

## **GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH BYLAWS**

### **PART 1**

#### **COMMUNION PARTICIPATION**

1. This congregation invites all of its members, who have been prepared to receive the Sacrament, to participate regularly in Holy Communion.
2. Participation in Holy Communion shall be open to members of other congregations who accept the Lutheran teaching in regard to this Sacrament.
3. It shall be made known to prospective participants that the belief of this congregation 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 nor worthy, for the words for you, requires simply a believing heart."

4. Record of participation of Holy Communion shall be maintained.

### **PART 2**

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

1. Baptized Members
  - a. A child, one or both of whose parents or guardians are members of the congregation shall, upon receiving Baptism, become a baptized member.
  - b. A child, neither of those 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.
  - c. A child baptized in another congregation shall be received as a baptized member in the congregation when a transfer has been received.
  - d. An unbaptized adult who has received instruction and has given evidence of an adequate understanding and acceptance of the teachings of the Work of God as confessed by the Lutheran Church, shall, upon confession of faith and Baptism, become a baptized member of the congregation.
  - e. When one or both parents of baptized children are received into the membership of the congregation, such children should be received as baptized members with the consent of the member parent or parents.
  - f. Where a baptized child is an orphan or a ward of someone and these people move in the area served by this congregation, the child may be received as a baptized member when it is commended to the care of this congregation by the congregation which baptized the child.

- g. When the parents of a baptized child are not themselves members of the Lutheran Church but move into the area served by this congregation and desire to have their child put within the pastoral care of this congregation, the child may be received as a baptized member.

2. Confirmed Members

- a. A baptized adult, not previously a confirmed member of the Lutheran congregation, shall become a confirmed member of this congregation after having received instruction, having given evidence of adequate understanding of the teachings of the Word of God as confessed by the Lutheran Church, and having publicly affirmed his faith.
- b. 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 1(d) of this Part of the Bylaws shall be considered a confirmed member without participation in the rite of confirmation.
- c. 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 Congregation Council. The acceptance of the applicant shall be reported to the congregation.
- d. 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 Congregation 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.

3. Voting Members

The Congregation Council shall determine the roster of voting members of the congregation in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws. The roster of voting members shall be available at all regularly called meetings of the congregation. The term in good standing shall be defined to include.

- a. Those who partake in Holy Communion
- b. Those who contribute to the congregational treasury according to the congregation's records
- c. Those who participate in the life and worship of the congregation.

4. Discontinuance of Membership

- a. 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.
- b. A confirmed member in good standing desiring to change his membership to another Lutheran congregation shall upon request receive a Letter of Transfer.
- c. A confirmed member who does not for a period of one year partake of Holy Communion, support the Church with offering and does not appear to desire to participate in the life and worship of the congregation shall be visited by the pastor and/or a Congregation Council representative 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.

- d. 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.

## 5. Discipline

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

- a. A person who is required to appear before the Congregation 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 the 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 Congregation Council may proceed with the hearing and may reach its conclusion in his absence.
- b. Should a person be found guilty by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Congregation Council, the Council shall impose one of the following:
  - 1) censure before the Congregation Council or the congregation;
  - 2) suspension from membership until proof is given of sufficient repentance and amendment;
  - 3) exclusion from membership and denial of the Sacraments.

In the event of the imposition of 2) or 3) above, the action of the Congregation Council shall be in writing.

## **PART 3**

### THE PASTOR

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 the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.
2. If a pastor received a Call to another ministry, he/she may consult the Congregation Council, or, if he/she desires, the congregation, before reaching a decision. He/she shall announce his/her decision as quickly as possible, normally within three weeks. He/she shall notify the synod bishop of his/her decision. When a Call has been accepted, the pastor shall terminate his/her ministry as soon as feasible, normally within a month.

## **PART 4**

### MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION

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

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

The nominating committee shall nominate candidates for the offices 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.

4. The annual meeting of the congregation shall elect an auditing committee of three members. The term of office of the members shall be one year. The auditing committee shall audit the fiscal records of the congregation and report its findings in writing to the annual meeting. Such audits shall include examination of existing insurance coverage.
5. The congregation may from time to time elect such other committees as may be needed or desired.
6. Unless otherwise ordered, parliamentary procedures shall be in accordance with Robert's Rules of order.

## **PART 5**

### **CONGREGATION COUNCIL**

1. Membership and meetings of the Congregation Council. In addition to the provisions of the Constitution, the following shall govern membership on the Congregation Council and the conduct of its meetings:
  - a. Only a voting member of the congregation shall be eligible for membership on the Congregation Council.
  - b. The congregation shall elect five (5) members of the Congregation Council at each annual meeting and in addition shall fill vacancies when the Congregation Council consists of fewer than ten (10) members
  - c. If a vacancy occurs on the Congregation Council, the Council may 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.
  - d. A member of the Congregation 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.
  - e. A quorum for any regular or special meeting of the Congregation Council shall be one-half of its membership
  - f. A special meeting may be called by a pastor, the president, or any three members of the Congregation 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.

2. Duties and Responsibilities of the Congregation Council. In addition to the duties and responsibilities provided in the Constitution, the Congregation Council shall:
  - a. Secure necessary staff other than the pastors and fix and review annually their salaries.
  - b. Review annually the salary of the pastors and make adjustments from time to time within the limits of the budget approved by the congregation.
  - c. Receive reports regularly from the treasurer to ascertain that the expenditures are within the budget approved by the congregation. Any expenditures in excess of the total voted budget must be approved by the congregation.
  - d. Prepare budgets to submit to annual congregation meeting.
  - e. Assure itself that the treasurer and others who have access to the funds of the congregation are adequately bonded.
  - f. Be responsible for the buildings and premises of the congregation. Should groups or individuals not associated with the congregation desire to use such property, application shall be made to the Congregation Council for its approval.
  - g. Have authority between meetings of the congregation to choose delegates to any group or meeting in which the congregation is entitled to representation.
3. Duties of Officers
  - a. The president shall preside at meetings of the Congregation Council and of the congregation.
  - b. The vice-president shall preside at the meetings of the Congregation Council and of the congregation in the absence of the president.
  - c. The secretary shall keep the minutes of the Congregation Council and of the congregation and shall have custody of the archives of the congregation.
  - d. The treasurer shall have custody of all funds of the congregation and shall receive and disburse such funds in accordance with the decisions of the congregation or the Congregation Council.

## **PART 6**

### **PARISH RECORDS**

The records of the congregation shall be and remain the property of the congregation. The pastors shall be responsible for the maintenance of the records, except as otherwise provided herein. Upon the termination of the pastor's service to the congregation, he/she shall have brought the records up date prior to his/her 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 Congregation 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 pastors 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 their ministerial acts.

Should the congregation be dissolved, the official records of the congregation shall be deposited in the archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor.

## **PART 7**

### **GRACE & GROWTH FUND**

There is hereby established a Grace & Growth Fund of Grace Lutheran Church.

**PURPOSE OF FUND:** The purpose of this fund is to provide the opportunity to members of Grace Lutheran Church to give a long term, lasting gift, which shall be used in special outreach mission activities and to enhance and enrich the worship life and facilities of Grace Lutheran Church.

**PRINCIPAL:** The principal of this fund shall be maintained. The congregation shall approve any permanent reduction in the principal.

**INVESTMENT:** \$10,000 of the Grace & Growth Fund is to be invested at a local financial institution for a contingency fund. Any new additional monies invested in the Grace & Growth Fund shall be divided 50% in Mission Loan and 50% in Christian financial organizations (such as Lutheran Brotherhood, AAL, etc.) at the highest possible interest rate. Investment recommendations to be made by the Business Manager with approval of the Congregation Council.

**INTEREST DISTRIBUTION:** The distribution of interest income from this fund shall be left to the decision of the Congregation Council. The following guidelines shall be used: at least one-half of the income from the fund shall be used annually for outreach mission activities beyond the congregation. The balance should be distributed as follows: 25% - capital improvements; 10% - worship; 10% - education, 5% - library/Christian promotional items. These funds are to be used for expenses outside the budget. Cost of living should be deducted from the earned interest before distribution to maintain the principal.

**LOANS:** The trustees shall present proposed loans with the recommended terms to the Church Council for their approval up to \$10,000 and loans in excess of an aggregate of \$10,000 be referred to the Church congregation for approval.

**REPORTS:** A Grace & Growth Fund report should be submitted annually to the congregation and the Congregation Council.

## **PART 8**

### **ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION**

All organizations within this congregation shall exist to aid in the ministering to the members of this congregation and to all persons who can be reached with the Gospel of Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of this congregation's life, the organizations are subject to its oversight and direction. The congregation at its meeting shall receive reports concerning their membership, work and finances.

**PART 9**

**RESTRICTED FUNDS**

Grace Lutheran Church has established restricted funds for the benefit of Grace Lutheran Church and/or to carry out missions of the Church. Grace Lutheran Church may establish one or more additional funds in the future. As of this date, March 5, 2000 the Church has two restricted funds:

1. The Grace & Growth Fund for Grace Lutheran Church, and
2. The Grace Lutheran Church Endowment Fund of Minnesota Foundation (which is held by Minnesota Foundation under agreement dated July 20, 1999).

Restricted funds for the benefit of Grace Lutheran Church are administered pursuant to separate statements of policy. Current statement of policy regarding the Grace & Growth Fund is stated in Part 7 of these bylaws. Current statement of policy regarding the Grace Lutheran Church Endowment Fund is available from the Church office.