communion) are the two Sacraments recognized by the Lutheran Church and this congregation as God's means of dispensing His gracious love and forgiveness to His children. They are free gifts from God that cannot be earned, only received.
- B. Both Sacraments are equal in every respect. No distinction is made between the two.

## **SECTION II**

### **Communion Participation**

- A. This congregation invites all baptized Christians to receive the Sacrament and encourages frequent use of this means of God's grace.
- B. Instructing the young concerning Holy Communion begins at the earliest age in Sunday school and continues each year in every grade.
- C. Formal instruction of children by the Pastor, leading to special recognition at a worship celebration, will be open to children having the ability to understand the Sacrament appropriately, but relative to their level, and with the consent and support of the parents.
- D. Parents are encouraged to share the element(s) of the Lord's Supper with their children regardless of the child's age.

- E. Participation in Holy Communion shall be open to all baptized members of any Christian congregation.
- F. Notice of Communion participation by visitors is sent to his/her home Church upon request.

## **SECTION III**

### **Membership**

#### **A. Baptized Membership**

1. All persons who have received Christian baptism are baptized members.
2. All baptisms will be recorded as ministerial acts.
3. Adults not baptized, having received instruction and given evidence of an adequate understanding and acceptance of God's Word, shall upon confession of faith and Christian baptism be welcomed as confirmed, voting members of this congregation.

#### **B. Confirmed Membership**

1. Baptized adults, not previously members of a Lutheran church, will be instructed in the Word of God and the confessions of Lutheran Church. Upon completion, they will be welcomed as confirmed/voting members.
2. Baptized children shall be admitted to confirmed/voting membership after preparation for and participation in the Rite of Confirmation.
3. Applicants for membership presenting letters of transfer (if possible) from another Lutheran church or by profession of faith will be welcomed as confirmed/voting members.

#### **C. Membership Transfer**

1. A confirmed/voting member desiring to change their membership to another church will, upon request, receive a Letter of Transfer.

## **D. Active Membership**

1. Determination of “Active” membership will be based on a periodic review of the membership roster.
2. If possible, those members who are removed will be notified by mail in a letter explaining the reasons for the action.

## **SECTION IV**

### **The Nominating Committee**

#### **A. Nomination of Candidates**

1. Nomination of candidates for Officers and Committee Chairpersons will be made by the *Nominating Committee*. The Nominating Committee will:
  - a. Choose one or more candidates for each office whose consent to serve if elected was obtained in advance.
  - b. Post the candidates’ names four weeks before the election.
  - c. Receive additional nominations from any voting member at least one week before Candidate List is mailed.
  - d. Include the names with the mailing informing the congregation of the Annual Meeting’s date and time.
2. Any voting member can nominate a candidate from the floor at the Annual Meeting if the candidate is present, consents to the nomination and indicates a willingness to serve if elected. If these conditions are met, the name will be placed on the ballot.

## **SECTION V**

### **Absentee Ballots**

1. Situations may arise whereby a member is entitled to cast a vote but, because of circumstances beyond their control, is unable to be present at a congregational meeting. In these cases an absentee ballot is permitted.
2. The procedure for requesting an absentee ballot will be included in the required church-wide notification mailing. The procedures are:
  - a. The member makes their request through the President or Vice-President no later than one week before the meeting date.
  - b. A designated officer of the Church Council personally registers the voter, supplies and retrieves the ballot, and places it in a sealed envelope.
  - c. The Registration Form and sealed ballot are returned to the Church office. The ballot is placed in the ballot box.

## **SECTION VI**

### **The Annual Meeting**

- A. An announcement stating the time and place of the Annual Meeting will be made during public worship two consecutive weeks before the meeting.
- B. A letter containing the above content will be mailed to all voting members at least ten (10) days before the meeting.
- C. A quorum at the Annual or Special congregation meeting will be determined by calculating fifty percent (50%) of the average attendance for the previous five Sundays.
- D. The Order of Business at the Annual Meeting shall be:

1. **Call to Order.**
2. **Devotions.**
3. **Reading and approval of minutes.**
4. **Oral reports by the Pastor, Church Council, Treasurer, and Committee Chairs only if written reports were not published in the Annual Report.**
5. **Report of the Nominating Committee.**
6. **Election of Church Council members.**
7. **Approval of the budget.**
8. **Unfinished business from the last Annual Meeting.**
9. **Adjournment.**

E. Voting will be by secret ballot in the following cases:

1. Election of Officers and Committee chairpersons unless the Rules are suspended in favor of a voice or hand vote by request of the Presiding officer.
2. Adopt or amend the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution, or By-laws of the congregation.
3. Call a pastor or request their resignation.
4. Sever membership in Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC).
5. Dispose of, encumber, or purchase real property.
6. When requested by ten or more voting members present.

F. Except as otherwise provided for in the Constitution and By-laws, all matters shall be decided by a **majority vote** of those present and voting.

G. All elections will be declared by a majority of the votes cast.

H. Should more than one ballot be required in an election because a majority has not been attained, the three receiving the most votes after the first ballot will appear on the second ballot. The two receiving the most votes after the second ballot will appear on the third ballot to determine the eventual winner.

- I. In all matters not specifically provided for herein, procedure shall be according to Robert's Rules of Order.

## **SECTION VII**

### **The Church Council and Committees**

#### **A. Membership and Meetings of the Church Council**

1. The governing body of this congregation shall be known as the ***Church Council***, comprised of the Pastor, Executive Board, and the Chairperson of each Standing Committee.
2. The ***Standing Committees*** shall consist of:
  - a. Education and Youth
  - b. Property and Management
  - c. Worship and Music
3. The ***purpose*** of these Standing Committees shall be to carry out and implement the necessary functions of the congregation as defined in the Constitution and By-laws:
  - a. The Chairperson of each Committee will be responsible for its programs and selection of committee members.
  - b. Committee membership will be open to all interested parties.
  - c. Committees will schedule their own meetings.

#### **B. Council Meetings**

1. The Church Council will meet at least once a month or at such time as it may decide. A ***quorum*** of the Church Council will be a ***simple majority***.
2. All Council and Committee Meetings will be open to members of the congregation. Those wishing to be included on the agenda of the

Church Council will be scheduled at the discretion of the President.

3. The Executive Board and Church Council have the right to meet in *executive session*, i.e. *members only in attendance*. The Board and Council may however invite persons to appear before them.

## C. Duties of the Church Council

1. Each member of the Council shall faithfully fulfill duties relative to their respective Office or Committee. Their functions are as follows:

### a. *Church Council*

- I. Set policies for the work of the congregation.
- II. Do long-range planning.
- III. Direct the administration of church business.
- IV. Prepare annual performance reviews of all paid personnel.

### b. *Executive Board*

- I. Serve as the Finance Committee for the purpose of compiling the congregation's Annual Budget.
- II. Oversee paid personnel.

### c. *Education and Youth*

- I. Provide educational opportunities for growth in the Christian faith for all age groups.
- II. Create educational, service, and social opportunities for the congregation's youth.

### d. *Property and Management*

- I. Be responsible for the protection, maintenance and use of the Church's property and buildings.

### e. *Worship and Music*

- I. Provide for a variety of worship experiences.
- II. Create a schedule of services, including hymn selection, musicians, and special music.

- III. Promote and encourage participation in the choir.
- IV. Purchase worship supplies.
- V. Arrange for pulpit supply.

**D. Duties of the Officers.**

1. The Officers of this congregation shall set the example of respect and love of others: being diligent in prayer, attending worship, calling upon the Holy Spirit for strength and guidance, nourishing their faith through the study of God's Word, and frequent use of the Sacraments.

**2. The President shall:**

- a. Chair the Church Council and Executive Board and preside at their meetings.
- b. Preside at congregational meetings unless otherwise delegated.
- c. Be an ex-officio member of all Standing Committees.
- d. Be in weekly dialogue with the Pastor on all issues in order to coordinate the work and ministry of the church.

**3. The Vice-President shall:**

- a. Perform all presidential duties in the absence of the President.
- b. Perform such other duties as the Council determines.

**4. The Council Secretary shall:**

- a. Keep accurate minutes of congregational, Council, and Executive Board meetings.
- b. Hold in safe keeping all documents of the church.
- c. Notify members of official meetings.
- d. Submit all minutes and other correspondence prior to publication to the President and Pastor for review.

**5. The Treasurer shall:**

- a. Receive from the Financial Secretary a record of all monies.
- b. Receive all bills and pay them as authorized by the Church Council.
- c. Provide a written monthly report to the Church Council.
- d. Provide a year-end summation for publication in the Annual Report.
- e. Make files available for inspection for those having made request through the President.

**6. The Financial Secretary shall:**

- a. Receive and record all monies given by congregation members by way of Sunday offerings and through other donations.
- b. Deposit all revenues in the proper bank account.
- c. Furnish the Treasurer with a record of such deposits.
- d. Post individual contribution accounts.
- e. Issue an annual Contribution Statement to each member and other statements as the Church Council deems necessary.
- f. Provide a summary of monthly revenue at the Church Council meetings.
- g. Provide a year-end Revenue Statement for publication in the Annual Report.
- h. Keep all individual giving confidential.

**E. Non-Performance**

- 1. Non-performance by a Council member will be grounds for removal

from office. Removal requires a two-thirds majority vote of the Church Council.

## **SECTION VIII**

### **Auxiliary Organizations**

- A. All monies or material received by the church from an auxiliary become the property of this congregation and its use is at the discretion of the Church Council.
- B. All monies donated by an auxiliary will be noted as income by the Treasurer and its eventual expenditure recorded under the appropriate expense account.
- C. Auxiliaries shall write a report of their work and finances to be published in the Annual Report.

## **SECTION IX**

### **The Role of the Pastor**

- A. St. Paul, in I Corinthians 12:4-7, writes about “varieties of service” and “varieties of workings” but adds that “it is the same God who inspires them all.” One gift, talent, occupation, etc. is no more or no less important in God’s eyes. It is the faith one brings to it that matters. Martin Luther agreed and addressed these “workings” as “vocations.” The only vocation that receives special comment is not the “Office” of the Pastor but the unique functions performed therein.

"Our churches teach that nobody should preach publicly in the church or administer the sacraments unless he is regularly called."

**The Augsburg Confession,  
XIV, “Ecclesiastical Order”**

This, however, does not preclude trained laity from preaching or administering the sacraments when the Pastor is unavailable. The common

good of the congregation is thus served in an orderly fashion.

- B.** This congregation recognizes and supports the unique role of the Pastor as leader of the church body.
- C.** The role of pastor, by virtue of the “call,” is to express their gifts in ways that promote the witness of salvation in the person of Jesus Christ within the community of faith issuing the call, and the community at-large.
- D.** This “witness” or ministry encompasses a broad spectrum of duties. Some are spiritual in nature while others may appear mundane. The combining of all aspects of ministry and the latitude to act with good judgment as situations arise, allows the freedom necessary for the Pastor to fulfill the pastoral role effectively without undo restraint.
- E.** This “witness” (ministry) is also accomplished through open, free and frequent communication between the Pastor, Church Council, and membership at-large. This sharing of ideas and consensus building is crucial for planning the many and varied programs of the church. Just as important is the establishment of healthy cooperation, sense of belonging, and mutual creativity and support which is so vital to our ministry.

## **SECTION X**

### **Annual Reports**

- A.** The Pastor, President, Standing Committees Chairpersons, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, and Auxiliary organizations of the church shall submit a year-end report to the *office secretary*, or other designee, at least two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting for the purpose of assembling the Annual Report.

## **SECTION XI**

### **Ministerial Records**

- A.** The Pastor will be responsible for keeping an accurate record of ministerial acts and posting them in the appropriate book. Upon leaving the pastorate,

all records must be brought up-to-date prior to departure.

## **SECTION XII**

### **Sexual Misconduct and/or Sexual Molestation**

- A.** Background and reference checks will be required of all employees, clergy and ministerial staff, and all volunteers who are involved in any way in the care, supervision, and/or teaching of minors including providing social services or counseling. This includes volunteers involved in nursery, day care, school, athletic, recreational and/or overnight activities, and mentorship of minors. This background check must be accomplished through an approved investigative agency as long as Mutual of Enumclaw is the company providing coverage.
- B.** A minimum three (3) months waiting period is required before new church members are allowed to volunteer/interact with minors.
- C.** If a background check reveals a prior sexual misconduct related offense, that person will be permanently ineligible to be involved in all services noted in paragraph (A) above.
- D.** No minor should be alone with one adult on the church's premises, or in any sponsored activity, unless in a counseling situation.

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