

BYLAWS

Of

First Evangelical Lutheran Church

Wolf Point, Montana

Part I - COMMUNION PARTICIPATION

(Cf. Article II of Constitution)

Chapter 4

Statement of Purpose

C4.03.01

1. Participation in ~~Jesus welcomes us to the sacrament of~~ Holy Communion. ~~Holy Communion is a gift from God and shall be open to all who wish to receive it regardless of age.~~ ~~is open to baptized members of this congregation who have received communion instruction and to individual members of other congregations who accept the Lutheran teaching regarding Holy Communion as set forth in Paragraph 2.~~

C4.03.02

2. ~~Holy Communion requires~~ ~~We as Lutheran Christians believe that the Holy Spirit through Holy Communion will move us to~~ sincere repentance, faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, and an earnest desire to amend our ~~one's~~ sinful ways. ~~life,~~ as well as acceptance of ~~We also accept~~ the scriptural teaching of the Real Presence of Christ with his body and blood in the Sacrament. ~~Such registration forms or oral announcements shall be used as will make prospective participants aware of these requirements.~~
3. ~~Record of participation in Holy Communion shall be maintained. If a member of another congregation communes, notice shall be sent to his pastor.~~

Part II - CONFLICTING LOYALTIES

(Cf. Article II of the Constitution and Article V of the Minneapolis Theses as quoted in the United

Testimony on Faith and Life)

Contained in Chapter 14 – Organizations Within the Congregation

- ~~1. While the buildings of the congregation shall be open to all people to share in its worship, instruction, pastoral care, and fellowship, the congregation rejects all fellowship with organizations, secret or open, which are avowedly religious or which practice forms of religion without confessing faith in the Triune God and in Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God incarnate to be our only Savior from sin, and which thus teach salvation by works.~~
- ~~2. Ceremonies of lodges or other such organizations shall not be permitted in the buildings or premises of the congregation; nor shall its pastor(s) or lay assistant(s) take part in any such ceremonies wherever they are conducted.~~

Part III – MEMBERSHIP

(Cf. Article VI of Constitution)

Contained in Chapter 8 of Constitution - Membership

A. BAPTIZED MEMBERS

- ~~1. A child, one or both of whose parents or guardians are members of the congregation shall, upon receiving Baptism, become a baptized member.~~
- ~~2. A child, neither of whose parents or guardians is a member of the congregation, shall upon receiving Baptism, become a baptized member of the congregation; unless for good reason he is to be a baptized member of another congregation, in which case his membership shall be transferred to that congregation.~~
- ~~3. A child baptized in another congregation shall be received as a baptized member in the congregation when a transfer has been received.~~
- ~~4. An unbaptized adult who has received instruction and has given evidence of an adequate understanding and acceptance of the teaching of the Word of God as confessed by the Lutheran Church, shall, upon confession of faith and Baptism, become a baptized member of the congregation.~~

B. CONFIRMED MEMBERS

- ~~1. A baptized adult, not previously a confirmed member of a Lutheran congregation, shall become a confirmed member of the congregation through the rite of confirmation after having received instruction and having given evidence of adequate understanding of the teachings of the Word of God as confessed by the Lutheran Church.~~
- ~~2. A baptized member of the congregation shall become a confirmed member through the Rite of Confirmation except that an adult who has become a baptized member in accordance with the provisions of Section A, 4 of this part of the bylaws shall be considered a confirmed member without participation in the Rite of Confirmation.~~
- ~~3. An applicant for membership who presents a Letter of Transfer which certifies that he is a confirmed member in good standing of a Lutheran congregation shall become a confirmed member of the congregation upon approval by the Church Council. The acceptance of the applicant shall be reported to the congregation.~~
- ~~4. An applicant for membership who presents evidence of confirmation in a Lutheran congregation but does not have a Letter of Transfer shall be admitted to confirmed membership when the Church Council has determined that he meets the standards of Christian faith and life indicated in the constitution and bylaws and when he has reaffirmed his faith before the congregation.~~

~~C. VOTING MEMBERS~~

~~The Church Council shall determine the roster of voting members of the congregation in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and the bylaws. The term "in good standing" shall be defined to include all of the following:~~

- ~~1. those members who are confirmed~~
- ~~2. Those who partake of Holy Communion~~
- ~~3. those who contribute to the congregation treasury according to the congregation's record~~
- ~~4. those who participate in the life and worship of the congregation~~

~~D. DISCONTINUANCE OF MEMBERSHIP~~

- ~~1. The congregation shall, in the event of the removal of a member from the community it serves, encourage the member to request a transfer to a Lutheran congregation, which can serve him effectively. Should the member fail to request a transfer, a Lutheran congregation in the community of his residence shall be notified.~~
- ~~2. A confirmed member in good standing desiring to change his membership to another Lutheran congregation shall, upon request, receive a Letter of Transfer.~~
- ~~3. A confirmed member who does not, for a period of one year, partake of Holy Communion, support the church with his offerings, and does not appear to desire to participate in the life and worship of the congregation shall be visited by the pastor and the congregation's officers and encouraged by them to active membership. If, during the second year, the confirmed member does not actively participate, his name shall be removed from the membership roster of the congregation but be retained on a responsibility list as one who is in special need of the congregation's prayer and concern.~~
- ~~4. A child, neither of whose parents or guardians is a member of the congregation, may be removed from the roster of baptized members if he fails to participate in the life and the worship of the congregation.~~

~~E. DISCIPLINE (Cf. Article VII of Constitution)~~

Contained in Chapter 15 of Constitution – Discipline of Members and Adjudication

~~In exercising discipline as provided in the constitution, the following shall be the procedure:~~

- ~~1. A person, who is requested to appear before the Church Council for possible discipline, shall be advised in writing no less than ten days prior to the hearing. The written notice shall include the time and place of the hearing and shall specify the exact reason for the possible discipline. If a person fails to appear at the time and place without valid excuse, the Church Council may proceed with the hearing and may reach its conclusion in his absence.~~
- ~~2. Should the person be found guilty by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Church Council, the Council shall impose one of the following:~~
 - ~~(a) censure before the Church Council or the congregation~~

- ~~(b) suspension from membership until proof is given of sufficient repentance and amendment~~
- ~~(c) Exclusion from membership and denial of the Sacraments.~~
- ~~3. In the event of the impression of (b) or (c) above, the action of the Church Council shall be in writing,~~
- ~~4. The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Congregation Council shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Synod Council. Such right may not be abridged and the decision of the Synod Council shall be final~~

~~Part IV - THE PASTOR~~

~~(Cf. Article IX of the Constitution)~~

Chapter 9

Rostered Minister

C9.01.01

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 ELCA. It shall be signed by the chairperson and the secretary of the meeting at which the Call was voted, and shall be attested by the signature of the bishop of the synod. A Call to a member of the clergy to be an assistant pastor shall be issued only with the concurrence of the pastor of the congregation and in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph.

C9.01.02

2. The Call shall normally be for an indefinite time. A Call issued to an assistant pastor may be for a definite time.

C9.05.01

3. If a pastor receives a Call to another ministry, the pastor shall consult the church council, or, if desired, the congregation before reaching a decision. The pastor shall announce the decision as quickly as possible, normally within three weeks, and shall notify the synod bishop of the decision. When a Call has been accepted, the pastor shall terminate his or her ministry as soon as feasible, normally within one month.

~~Part V - MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION~~

~~(Cf. Article X and Amendment One of Constitution)~~

Chapter 10

Congregational Meeting

C10.01.01

4. The choice of date of the annual meeting, and announcement of the time and place of the annual meeting of the congregation shall be made at two public services immediately preceding the meeting, said services to be a least a week apart; and in such publications as the congregation or the pastor may periodically issue, or by written notice to the voting members mailed not less than ten days in advance of the meeting.

C10.01.02

2. The current rosters of voting, confirmed, and baptized members shall be available at each meeting of the congregation.

C10.01.03

3. The annual meeting shall receive reports from all the organizations of the congregation. Such reports, including a financial statement, shall be submitted in writing to the pastor not less than ten (10) days before such meeting.

C10.01.04

4. The annual meeting of the congregation shall elect a nominating committee of five members. The pastor shall serve as convener and as an advisory member. The term of office of the members of the nominating committee shall be one year.

The nominating committee shall nominate one or more candidates for each office to be filled and shall secure the consent of each candidate.

The list of nominees shall be announced to the congregation in conjunction with the announcements of the meeting of the congregation at which the elections are to take place.

In addition to the candidates submitted by the nominating committee, additional nominations may be made from the floor.

The Church Council shall fill vacancies on the nominating committee.

C10.01.05

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

(Cf. Article XI of Constitution)

Contained in Chapter 12 – Congregational Council

A. MEMBERSHIP AND MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

In addition to the provisions of the constitution, the following shall govern membership on the Church Council and the conduct of its meetings:

1. Only a voting member of the congregation shall be eligible for membership on the Church Council.
2. If a vacancy occurs on the Church Council, the Council shall fill the vacancy until the next meeting of the congregation. Should the unexpired term be one year or less it shall not be considered in determining eligibility for succession.
3. A member of the Church Council who is absent from two consecutive regular meetings shall be consulted by the president of the congregation; if he is absent from three consecutive regular meetings without valid excuse, the Council may declare the office vacant.
4. A quorum for any regular or special meeting of the Church Council shall be one-half of its membership.
5. A special meeting may be called by the pastor, the president, or any three members of the Church Council. Notice of such meeting shall be given not less than five days prior to the meeting and shall be announced at a public service if one is held during that period.

B. COMMITTEES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

Chapter 13

Congregational Committees

C13.06.01

4. The Church Council shall elect from its own membership regular committees on evangelism and worship, on stewardship, on education and youth, and on property, and shall also have authority to appoint such other committees as may from time to time be necessary or advisable.

C13.06.02

2. The Church Council shall have the authority to appoint or elect additional congregational members who are not members of the Council as members of

its regular committees. The Council shall also appoint at least one confirmed, non-voting member (youth) to serve on each regular committee.

C13.06.03

3. The Church Council shall at least once a year invite the full membership of its regular committees together with representatives chosen by the organizations of the congregation to review the entire program of the congregation.

C. ~~DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL~~

Chapter 11

Officers

C11.01.01

4. The president shall preside over meetings of the Church Council and of the congregation unless the meeting decides otherwise.

C11.01.02

2. The vice-president shall preside in the absence of the president, unless the meeting decides otherwise.

C11.01.03

3. The secretary shall keep the minutes of the council and of the congregation and shall preserve its archives.

C11.01.04

4. The treasurer shall be custodian of all funds of the congregation, local and synodical, and shall disburse all such funds in accordance with the decisions of the congregation or the Church Council. He shall present a duly audited report to the annual congregational meeting and such other reports to the Church Council as may be required.

Chapter 13

Congregational Committees

C13.07.01

5. The committee on evangelism and worship shall have special responsibility under the supervision of the pastor in the development of a sound program of evangelism, in matters pertaining to the congregation's worship and in the general spiritual care of the congregation, and shall make recommendations thereon to the Church Council.

C13.07.02

6. The committee on stewardship shall have special responsibility under the supervision of the pastor for the congregation's development in accordance with scriptural principles of stewardship and for the raising of funds, and for

the management of funds, and for the preparation of the congregational budget, and shall make recommendations thereon to the Church Council.

C13.07.03

7. The committee on education and youth shall have special responsibility under the supervision of the pastor to operate the Sunday School and other schools of the congregation, to promote adult education, and to develop the youth program in the congregation, and shall make recommendations thereon to the Church Council.

C13.07.04

8. The committee on property shall have special responsibility for care, use, and maintenance of the property(ies), building(s), and equipment, and shall make recommendations thereon to the Church Council.

Contained in Chapter 12 – Congregational Council

~~D. OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL~~

- ~~1. The Church Council shall be empowered to secure such help as is needed to carry on the work of the congregation such as organist, choir director, parish worker, pastor's secretary, intern, custodian, etc., and shall fix their salaries.~~
- ~~2. Review annually the salary of the pastor(s) and make adjustments from time to time within the limits of the budget approved by the congregation.~~
- ~~3. The Church Council shall as far as possible operate within the limits of the approved budget of the congregation. Any expenditure in excess of the total voted budget must be approved by the congregation.~~
- ~~4. An auditing committee composed of two (2) persons shall be appointed by the president with the approval of the Church Council. The auditing committee shall audit all financial records to the congregation proper, and present its report to the annual meeting in writing. The auditing committee shall carefully examine all insurance policies to determine the amount and kind of insurance in force and include this report in its statement.~~
- ~~5. Be responsible for the buildings and premises of the congregation so that their use is normally limited to the functions of the congregation. Should groups or individuals not associated with the congregation desire to use such property, application shall be made to the Church Council for its approval.~~

- ~~6. Elect the superintendent of the Sunday Church School, upon nomination by the committee on education and youth.~~
- ~~7. Exercise discipline in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.~~

~~Part VII – PARISH RECORDS~~

~~Contained in Chapter 9 – Rostered Minister~~

~~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 his service to the congregation, he shall have brought the records up to date prior to his departure. The records shall consist of:~~

- ~~1. The roster of baptized, confirmed, and voting members.~~
- ~~2. The ministerial acts performed by the pastor.~~
- ~~3. The minutes and reports of the synod and the Handbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.~~
- ~~4. The minutes of the meetings of the congregation and the Church Council, for which the secretary of the congregation shall be responsible.~~
- ~~5. The financial records of the congregation, for which the treasurer of the congregation shall be responsible.~~

~~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 his ministerial acts.~~