

**BYLAWS OF  
CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH  
A member congregation of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

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## Chapter 1

## COMMUNION PARTICIPATION

B1.01 ~~This congregation invites all of its members who have been prepared to receive the Sacrament to participate regularly in Holy Communion.~~ **This congregation welcomes all those who are baptized, and trust that our Lord, Jesus Christ is present to us in the breaking of bread and sharing of the cup to share in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Any person who has had the sacrament of the altar withheld for disciplinary reasons is asked to reconcile with the congregation involved. If reconciliation is impossible, the person may receive welcome to the table after conversation with a pastor of this congregation.**

**B1.02 The age for first communion is guided by “The Use of the Means of Grace” adopted by the ELCA in 1997. Specifically: “There is no command from our Lord regarding the age at which people should be baptized or first communed. Our practice is defined by Christ’s command (“Do this”), Christ’s twin promises of his presence for us and for our need, and the importance of good order in the Church. In all communion practices congregations strive to avoid both reducing the Lord’s Supper to an act effective by its mere performance without faith and narrowing faith to intellectual understanding of Christ’s presence and gifts. Congregations continually check their own practices and statements against these biblical and confessional guides.” (Background 38B) “Baptized children begin to commune on a regular basis at a time determined through mutual conversation that includes the pastor, the child, and the parents or sponsors involved, within the accepted practices of the congregation. Ordinarily this beginning will occur only when children can eat and drink, and can start to respond to the gift of Christ in the Supper. (Application 37C). Additionally, “participation in Holy Communion is accompanied by catechesis appropriate to the age of the communicant. When infants and young children are communed, the parents and sponsors receive instruction and the children are taught throughout their development. (Application 37E).” “Catechesis, continuing throughout the life of the believer,**

**emphasizes the sacrament as gift, given to faith by and for participation in the community. Such faith is not simply knowledge or intellectual understanding but trust in God's promises given in the Lord's Supper ("for you" and "for the forgiveness of sin") for the support of the baptized." Background 37F**

- ~~B1.02 — It shall be made known to prospective participants that the belief of this congregation in regard to Holy Communion is:~~
- ~~— Participation in the Lord's Supper is the reception of "the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, given with bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself for us to eat and drink.....We hold that a person is well prepared and worthy, who believes these words, given and shed for you for the remission of sins. But anyone who does not believe these words, or doubts them is neither prepared or worthy, for the words 'for you' require simply a believing heart." (Luther's Small Catechism-Part 5)~~

## Chapter 2

### THE ANNUAL MEETING

- B2.01 The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held no later than the final Sunday in January.
- B2.02 The pastor(s), the ministerial staff, the officers, the Congregation Council, the Audit Committee, the Nominating Committee, and the Mutual Ministry Committee shall make report in writing at the annual meeting. Reports are due at a time to be assigned by the Congregation Council.
- B2.03 It is the duty and privilege of all voting members to participate in congregational meeting. However, when deciding on property issues or the borrowing or lending of money, only those members who have attained the age of 18 years may participate in the vote.
- B2.04 The fiscal year of this congregation shall be from January 1 through December 31.

## Chapter 3

### OFFICERS AND CONGREGATION COUNCIL

**B.3.01 Elected and appointed leaders of the congregation will be guided by faith as expressed in the Confession of Faith in the constitution. In addition, the mission, vision, and values of the congregation will provide discipline and guidance for all we do. Leaders will be called upon to reflect this mission, vision, and these values in the role of leader and as a member of the congregation. Leaders will be encouraged to lead by example as the values of the congregation become values for daily living. Members of the Congregation Council are encouraged and expected to:**

- a. Attend worship regularly and participate in at least one Sunday morning ministry.**

- b. Pray for the staff, leaders, and mission of the congregation daily.
- c. Participate in learning opportunities that nurture growth in faith and understanding.
- d. Participate in a small group or fellowship group of the congregation.
- e. Be committed to using their spiritual gifts in the life of the congregation and the world beyond.
- f. Be committed to tithing (giving the first 10%) or working toward tithing as an act of faith and discipleship.
- g. Seek opportunities to invite and provide hospitality to others.]

## B3.04 [2]

The duties of the officers of this congregation are:

- a. President:
  - 1. Preside at council and congregational meetings
  - 2. Serve as liaison with the Northern Illinois Synod in the absence of the Pastor or when conflicts exist between the congregation and pastor
- b. Vice President
  - 1. Shall function as president in the absence of the president.
  - 2. **[Shall be responsible for the Council's regular review of membership in cooperation with the pastor charged with administrative duties and Parish Administrator.]**
- c. Secretary:
  - 1. Keep the minutes of council and congregational meetings.
  - 2. Maintain congregational archives.
- d. Treasurer
  - 1. To have custody of all funds of this congregation and of all organizations of this congregation, unless a congregationally approved office has been enacted.
  - 2. To receive and disburse such funds in accordance with the decision of this congregation and council.
  - 3. To work with the Financial Secretary to ensure accurate and complete records of all contributions.
  - 4. To be responsible for the preparation of a budget for action by this congregation at the annual meeting.

## B3.02 [3]

~~In addition to those duties and responsibilities described in \*C12 of the Constitution, the Congregation Council shall:~~

- ~~a. Receive a monthly report from the Pastor, Treasurer, and the Executive Officers of the church.~~
- ~~b. Secure bonding for all persons who have access to the funds of this congregation.~~
- ~~c. Provide policy and guidelines on the use of the church building.~~

**[The congregation shall elect members to lead teams that correspond to the values stated by the congregation. Each team leader shall be a member of the Council. In addition, a youth representative shall be elected to the council.]**

**[ B3.04 The work of all committees, task forces, organizational groups, ministry teams, and individuals shall be guided by the mission, vision, and values of the congregation. The Congregation Council shall be informed as to the work of all and may provide direction, correction, guidance, evaluation as necessary]**

#### Chapter 4

##### PARISH RECORDS

- B4.01 The records of this congregation shall be and shall remain the property of the congregation.
- B4.02 The pastor **[charged with primary administrative responsibilities]** shall be responsible for the maintenance of the records except as otherwise noted. The pastor shall have all records brought up to date upon termination of service to this congregation.
- B4.03 The records of this congregation shall consist of:
- a. Roster rolls of baptized, confirmed, and voting members.
  - b. Ministerial acts of the pastor(s).
  - c. Minutes of congregational council meetings
  - d. Financial records of this congregation.

#### Chapter 5

##### MEMBERSHIP

- B5.01 It shall be the responsibility of the Congregation Council **[in cooperation with the pastor charged with primary administrative responsibilities and/or Parish Administrator]** to assess, on an annual basis, the activity of all Members and to determine whether any changes in membership status or removal from the rolls is necessary.

**[B5.02 Membership is rooted in the on-going, regular participation of a person in the worshipping congregation. Membership does not impart rights or privileges, but instead centers on various levels of activity, commitment and responsibility within this congregation. Members of this congregation in the broadest sense shall be those persons who have established a worshipping relationship with the congregation, made themselves known to the congregation, and for whom the congregation provides an on-going ministry of hospitality and invitation into a deeper relationship with the people of the congregation and their Lord, Jesus Christ.]**

**[B5.03 Friends of the congregation are those persons who bless us with their presence, support, prayers, and for whom this congregation expresses appreciation and care, and who do not claim this congregation as their primary place of worship.]**

**[B5.04 Affiliate Members are those persons who worship with the congregation at least quarterly, and who have made themselves known to the congregation so that communication can be established, and for whom this congregation is their primary place of worship. Affiliate members are encouraged and invited to participate in the life**

of the congregation and to grow in faith and discipleship. Affiliate members will not be accounted for on the statistical rolls of the congregation. Affiliate members are welcome to participate in all programs and ministries of the congregation. They may not serve as officers or in other leadership positions and do not have a vote at congregational meetings.]

[B5.05 Confirmed Members demonstrate consistent growth and commitment in their regular patterns of worship, service, giving, learning, and fellowship. Confirmed members who have not worshipped and made a contribution of record in the last calendar quarter may be considered to be Affiliate Members at the recommendation of the Executive Committee.]

[B5.06 Inactive Members are those persons who have not worshipped and made a contribution of record to the congregation in the prior six months. Inactive members are no longer considered to be confirmed and/or voting members of the congregation, but are considered to be Affiliate Members. The Congregation Council may grant exceptions to those persons who for reasons of health or vocation cannot attend and/or contribute in the time period prescribed. After a period designated in the bylaws an Inactive Member, may be removed from the records, but remain a person welcome and invited to be part of the congregation's life.]

B.5.07 Inactive Members who have not worshipped and made a contribution of record to the congregation in the prior twelve months will be removed from the rolls.

B.5.08 An Inactive Member who attends worship and makes a contribution to the congregation will be re-activated and considered an Affiliate or Baptized Member of the congregation based on the recommendation of the Executive Committee.]

## [Chapter 6 MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

B6.01 The mission statement of the congregation shall be: Making Christ Known.

B6.02 The leadership and staff of the congregation shall continually work to articulate the vision that guides the congregation in mission. The Council will approve Vision Statements clarify the mission and work to communicate said vision.

B6.03 The Values of the congregation may be changed by following procedures to amend the bylaws as a means of building consensus. The stated values of the congregation which give shape to and inform the execution of our mission are:

- ❖ Hospitality/Invitation
- ❖ Worship
- ❖ Learning

- ❖ Prayer
- ❖ Fellowship
- ❖ Service
- ❖ Generosity]

**B6.04**      **The Core Beliefs of the congregation shall be:**

- ❖ Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior of the Word.
- ❖ Christ comes to us in God's Word, water, wine & bread.
- ❖ We are welcomed, accepted, and saved by grace.
- ❖ We know Christ by knowing the people of Christ.
- ❖ Christ changes and challenges us.
- ❖ Every member is a minister.

**[Chapter 7**

**MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND**

**B7.01**      **In accordance with C13.06 and C13.07 of the congregation's constitution, a Mission Endowment Committee (hereafter called "Committee") consisting of seven members, all of whom shall be voting members of Christ Lutheran Church shall be elected at the Congregation's annual meeting. Except as herein limited, the term of each member shall be three (3) years. Upon adoption of this resolution by the congregation, it shall elect five (5) members to the Committee: two (2) for a term of three (3) years; two (2) for a term of two (2) years and one (1) for a term of one (1) years. Thereafter, at each annual meeting, the congregation shall elect the necessary number for a term of three (3) years. No member shall serve more than two consecutive three (3) year terms. After a lapse of one (1) years, former Committee members may be re-elected. The pastor and the President of the Congregation Council shall be members of the Committee. The Nominating Committee shall nominate members of the Committee. The Committee shall report at the annual congregational meeting in the same manner as for other offices and committees. In the event of a vacancy on Committee, the Congregation Council shall appoint a member to fill the vacancy until the next annual meeting of the congregation, at which time the congregation shall elect a member to fulfill the term of the vacancy. The purpose of the Committee shall be to implement the guidelines of the Mission Endowment Fund.**

**B7.02**      **The Committee shall operate according to the following guidelines:**

- a. Meet at least quarterly, or more frequently as deemed to be in the best interest of the Mission Endowment Fund.
- b. A quorum shall consist of three (4) members. When only three (4) members are present a unanimous vote shall be required to carry any motion or resolution.

- c. The committee shall elect from its membership a Fund Chairperson, Fund Secretary and Fund Treasurer. The chairperson or member designated by the chairperson shall preside at all committee meetings.
- d. The Fund Secretary shall maintain complete and accurate minutes of all meetings and supply a copy to each member of the committee. Each member shall keep a complete copy of minutes to be delivered to his or her successor. The Fund Secretary shall also supply a copy of the minutes to the Congregation Council.
- e. The Fund Treasurer shall work with the congregation's Treasurer in maintaining and coordinating complete and accurate accounts of the Fund and shall sign checks and all other necessary documents on behalf of the congregation in furtherance of the purposes of the Fund. The books shall be audited annually in the same manner as that of other financial records of the congregation and those auditing the records shall not be a member of the Committee.
- f. The Committee shall report on a quarterly basis to the Congregation Council and, at each annual or duly called special meeting of the congregation, shall render a full and complete audited account of the Fund during the preceding year.
- g. The Committee may request other members of the congregation to serve as advisory members and, at the expense of the Fund income, may provide for such professional counseling on investments or legal matters as it deems to be in the best interest of the Fund.
- h. Members of the Committee shall not be liable for any losses which may be incurred upon investments of the assets of the Fund except to the extent such losses shall have been caused by bad faith or gross negligence. No member shall be personally liable as long as he/she acts in good faith and with ordinary prudence. Each member shall be liable only for his/her own willful misconduct or omissions, and shall not be liable for the acts and omissions of any other member. No member shall engage in any self dealing or transactions with the Fund in which the member has direct or indirect financial interest and shall at all times refrain from any conduct in which his/her personal interests would conflict with the interest of the Fund.

B7.03 All assets are to be held in the name of Christ Lutheran Church Mission Endowment Fund.

B7.04 Recommendations to hold, sell, exchange, rent, lease, transfer, convert, invest, reinvest and in all other respects to manage and control the assets of the Fund, including stocks bonds, debentures, mortgages, notes or their securities, as in their judgment and

discretion they deem wise and prudent, are to be made by the Committee for approval by the Church Council with subsequent execution by the designated member of the Committee.

- B7.05** The Committee, in consultation with the Council reserves the right to refuse any gift, especially those that would be difficult to convert to cash, manage without undue burden, would compromise the mission, values, and essential beliefs of the congregation, or are given with unreasonable restrictions or expectations.
- B7.06** Upon the receipt of principal gifts to the fund, one-tenth (10%) of the total gift will be donated to the Mission Endowment Fund of the Northern Illinois Synod. In the event that this fund is no longer exists, or with the unanimous recommendation of the Committee and approval of the Congregation Council, this amount will be given to the ELCA Foundation for the development and re-development of mission congregations.
- B7.07** The Committee will determine how the Fund assets will be invested, including asset allocation. The investment objective will be to provide long-term growth so the annual distribution will keep pace with inflation, i.e. the annual distribution will maintain its purchasing power. In any event, all investments shall be invested by outside investors such as the ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust and/or the ELCA Mission Investment Fund and/or The Lutheran Community Foundation.
- B7.08** There is hereby established for administration by the Mission Endowment Committee a separate fund to be known as the "Memorial Fund". The Memorial Fund will receive donations, gifts and contributions that are designated for specific purposes which have been approved by the Congregation Council. These funds shall not be included in the Mission Endowment Fund or in the general fund of the church. Any funds received as memorials which are undesignated as to purpose, shall be placed in the Mission Endowment Fund. The Memorial Fund shall be administered by the Congregation Council. The Memorial Fund may be used for purposes that have been approved by the council and designated by the donor. The Congregation Council reserves the right to refuse receipt of a designated gift.
- B7.09** To fulfill the purpose of the Mission Endowment Fund, that is, to provide annual distributions beyond the General Operating Budget of the congregation according to the following guidelines:
- a. Distributions from the Fund shall begin when the value of the Fund reaches \$50,000.
  - b. The distribution will be a percentage of the annual value of the Mission Endowment Fund balance, and may include interest and

dividends received, realized gains, and/or unrealized gains. The percentage of the annual value will be determined by the Committee and approved by the Congregation Council, informed by such matters as investment income over the past three to five years.

- c. Disbursement of income from the Fund shall normally occur annually by the end of the first fiscal; quarter. Distribution need not occur annually in the event causes and programs have not been approved by the Committee sufficient to utilize the distribution amount available, or if in the judgment of the Committee total annual distribution is not recommended.

**B7.10 Distributions shall be made to support mission and ministry according to the following guidelines:**

- a. Up to 40% to establish and support programs beyond the congregation's ministries which make Christ known in the community and world. Priority will be given to programs that accomplish one or more of the following: 1) Support the advancement of the mission of the church; 2) Promote health and wholeness in the name of Christ; 3) Equip and Empower leadership development in the church.
- b. Up to 40% to further partnerships in mission through the Synodical, Regional and Churchwide expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- c. Up to 40% to provide scholarships for persons who show potential to develop as leaders of Christ's church, giving priority to members of the congregation. Priority will also be given to programs and places of study in the following order: 1) Seminary or professional training for rostered leaders or those pursuing rostered status; 2) Undergraduate or graduate studies that will lead to church vocations; 3) Undergraduate studies at a college of the ELCA; 4) Members who demonstrate leadership potential who are pursuing a degree.

**B7.11 Programs for support shall be recommended by the Committee and approved by the Congregation Council.**

**B7.12 When, in the opinion of the Committee circumstances are so dire and of such an emergency nature that the future of the congregation is at stake, and the only recourse seems to be the use of the Fund, the Committee may, with a unanimous vote, recommend such authorizing action to the Congregation Council. The Council must recommend the action to the congregation with a three-quarters plurality. The congregation, in special meeting, may then follow the recommendation of the Committee and Council with a plurality of three-quarters of the votes. Un-disbursed income in the Fund shall be used before any liquidation of principal in this instance.**

- B7.13** To encourage gifts to the Fund, the Committee may use the services of the ELCA Foundation Regional Gift Planner in assisting members with the best way to include the Fund in their current giving and estate planning.
- B7.14** In the event Christ Lutheran Church ceases to exist, either through merger or dissolution, disposition or transfer of the Fund shall be at the discretion of the Congregation Council in conformity with the approved congregational constitution and in consultation with the Bishop of the Northern Illinois Synod. Consultation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be desirable for continuation of Mission Endowment Fund obligations.
- B7.15** Any gifts given to the Mission Endowment Fund, as well as all income derived therefrom, shall be used exclusively for religious, charitable and educational purposes in conformity with Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law. This Mission Endowment Fund is created and shall be operated exclusively for church purposes. No part of the income or property of this Fund shall inure to the benefit of or be distributed to any member, director or office of the church or to any other private person, except that the Mission Endowment Fund Committee is authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth herein. No part of the activities of the Mission Endowment Fund shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and it shall not participate in or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of this document, the Mission Endowment Fund shall (a) not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by any entity exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law or (b) do any act which would render contributions to the Mission Endowment Fund non-deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law.]