

# **BYLAWS OF MIDLAND LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Adopted at Congregational Meeting of 04/18/1999

Ratified at Congregational Meeting of 01/23/2000

## **SECTION I**

### **COMMUNION PARTICIPATION**

- B1.01 This congregation invites all of its members who have been prepared to receive the Sacrament, to participate regularly in Holy Communion.
- B 1.02 It shall be made known that participation by a communicant requires sincere repentance, faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and an earnest desire to amend his sinful life, together with an acceptance of the Scriptural teaching regarding the Real Presence of Christ with His Body and Blood in the Sacrament.
- B 1.03 Preparation for Holy Communion will normally be provided for persons as young as those in the fifth grade. Following preparation, participation in Holy Communion will be available for those youth who have not yet been confirmed, with parental and pastoral consent.
- B1.04 Record of Communion participation shall be entered upon the books of the Congregation and notice regarding members of other congregations sent to the respective pastors of the congregations of which they are members.

## **SECTION II**

### **CONFLICTING LOYALTIES**

- B2.01 This congregation rejects all fellowship with organizations, secret or open, which are avowedly religious or practice forms of religion without confessing faith in the Triune God and in Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God incarnate to be our only Savior from sin, and thus teach salvation by works. It declares such organizations to be AntiChristian.
- B2.02 No lodge ceremonies are to be permitted in the church or on the premises of this congregation.
- B2.03 The pastor and other officiating "lay" ministers of this congregation shall take no part in any such services even if conducted outside of the church premises.

## **SECTION III**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

- B3.01 Admission to baptized membership
- a) Children, one or both of whose parents or guardians are members of this congregation, shall upon receiving Christian baptism be thereby received as baptized members of this congregation.
  - b) Children, neither of whose parents or guardians are members of this congregation shall, upon Christian baptism duly recorded as a ministerial act performed under the auspices of this congregation, thereby be received as baptized members of this congregation, unless there is understanding that, for good reason, they will be enrolled as baptized members of another congregation, in which case notice of the baptism shall be given to the congregation in which the child is to be enrolled as a baptized member.

- c) Children baptized in other congregations (and baptized adults mentally incompetent for confirmation) shall be received as baptized members of this congregation upon admission of one or both parents or guardians to membership, or by consent of one or both parents or guardians, or by action of the Church Council.
- d) Non-Baptized adults who have received instruction and given evidence of having an adequate understanding and acceptance of the teachings of the Word of God as confessed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall, upon confession of faith and Christian Baptism duly recorded as a ministerial act performed under the auspices of this congregation, thereby be received as baptized members of this congregation.

#### B3.02 Admission to confirmed membership

- a) Baptized adults, not previously members of the congregation, who have received instruction and given evidence of having adequate understanding and acceptance of the teachings of the word of God as confessed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be admitted to confirmed membership through the rite of confirmation.
- b) However, adults received as baptized members according to the provisions of Section III, B3.01, of the Bylaws shall be recognized as confirmed members, whether or not, at the discretion of the pastor, they participate in the rite of confirmation.
- c) Children who are baptized members of the congregation shall be admitted to confirmed membership through preparation for and participation in the rite of confirmation.
- d) Applicants for membership presenting letters of transfer showing them to be confirmed members in good standing in other Evangelical Lutheran Churches in America shall be admitted to confirmed membership upon acceptance of their letter of transfer by the Congregation Council and the report of their names to the congregation.
- e) Applicants for membership who present evidence of confirmation in a Evangelical Lutheran Church in America but do not have letters of transfer shall be admitted to confirmed membership when the Congregation Council has determined that they meet the standards of Christian faith and life indicated in the Constitution and Bylaws and when they have reaffirmed their faith before the congregation.

#### B3.03 Admission to voting membership

- a) The Congregation Council shall be responsible for determining the voting membership in accordance with the qualifications specified in the Constitution and Bylaws. Any doubtful cases shall be decided by the congregation.

#### B3.04 Discontinuance of membership

- a) Members who move away shall be encouraged to transfer. Any confirmed member in good standing desiring to change his membership to another Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall upon request, be entitled to a letter of transfer.
- b) A confirmed member who does not, for a period of one calendar year, partake of Holy Communion, support the church with his/her offerings, and does not appear to desire to participate in the life and worship of the congregation shall be visited by the pastor and the congregation's officers and encouraged by them to active membership. If, during the second calendar year, the confirmed member does not actively participate, that member's name shall be removed from the membership roster of the congregation.

- c) Children, neither of whose parents or guardians are active members of this congregation, shall be dropped from the baptized membership roll if they fail to participate in the Christian education program of the congregation.
- d) Members who have been excommunicated, dismissed, or who have resigned and members who have transferred to other Lutheran congregations, or who are definitely known to have become members of other congregations without transfer, shall thereby have lost membership in this congregation and all rights appertaining thereto.

## **SECTION IV**

### **THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

- B4.01 All congregational meetings shall open with the Word of God and prayer, and close with prayer.
- B4.02 The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held during the month of January at a time designated by council.
- B4.03 The current roster of baptized, confirmed, and voting members shall be determined prior to each annual meeting.
- B4.04 Each voting member shall be entitled to one vote.
- B4.05 In the following cases voting shall be by ballot:
- a) to elect officers, members of the Congregation Council, and committee chairpeople except the ballot may be dispensed with by unanimous vote when there is but one candidate.
  - b) to adopt or amend the articles of incorporation, Constitution or Bylaws of the congregation.
  - c) to call a pastor or request his/her resignation.
  - d) to excommunicate a member from the congregation or remove a member from office in the congregation.
  - e) to sever membership in The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - f) to dispose of, encumber, or purchase real property when requested by ten or more voting members present.
- B4.06 If more than one ballot is required in an election other than for the three two-year term members of the Congregation Council, it shall be in order by proper motion to limit the balloting after the first ballot to the three candidates receiving the highest number of votes on the first ballot and after the second ballot to limit the balloting to the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes.
- B4.07 In voting for Congregation Council members, the two officers shall be filled first. If more than one ballot is required in electing the three two-year term members of the Congregation Council, it shall be in order by proper motion to limit the balloting on the second ballot to the candidates equal to the number of positions remaining unfilled plus two, the candidates being those who received the highest number of votes on the first ballot, but who were not elected. If subsequent ballots are required, balloting may be limited by proper motion to the number of candidates equal to the number of positions remaining unfilled, plus one, the candidates being those who received the highest number of votes on the previous ballot, but who were not elected.

B4.08 The order of business at the annual meeting shall be:

- a) opening devotion
- b) the minutes
- c) reports of the pastor, the Congregation Council, the treasurer, committees and others
- d) elections
- e) approval of Budget
- f) unfinished business
- g) new business
- h) closing prayer

## **SECTION V**

### **THE CONGREGATION COUNCIL**

B5.01 Officers of the congregation, membership and meetings of the congregational council.

- a) In addition to the requirements of congregational membership stated in Chapter 12 of the Constitution, qualifications for membership on the Congregation Council shall include such practical ability as is needful in promoting the various interests of the congregation as outlined in the duties of the various committees of the Congregation Council in Continuing Resolutions.
- b) After the annual meeting of the congregation at which time the members of the Congregation Council are elected, Congregation Council shall approve committee members of standing committees as specified by the Constitution and as provided by Continuing Resolutions. One member of each committee shall be the elected liaison from the Congregation Council. All appointments shall be made by the time of installation of church leaders. The appointments are for two years, and no one can be appointed for more than two consecutive terms.
- c) Since it is incumbent upon all members of the congregation according to Chapter 8.04 of the Constitution to make diligent use of the Word of God and the Sacraments in the Public Worship, Officers or Congregation Council members who neglect these privileges, shall forfeit the right to serve in their elective or appointed capacities.
- d) Each council member shall be an integral part of the committee to which he or she is elected as liaison.

B5.02 Duties of Officers.

- a) The President shall preside over meetings of the Congregation Council and of the congregation.
- b) The Vice-President shall preside in the absence of the President, unless the Vice-President is also absent in which case the members present shall decide who presides. The Vice-President is liaison to the Palaestra School Committee.
- c) The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the Congregation Council and of the congregation meetings and shall preserve it in the archives.
- d) The Treasurer shall be custodian of all funds of the congregation, local and synodical, and shall disburse all such funds in accordance with the decisions of the

congregation or the Congregation Council. He/she shall present a duly audited report to the annual congregation meeting and such other reports to the Congregation Council as may be required.

- e) The President shall act on behalf of this congregation or congregation council to execute and act upon duly authorized actions taken by either group. In the absence of the president, he or she may designate a substitute from the Executive Committee.
- f) The Executive Committee shall conduct business as needed between council meetings and make recommendations to council regarding activities and policy of Midland Lutheran Church as well as all employees, both lay and ordained.
- g) The Elected Officers of the congregation shall conduct an annual review with the pastor during the budget process and present recommendation to council with respect to remuneration and employment.
- h) The Mutual Ministry Committee shall be consulted during the annual review.

#### B5.03 Terms of Offices

- a) Each Council member shall be elected as a specific liaison to a standing committee.
- b) Three council members shall be elected each year.
- c) The Worship, Fellowship, and Building & Grounds liaisons shall be elected on even numbered years.
- d) The Education, Finance & Stewardship, and Outreach Liaisons shall be elected on odd numbered years.

## **SECTION VI**

### **REPORTS OF ORGANIZATIONS**

B6.01 Committees and organizations of the congregation shall submit accounts and reports to the President at least ten (10) days prior to the annual meeting. The Treasurer shall insure that all accounts are reported to the meeting.

## **SECTION VII**

### **COMMITTEES**

#### B7.01 Nominating Committee

- a) The Nominating Committee shall convene within a month after the annual meeting and elect its chair.
- b) The chair of the nominating committee shall request suggestions for nominations, at the appropriate time, through the newsletter and bulletin. All members of the committee shall talk with members of the congregation seeking names for nomination and shall consult with council members and committee chairpersons.
- c) The Nominating Committee shall present at least one name for each office, council member, standing committee chairperson, and non-council nominating committee member to be elected according to the procedure set in the constitution.

- d) Additional nominations may be made from the floor during the annual meeting provided the consent of the nominee has been obtained.
- e) If a vacancy occurs on the Nominating Committee, or a member is unable to serve, the remaining members may elect, by majority vote, a voting member to fill the vacancy **or**
- f) The Nominating Committee may fulfill its obligations without electing a new member, as the Committee elects to do, by majority vote.

**B7.02 Standing Committees** - Standing Committees shall be Worship, *Education*, Fellowship, Building & Grounds, Finance & Stewardship, and Outreach. (Education was left out of the original scanned document, but was included in g) below).

- a) When possible, each standing committee shall have six voting members: the chair, the liaison, and four appointed members. All committee meetings are always open to all members of the congregation. Chairs of subcommittees and other persons integral to the working of the committee shall attend as needed.
- b) In standing committees, two of the members are appointed on odd years and two on even years, each for a two year term. Unexpired terms are filled by the committee as needed and approved by the Church Council.
- c) The committee shall provide job descriptions for every special position or subcommittee.
- d) Each committee shall meet at least in February, April, June, August, and October and shall provide minutes of those meetings to council.
- e) The six chairpersons shall be elected during the regular elections of officers and council members.
- f) The Worship, Fellowship, and Building & Grounds chairpersons shall be elected on odd numbered years.
- g) The Education, Finance & Stewardship, and Outreach chairpersons shall be elected on even numbered years.
- h) Each chairperson shall serve two year terms and no more than two consecutive terms.

## **SECTION VIII**

### **POLICY AND GUIDELINES**

#### **B9.01**

- a) Any principles, job descriptions, or courses of action not covered in the constitution or by-laws are in the Policy and Guidelines of Midland Lutheran Church and shall be considered Continuing Resolutions.
- b) Changes to Policy and Guidelines shall be by two-thirds vote of the Council.