

BYLAWS

MESSIAH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060

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May 22, 2002
May 19, 2004
May 23, 2007

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP

SECTION A – A BAPTIZED MEMBER is a person who has been baptized in name of the Triune God and is under the spiritual care of the pastor and the congregation.

SECTION B – A COMMUNICANT MEMBER is a baptized member with communion privileges. Such a person is eligible to participate in Holy Communion at Messiah Lutheran Church provided that:

1. the age for First Communion, as established by voters assembly, has been attained.
2. instruction in the meaning of faith in our God and Savior, the Means of Grace and Holy Communion has been received.
3. the desire to participate is expressed and has the consent of his/her parents and the pastor.

SECTION C – A CONFIRMED MEMBER is a person who:

1. has received the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and has been confirmed.
2. recognizes him/herself as a member of Christ's church and evidences a willingness to be part of the Body of Christ in the world to be called to follow, love, suffer and die for the needs of other people after the pattern of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
3. accepts the Bible as the verbally inspired revelation of God and the only divine rule and standard of faith and life.
4. does not actively participate in any anti-Christian association.
5. confirms his/her faith by adult or child confirmation, or by reaffirmation of his/her previous confirmation of faith, or provide a letter of transfer from another Lutheran congregation in fellowship with The LC-MS.

SECTION D – DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A CONFIRMED MEMBER

A confirmed member should:

1. be familiar with the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, at least to the extent as it is set forth in *Luther's Small Catechism* and declares acceptance thereof.
2. attend divine worship and partake of the Lord's Supper faithfully and frequently.
3. lead a Christian life and abstain from manifest works of the flesh.
4. contribute, as the Lord has prospered him/her toward the maintenance of the congregation, its operation and mission.
5. submit, for the sake of love and peace, to the constitution and bylaws of this congregation.
6. accept a brotherly admonition when he/she has erred or when he/she has become delinquent in the requirements of membership, or otherwise has given offense.

SECTION E – TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

A person's communicant, confirmed, or voting membership shall cease when he/she:

1. is transferred to another congregation in fellowship with The LC-MS or given a peaceful release to another Christian congregation.
2. excludes him/herself by expressly declaring his withdrawal from the congregation or by his persistent absence from the Word and Sacraments.
3. is excommunicated from the congregation in accordance with the order of church discipline set forth in the Word of God
4. dies.

SECTION F – REINSTATEMENT OF MEMBERSHIP

A person whose communicant, confirmed, or voting membership has been terminated may apply for reinstatement of his/her membership when the cause for the termination has been relieved and upon recommendation of the pastor.

SECTION G – VOTING MEMBERSHIP

All confirmed members are automatically members of the voters assembly, except when legal voting age is required by law.

ARTICLE II – MEETINGS OF THE VOTERS ASSEMBLY

SECTION A – REGULAR MEETINGS

There shall be two (2) regularly scheduled meetings of the voting members of the congregation – one in May and the other in November of each year. Election of officers will be done in May and the budget for the next fiscal year will be adopted in November. The exact dates shall be determined by the Church Council and shall be announced and published in the church's Sunday worship bulletin and in the newsletter at least four (4) weeks prior to the date of the meeting together with the proposed agenda. Along with the agenda, the slate of nominees for the various offices (May meeting) and the proposed budget (November meeting) should be attached.

SECTION B – SPECIAL MEETINGS

Special meetings may be called by the pastor, the president, majority vote of the church council or five (5) voting members provided that notification, together the agenda, has been given at least six (6) days prior to the date of the meeting by public announcement at the Sunday worship service and by first class mail. Only matters printed on the agenda may be acted on at that meeting.

SECTION C – QUORUM

Ten (10) percent of the voting membership shall constitute a quorum at a properly called regular or special meeting of the voters assembly.

SECTION D – VOTING

In all voters meetings, a simple majority of the votes cast of members present shall decide all questions; except in the amending of the constitution or bylaws, the calling or dismissal of a pastor or professional church worker, and the dissolution or separation of the congregation, approving a building or remodeling program requiring expenses of \$25,000 or more, sale of church real estate, and borrowing funds of 5% or greater of the then current annual church budget; where a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the votes cast of members present shall be required. Current *Robert's Rules of Order* shall govern the conduct of the meetings of the voters assembly in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the constitution and bylaws and always in a spirit of Christian love and understanding.

Voting by proxy is not allowed.

ARTICLE III – CALLING A PASTOR OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL CHURCH WORKER

The pastoral office of this congregation shall be conferred only on such a pastor or candidate who professes and adheres to the confessional standard set forth Article III of the constitution, who is qualified for his work and whose name is on the official clergy list of The LC-MS.

SECTION A – PROCEDURE FOR CALLING A PASTOR OR PROFESSIONAL CHURCH WORKER:

1. The president of the congregation shall:
 - a. notify the District President that a vacancy exists and request a list of possible candidates for the call list.
 - b. select a Call committee to be in charge of the calling process.
 - c. call a special meeting of the voters assembly after the slate of nominees has been distributed to all the members to officially issue a call after a candidate has been determined.

2. The Call committee shall:
 - a. work with the district president and the circuit counselor throughout the calling procedure and with the voters assembly approval, secure an interim pastor if deemed advisable.
 - b. conduct a self-study of the congregation's potential , short-comings and needs.
 - c. solicit possible nominations from members of the congregation. The names of all nominees shall be submitted to the district president for characterization and evaluation
 - d. mail the recommended slate of all candidates to all members of the voters assembly for their prayerful consideration .

3. The voters assembly shall:
 - a. elect one candidate . A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the voters present is necessary to elect.

Should the call be declined, the calling procedure will begin again with the consideration of the nominees previously selected. The names of new nominees may be presented by either the district president or from a member of the congregation. In the latter case, the nominee(s) must have district characterization.

ARTICLE IV – ELECTED OFFICERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

SECTION A – NOMINATIONS

A nominating committee for officers and chairpersons shall be appointed by the president in January. The slate shall be approved by the church council. The approved slate of candidates shall be published and mailed to all voting households at least four (4) weeks prior to the May voters meeting. All nominees must have given their consent to be nominated and agree to serve if elected.

SECTION B – ELECTION

At the May meeting the voters assembly shall elect by ballot the president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and chairpersons of all the standing boards.

SECTION C – ELIGIBILITY

All voting members who are confirmed members of the congregation for at least twelve (12) months and are 18 years or older, in good standing, are eligible to be an officer or board chairperson. However, the chairman of the Board of Elders, shall be filled only by male members of the congregation.

The chairman of the Board of Elders shall be elected only from the current Board of Elders after being nominated by his peers.

SECTION D – INSTALLATION

All elected officers and chairpersons shall be installed in their respective offices during a church service on the last Sunday in June. An orientation meeting should be held before they take office.

ARTICLE V – TENURE OF OFFICE

SECTION A – OFFICERS

The president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer shall hold office for two (2) years and are eligible for re-election. The president and vice-president shall be elected in even numbered years; the secretary and treasurer in odd numbered years.

SECTION B – BOARDS

Board chairpersons shall hold office for a term of two (2) years. They may serve two (2) consecutive terms. The election of the chairpersons of the boards of family ministries, evangelism, finance, property and fellowship shall be held in odd numbered years. The election of chairpersons of the Boards of Elders, Human Care, Stewardship, Christian Pre/Day School and Youth shall be held in even numbered years.

ARTICLE VI – CHURCH COUNCIL

SECTION A – MEMBERSHIP

The Church Council shall consist of the four (4) elected officers, the chairpersons of all standing boards and the pastor(s).

SECTION B – MEETINGS

The Church Council shall meet monthly. Special meetings may be called by the president, the pastor(s), or four members of the Church Council.

SECTION C – POWERS

The Church Council is authorized to exercise all powers of the voters assembly in between semi-annual or special meetings except those specifically reserved to the voters assembly in the constitution and bylaws. Among these powers reserved to the voters assembly are: amending the constitution and/or bylaws, purchasing or mortgaging real property, erecting buildings, excommunication, calling or removing a pastor or professional called church worker, changing synodical affiliation, electing or deposing officers and board chairpersons except to fill a vacancy of an unexpired term and setting the annual budget.

The Church Council may authorize expenditures in addition to those approved in the annual church budget, the total of which shall not exceed five (5) percent of the total budget.

SECTION D - QUORUM

A simple majority of the church council members shall constitute a quorum.

SECTION E – VACANCIES

All vacancies in elected and appointed positions shall be filled by the church council and be validated at the next voters assembly meeting.

ARTICLE VII – STANDING BOARDS

SECTION A – BOARD OF ELDERS

1. Number – The Board of Elders shall consist of at least four (4) male communicant members and no less than one elder for every one hundred communicant members of the congregation.
2. Term - An elder shall serve a term of four (4) years. He may be nominated to serve additional terms after prayerful consideration and brotherly consultation of his fellow elders. The chairman shall be nominated by the Board of Elders, ratified by the church council and elected at the May meeting of the voters assembly.
3. Duties – The Board of Elders shall:
 - a. consider complaints and grievances on members of the congregation. If Matthew 18:15-16 has been fully observed, they shall report to the congregation these complaints and grievances which cannot be otherwise resolved in accordance with Matthew 18:17-18.
 - b. make every effort to encourage members who have been negligent in their attendance at worship services and in the use of the Sacraments to change their ways and fully enjoy the rights and privileges of their membership.

SECTION B – BOARD OF FINANCE

1. Number – The Board of Finance shall consist of the elected chairperson, the vice-president, the chair of the Board of Stewardship and at least one (1) other recruited by the chair and approved by the Church Council.
2. Term - The Board of Finance shall serve for two (2) years to coincide with the chairperson’s term. Appointed members may serve additional terms upon their reappointment and council approval.
3. Duties – The Board of Finance shall be responsible for the fiscal management of the corporation with the advice and consent of the Church Council.
 - c. be responsible for the counting of all offerings and the deposit of same in the bank and reporting amounts to the treasurer.
 - d. be responsible for the posting of all donations and making quarterly reports to the membership of their contributions
 - e. prepare an annual operating budget .
 - f. prepare a written report of the financial condition of the congregation at the monthly meetings of the Church Council. The report should be distributed to all members who have requested a copy of the minutes of the council meetings.

SECTION C – BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

1. Number – The Board of Stewardship shall consist the elected chairperson and at least two (2) others recruited by the chair and approved by the Church Council.
2. Term – The Board of Stewardship shall serve two (2) years to coincide with the chairperson’s term. Board members may serve additional terms upon their reappointment and council approval.
3. Duties – The Board of Stewardship shall:
 - a. inform members of the congregation of their opportunities and responsibilities as members of a Christian congregation.
 - b. maintain an every member profile of the members of the congregation which enables the membership to utilize their individual talents to the glory of God.
 - c. promote the concept of proportionate giving so that a God-pleasing percentage of one’s income (blessings) is returned to Him in support of His work both at home and abroad.

SECTION D – BOARD OF FAMILY MINISTRIES

1. Number – The Board of Education shall consist of the elected chairperson and at least two (2) others recruited by the chair and approved by the Church Council.
2. Term – The Board of Education shall serve two (2) years to coincide with the chairperson’s term. Board members may serve additional terms upon reappointment and council approval.
3. Duties – The Board of Education shall:
 - a. be responsible to provide a program of Christian education upon which a person may build and maintain a life-long relationship with Christ.
 - b. appoint a Sunday School superintendent, director of vacation Bible school and a director of the Kingdom Kids annually.
 - c. recruit Sunday School and Vacation Bible School teachers and staff and provide for their training.
 - d. review, evaluate and develop ways to ensure the effectiveness of the congregation’s educational program
 - e. plan and execute, in cooperation with the pastor(s), an annual leadership conference for the officers and leaders of the congregation.

SECTION E – BOARD OF CHRISTIAN PRE/DAY SCHOOL

1. Number -The Board of Christian Pre/Day School shall consist of the elected chairperson and at least two (2) others recruited by the chair and approved by the Church Council.
2. Term – The Board of Christian Day/Pre School shall serve two (2) years to coincide with the chairperson’s term. Board members may serve additional terms by reappointment and council approval.
3. Duties – The Board of Pre/Day School shall:
 - a. determine the policy of operation of the pre/day school for approval by the Church Council.
 - b. nominate contracted teaching and/or administrative pre/day school staff for approval by the Church Council.
 - c. prepare an annual pre/day school budget and submit it to the Church Council for approval by July 1.

SECTION F – BOARD OF PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

1. Number - The Board of Property Management shall consist of the elected chairperson and at least two (2) others recruited by the chairperson and approved by the Church Council.
2. Term – The Board of Property Management shall serve a term of two (2) years to coincide with the chairperson’s term. Board members may serve additional terms by reappointment and council approval.
3. Duties –The Board of Property Management shall:
 - a. keep, or cause to be kept, the property of the congregation in good repair and neat in appearance, arrange for and supervise the janitorial and landscaping services.
 - b. provide adequate property and liability insurance so that the property is insured against loss or damage.

SECTION G – BOARD OF EVANGELISM

1. Number – The Board of Evangelism shall consist of the elected chairperson and at least two (2) others recruited by the chair and approved by the Church Council.
2. Term – The Board of Evangelism shall serve a term of two (2) years to coincide with the chairperson’s term. Board members may serve additional terms by reappointment and council approval.
3. Duties – The Board of Evangelism shall:
 - a. concern itself with the work of child, youth and adult evangelism.
 - b. promote the work of winning people for Jesus Christ and His work in the world.

SECTION H – BOARD OF HUMAN CARE

1. Number – The Board of Social Ministry and Welfare shall consist of the chairperson and at least two (2) others recruited by the chair and approved by the Church Council.
2. Term – The Board of Social Ministry and Welfare shall serve a term of two (2) years to coincide with the chairperson’s term. Board members may serve additional terms by reappointment and council approval.
3. Duties – The Board of Social Ministry and Welfare shall:
 - a. strive to meet the physical needs, when necessary, of the people the congregation and community , and to do this in the name and love of Jesus Christ.
 - b. be responsive to the needs of people who have suffered grief through death, tragedy or illness in the lives of family members.
 - c. Address itself, whenever feasible, to the broader aspects of social ministry in the life of the community and of the world, bearing in mind that the Lord admonishes all believers to “do good too all men, especially to those of the household of faith.”

SECTION I – BOARD OF YOUTH

1. Number – The Board of Youth shall consist of the chairperson and at least two (2) others recruited by the chair and approved by the Church Council.
2. Term – The Board of Youth shall serve a term of two (2) years to coincide with the chairperson’s term. Board members may serve additional terms by reappointment and council approval.
3. Duties - The Board of Youth shall:
 - a. provide guidance and direction, regularly analyze and administrate a plan of ministry for and with young people.
 - b. gear its program of ministry to all the youth and young adults of the community.
 - c. work with other Lutheran churches of the area.

SECTION J – BOARD OF FELLOWSHIP

1. Number - The Board of Fellowship shall consist of the chairperson and at least two (2) others recruited by the chair and approved by the Church Council.
2. Term – The Board of Fellowship shall serve a term of two (2) years to coincide with the chairperson’s term. Board members may serve additional terms by reappointment and council approval.
3. Duties – The Board of Fellowship shall:
 - a. be responsible for congregational fellowship events for the enjoyment and edification of the church membership.
 - b. develop and schedule fellowship events that will bring together various age levels and interest groups to help integrate members of the congregation.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS OF BYLAWS

Proposals to change the bylaws may be offered by any communicant member of the congregation. Such proposals shall be given in writing to the president, who in turn will refer them to the Church Council for special study. The Church Council shall draft suitable resolutions concerning the proposals. These shall be distributed to the voting membership not less than two (2) weeks prior to the meeting at which they are to be presented for action. Normally, amendments to the bylaws shall be considered only at the semi-annual meetings. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting members in attendance at the meeting is necessary to adopt the proposed amendment(s).