

**BY LAWS OF
ST. MATTHEW EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Revised 2001**

5 **SECTION I. COMMUNION PARTICIPATION**

(Reference Chapter 2 – Confession of Faith, of the Constitution)

- 10 A. Participation in Holy Communion shall be open to communicant Lutherans and other Christians who truly believe that Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church, is present in the Sacrament, and that to receive Him is to receive the forgiveness of sins and promise of everlasting life. This shall include all Christian denominations with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is in Full Communion. Registration forms or oral announcements shall be so devised as to make prospective participants aware of these requirements.
- 15 B. Record of Communion participation shall be entered upon the records of the Congregation.
- 15 C. Communion will be open to all baptized children who have been instructed in the basic understanding of the Lord's Supper and who, in the judgement of the Pastor(s) and of their parents/guardian/legal custodian, are eligible to receive Communion.

20 **SECTION II. MEMBERSHIP**

(Reference Chapter 8, Membership, of the Constitution)

- 25 A. A confirmed member is considered inactive when he/she does not at least once in a period of one year, partake of Holy Communion, support the church with his/her offerings, or participate in the life and worship of the congregation. This lack of activity presumes that he/she no longer desires active membership. He/she shall lose the right to vote if of voting age, and shall not be counted in the membership statistics of the congregation. He/she shall be visited by the pastor(s) and be encouraged to become active members. Upon determining that the member is inactive, he/she shall receive a letter from the Congregation inviting him/her to reactivate membership. If after one year from the letter being sent, the confirmed member has not become active, that member's 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. Special consideration, however, shall be given persons in special circumstances.
- 30 B. A minor who has neither a parent nor guardian who is a member of the congregation, may be removed from the roster of baptized members if that child fails to participate in the life and worship of the congregation.

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SECTION III. CONGREGATION MEETINGS

(Reference Chapter 10 - Congregation Meeting, of the Constitution)

- 40 A. Voting at any duly called congregational meeting shall be by written ballot in the following cases. The Secretary of the Congregation shall retain ballots for 30 days.
1. Elections
 2. By the recommendation from the Executive Council
 3. To adopt or amend the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution or By-Laws of the congregation.

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- 45 4. To call a Pastor, a professional lay-staff person, or an ordained staff person; to request the resignation of any of these persons.
5. To remove a member from office in the congregation.
6. To sever membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
7. The purchase of capital equipment or real property.
8. When requested by at least twenty-five (25) percent of voting members present.
- 50 B. Except as otherwise provided in the Constitution and By-Laws, all matters shall be decided by a majority vote of those present and voting.
- C. The Executive Council shall prepare a roster of voting members prior to a congregational meeting.
- 55 D. The annual meeting of the congregation shall be held during the month of November or December. The annual meeting shall succeed the regularly scheduled November Executive Council meeting and precede the regularly scheduled December Executive Council meeting.
- E. The order of business at the annual meeting shall be:
- 60 1. Opening Devotions
2. Elections of Executive Council members
3. Approval of the minutes from previous annual meeting.
4. Any reports of the Pastor(s), the Executive Council, and Five Star Ministry Team Leaders.
5. Approval of the Budget
6. Old Business
- 65 7. New Business
8. Announcements
9. Adjournment and closing devotions

SECTION IV. THE CHURCH OFFICIALS

70 **(Reference Chapter 11 – Officers, and Chapter 12 – Congregation Council of the Constitution)**

A. Members of the Executive Council

- 75 1. The Executive Council shall consist of the Pastor(s) and seven elected members. The President Elect is elected for a two-year term, serving as President in the second year. All other members are elected for one-year terms and may serve no more than four consecutive terms.
2. The seven elected members shall consist of:
- 80 a. President
- b. President Elect
- c. Treasurer
- d. Secretary
- e. Finance Director
- f. Property Director
- g. Personnel Director
3. The filling of an unexpired term shall not be considered a term of office.
- 85 4. Executive Council members shall:

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- a. Meet the requirements of congregational membership stated in Chapter 8 of the Constitution.
 - b. Shall be at least 18 years old.
 - c. Demonstrate leadership and service promoting the welfare of the Congregation.
- 90 5. The newly elected Executive Council members shall be Council member-elect until their public installation. Council members-elect shall have voice but no vote until after their public installation prior to the first Executive Council meeting of the calendar year.
6. The term of office of any Council member does not end until that Council member's successor is installed.
- 95 7. The Executive Council shall fill any vacancy in the Executive Council by majority vote of the Executive Council for the unfilled portions of the term.

B. Meetings of the Executive Council

- 1. Regular meetings of the Executive Council shall be held monthly unless changed by vote due to calendar conflicts.
- 100 2. The Pastor(s), or any member of the Executive Council, may call special meetings of the Executive Council.

C. Duties of the Executive Council Officers and the Pastor(s)

- 1. The **President, the President Elect, the Secretary and Pastor(s)** shall establish a liaison relationship with one of the Five Star Ministry Teams at the beginning of each calendar year. Alignment should ideally match talents with areas of interest. This relationship will be one of assistance and communication to maintain continuity with the leadership group and the Ministry Team Leaders.
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- 2. The **President** shall tend to the necessary and appropriate business, legal and management functions of the Church. The president shall preside over the meetings of the Executive Council and the congregation, unless the meeting decides otherwise.
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- 3. The **President Elect** shall preside or succeed in the absence of the President, unless otherwise decided. The President Elect shall also be informed of, report on, interpret, and promote for Council the work of the Lutheran Church at large.
- 4. The **Treasurer** shall be the custodian of the funds of congregation, shall be bonded, and disburse the funds in accordance with the adopted annual budget and the decisions of the Executive Council and the Congregation. The Treasurer shall present an annual report to the Congregation and such other reports as the Council may require. The fiscal year shall coincide with the calendar year. The Treasurer shall participate in the budget preparation activities for the following fiscal year.
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- 5. The **Secretary** shall keep the minutes of the Executive Council and the Congregation, shall preserve its archives and shall inform the congregation of Council activities. The secretary shall also execute all legal documents as required. The secretary shall record members' giving, and shall send regular giving statements to members.
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- 6. The **Finance Director** shall manage the following duties, recruiting assistance as needed:
- a. Manage the risks and assets of the congregation
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- b. Deposit and credit to the proper accounts all the income of the congregation
 - c. Monitor and assure that insurance coverage is maintained
 - d. Monitor all transactions of organizations that handle funds within the congregation
 - e. Prepare the annual budget with input from Executive Council members and ministry team leaders.
 - f. Recommend and implement internal control procedures
 - g. Arrange for annual audits of the financial records of the congregation by an independent auditor
 - h. Perform and/or coordinate internal fiscal audits
 - 135 i. Audit purchase orders and tax filings.
 - j. Monitor financial activities relating to mission activities and benevolence requests of the congregation
 - k. Appoint members to the annual Stewardship Task Force as directed by Executive Council.
- 140 7. The **Property Director** shall manage the following duties, recruiting assistance as needed:
- a. Provide for repairs and maintenance of buildings, equipment, furniture and grounds
 - b. Oversee the custodial staff
 - c. Manage the utilities
 - d. Present requests to use church facilities and equipment to the Executive Council
 - 145 e. Coordinate the approved use of church facilities
 - f. Coordinate the service needs for outside groups
8. The **Personnel Director** shall:
- a. Serve as non-voting Executive Council liaison to the Personnel Committee, Pastoral Relations Committee and the Nominating Committee
 - 150 b. Recruit members to these committees as directed by Executive Council
9. The Executive Council, working with the Personnel Committee, shall be empowered to employ such non-ordained or lay staff persons as are needed to carry on the work of the congregation such as organists, choir directors, secretaries, interns, custodians, etc., and shall
- 155 fix their salaries.
10. Adjustments in such salaries, including the Pastor's, shall be the responsibility of the Executive Council working with the Personnel Committee, subject to the congregation's approval of the annual budget.
- 160 11. The Executive Council and Ministry Team Leaders shall perform an annual review of the Continuing Resolutions relating to the Five Star Ministry initiatives. This must be completed as soon as possible during the first quarter to provide direction to the Ministry Team Leaders for the coming year.
12. Delegates to the Church assemblies shall be appointed by the Executive Council. Their expenses are to be met by the congregation.
- 165 13. The Pastoral duties shall be those as outlined in Chapter 9 of the Constitution

D. Five Star Ministry Team Leaders

- 170 1. The Five Star Ministry Teams shall be:
 - a. Congregational Life
 - b. Comprehensive Youth
 - c. Small Group
 - d. Social Concerns
 - e. Communication Evangelism
2. The Team Leaders shall be elected by the congregation at the annual meeting of the congregation for a one-year term. The Team Leaders are not term limited.
- 175 3. Each Team Leaders shall meet with the Executive Council quarterly.
4. Ministry Team Leaders will coordinate ministry activities based on the priorities as established with the Executive Council. These activities are specified via Continuing Resolutions and are subject to an annual review by the Executive Council. Likewise new ministry initiatives not included in the Five Star Ministry areas require Executive Council approval.
- 180 5. Ministry Team Leaders are responsible for securing helping members.
6. Ministry Team Leaders shall submit summary reports to the Executive Council Secretary one week prior to the Executive Council meetings.
- 185 7. Ministry Team Leaders are responsible for the management of the budgets under their stewardship. Variances to these budgets should be discussed with the Executive Council. Annual budget inputs shall be provided to the Finance Director.

E. Responsibilities of the Five Star Ministry Team Leaders

A general description of the Ministry Team Leader responsibilities follows:
The activities of the Five Star Ministries of St. Matthew are performed per the
190 Continuing Resolutions set forth each year by the Executive Council.

1. Congregational Life

The Congregational Life Ministry Team Leader is responsible for coordinating the worship life, prayer ministry, fellowship and service opportunities of the congregation. This ministry is focused on the physical, spiritual and emotional needs of all members.

2. Comprehensive Youth

The Comprehensive Youth Ministry Team Leader is responsible for all ministries related to the youth of St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church and the community we serve. Youth is defined as all persons high school age and under.

3. Small Group

The Small Group Ministry Team Leader will seek to provide opportunities for the post high school adults and families of St. Matthew to meet together for study and discussion. The goal is to serve the adults and families of St. Matthew and the community.

4. Social Concerns

The Social Concerns Ministry Team Leader is responsible for coordinating and promoting the social ministry of St. Matthew and receiving and evaluating information

on social concerns from a Christian perspective. This hands-on ministry can serve local, national or international needs.

5. Communication Evangelism

210 The Communication Evangelism Ministry Team Leader is responsible for the coordinating and promoting of church activities directed at reaching out and witnessing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. This ministry is the communication resource of the church to our members and the community.

215 **SECTION V. NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

(Reference Chapter 13, Congregation Committees, of the Constitution)

This committee shall seek and nominate candidates for the Executive Council and for the Five Star Ministry Team Leaders. The slate of candidates will be published with the announcement of the annual meeting. Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the annual meeting.

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SECTION VI. PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

(Reference Chapter 13, Congregation Committees, of the Constitution)

- A. The role of this committee is to strengthen our ministry by serving as a channel of communication between the pastor(s) and congregation as needed.
- 225 B. The committee shall hold quarterly meetings and always with the knowledge of the pastor(s). The Pastor(s), the chairperson of the committee, or the office of Bishop of the Northeastern Ohio Synod may call special meetings. It may hold special meetings without the Pastor being present, provided the Bishop of the Northeastern Ohio Synod or his representative is present. When the Pastor is not present, he shall be informed prior to such a meeting and immediately
- 230 after such a meeting he shall be brought into consultation either by the committee or by the Bishop of the Northeastern Ohio Synod or his representative.
- C. This committee will report to the Executive Council, and may forward recommendations for action and implementation.
- D. Continuing Resolutions will define the pastoral evaluation process.
- 235 E. The committee will share concerns and communications in a confidential and supportive atmosphere.
- F. Additional agenda items may include personal and spiritual growth, housing, expectations, family, etc.

240 **SECTION VII. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

(Reference Chapter 13, Congregation Committees, of the Constitution)

- A. The personnel committee will be responsible for the administration of the paid staff of the church as follows:
 - 1. Serve as mediator to resolve personnel / policy conflicts.
 - 245 2. Make annual budget recommendations for staff compensation.
 - 3. Work with appropriate committees to complete an annual confidential ministry review of non-ordained staff members.

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- 4. Work with appropriate committees to conduct interviews and make recommendations to the Executive Council to fill vacancies in non-ordained staff positions.
- 250 5. Work with appropriate committees to initiate recommendations for termination (non-ordained positions only).
- 6. Work with appropriate committees and staff persons to develop and regularly update job descriptions for personnel.
- 7. Represent staff concerns regarding job descriptions to the Executive Council.
- 255 8. Develop written policy for personnel regarding matters of leave, vacations, reviews, etc.
- 9. Assume other personnel responsibilities as designated by the Executive Council.

SECTION VIII. REPORTS OF ORGANIZATIONS

260 All committees and organizations that handle funds within the congregation shall submit annual accounts to the Church Treasurer by the tenth of January and such reports shall be made available to the congregation.

SECTION IX. PARISH RECORDS

- 265 A. 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 a Pastor's service to the congregation, the records shall have been brought up to date prior to departure. The records shall consist of:
 - 1. The roster of baptized, confirmed, and voting members
 - 2. The ministerial acts performed by the Pastor
 - 270 3. The minutes and reports of the Northeastern Ohio Synod and the Handbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- B. The secretary of the congregation shall be responsible for the minutes of the meetings of the congregation and the Executive Council.
- 275 C. The treasurer of the congregation shall be responsible for the financial records of the congregation.
- D. The Pastor shall report to the General Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America such statistics as may be requested and shall annually report to the congregation a summary of ministerial acts.
- 280 E. 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.

SECTION X. PASTORAL VACANCY

(reference Chapter 10, Congregation Meeting and Chapter 13, Congregation Committees)

- 285 A. When a pastoral vacancy occurs which may result in a change in the seated pastor's call:
 - 1. The Executive Council shall call an informal meeting of the Congregation to discuss the process for filling the pastoral vacancy. Two options shall be discussed:
 - 290 a. A direct vote to call the seated pastor to take the position opened by the pastoral vacancy;
 - or

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- b. Appoint a Call Committee according to the synod recommended call process to fill the pastoral vacancy.
- 295 2. After the informal meeting, the Executive Council shall call a special Congregation Meeting to vote to choose either option (a) or option (b).
3. If the Congregation chooses option (a), the Executive Council shall call a second special Congregation Meeting to vote to call the seated pastor to the open position.
4. Before the second special Congregation Meeting, the Executive Council may call a second informal meeting of the Congregation to discuss calling the seated pastor to the open position.
- 300 5. After the second special Congregation Meeting or if the Congregation chooses option (b), the Executive Council shall nominate a Call Committee to fill the remaining pastoral vacancy and shall call a further special Congregation Meeting to vote to confirm the nominated Call Committee. If option (b) is chosen, the seated pastor may be recommended for call by the Call Committee.