

BYLAWS OF ST. MARK EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

SECTION I

St. Mark Mission Statement

“Loving God, Loving Our Neighbor”

St. Mark Vision Statement

St. Mark’s is a community of believers united by Baptism as a family through the promise and presence of Jesus Christ. As a congregation, we will show loving concern and service to each other, our community and the world.

We will answer God’s call to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ by example, word, and deed. We are committed to do God’s will as led by the Holy Spirit. We will share the unconditional love of Jesus Christ as we continue our ministries of outreach, worship, and fellowship, becoming the church God has called us to be.

SECTION II

The Pastor

1. The pastor shall grant certificates for ministerial acts as appropriate. These shall be issued as early as practicable, but no later than two weeks after the act. Certificates of standing or transfer of membership shall be issued as requested, but no later than one month after receipt of the request. Notifications shall be sent to the member requesting such transfer. The pastor shall report monthly on these requirements to the Congregation Council.
2. a. In the absence of the pastor, the president shall perform the administrative duties of the pastor as president of the congregation and the Congregation Council, or any other duties as may be assigned by the pastor.
b. During a pastoral vacancy the president shall be the custodian of the seal and shall grant letters of standing or transfer as requested. The president shall report monthly on these requirements to the Congregation Council.

SECTION III

Congregational Meetings

1. The annual congregational meeting shall be held in January. Its exact time and date will be determined by the Congregation Council at the December meeting.
2. At the annual meeting, reports shall be submitted by the pastor(s), the financial officers, the secretary of the Congregation Council, all standing committees, the superintendent of church school and any other organizations or agencies of the congregation as the Congregation Council may direct. The reports shall include all financial and statistical data that are necessary for the official parochial report. The report of the secretary of Congregation Council shall include a summary of the actions of the council and the congregation taken during the year. If possible, all such reports shall be printed and distributed to the congregation before the annual meeting, said reports to be attached as part of the minutes of the annual meeting.
3. A meeting of the congregation shall be held in the month of December the exact date to be determined by the Congregation Council, for the purpose of electing council members and, if necessary, trustees.
4. Action on the recommended budget shall be taken before the end of the calendar year.
5. The Congregation Council shall review and give approval to the minutes of all congregational meetings at a subsequent regular council meeting.

SECTION IV

Officers

1. At an organizational meeting, the Congregation Council shall elect a president, a vice-president, a secretary, a treasurer and, if desired, a financial secretary, all of whom will serve both the council and the congregation in their several capacities. All of the above, except the treasurer and financial secretary, shall be chosen from the membership of the Congregation Council. The other officers, if not members of the council, shall be accorded the privilege of voice without vote in its meetings.
2. All officers shall be voting members of the congregation. If any of them ceases to be such, that office shall at once be declared vacant by the council, which shall fill the vacancy for the unexpired term.
3. The secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation and of the council in a volume provided by the congregation, which shall be preserved permanently in its archives.

4. The financial secretary, if such an office is activated, shall receive and keep records of all income from contributing members and other sources.
5. The financial secretary shall keep the books of account of the congregation in a current condition; and shall receive all funds and disburse them on proper orders, making monthly remittance of benevolence receipts to the treasurer of the synod.
6. The financial secretary shall make written reports of all financial transactions to the Congregation Council monthly and to the congregation, together with a satisfactory audit, at its annual meetings. All financial officers shall give corporate surety, in amounts determined by the Congregation Council, for which the premium shall be paid by the congregation. Fidelity coverage provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in American shall be deemed a fulfillment of this requirement.
7. The Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the council and shall prepare a slate of nominees for Congregation Council membership to be reported to the council at its October meeting. The pastor(s) shall serve as (an) ex officio member (s) of the nominating committee. The Nominating Committee shall determine prior to submission of a slate, that the recommended candidates are willing and capable of serving. When the Nominating Committee has submitted its slate to the council, names of additional candidates may be placed upon the slate by the council members. The council will then vote on the slate to determine the candidates it will propose to the congregation.
 - a. Under no circumstances shall a name be submitted without concurrence of the potential candidate.
 - b. The congregation shall be given the opportunity to make further nominations at the December congregation meeting. The vote will be taken by the congregation immediately after the recommended slate, plus nominees from the congregation, has been presented.
8. Following the annual elections, the newly elected council members shall have a voice in the December meeting, but not vote until the first meeting in January.
9. The Nominating Committee appointed for the purpose of preparing a slate of nominees for Congregation Council membership shall also have the responsibility to develop the availability of personnel for committee chairpersons and committee members, giving the council the opportunity to modify the recommendations.
10. Each committee should include at least one council member. The pastor (s) shall be ex officio member(s) of all committees and boards.

SECTION V

Congregation Council

1. The dates and times of the council meetings shall be determined by a majority of the council at the organizational meeting.
2. The following agenda shall constitute the order of business at regular meetings:
 - a. Devotions
 - b. Roll call
 - c. Presentation of minutes of regular and special meetings
 - d. Reception of reports:
 - i. Pastor (s)
 - ii. financial officers
 - iii. standing committees
 - iv. special committees
 - v. organizations
 - e. Receipt of petitions and communications
 - f. Unfinished business
 - g. New business
3. The Congregation Council shall have the authority to appoint ad hoc committees at any time.
4. At the regular meeting in January, the Congregation Council shall review the roll of confirmed members and other necessary records, and designate membership standing in keeping with Chapter 8.02 of the Constitution.

SECTION VI

Standing Committees

1. Following approval of committee chair appointments, each appointee will be given a statement of the responsibilities involved. (see policy manual)
2. Subsequent to the committee appointments, the chairpersons will organize the committee, increasing the size, if desired. These appointments should be made only after consultation with the pastor.
3. Vacancies in committees shall be filled by the pastor (s) in consultation with the committee chairperson.
4. Each committee chairperson shall call the committee meetings as needed. Additional committee meetings may be called by the committee chairperson, the pastor (s) or the council.

5. Each committee should include at least one member of the Congregation Council.
6. Written reports should be submitted by each committee to the Congregation Council after each committee meeting.
7. Except as stipulated in the following paragraphs, the duties of all committees shall be assigned by the Congregation Council, along with such instructions as in its judgment are in the best interest of the Congregation. All actions of committees shall be subject to review by the Congregation Council.
8. There shall be a Committee on Christian Education. This committee, in association with the pastor (s), shall oversee the conduct and promotion of the schools within the congregation. It shall encourage the use of teaching and worship materials published or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in American, and seek to introduce the church's periodicals and books of family devotion into the homes of the congregation. One of the primary aims of the Committee on Christian Education shall be to bring the call to the ministry of the Gospel and to other full-time church vocations to the attention of qualified youth of the congregation.
9. There shall be a Committee on Evangelism. This committee shall stimulate and lead all members of the congregation in continuous and, from time to time, concerted endeavors to reawaken the spiritually indifferent and to reach others, who are yet unwon, with the Gospel and attach them to Christ's Church. To this end, the committee shall devote itself to deepening spiritual life and shall periodically study the congregation in the context of its surrounding community.
10. There shall be a Fellowship Committee. The purpose of this committee will be to create and coordinate recreational and social opportunities for the congregation. Congregational dinners, outings, athletic activities and other special events will be the responsibility of the committee. The committee will from time to time, call on others of the congregation to help with the various functions.
11. There shall be a Finance Committee, of which the treasurer shall be an ex officio member. Subject to the approval of the Congregation Council, the committee shall exercise oversight of all the financial affairs of the congregation to make sure that they are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies to the synodical treasurer. It shall, subject to the approval of the Congregation Council, be responsible for the congregation's investments and its total insurance program. It shall also provide for annual audits of the accounts of the treasurer and the financial secretary, if there be one, as well as of the accounts of the schools and organizations within the congregation. It shall specifically be the responsibility of this committee to monitor all actions requiring legal counsel to insure that such actions are for the benefit of the church. Such actions are to be examined for both content and completion of the action.

12. There shall be a Committee on Church Property. This committee shall see to the proper maintenance and protection of all property of the congregation, and shall take care that it is kept in good repair.
13. There shall be a Committee on Mutual Ministry. This committee shall consist of three to five members, who are concerned and willing to assist the pastor (s) in maintaining an effective ministry. The Committee should be a resource to whom the pastor(s) can confide in times of pastoral need. The pastor(s) should also feel free to discuss in complete confidence matters of conflict within the life of the congregation or among its staff. This committee shall serve as a channel of communication between the pastor(s) and the congregation and between the congregation and the pastor(s). This committee shall not make compensatory recommendations, but may be consulted by those responsible for such recommendations. The pastor(s) should be expected to make recommendations for committee membership. In the appointment of this committee, together with its functioning, the guidelines for such a committee as provided by the synod shall be followed. (See Constitution, Chapter 13.04)
14. There shall be a Committee on Social Ministry. The purpose of this committee shall be to extend Christian compassion and helpfulness to the ill, the aged, the orphaned, the underprivileged, the imprisoned and, in general, to persons of all ages in need of aid in body or soul. It shall strive to enlist in these efforts as many as possible of the individual members and organizations of the congregation. This committee shall further have the duty to study social conditions, primarily in the local community, in order to bring the cleansing and healing light of Christian truth to bear upon critical problems through thoughtful Christian discussion of facts and issues.
15. There shall be a Committee on Stewardship, of which the treasurer shall be an ex officio member. It shall be the function of this committee to evoke and promote the expression of Christian faith in daily living; to teach the Christian use of money; to diffuse knowledge of the congregation's local, national and world-wide ministries; and to lead all its members to higher levels of proportionate giving for the Lord's work. This committee shall also be responsible for the annual Every Member Response and other congregational efforts that lead to informed and grateful giving.
16. There shall be a Committee on Worship and Music.
 - a. It shall assist the Congregation Council in seeing that the services of God's house are conducted regularly and in accordance with the liturgy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, that competent ushers are recruited and trained, and that hymnals and other devotional materials are provided and properly cared for.
 - b. This committee shall supervise and strive to advance the welfare and effective service of, the choirs of the congregation. It shall arrange for the care of paraments, vestments and musical instruments and, in consultation with the pastor(s), the organist and the choir director, it shall furnish music supplies appropriate for the use in the worship of a congregation of the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and assume the responsibilities for the care of the altar, including the lay assistants in the administration of the sacraments.

- c. For the purpose of carrying out the foregoing responsibilities, this committee, with the approval of the pastor(s) and/or the Congregation Council may appoint such subcommittees as may be deemed necessary.
17. There shall be a Committee on Youth Ministry. This committee will advise, plan and oversee the spiritual growth and activities of the youth of the congregation. A member or members of the youth group shall be represented on the Youth Advisory Committee. Youth of the congregation are encouraged to participate in the total life of the congregation.
 18. There shall be a Committee on Human Resources. The purpose of this committee will be to serve as the first step to help resolve questions of sexual abuse or harassment. The committee shall maintain a comprehensive Policy Manual and shall function as a support to the staff and Congregation Council in hiring and evaluating staff.
 19. There shall be a Bereavement Committee. The purpose of this committee shall be to serve the congregation in whatever capacity a family needs upon the loss of a loved one.
 20. There shall be a Bower's Library Committee. The purpose of this committee will be to provide books and media which strengthen and enrich the educational and spiritual life of our church, thus deepening our faith and relationship with Jesus Christ. The collection will include books and media for all ages.
 21. There shall be an Educational Gifts Committee. The purpose of this committee is to assist children of single parents who have financial needs with Lydia-Morris Funds and to assist children of St. Mark Lutheran Church with Guinther-Schel-Hoal Funds.

SECTION VII

Organizations within the Congregation

1. All organizations within the congregation shall exist to aid it in ministering to its members and to all whom it can reach with the gospel of Christ. The organizations are outgrowths and expressions of the congregation's life and may reflect the special interests of Women, Men, Youth, classes and study groups. The policies and activities of the organization shall not be in conflict with the policies and activities of the congregation. The organizations shall submit annual reports to the congregation concerning their membership, work and finances.

2. Special interest groups, other than the congregational units of the official auxiliaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council.
3. David's Kingdom Childcare, a ministry of St. Mark Lutheran Church, is an organization within the congregation.

SECTION VIII

Finance

1. The fiscal year of the congregation and its organizations shall be the calendar year.
2. Any special fund raising project carried out in the name of the congregation or in the name of any organizations of the congregation shall require prior approval of the Congregation Council.
3. In reviewing the availability of funds, the Finance Committee and the Congregation Council shall consider income received in relation to the budget.

Revised: February 2010