

# BYLAWS

## Preamble

This congregation shall be affiliated with Lutheran Church – Canada as long as the confessions and constitution of said Synod are in accord with the confession as stated in Article IV of the Constitution and bylaws of this congregation.

The congregation shall, to the best of its ability, collaborate with Lutheran Church – Canada and assist it in effecting all sound measures intended for the building up of the Kingdom of God.

## Article I Membership.

Section 1. Admission into baptized membership shall be,

1. By baptism.  
A person baptized with water “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” will be received into baptized membership.
2. By transfer.  
Baptized persons presenting a letter of transfer from a congregation in fellowship with this congregation shall be received into baptized membership.
3. By request.  
Baptized persons who have no church affiliation and who have come under the spiritual care of this congregation, including the children who have not yet been confirmed, may be received into baptized membership.
4. Received and approved by the pastor and the board of elders and reported to the voters’ assembly.

Section 2. Admission into communicant membership.

1. Confirmation itself being a reception into church membership, all who are received by this church rite become communicant members.
2. Applicants for communicant membership in this congregation shall consult the pastor who shall determine whether such applicants are eligible for communicant membership in accordance with Article V of the constitution.

3. Applicants not familiar with the doctrines and confessions of the Lutheran Church shall be required to attend a course of instruction, and to make profession of their faith either before the congregation or, at the pastor's discretion, before witnesses who are elders, before being received as communicant members.
4. Applicants from other Evangelical Lutheran Churches in fellowship with Lutheran Church – Canada shall submit a letter of transfer from their former congregation to establish their eligibility for membership as communicant members. In the case of applicants whose previous membership in a Lutheran congregation has lapsed, the pastor may arrange for a period of re-instruction of faith for such applicants.
5. After applicants have given satisfactory evidence of their eligibility in accordance with the preceding subsections and have been presented with the constitution and bylaws, their admission as communicant members shall be approved by the pastor and the board of elders and reported to the voters' assembly. The roster of new members shall be publicized in the various news media of the congregation.

Section 3. Privileges and duties of membership.

1. It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregation to:
  - (a) grow in the Christian faith and life through faithful use of the means of grace, searching the Scriptures at home and in fellowship with other members of the congregation and its agencies, and partaking of the Lord's Supper frequently,
  - (b) live a morally decent life before God and men, abstaining from open works of the flesh (Galatians 5:18-21), and so conducting themselves at all times to bring credit rather than blame upon the Church of Jesus Christ,
  - (c) provide for the proper Christian training of their children by instruction at home and through the agencies of the church,
  - (d) contribute toward the maintenance of the congregation and the extension of the Kingdom of God at home and abroad to the limit of their financial ability,
  - (e) place their God given talents and abilities at the disposal of the pastor, the officers and other agencies of the congregation as set forth in the constitution and bylaws, so that the purposes and functions of the congregation may be effectively implemented.

Section 4. Voting Membership.

1. Any communicant member of this congregation who is of legal voting age in the province of British Columbia is eligible to be received as a voting member.
2. A communicant member of this congregation who wishes to be received as a voting member shall read the constitution and bylaws and sign the registry copies indicating they are understood and agreed to.
3. After the communicant member signs the registry copies of the constitution and bylaws he/she will be received as a voting member at the end of the next voters' meeting.
4. If for no adequate reason a voting member fails to attend at least three consecutive voters' meetings the member's name shall be removed from the voting membership registry. Such a member may reapply for voting membership according to Section 4 subsection 3.
5. It shall be the privilege and duty of a voting member to:
  - (a) Conscientiously and prayerfully exercise his right of suffrage in all measures that will advance the work of God's Kingdom both locally and in the church at large,
  - (b) Willingly serve in any office or capacity for which his talents and abilities equip him,
  - (c) Faithfully carry out all the duties of communicant membership as outlined in Section 3,
  - (d) Assist with wholehearted diligence in administering the temporal and spiritual affairs of the congregation,
  - (e) Faithfully attend all meetings of the voters' assembly.

Section 5. Termination of membership.

1. Members desiring to join a congregation in church fellowship with this congregation shall present their request for transfer to the pastor. Such transfer of membership shall be announced at a subsequent meeting of the voters' assembly.
2. In cases where members have joined another congregation not in fellowship with this congregation, they shall, upon the recommendation of the pastor, be considered as having already terminated their membership and their names shall be removed from the membership list by action of the board elders and reported to the voters' assembly.
3. After a reasonable time, the names of members whose whereabouts are unknown shall be removed from the membership

list by action of the board of elders and reported to the voters' assembly.

4. Members who have moved to a known location and have not worshipped in this congregation for six (6) months shall have their names forwarded to a pastor of a sister congregation in their area. Such action shall be reported at the next meeting of the voter's assembly.

#### Section 6. Self-exclusion.

1. When a member of this congregation has not communed for a reasonable length of time, he/she will receive a number of periodical and caring visits from an elder and shall be admonished and encouraged. If then, after twelve months, the member has not responded to Christian admonition as outlined above, the individual shall be considered to have excluded himself/herself from the congregation. Such self exclusion releases the individual from all responsibilities and privileges of this congregation, and to any claim against the properties of this congregation. A report of such shall be made at the next meeting of the voters' assembly. Such person, however, will at all times be cordially welcome to attend divine services in our church.

#### Section 7. Excommunication.

1. A member who conducts himself/herself in an unchristian like manner; i.e. who openly adheres to false doctrine, gives evidence of an immoral and offensive life or wilfully despises the preaching of the Gospel and the Lord's Supper shall be admonished in accordance with Matthew 15:18/20. The board of elders shall assist the pastor in administering church discipline on behalf of the congregation.
2. A 75% vote by secret ballot of the voting members present shall be required for every resolution for excommunication. A copy of such resolution, signed by the secretary and pastor shall be sent to the person by registered mail. Excommunication terminates membership.
3. Persons who have been removed from membership for whatever reason shall be restored with all rights and privileges when they repent and ask for forgiveness through the pastor and the board of elders.
4. Acts of discipline and restoration of membership shall be made known to all communicant members by whatever method the pastor

and the elders deem appropriate and shall be reported at the next voters' meeting.

5. A member who has been excommunicated shall be cordially welcome to attend divine services in our church.

Section 8. Forfeiture of member rights.

1. A person whose membership has been terminated has forfeited all rights of a member of this congregation and all claims upon the property of the congregation as such, or upon any part thereof, so long as he/she is not reinstated into membership.

Section 9. Removal from Office.

1. Any officer or director of this congregation who wilfully neglects the duties of his office may be deposed of his/her office by a 75% vote of the voting members present at a voters' meeting. The board of elders shall initiate such disciplinary action.
2. When an office is made vacant by the incumbent for any reason, it shall be filled by appointment until the term is completed.

**Article II    The Pastoral Office.**

Section 10. Calling a pastor.

1. Names of pastors shall be obtained by the church council from the District President or his representative.
2. Additional names of pastoral candidates may be suggested by any voting member. Such names must be cleared by the District President or his representative.
3. The chairman and the board of elders shall then prepare a short list of candidates, with their biographical sketches.
4. After the foregoing steps have been completed the chairman shall call a special voters' meeting for the purpose of calling a pastor. Selection shall be made by way of secret ballot in accordance with the following procedure:
  - (a) Candidates cleared by the District President in advance may be added to the short list and placed on the ballot, subject to approval by the voters at that meeting,
  - (b) All candidates on the ballot shall be included for a first vote. The candidate who receives the least number of votes will be

dropped from the ballot. This process will be followed by way of secret ballot until two candidates remain. The pastor then receiving the most votes by way of simple majority will be considered elected.

- (c) The chairman shall then request a unanimous vote of approval from the voters' assembly for the pastor elect by way of a show of hands.
- 5. The chairman in concert with the board of elders shall promptly complete and send the call documents to the pastor elect.
- 6. When calling a pastor to teach the Word of God and to administer the sacraments on their behalf, the members of the congregation exercise the royal priesthood and by no means relinquish it. This is the privilege and responsibility of the whole Church.

#### Section 11. The pastoral office.

- 1. The pastoral office is the authority conferred upon pastors by God, through a call of the congregation (the holder of the priesthood and of all congregational authority) to exercise in public office the common rights of spiritual priesthood in behalf of all. The pastoral office is the primary position in the congregation from which all other positions of the congregation issue. The congregation may, however; establish as many auxiliary positions as its needs require and determine what work is to be assigned to such positions.
- 2. Upon being installed, the pastor is authorized and obligated to proclaim to the congregation, jointly and severally, the word of God in its full truth and purity as contained in the canon of the Old and New Testaments and professed in the Book of Concord of the year 1580. He is further to:
  - (a) Administer the Sacraments in accordance with their divine institution,
  - (b) Discharge toward all members of the congregation the functions of a minister and curate of their souls in an evangelical manner, in particular to visit the sick and the dying and to admonish indifferent and erring members,
  - (c) Spiritually guard the welfare of the younger members of the congregation and adults during their preparation for acceptance of Holy Communion,
  - (d) Guide the congregation in applying the divinely ordained discipline in the church,
  - (e) Provide spiritual leadership and oversight in the educational agencies and the various adult and youth organizations within the congregation,

- (f) To serve as an example by Christian conduct and to do all that is possible for the up-building of the congregation and for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. By reason of his position the pastor is not only a servant and steward of God, but also of the congregation.
- 3. The pastor shall have the authority and responsibility for supervising the musical portion of all worship services in conjunction with the board of elders so that it is at all times in harmony with the doctrine and practice of Lutheran Church Canada.
- 4. Members of the congregation are obligated to accord the pastor honour, love and obedience in his ministry of God's Word and to support his ministrations with diligence and faithful prayers. To help him in the discharge of his duties by cordial one-mindedness, by willing readiness, by peaceable conduct, and in every other way possible, and to provide for him according to the ability of the congregation.

#### Section 12. Deposing a pastor.

- 1. Sufficient grounds for deposing a pastor shall be,
  - (a) persistent adherence to false doctrine,
  - (b) scandalous life,
  - (c) wilful neglect of official or Pastoral duties,
  - (d) evident and protracted incapacity to perform the functions of the sacred office.
- 2. Protracted incapacity to perform the function of sacred office shall be investigated by the board of elders. The pastor involved and President of the Alberta British Columbia District shall be consulted. If the incapacity reveals a condition of a permanent nature the pastor shall be relieved of his office. Church council shall ensure that the pastor is afforded whatever care and benefits are available and within the capacity of council to provide.
- 3. Persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life and wilful neglect of official or pastoral duties shall be investigated by the board of elders. The pastor involved shall first be given an opportunity to repent and if this opportunity bears no fruit, the pastor shall be given the opportunity to resign his position in the congregation. Such opportunity having been given and declined, the board of elders shall, after consultation with the appropriate officers of the Alberta British Columbia District, notify the voting members of the situation, and shall submit the matter for action at a special meeting of that body. A 75% majority of the voting members present shall be required to depose a pastor.

4. Should the occasion to depose a pastor ever arise, the intended deposition shall be announced by the board of elders at regular divine service on two Sundays preceding a meeting of the voting members called for that purpose. All voting members shall be notified two weeks in advance.

### **Article III    Organization.**

#### Section 13. Rights and Powers.

1. This congregation, subject to the limiting provisions and regulations of the constitution and associated bylaws, shall have supreme power in the administration of its affairs. No duly elected officers or board members of this congregation shall have any power or authority beyond that conferred upon them by the congregation acting through its voting membership. Each administrative board along with church council shall be responsible for the performance of such duties as the voting membership may delegate to them by special resolution. Such specially delegated rights and powers, both of officers and administrative boards, shall be subject to revision or complete withdrawal by the voting membership at its discretion.

#### Section 14. Voting membership.

1. This congregation shall be represented by and administer all its affairs through its voting membership. Only communicant members who have qualified according to the membership provisions of Article V of the constitution and Article 1, Section 4 of the bylaws shall be received as voting members.

#### Section 15. Administrative boards.

1. Responsibility and authority for the daily administration of congregational affairs shall be delegated to the following boards:
  - (a) Board of elders,
  - (b) Board of Christian education and outreach,
  - (c) Board of trustees,
  - (d) Administrative boards as deemed needed by the congregation and organized by church council.
2. One member of each administrative board shall serve as director of that board.



3. The pastor and the chairman shall be advisory, non-voting members of all administrative boards and shall attend meetings at their discretion.

Section 16. Officers of the congregation.

1. Officers of the congregation shall be:
  - (a) Chairman,
  - (b) Vice chairman,
  - (c) Treasurer,
  - (d) Financial secretary.

Section 17. Church council.

1. Church council shall be comprised of:
  - (a) Pastor,
  - (b) Chairman,
  - (c) Vice chairman,
  - (d) Treasurer,
  - (e) Financial secretary,
  - (f) Board of elders,
  - (g) Directors of other administrative boards,
  - (h) Secretary.

**Article IV Meetings of the Congregation.**

Section 18. Voters' meetings.

1. Meetings of the voters' assembly shall be held in October and in May each year.
2. The voters' meeting held in October shall be held to debate and approve the budget, receive reports of all members of church council and to approve the ongoing mission of the congregation.
3. Other voters' meetings may be called by the chairman or by written request of 10 percent of the voting membership. Notice of the date and time of such meetings and the nature of the business to be transacted shall be announced at Divine Service immediately preceding the date of the meeting.
4. Church council shall set the dates and times of all voters' meetings.
5. All communicant members of the congregation who are not voting members may attend the voters' meetings as observers with speaking privilege.

6. Every voter's meeting shall be announced at least two Sundays prior to the date of the meeting. This clause shall not apply should it be necessary to hold an emergency voters' meeting as determined by church council.

Section 19. Annual general meetings.

1. The voter's meeting held in May shall be determined as the annual general meeting.

Section 20. Church council meetings.

1. It shall be the duty of church council to meet monthly or as considered necessary by the chairman.
2. Church council meetings shall consider, discuss, plan and coordinate all matters pertaining to the general welfare of the congregation and when necessary present recommendations to the congregation.
3. All communicant members of the congregation may attend church council meetings as observers. They may, with the consent of the church council members present, participate in the discussion of those items of business that they may bring forward individually or as a delegation.
4. Church council shall act in matters of emergency when necessary.
5. Church council shall conduct an annual financial review.

Section 21. Administrative board meetings.

1. Directors of the administrative boards shall hold meetings when and as often as deemed necessary to carry out board responsibilities.
2. The director, with the consent of the members present, may vary the order of business depending on the nature and purpose of the meeting and also in the interest of efficiency.

Section 22. Quorum.

1. Those members in attendance at a properly called meeting shall constitute a quorum.
2. When dealing with special situations, exceptions to the quorum are specifically mandated in the constitution and by laws.

Section 23. Validity of resolutions.

1. For the purposes of order Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed at all meetings of the congregation.
2. All congregation matters may be decided by a simple majority vote of the qualified members present at a properly convened meeting of the membership, except as otherwise provided in the constitution and the bylaws for dealing with certain situations or resolutions.
3. Proxy votes are prohibited.

**Article V Societies.**

Section 24. Societies within the congregation.

1. Societies may be organized within the congregation only with the expressed approval of the voting membership.
2. All such societies shall be under the supervision of the pastor and the appropriate administrative board under whose jurisdiction they function.
3. Any decisions, enactment or performance of or by societies or groups shall be invalid if they conflict with the constitution or by laws.
4. The pastor, by virtue of his office, shall be the advisor for such societies or groups within the congregation.
5. Only communicant members of this congregation shall be voting members or hold office of such societies.

**Article VI Property Rights.**

Section 25. The congregation may receive, acquire, hold title to and manage such real estate and other property as it may need to accomplish the purposes of the congregation and may buy and sell real estate and other property upon a 75% majority vote of the voting membership present at a voters' meeting.

Section 26. If at any time a separation should take place within this congregation, the advice of the president of the Alberta-British Columbia District of Lutheran Church – Canada or his representative shall be sought.

Section 27. Should all efforts to reconcile differences in peace and love fail, the property of the congregation and all benefits therein connected shall remain with those members who continue to adhere to confession and practice to Article IV of the constitution.

Section 28. In the event the congregation should disband, the property and all rights connected therewith shall be transferred to the Alberta British Columbia District of Lutheran Church Canada at the time of dissolution.

**Article VII Borrowing powers of the congregation.**

Section 29. The congregation may borrow money with a 75% majority vote cast in a regular or special meeting of the voters' assembly.

**Article VIII Amendments.**

Section 30. Amending the constitution and bylaws.

1. The constitution and its bylaws may be amended by a 75% majority of the votes cast at a voters' meeting.
2. The intention to amend the constitution or bylaws and the wording of the amendments proposed shall be presented to the congregation in writing two Sundays prior to the date upon which the amendments are presented for action.
3. The constitution and bylaws shall be reviewed by the board of elders every five years.

**Article IX Election of officers and administrative boards.**

Section 31. Nominating procedure.

1. At the February meeting of church council three members shall be appointed from the voting membership who, in addition to the pastor, shall serve as the nominating committee.
2. The nominating committee shall prepare a list of nominees from the voting membership for each office.
3. Voting members may submit to the nominating committee names from the voting membership as nominees for each office. Such

nominations must be received by the nominating committee by April 30th.

4. The nominating committee shall obtain the consent of all nominees to serve if elected.
5. The list of candidates as determined by the nominating committee shall be made available to the congregation in the church bulletin as least two Sundays prior to the annual general voters' meeting.
6. Only male candidates shall be eligible for the office of chairman, vice chairman and the board of elders.
7. Nominations shall not be made from the floor at the annual general meeting. This stipulation may be waived should a candidate listed in subsection 5 be unable to accept nomination at the annual general meeting.
8. Written consent of nominees if elected and not present at the annual general meeting shall be provided.
9. Candidates defeated for office may be placed on the nominating slate at the annual general meeting for any other office not yet filled.
10. From the list of candidates for each elective office submitted by the nominating committee, the voting membership shall, at the annual general meeting, elect by secret ballot, officers in the following order:
  - (a) Chairman,
  - (b) Vice chairman,
  - (c) Treasurer,
  - (d) Financial secretary,
  - (e) Board of elders,
  - (f) Administrative boards,
  - (g) Secretary.

Section 32. Election for the term of office shall take place every two years at an annual general meeting.

Section 33. The term of office for all elected positions shall be two years.

#### **Article X Duties of Officers and Administrative Boards.**

Section 34. Chairman and vice chairman.

1. The chairman shall preside at all church council and voters' meetings.

2. The vice chairman shall preside at all church council and voters' meetings in the absence of the chairman.
3. Specific duties of this position are included in the policy manual.

Section 35. Treasurer.

1. The treasurer shall pay all bills authorized by the congregation and keep accurate records of receipts and disbursements in records which shall be and remain the property of the congregation.
2. All records shall be reviewed annually and a report of such review shall be submitted to the congregation.
3. Specific duties of this position are included in the policy manual

Section 36. Financial secretary.

1. It shall be the responsibility of the financial secretary to receive, record and deposit in the congregation's designated depository, all congregational monies, including offerings, contributions, special collections, loans, subsidies, bequests, etc.
2. The records maintained by the financial secretary shall be reviewed annually and a report of such review shall be submitted to the congregation.
3. Specific duties of this position are included in the policy manual.

Section 37. Secretary.

1. The secretary shall take minutes of all meetings and shall enter them in a permanent record book.
2. The secretary shall maintain the signed master copy of the constitution and bylaws and a registry of members that comprise the voters' assembly.
3. Specific duties of this position are included in the policy manual.

Section 38. Board of elders.

1. The functions of this board are the spiritual welfare of the pastor and congregation members, individually and cooperatively; and the supervision of everything pertaining to congregational worship.
2. This board shall consist of three or more members.
3. Specific duties of this position are included in the policy manual.

Section 39. Board of Christian education and outreach.

1. The basic function of this board is to plan and administer Christian education programs within the congregation as well as outreach programs.
2. Specific duties of this position are included in the policy manual.

Section 40. Board of trustees.

1. The basic functions of the board are the proper maintenance and repair church property.
2. The board shall consist of two or more members.
3. Specific duties of this position are included in the policy manual.

Section 41. Policy Manual

1. The church council shall prepare a policy manual describing in detail the specific duties and functions of the church officers and administrative boards.
2. The policy manual may also include various congregational policies regarding such things as privacy concerns, funerals, weddings or use of the church property by outside groups, etc.
3. This policy manual shall be periodically reviewed by the board of elders and updated to assist the various church officers and administrative boards as they carry out their duties.