

BYLAWS

Adopted: March 23, 2003

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of The Good Shepherd of Turlock

ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP

A. Baptized Members:

Baptized members are all who have been baptized in the Name of the Triune God with water and are under the Congregation's Pastoral care.

B. Communicant Members:

Communicant members are those who:

1. Have been baptized in the name of the Triune God.
2. Have declared their personal faith, by public confirmation, in Jesus Christ as Savior and in the Confessions given in Article II of the Constitution.
3. Have been accepted as communicant members and remain faithful to the responsibilities of said membership.
4. Lead a Christian life.

C. Membership by Association

1. Members, who are no longer active in the Word and Sacrament ministry life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, may be an associate of the Congregation. At the discretion of the Elders such members may be placed in that status when the person:
 - a. Has not attended any worship service at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in two years.
 - b. Is not a member of any other congregation.
 - c. Has expressed a desire to remain associated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd.
 - d. Has an active member who will commit to being responsible for keeping contact with him/her.
 - e. This classification would exclude any out-of-town college student or shut-in.

2. An associate member would:
 - a. Be kept on the mailing list.
 - b. Be included in membership directories.
 - c. Not be given contribution envelopes, unless requested.
 - d. Not be counted as a member in any report given to Synod or District.
 - e. Be integrated back as a communicant member when/if the person moves back into the area or begins to attend the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd again.

D. Membership Process

1. Applicants for communicant membership shall consult with the Pastor who shall determine whether such applicants are eligible for membership in accordance with Article I, Section B, of the By-laws. Applicants not familiar with the doctrines and confessions of the Lutheran Church shall be required to attend a course of instruction, and to make profession of their faith either before the Congregation or, at the Pastor's discretion, before witnesses who are members of the Elders, prior to being received as members.
2. Applicants from synods of the Lutheran Church other than the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) shall consult with the Pastor about their doctrinal beliefs in relation to the Congregation's confessional stance in accordance with Article II of the Constitution. After such consultation and/or instruction they shall publicly affirm their faith.
3. A letter of transfer from other LCMS churches or those in fellowship with the LCMS, establishes eligibility for membership.
4. After applicants have given satisfactory evidence of their eligibility, their admission as communicant members shall be recommended by the Pastor to the Elders which shall have the authority to act upon such applications on behalf of the voting membership. The roster of new members shall be publicized in the various news media of the Congregation.

E. Privileges and Duties of Baptized and Communicant Members

1. Grow in the Christian faith and life through faithful use of the means of grace, searching the Scriptures at home and in fellowship with other members of the Congregation and its agencies, and partaking of the Lord's Supper frequently, after having become a communicant member.
2. Live a morally decent life before God and man, abstaining from open works of the flesh (Gal. 5:18-21), and so conducting themselves at all times to bring credit rather than blame upon the Church of Jesus Christ.

3. Provide for proper Christian training of their children by instruction at home and through the agencies of the church.
4. Contribute joyfully according to ability toward the support of the Congregation and all its responsibilities (1 Cor. 16:2; Mark 16:15; 1 Cor. 9:14).
5. Place their God-given talents and abilities at the disposal of the Pastor(s), the officers, and other agencies of the Congregation as set forth in its Constitution and Bylaws, so that the purposes and functions of the Congregation may be effectively implemented.
6. Vote at all congregational voting assemblies, by communicant members who are 18 years of age or older.

F. Membership Changes

1. Transfer of Communicant Members

A member desiring transfer to another LCMS Congregation shall apply to the Pastor. Upon approval by the Pastor and the Elders, the Pastor shall issue a letter of transfer. The Elders shall report all transfers to the Congregation via church publications and to the Congregational Voting Assembly at the next regular meeting of that body.

2. Joining other Churches

In cases where members of this Congregation have joined a non-Lutheran congregation, or a Lutheran congregation not in fellowship with LCMS, they shall, upon the decision of the Pastor(s) and the Elders, on behalf of the Congregation, be released from membership in this Congregation, forfeiting all rights and privileges of such membership. Their name(s) shall be removed from the membership list of the Congregation.

3. Members Whereabouts Unknown

The names of members whose whereabouts are unknown and cannot be established within a period of one year shall be removed from the membership list of the Congregation. Such membership is terminated and shall be reported as such to the next regular meeting of the Congregational Voting Assembly by the Elders.

G. Church Discipline

All discipline in this Congregation shall be administered in accordance with the order of discipline laid down in Matthew 18:15-20, I Corinthians 5:1-5, and other related New Testament passages. The following procedures shall be followed under the direction of the Pastor(s), Elders, and the Church Council.

1. Excommunication & Self-exclusion

- a. When a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd becomes inactive in his/her worship attendance and participation in Holy Communion, the Pastor and the Elders will visit the individual in order to discover the reason(s) for such inactivity. The purpose of such visits, using Matthew 18 as a guide, will be to help restore the individual to the functioning body of the church.
- b. It shall always be the intent and purpose of the church to restore individuals who are in danger of self-exclusion or excommunication, per living in an unchristian manner (I Cor. 5-7; 8:1; 2:1; and 14:40), to motivate them through love and the Gospel of forgiveness.
- c. A communicant member who conducts himself/herself in an unchristian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20. If the person remains impenitent after proper admonition, he/she shall be excommunicated. Each case shall be presented individually to the Congregational Voting Assembly for action. A two-thirds majority vote by written ballot at a Congregational Voting Assembly shall be required for excommunication. If such member deliberately absents himself/herself from the meeting at which the case is discussed, or in some other manner makes it impossible to deal with him/her, he/she shall be regarded as having excluded himself/herself from the membership of this Congregation.

2. Unchristian Organizations

Members may not hold membership in an unchristian organization or any organization whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God.

ARTICLE II. MEETINGS OF CONGREGATION

A. Regular Meetings:

In order to administer Congregational affairs, the Church Council shall meet at least quarterly. At least one annual Congregational Voting Assembly is required near the end of the fiscal year.

1. Announcement of Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the Congregational Voting Assembly shall be published in the weekly newsletter one month prior to the meeting.

2. Quorum

In matters of Christian doctrine a quorum consists of one-third of the voting communicant members. In matters not explicitly covered by the Word of God, the majority of the voters present shall rule.

3. Voting

Voting on sensitive issues, or other specific issues requested by a member, will be by written ballot.

B. Special Meetings:

Special meetings may be called by the Pastor(s), the President, the Church Council, or by 15 members of the Congregation. In each case the time, place, and purpose of special meetings must be announced to the Congregation either in person or by writing.

The quorum requirements for special meetings are the same as that for regular meetings.

ARTICLE III. OFFICERS, ELDERS AND CHURCH COUNCIL

A. Elected Officers

The elected officers of the Congregation shall be a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

1. Duties of Officers

a. President

- 1) Preside at all meetings of the Congregational Voting Assembly and call and preside over meetings of the Church Council.
- 2) To the best of his ability, enforce the Constitution and Bylaws of the Congregation and carry out the expressed will of the Congregation as embodied in the resolutions of the Voting Membership and sign all legal documents on behalf of the Congregation.

- 3) With the approval of the Church Council, appoint members of Policy Advisory and Ad Hoc committees as established by the Congregational Voting Assembly or the Church Council.
- 4) At the direction of the Church Council, call special meetings of the Congregational Voting Assembly. Be an ex-officio member of all committees, groups, etc., in the Congregation and shall be welcome at all their meeting either in person or represented by such person(s) he may appoint.

b. Vice-President

- 1) The Vice President shall act for and in the stead of the President in his absence.
- 2) The Vice President shall be available for whatever duties the President may assign.

c. Secretary

- 1) The Secretary shall be present at all congregational voting assemblies and at all meetings of the Church Council and shall enter the minutes of all meetings of said groups in a permanent record book over his/her signature.
- 2) The Secretary shall conduct all official correspondence of the Congregation and, under the supervision of the President or authorized individuals execute all legal documents.

d. Treasurer

- 1) The Treasurer shall be responsible for accurate recording of congregational receipts and disbursements and budgeted and actual expenditures per proper accounting procedures and shall suggest for congregational consideration improvements for keeping financial records.
- 2) The Treasurer shall present a written financial report at the annual Congregational Voting Assembly and a financial report at the Church Council meetings.
- 3) The Treasurer shall be responsible for monthly remission of offerings for missions and church agencies and for prompt payment of salaries and bills authorized by the Congregation or the Church Council.
- 4) The Treasurer shall be responsible for obtaining and renewing all types of insurance for the church staff, church property, church equipment, and motorized vehicles.

B. Elders

The number of Elders shall be determined by dividing the number of church family units annually by 25. The minimum number of Elders shall be five.

C. The Church Council

1. Purpose

- a. The Church Council shall conduct and perform the acts and affairs of the Congregation between meetings of the Congregational Voting Assembly.
- b. The members shall not be leaders of any other ministry team.

2. Membership

- a. The four officers of the Congregation (President, Vice-President, Secretary, and the Treasurer).
- b. One Elder.
- c. Four members-at-large elected by the Congregation (or appointed to fill vacancies as provided in the Bylaws)
- d. The Senior Pastor.

3. Terms of Office

- a. The terms of office for elected officers, Elders, and Church Council members shall be two years. The terms of office shall be staggered so that one-half of all Church Council members shall be newly elected each year.
- b. In the event of a vacancy in the office of President, the Vice-President shall succeed to the office of the President for the remainder of the term and the Church Council may appoint a Vice-President for the remainder of the term. In the event of any other vacancy, the Church Council may appoint a replacement for the remainder of the term.

4. Duties

- a. Be responsible for establishing policies necessary to direct the overall program of the Congregation for the furtherance of Christ's Kingdom in our midst.
- b. Maintain the financial integrity of the Congregation.
- c. Encourage the Ministry Staff in their work through prayer, word and action and provide for the spiritual and physical health and welfare of the Ministry Staff and their families.

- d. Authorize the Ministry Staff to administer the day-to-day operations of the Congregation in accordance with its own policies and directives and those established by the Congregation through its Congregational Voting Assembly.
- e. Direct the calling of special meetings of the Congregational Voting Assembly as requested by the Pastor(s) or voting members.
- f. Be responsible for the receiving of and acting upon, if necessary, feedback and/or complaints from members of the Congregation regarding aspects of its operations.
- g. Establish appropriate Policy Advisory and Ad Hoc committees and approve the appointment of members.

5. Meetings

The Church Council shall meet at least quarterly at a time and place determined by the congregational President. The Senior Pastor or President may call special meetings of the Church Council by informing members of the time and place of such meetings at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance. A Quorum consists of five members.

6. Voting

All Church Council action requires a verbal and/or written motion and a simple majority vote.

7. Expenditures

The Church Council has expenditure power of up to \$1,000.00 for unbudgeted expenditures without reporting to the Congregation. Expenditures from \$1000.00 to \$5000.00 must be reported to the Congregation for information. The Church Council can make no expenditure commitments above \$5000.00 without Congregational Voting Assembly approval.

8. Employees

The Pastor, in consultation with the President, shall exercise authority to employ and discharge all employees of the Congregation other than professional church workers.

D. Restrictions on Holding any Elected Office

1. Candidates for President, Vice-President, and the Elders must be men who have attained the age of 21 years.
2. No person shall hold two elected positions concurrently, be a paid employee, or be married to a called worker of the church.
3. Church officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer) Church Council Members or Elders may serve two consecutive terms.
4. He or she may be nominated to the office after a period of one year. This does not restrict them from holding another elected position in the following term.
5. Elected individuals must be voting, communicant members.

ARTICLE IV. NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS, ELDERS, AND CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS

A. Nomination Committee

A nominating committee appointed by the President and approved by the Church Council shall present a slate of candidates for elected officers, Elders, and Church Council members at the annual meeting of the Congregational Voting Assembly. The slate proposed by the nominating committee shall consist of one or more names for each office, which will be distributed to the Congregation prior to the meeting. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.

B. Voting

In the case where more than one candidate is nominated for an office, a written ballot shall be used and those receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected. There shall be no voting by proxy.

ARTICLE V. OFFICE OF CALLED WORKER

A. Vesting of Call Process:

The right of calling or contracting for pastors, or other professional church workers shall be vested in the Congregational Voting Assembly.

B. CALL PROCESS

The Church Council shall appoint a call committee to include the officers of the congregation, the Senior Pastor and/or representation from staff, and at least five other communicant members. The District President shall be contacted for a list of Pastoral or other candidates depending on the vacant position. Members of the congregation may also make nominations. The candidate selected for a call by the committee shall be submitted to the congregation for vote, and that person's selection shall require affirmation by a three-quarter majority vote of voting members present at a Congregational Voting Assembly.

C. REMOVAL OF PASTOR AND OTHER CALLED WORKERS

1. The members may remove the Pastor at any regular or special congregational meeting for the following reasons: teaching false doctrine; leading an immoral life; or is not fulfilling his duties as Pastor. Such removal shall require a three-quarter-majority vote of voting members present.
2. The removal process shall be initiated through an action of the Church Council or a petition signed by ten percent of the communicant membership.
3. The Church Council shall have the power to remove any other Called Worker, for the same causes as stated in number 1 of this section, by a three-quarter-majority vote of the Church Council.

ARTICLE VI. AMMENDMENT PROCESS

Amendments to the Bylaws shall be made in writing at least two months prior to a vote on the amendment. They shall be announced and distributed to the congregation. They will be presented to a Congregational Voting Assembly one month prior to action. A two-thirds vote of the quorum is necessary for passage. Upon adoption, the amendment(s) shall be submitted to the California-Nevada-Hawaii District, LCMS Committee on Constitutional Matters for approval.