



LWML Bylaws — Districts

BYLAWS

Districts have different structures, and each district should draft bylaws that best describe its organization and method of transacting business. The person responsible for drafting the district bylaws should study the LWML Bylaws to determine the parameters set by the LWML and use the LWML Bylaws as a guideline. The current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* may also be used as a source for general information regarding bylaws. If further help is needed, the bylaws chairman should contact the LWML Structure Committee Chairman for guidance. Her name and contact information can be found by contacting the LWML District President.

Articles and sections on name, object, members, representation at LWML conventions, and parliamentary authority must conform to LWML Bylaws. Also, when referencing LWML officers, committees, or programs in district bylaws, the correct nomenclature should be used. Likewise, when referring to dates and deadlines required by LWML, care should be taken that these references are correct.

SEQUENTIAL STEPS FOR DISTRICT BYLAWS CHANGES

Extensive amendments or revisions of bylaws should not be rushed. The district Structure Committee should expect major change approvals to take at least one year from starting the process until the changes are presented for approval to district convention delegates. The Committee, working with the district officers, should give members plenty of time to review the changes and involve the membership as much as possible. The following steps should be taken when making proposed changes to the bylaws:

- a. District Structure Committee drafts revisions or amendments.
- b. The Committee presents the proposed changes to members of the district EC and/or the district BOD for input and preliminary approval.
- c. The district Structure Committee Chairman sends one (1) copy (in Microsoft Word via email attachment) of proposed changes as approved by the district EC and/or BOD (including cover letter listing date by which response is needed) to the chairman of the LWML Structure Committee for review. (The Structure

Committee Chairman's address can be found by contacting the District President.) Allow at least three (3) months for the LWML Structure Committee members to complete their review and report before the district's convention.

- d. The LWML Structure Committee members review changes:
 1. making sure that articles on Name (of LWML organization), Object, Members, Representation at LWML conventions, and Parliamentary Authority conform to the respective articles in the LWML Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws;
 2. checking that the proper names and titles of LWML officers, departments, committees, and programs are used when referenced in the district's bylaws; and
 3. offering suggestions for changes to enhance the finished product.
- e. The LWML Structure Committee Chairman sends the Committee's comments to the district Structure Committee's Chairman and the District President.
- f. District Structure Committee makes necessary changes.
- g. District EC and/or BOD gives approval to the proposed bylaws changes.
- h. Delegates to district convention vote to adopt, not to adopt, or amend proposed bylaw changes (in their entirety or in part).
- i. District Structure Committee Chairman sends one (1) copy (in Microsoft Word via email attachment) of the adopted bylaw changes to the LWML Structure Committee Chairman as soon as the bylaws are ready for distribution. (If the convention does not approve the changes, the district Structure Committee Chairman sends a courtesy letter to the LWML Structure Committee Chairman apprising her of this fact.).

All district bylaws and amendments must be sent to the LWML Structure Committee at least three (3) months before the district's convention date for approval before presentation to the voting assembly for adoption. Following is an outline of articles and sections that may be used as a guideline when drafting district bylaws. The articles and sections that must comply with LWML Bylaws are written in detail.

SAMPLE DISTRICT BYLAWS

Lutheran Women’s Missionary League (Name of the district) District Bylaws The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

ARTICLE I — NAME

The name of this organization shall be Lutheran Women’s Missionary League (*district name*) District (hereinafter referred to as (*short name*)), a subordinate organization of the Lutheran Women’s Missionary league (hereinafter referred to as LWML), which is an integrated auxiliary of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (hereinafter referred to as LCMS).

ARTICLE II — OBJECT

The object of this organization shall be:

- a. to develop and to maintain a greater mission consciousness among the women of the district through mission education, mission inspiration, and mission service;
- b. to gather funds for mission grants either directly sponsored or approved by LCMS boards or LCMS district presidents, especially those for which no adequate provision has been made in LCMS or LCMS district budgets;
- c. to foster and support the program of LWML; and
- d. to take charge of, hold, and manage all property, personal and real, that may at any time or in any manner come to or vest in this organization. (Note: This wording is important if the district has an endowment fund.)

ARTICLE III — STRUCTURE

Section 1

The district is composed of individual women and women’s LWML groups within congregations of the LCMS (*LCMS district name*) District, on campuses, in resident homes, or in other settings.

Section 2

The district is organized into zones which consist of individual women and women's LWML groups from LCMS congregations in their geographical areas. Zones shall conform to LCMS circuit lines where possible.

Section 3

(In this section outline the district's guidelines for zone bylaws.)

Section 4

(In this section delineate the district's requirements for the zones.)

ARTICLE IV — MEMBERS

- a. A woman who is a communicant member of an LCMS congregation is eligible for membership as an individual or in a local group.
- b. Women's organizations within congregations of the LCMS, on campuses, in resident homes, or in other settings shall be eligible for membership as LWML groups.
- c. One (1) or more LWML groups affiliated with the district from the same congregation, campus, resident home, or other single setting shall be considered one (1) unit for the purpose of representation at LWML conventions.
- d. LWML groups formed in a setting other than a congregation, a campus, or a resident home by women who hold membership in an LCMS congregation shall make application to the district for recognition as groups.
- e. Individual membership is available to a woman in an LCMS congregation with or without a group affiliated with LWML. Individual membership is not considered an LWML group or a unit, nor does it confer voting privileges at the district or LWML level.
- f. Request for recognition of membership shall be processed by the district *(Insert name of district officer responsible for membership records)* with approval of the district Executive Committee and/or the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE V — CONVENTIONS

Section 1

(In this section, delineate guidelines for district convention site selection, dates, and official call to convention.)

Section 2

(In this section, outline the makeup of the voting assembly and information about voting such as voting in only one capacity, proxy votes, etc.)

Section 3

(Outline how delegates are certified. Delegates should be certified by the ranking officer at the next highest level of the organization. For example: District Presidents certify zone delegates to the LWML convention, Zone Presidents certify local group delegates to district conventions.)

Section 4

A convention for the purpose of transacting the business of the LWML shall be held biennially in the odd-numbered years at a place determined in a prior convention. District representation shall be as follows:

- a. Districts may authorize one (1) certified delegate from each zone having ten (10) or fewer units and one (1) certified delegate for each additional ten (10) units or major fraction thereof as of January 1 preceding the convention.
- b. Delegates may vote in only one (1) capacity and proxy votes are prohibited.
- c. Each certified delegate shall have a certified alternate when possible.
- d. The District President shall send the names of the certified delegates and alternates to the LWML Recording Secretary by the requested date in odd-numbered years.
- e. In the event neither the delegate nor the alternate is able to serve, a member of the same zone may serve as delegate upon certification in writing by the District President and presentation to the LWML Recording Secretary.

ARTICLE VI — OFFICERS AND ELECTIONS

Section 1

The elected officers shall be: *(List all elected officers here and in the following sentence. The officers should be listed in this order: President, Vice Presidents in alphabetical order by position, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Financial Secretary, and Treasurer; this order should be followed throughout the document.)*

Section 2

(Describe terms of office, when officers assume their duties, which officers are elected in which conventions, and time limitations for transfer of records.)

Section 3

(Describe method of filling vacancies, especially a vacancy occurring in the office of President.)

ARTICLE VII — DUTIES OF OFFICERS

(Outlines the responsibilities of each officer, giving each officer its own section as in the following example.)

Section 1

The President shall: *(Outline the responsibilities of the District President.)*

Section 2

The Vice President of *(VP Title)* may perform the duties of the office of the President in the absence of, or at the request of, the President and shall: *(Note: Please consult the LCMS Official Stylebook for the correct punctuation of “may” sentences followed by “and shall:” This style should be used to introduce each Vice President’s responsibilities in subsequent sections. Remember to list Vice Presidents in alphabetical order by position. After the sections on Vice Presidents, provide a section for each of the remaining officers in the order they are listed in Article VI.)*

ARTICLE VIII — NOMINATIONS

Section 1

(Outline the method of selecting the Nominating Committee. A Nominating Committee is independent of the President and Executive Committee and should not be appointed.)

Section 2

(Outline the responsibilities of the Nominating Committee.)

Section 3

(Insert information about nominations from the floor.)

ARTICLE IX – APPOINTED OFFICERS

Section 1

(List alphabetically the titles of all appointed officers in the opening sentence; then outline the characteristics and duties that are common to all appointed officers.)

Section 2

(In this and following sections, list alphabetically by position each appointed officer's responsibilities.)

ARTICLE X – SPECIAL APPOINTED PERSONNEL

Section 1

(Special appointed personnel are persons whose office requires certain skills that are not common to the group as a whole, such as Archivist-Historian and Parliamentarian. This section should list the special appointed personnel in alphabetical order by position and describe the characteristics that are common to all of them.)

Section 2

(In this and subsequent sections, list the special appointed personnel in alphabetical order by position and describe each one's responsibilities.)

ARTICLE XI – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1

(Describe the makeup of the board and who has voting privileges and who does not. Also state whether or not substitutes are allowed to attend for absent board members and whether or not the substitutes have a vote.)

Section 2

(Insert information regarding meetings.)

Section 3

(Insert information about a quorum.)

Section 4

(Outline the responsibilities of the board.)

ARTICLE XII — EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(Use the same outline as for the Board of Directors.)

ARTICLE XIII – PASTORAL COUNSELOR

Section 1

(Describe the requirements for pastoral counselors.)

Section 2

(Describe the selection procedure.)

Section 3

(Outline the responsibilities of the counselors.)

ARTICLE XIV – STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1

(In Paragraph a, list names of standing committees in alphabetical order, ending with who serves as chairman with wording such as “with a Vice President serving as chairman of each committee.”)

(In paragraph b, list duties that are common to each committee member as in the following example.)

- b. Standing committee members shall:

1. be appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Committee;
2. serve as coordinators of continuing programs and activities of the district and correlate to standing committees of the LWML;
3. serve as non-voting members of the board;
4. prepare a written report for regular meetings of the board;
5. present an oral report to the board when requested to do so by the President;
6. prepare a written report for the convention manual; and
7. serve a term of two (2) years or until their successors are appointed, and shall be eligible for one (1) reappointment.

Section 2

(In this and following sections, with a separate section for each committee, list the responsibilities of each committee and coordinator as in the following example.)

The Christian Life Committee shall include the Vice President of Christian Life as chairman, the Christian Events Coordinator, and the Christian Materials Coordinator. The committee shall provide materials and opportunities that nurture members' spiritual lives.

- a. The Christian Events Coordinator shall:
 1. work with Zone Presidents to prepare and present devotions at board meetings;
 2. serve as a resource person for zone and group Christian Life chairmen in planning Christian nurturing events; and
 3. maintain and publicize materials for society and group activities, promoting use of the products found in the LWML *Catalog* and on the LWML website.
- b. The Christian Materials Coordinator shall:
 1. inform members of a variety of resources suitable for use by individual members and for use at women's activities and events;
 2. maintain a table display of materials available from the LWML *Catalog*; and
 3. maintain the audio/visual library for the district and be responsible for its circulation.

ARTICLE XV – SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Section 1

(In this section list alphabetically all special committees such as Convention, Endowment Gift Fund, Finance, etc.)

Section 2

(In this and following sections, list the makeup and responsibilities of each committee with a separate section for each committee.)

ARTICLE XVI – OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

Section 1

[Designate the official publication for the district. If possible, this should be a publication (printed and/or available online) which the LWML district controls, not one published by the LCMS district. This is desirable for times when the district needs to have a special publication to inform members of important items of business such as bylaw amendments, special elections, etc.]

Section 2

(List the purpose of the official publication.)

Section 3

(Should include wording like the following.)

The *(name of publication)* shall be provided to all members of the Board of Directors and to all LWML groups within the district in the second and fourth quarters of the calendar year.

ARTICLE XVII – MISSION GRANTS

Section 1

(Outline who may submit mission grant proposals and guidelines for accepting the proposals, including dates. For example, you may want to set a “must be postmarked by (date)” date or set a specific date for electronic submissions.)

Section 2

(Outlines the procedure for approving mission grants. Note that proposals for all mission grants, except those submitted by LCMS boards, shall have the approval of the Executive Committee or the Board of Directors of the LWML district in which they originate; and have the approval of the President of the LCMS district or partner church in which the proposed grant recipient is located.)

Section 3

(List any restrictions and method of handling changes in mission grants with wording like the following example.)

- a. Funds voted for a mission grant must be disbursed or put into use within a two (2) year period from the time of the vote or be returned to the treasury for reallocation. The Board shall have the authority to extend the time for two (2) additional years in case of extenuating circumstances.
- b. In the event that changes in mission grant plans occur after the recipients have been selected in convention, the Board shall be authorized to approve the amended grant or reallocate the funds either in session, by mail, or by electronic messaging.

ARTICLE XVIII – RESOLUTIONS AND APPEALS

Section 1

(Outline the procedure for members to bring resolutions to the floor of the convention.)

Section 2

(Outline the procedure for receiving resolutions not received in the proper time so that the district can be flexible in listening to the needs of its constituency.)

ARTICLE XIX — FINANCES

Section 1

(List the title of the officer to whom mites and other offerings are sent. Include wording about sending twenty-five (25) percent of mite offerings to the LWML.)

Section 2

(Outline the district's other financial policies such as society assessments, percentage of zone rally registrations to be remitted to district, etc.)

Section 3

(List any financial restrictions such as "No disbursements shall be made that necessitate a permanent subsidy from the treasury," etc.)

Section 4

(Outline allowable expenses for district leaders and functions or include wording similar to the following example.)

Expenses of meetings of the Board of Directors, Executive Committee, committees and other routine administration expenses incurred in the management of the district shall be paid from the treasury of said district.

Section 5

(Include wording similar to the following example.)

The financial records shall be submitted for financial review at the end of each biennium.

ARTICLE XX — FISCAL YEAR

(List the parameters of the fiscal year.)

ARTICLE XXI – EMERGENCY ACTION

Section 1

(List the method the district uses to determine whether or not a state of emergency exists that would prohibit the holding of a convention.)

Section 2

(Outline the procedure for conducting the business of the district in the event a convention cannot be held.)

ARTICLE XXII – PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

(Parliamentary authority is one of the areas in which district bylaws must conform to LWML Bylaws.)

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern the proceedings of the district in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws, applicable law, or Christian principles.

ARTICLE XXIII — AMENDMENTS

Section 1

(Outline the procedure for amending the district bylaws.)

Section 2

(The following wording may be included in this section.)

- a. The required number of copies of these bylaws and all amendments or revisions shall be submitted to the LWML Structure Committee for review [at least three (3) months prior to the district convention] before being presented to the district membership for adoption.
- b. Upon adoption by the convention, the required number of copies shall be submitted to the LWML Structure Committee for filing.

Date district became a member of LWML *(date)*

Date of original bylaws *(date)*

Date of last amendments to bylaws *(date)*