

# **GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

## **DESOTO, MISSOURI**

### **BYLAWS**

#### **ARTICLE I**

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

##### **SECTION 1: Admission of Communicant Members**

- A. A person confirmed in this congregation through the Lutheran Rite of Confirmation after thorough instruction in Christian Doctrine can become a communicant member.
- B. A person whose certificate of transfer from a congregation with membership in The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, is acceptable to the Board of Elders, and is recommended by the Pastor, shall be accepted as a communicant member.
- C. A person not having such certificate of transfer may be accepted into communicant membership if the person's profession of faith is acceptable to the Board of Elders. The person must confer with the Pastor in order to establish agreement with the doctrines of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and the Constitution and Bylaws of this congregation.

##### **SECTION 2: Admission of Voting Members**

- A. A communicant member who has complied with the conditions set forth in ARTICLE IV of the Constitution, may apply for membership in the Voters' Assembly by reading, or having read to him, a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws of this congregation. At a subsequent meeting of the Voters' Assembly he shall request membership.
- B. Admission to voting membership shall be affected by a majority vote of the members present and voting.
- C. Upon acceptance as a voting member, each accepted individual shall receive a copy of the current Constitution and Bylaws of this congregation.
- D. It shall be the duty of every voting member to attend the meetings of the Voters' Assembly. By failing to attend such meetings, a member waives the right to voice and vote during that meeting.
- E. There shall be no proxy votes.
- F. It shall be the duty of each member to prayerfully consider acceptance of nomination for office, board or committee appointments, etc., and to accept, if possible, and to Participate in the business activities of the Voters' Assembly as much as possible.

#### **ARTICLE II**

#### **TRANSFER, INACTIVE STATUS, EXCOMMUNICATION AND REMOVAL**

### **SECTION 1: Transfer**

A communicant member, desiring to be transferred to a congregation with membership in The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, shall apply for such transfer in writing. The Pastor shall issue the certificate of transfer, after it has been approved by the Voters' Assembly in a subsequent meeting. A member, upon such transfer, relinquishes all claims upon any part of the property of the congregation.

### **SECTION 2: Inactive Status**

Upon recommendation of the Pastor, a communicant member may be removed from communicant status and be placed on an inactive status for the following reasons:

- A. The person's whereabouts are unknown and address cannot be established.
- B. The person neglects to attend regular services, neglects to participate in the Sacraments and otherwise neglects to support the work of the congregation despite admonition by the Pastor and the Board of Elders.
- C. Such other reasons as may be deemed appropriate by the Pastor and the Board of Elders.

### **SECTION 3: Excommunication**

Procedures for excommunication of a communicant member shall be as outlined in ARTICLE V, SECTION 6 of the Constitution of this congregation.

### **SECTION 4: Removal**

A member affiliating with a church body or any religious organization not in fellowship with The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, or who has otherwise excluded himself from fellowship with the congregation, shall forfeit all rights or membership, and shall relinquish all claims upon any part of the property of the congregation. The Board of Elders shall notify the Church Council and the Voters' Assembly of such removals.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **MEETINGS OF THE VOTERS' ASSEMBLY**

#### **SECTION 1: Meetings**

- A. Regular Voters' Assembly meetings shall be held a minimum of three (3) times a year with the date of each meeting to be determined by the council and the board of Elders.
- B. Should the regular meeting date conflict with Holy Week or some other activity, the date may be determined by the Board of Elders.
- C. Special meetings may be called by the President, Pastor or the Board of Elders.
- D. The annual budget shall be presented no later than November.
- E. The election of officers shall also be held no later than November.
- F. Every regular Voters' Assembly Meeting shall be announced by word or in the bulletin at the Sunday Service prior to it. Whenever such announcement has been made as stated above, or a Special Meeting called, it shall be a valid and legal meeting, capable of

transacting business, provided at least one-fourth (1/4) of the voting members in the congregation, which shall constitute a quorum, shall be in attendance. However, for amending the Articles of Incorporation, the Constitution and the Bylaws, the erection of buildings, the purchase or sale of real estate, or the removal of the pastor or other called servant from office, a quorum of one-third (1/3) of the voting members is necessary and a two-thirds (2/3) vote shall be required for adoption of a resolution, unless otherwise provided by State Law.

- G. It shall be the duty of every voting member to attend the Voters' Assembly meetings; failing to attend, the member waives the right of voice and vote during such a meeting.
- H. A voting member who is absent from the meeting of the Voters' Assembly for a full year, without offering a valid excuse, shall have his/her name removed from the roster of voting members. However, he/she may be reinstated by re-applying for voting membership.

## **SECTION 2: Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year shall be from January 1 through December 31 inclusive.

## **SECTION 3: Order of Business**

- A. The regular meetings of the Voters' Assembly shall normally proceed in accordance with the following prescribed order of business:
  - a. Opening Devotion
  - b. Approval of Minutes
  - c. Acceptance of New Members
  - d. Reports of Officers, Boards and Committees
  - e. Unfinished Business
  - f. New Business
  - g. Closing Prayer
  - h. Adjournment
- B. At each meeting the Secretary shall circulate the attendance sheet to keep records of the same.

# **ARTICLE IV**

## **NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS, BOARDS AND CHAIRMAN**

### **SECTION 1: Nomination and Election Procedures**

- A. A Nominating Committee of three (3) shall be elected by the Voters' Assembly at a September meeting. Up to five names shall be nominated from the floor from which three candidates will be elected by ballot. A plurality vote shall elect, with the one receiving the most votes serving as Chairman.
- B. The Committee shall prepare a slate of candidates with two (2) names for each office, if possible, and present it at a meeting no later than November. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.

### **SECTION 2: Terms of Office**

- A. The President, Secretary, Financial Secretary and Treasurer shall serve for a term of two years or until their successors are elected.
- B. The President and Treasurer shall be elected in the even-numbered years, and the Secretary and Financial Secretary shall be elected in the odd-numbered years.
- C. The Vice-President shall be elected by the Elders from the Board of Elders and shall serve for the duration of his term on the Board of Elders.

**SECTION 3: Election**

- A. Election shall be by ballot during a Voters' Meeting no later than November
- B. A majority vote shall elect.
- C. Officers shall assume their duties at the beginning of the fiscal year.

**SECTION 4: Vacancies of Office**

- A. In the event of a vacancy in the office of President, The Vice-President shall assume the office for the remainder of the term.
- B. In the event of a vacancy in any office other than that of the President, the President shall appoint a successor, with the approval of the Church Council, to serve until the end of the term.

**ARTICLE V**  
**DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

**SECTION 1: The President shall:**

- A. provide leadership toward the stated purpose of the congregation, and be responsible for all elected and appointed officers, boards and committees in carrying out their respective responsibilities;
- B. prepare the agenda and preside at all meetings of the Voters' Assembly and of the Church Council, conducting them according to Robert's Rules of Order;
- C. appoint such chairman, committees and delegates as the needs of the congregation may demand, with the approval of the Church Council;
- D. appoint an Auditing Committee with the approval of the Church Council, in accordance with ARTICLE VI, SECTION 8 of these Bylaws;
- E. serve as an ex-officio member of all committees and boards except the Nominating Committee. The President may attend, or designate a voting member in the President's stead to attend, any committee or board meeting as necessary or advisable;
- F. perform such other duties as may be appropriate to that office.

**SECTION 2: The Vice-President shall:**

- A. perform the duties of the President in his absence or when called on to do so;
- B. serve as Chairman of the Board of Elders;
- C. succeed automatically to the office of President in the event of a vacancy in that office, for the remainder of the term.

**SECTION 3: The Secretary Shall:**

- A. keep accurate proceedings of the meetings of the Voters' Assembly and of the Council and maintain permanent records of the congregation;
- B. keep an accurate record of the attendance at Voters' Assembly Meetings;
- C. keep accurate communion attendance records of the congregation;
- D. be responsible for the Sunday Church bulletin under the supervision of the Pastor;
- E. keep an accurate list of voting members
- F. perform such other duties as may be appropriate to that office.

**SECTION 4: The Financial Secretary shall:**

- A. keep an accurate account of contributions through offering envelopes of every member;
- B. prepare and issue individual statements to the members annually, showing their contribution for the year;
- C. prepare an annual report and present it to the Voters' Assembly showing congregational giving and financial information of a relevant nature;
- D. submit the books and records for examination by the Auditing Committee and the Board of Elders when called to do so;
- E. serve on the Stewardship Committee;
- F. serve as Chairman of the Finance Committee

**SECTION 5: The Treasurer shall:**

- A. promptly pay all bills, salaries, and make other disbursements as may be authorized by the Voters' Assembly or Church Council;
- B. keep accurate records of receipts and disbursements of the congregation in books which shall be and remain the property of the congregation;
- C. prepare an annual report to the Church Council and Voters' Assembly showing actual receipts and disbursements, cash analysis and balances;
- D. furnish upon request any information showing receipts and disbursements to date compared to budgeted amounts;
- E. prepare an annual budget with the approval of Council, and present it at a Voters' Meeting to be held no later than November;
- F. submit books and records for examination by the Auditing Committee and the Board of Elders when called to do so;
- G. serve on the Stewardship Committee;
- H. serve on the Finance Committee

**ARTICLE VI**  
**THE CHURCH COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

## **SECTION 1: The Church Council**

- A. A.The Church Council, as constituted under ARTICLE VI of the Constitution shall function as a decision making body of the various Boards and Committees.
- B. The Council shall meet at least 3 times per year to consider all matters pertaining to the general welfare of the congregation as presented by the various Boards, Committees and Organizations.
- C. The Council shall present recommendations to the congregation and shall act in matters committed to it by the Voters' Assembly.
- D. In cases of emergency, the Council shall have power to act on behalf of the congregation between meetings of the Voters' Assembly.
- E. The President shall preside at all Council meetings.
- F. In the absence of the President, the Vice-President shall preside.
- G. Six (6) Council Members, including at least one Corporate Officer, shall constitute a quorum.
- H. The Council shall approve the annual budget for distribution to the voting members and their consideration at least two weeks prior to a meeting of the Voter's Assembly to be held no later than November. The congregation shall operate from a unified budget.

## **SECTION 2: The Board of Elders**

- A. The Board of Elders shall consist of four (4) male members. Their term of office shall be for two (2) years. Two elders shall be elected each year.
- B. The Board of Elders shall meet monthly, the first Tuesday of the month or as near to it as possible.
- C. The Elders shall elect a Chairman from among themselves, who shall serve as Vice-President of the Congregation for the duration of his term in the Board of Elders.
- D. The duties of the Board of Elders shall be:
  - a. Assist the Pastor in all matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the congregation.
  - b. The board shall recommend to the Church Council and the Voters' Assembly those items pertaining to the welfare of the Pastor and other servants.
  - c. Report to the Church Council and Voters' Assembly on all applications for admission into or termination of communicant membership.
  - d. Admonish and encourage members who are negligent in church attendance, their use of Sacraments, or support of the church.
  - e. Provide for the observance of church discipline as outlined in ARTICLE V, SECTION 6 of the Constitution.
  - f. Assist the Pastor in arranging for pulpit assistance, special services and guest Speakers.
  - g. Be responsible for the appointment of the Chief Usher and for the performance of ushers and all matters pertaining to the conduct of worship services.
  - h. Prepare a list of candidates, at the direction of the Voters' Assembly, to call a Pastor.

- i. Be responsible for the operation of the church office.
- j. Serve as a Public Relations Advisor and endeavor to publicize the Gospel and the activities of the congregation through whatever methods are practical.
- k. Submit a budget request annually to the Church Council.

### **SECTION 3: The Church Trustees**

- A. The Trustees shall be at least (2) elected members to serve a term of three (3) years.
- B. The Trustees may appoint other members from the congregation as the need for help arises.
- C. The Trustee's can approve purchases as needed to maintain church property up to \$200.00 without prior approval.
- D. Emergency situations, i.e. (Furnace, A/C) need to be approved by three (3) Officers. Bills for purchases must be signed by the elected member to be given to the Treasurer for payment.
- E. The duties of the Trustee shall be:
  - a. Serve on the Church Council.
  - b. Report regularly to the Council and to the Voters' Assembly
  - c. Maintain all property belonging to the congregation and obtain bids on any repairs or additions to such property and present to the Voter's Assembly for approval.
  - d. Accept and receive grants and bequests, sign documents, appear in court when called upon, and transact all business of the congregation assigned to it by the Voter's Assembly.
  - e. The Trustee may expend monies committed to them for the purpose stated in the annual budget.
  - f. The trustee shall be responsible for the security of all legal papers and congregational records.
  - g. Submit a budget request annually to the Church Council.

### **SECTION 4: Stewardship Committee**

- A. The Chairman of the Stewardship Committee shall be appointed by the President, with the approval of the Church Council, and shall serve for a term of two (2) years, or until his successor is appointed.
- B. In addition to the Chairman, the Committee shall consist of the Financial Secretary, the Treasurer and additional members from the congregation to be appointed by the Chairman as needed. These members shall serve for a term of two (2) years.
- C. The Chairman shall serve as a representative on the Church Council.
- D. The duties of the Stewardship Committee shall be:
  - a. Provide Offering envelopes and assign envelope numbers each year.
  - b. Encourage members of the congregation to make their specific talents available for performance of the work of the Lord.
  - c. Analyze the needs of the congregation, recruiting or assisting in recruiting of lay workers for those areas of activity requiring assistance and developing such areas for lay activity as needed.

- d. Instruct and encourage members in the grace of proportionate giving to God's work in their own parish and throughout the world.
- e. Work closely with Circuit and District Stewardship Committees, and encourage large attendance at Circuit Meetings.
- f. Aid in planning successful Mission Sundays and programs for young and old.
- g. Submit a budget request annually to the Church Council.

#### **SECTION 5: Finance Committee**

A. The Financial Secretary shall serve as Chairman of the Finance Committee. In Addition to the Chairman, the Committee shall consist of the Treasurer and additional members appointed by the Chairman as needed. Members shall serve for a term of two (2) years.

- B. The duties of the Finance Committee shall be:
- a. Collect and count offerings after each service.
  - b. Open offering envelopes and record amounts accurately on proper forms.
  - c. Be responsible for the safe deposit of all funds.
  - d. Submit a budget request annually to the Church Council.

#### **SECTION 6: Christian Concerns Committee**

- A. The Chairman of the Christian Concerns Committee shall be appointed by the President, with the approval of the Church Council, and shall serve for a term of two (2) years, or until his successor is appointed.
- B. In addition to the Chairman, the Committee shall consist of additional members from the congregation to be appointed by the Chairman as needed. These members shall serve for a term of two (2) years.
- C. The Chairman shall serve as a representative on the Church Council
- D. The duties of the Christian Concerns Committee shall be:
- a. In the field of social welfare, discover the needs of individuals in the congregation, of the aged, the sick and the needy and bring these needs to the Voters' Assembly with recommendations for action by the congregation.
  - b. Make known to the congregation the welfare agencies being conducted by the church, and solicit support for them.
  - c. Submit a budget request annually to the Church Council.

#### **SECTION 7: Youth Ministry Committee**

- A. The Chairman of the Youth Ministry Committee shall be appointed by the President, with the approval of the Church Council, and shall serve for a term of two (2) years, or until his successor is appointed.
- B. In addition to the Chairman, the Committee shall consist of additional members from the congregation to be appointed by the Chairman as needed. These members shall serve for a term of two (2) years.
- C. The Chairman shall serve as a representative on the Church Council.
- D. The duties of the Youth Ministry Committee shall be:



- a. Provide ministry to the youth and be a resource conduit to the boards and youth organizations of the congregation; especially in training people for the youth ministry, offering direct spiritual leadership, and in seeking new and creative ministries for the youth of the congregation.
- b. Provide spiritual growth opportunities through worship and opportunities to share the faith.
- c. Provide opportunity for making Christian friends and growing in relational skills.
- d. Implementing ministry opportunities in the church with other youth and with family members.
- e. Implementing growth opportunities in understanding Scripture, developing Christian values and exploring vocational decisions.
- f. Provide opportunity to grow in understanding themselves, reaching out caringly to others, and building good relationships.
- g. Coordinating the functions of the youth group.
- h. Financing the youth ministry.
- i. Planning and publicizing youth ministry activities.
- j. Identifying, enlisting and training leaders for the youth programs.
- k. Submit a budget request annually to the Church Council.

#### **SECTION 8: Auditing Committee**

The Auditing Committee shall consist of three (3) persons from the Voters' Assembly appointed by the President, with the approval of the Church Council, at the January Voters' Assembly Meeting. The Committee shall report its findings at the March Meeting.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **THE DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

#### **SECTION 1: Units of the Department of Christian Education**

The Department of Christian Education shall consist of the Sunday School, the Adult Bible Classes, Youth and Adult Confirmation Classes and Vacation Bible School.

#### **SECTION 2: Sunday School**

The Sunday School Superintendent shall be appointed by the President.

The duties of the Sunday School Superintendent shall be:

- A. Secure a staff which will meets the needs of the organization.
- B. Be responsible for the opening devotions of the Sunday School.
- C. Supervise all activities of the Sunday School program.
- D. Serve as director of the Vacation Bible School
- E. Be responsible for monthly meetings of the Sunday School teachers and assist the Pastor in preparation of the teachers.
- F. Be responsible for attendance and enrollment records.
- G. Report to the Voters' Assembly the needs of facilities and equipment.

H. Submit a budget request annually to the Church Council.

**SECTION 3: Adult Bible Classes**

Adult Bible Classes shall be conducted by the Pastor or a male teacher who is appointed by the Pastor in his absence.

**SECTION 4: Confirmation Classes**

Youth and Adult Confirmation Classes shall be conducted by the Pastor.

**SECTION 5: Vacation Bible School**

A Vacation Bible School shall be held annually for one (1) week during the summer, under the direction of the Sunday School Superintendent and the Pastor.

**ARTICLE VIII**  
**DUTIES OF THE USHERS**

**SECTION 1: Chief Usher**

The Chief Usher shall be appointed by the Board of Elders and shall be responsible for selecting and organizing the Usher Staff.

**SECTION 2 Duties (cont.)**

- A. The ushers shall be responsible for promoting reverent worship of God by:
- B. Greeting members and visitors, make sure they receive a service bulletin.
- C. Serving as hosts in God's House, they shall arrange for proper seating of the congregation.
- D. Check the heating and or A/C thermostat for proper settings, have all lights on.
- E. Inspect each pew for enough Hymnals and Communion Cards
- F. Collect the offering.
- G. Further good public relations through direction of traffic flow and other such measures that will provide for orderliness of service and the comfort and convenience of worshippers.
- H. Setting handicap signs out and removing after service.
- I. Arrive at church thirty (30) minutes early to have everything ready for the service.
- J. Remember they are greeting visitors and serving as hosts and are in Public Office, representing the congregation by assisting the Office of the Holy Ministry so they should dress accordingly.
- K. Secure the Church after the service is over, i.e. turning off lights adjusting A/C and heat, locking doors etc.
- L. If no Acolyte's are present, light candles by arrangement with the Pastor.

**ARTICLE IX**  
**CALLING PROCEDURE**

**SECTION 1: Nominations**

- A. At a regular meeting of the Voters' Assembly, the Board of Elders shall present a slate of candidates from nominees received from the District Office and from members of the congregation. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- B. The names of the candidates, along with the pertinent information regarding status and qualifications, shall be compiled and distributed or publicly announced at two (2) Sunday services. If no protest is entered and sustained, the election may be held at the next meeting of the Voters' Assembly.

## **SECTION 2: Elections**

The election of a pastor or other servant from the list of candidates shall be by ballot, and a majority vote shall elect. In the event there is no majority vote, succeeding ballots shall be held, each time removing the candidate having the least number of votes cast, until one has the majority.

## **ARTICLE X PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

The rules contained in the current edition of ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER NEWLY REVISED shall govern the church in all cases in which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution and Bylaws of this congregation and with any special rules of order the congregation may adopt, provided they do not conflict in any way with the Confessional Standard as set forth in ARTICLE III of the Constitution.

## **ARTICLE XI AMENDING THE BYLAWS**

These Bylaws may be amended in any regular meeting of the Voters' Assembly provided such amendment was proposed at the previous meeting, or submitted in writing to the voting members through letter or in the Sunday bulletin at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting in which it is to be considered. An affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) is required to amend.

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