

Star of Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church Constitutional Bylaws

Article I Meetings of the Congregation

Section 1 The General Assembly

- 1.1 The General Assembly is made up of all communicant members of the congregation. It serves as the base line for this family of believers and is the primary source for determining the needs and opportunities for service in the local congregation.
- 1.2 A regular meeting of the General Assembly will be held during each quarter of the calendar year (in January, May, September and November) and precede the regular meeting of the Delegate Assembly. Other meetings may be called as needed.
- Sunday School children and non-members may be invited as visitors to the meetings of the General Assembly for the purpose of learning more about the congregation and its efforts to serve its Lord.
- 1.3 The President shall set the exact date, time and place of all meetings of the General Assembly, unless otherwise specified by the Delegates. Public announcements of the meetings will be given in print and/or orally on at least two different dates prior to the time of the meeting with a minimum of seven days separating the two announcements.
- 1.4 The purpose of the meetings of the General Assembly is to allow information to be exchanged between the various offices, boards, committees, and organizations of the congregation and the membership at large. Reports on past activities and future plans will be given, and input from the assembly encouraged.
- 1.5 Normally the President of the congregation will lead the meetings of the General Assembly. In his absence the members of the Board of Ministries will select a leader for the meeting.

Section 2 The Delegate Assembly

- 2.1 Because God has given the role of spiritual leadership to men (Constitution Article V, 1, C), the Delegate Assembly consists of the male communicant members of the congregation who have reached the age of 18, and is charged with the responsibility of providing the authoritative guidance for the congregation. When casting a vote, a Delegate is expected to vote responsibly and spiritually. He is a representative of his family and the non-voting members of the congregation.
- 2.2 The Lord of the Church sets the spirit in which the Delegates are to carry out their work. Those who would follow after their Lord and Savior should be looking for how they might serve others—not how they might rule over others. Any plan or action not based upon love is out of place in the family of believers. Through the Apostle Peter the Lord admonishes those who have been given responsibility over others: “...*servng as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; ... eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.*” (I Peter 5:2,3)
- 2.3 A regular meeting of the Delegate Assembly will be held during each quarter of the calendar year and follow the meeting of the General Assembly. There shall be a minimum two (2) week separation between the meetings to allow for prayerful consideration of the topics discussed by the General Assembly. The President shall chair all congregational meetings. In the absence of the President, the Board of Ministries shall select one of their members to chair the meeting. Other

meetings may be called as needed.

- 2.4 The President shall set the exact date, time and place of the meetings, unless otherwise specified by the Delegates. Public announcements of the meetings will be given in print and/or orally on at least two different dates prior to the time of the meeting with a minimum of seven days separating the two announcements.
- 2.5 Special meetings of the congregation may be called by the Board of Ministries, or the Pastor, or upon written request of three Delegate members. Such meetings must be announced according to the general rule set forth in Section 2.4 with the purpose(s) clearly stated.
- 2.6 The regular January meeting shall be designated as the annual meeting. At this meeting the reports of the prior year's work will be presented and the new officers will outline the plan of work for the new year.
- 2.7 The regular November meeting shall be designated as the Budget and Election meeting. The following actions must occur at this meeting:
 - Approval of the annual budget for the upcoming fiscal year
 - Election of officers for those positions expiring.
- 2.8 The order of business for the regular meetings may be as follows:
 - A. Opening with a devotion
 - B. Reading and approval of minutes of the previous regular and any intervening special meetings
 - C. Reception of new members; transfer, release or removal from membership
 - D. Reports and recommendations of the Pastor and Officers
 - E. Unfinished business
 - F. New business
 - G. Elections (when required)
 - H. Adjournment with prayer
- 2.9 The meetings shall be conducted according to good, Christian order. Robert's Rules of Order may be followed for parliamentary procedure.
- 2.10 No one shall bring to any meeting a charge or complaint against any member or against a Pastor, a teacher, or a staff minister unless he has first admonished him in a Christian manner in the spirit of Matthew 18:15-20.
- 2.11 Only Delegate members present at the meeting shall have the right to vote.
- 2.12 Delegate members must decide upon, but are not limited to, the following issues:
 - Establish the overall work plan or direction for the congregation
 - Election of the Board of Ministries
 - Budget approval
 - Calling of new called workers
 - Church discipline cases
 - Non-budget capital expenditures exceeding \$1,000.00
- 2.13 Delegate members shall sign, thereby indicating their acceptance, the official copy of the Constitution and Bylaws at the meeting of the congregation in which they were received or as soon thereafter as possible.
- 2.14 The decision-making authority, and the ability to change policy, ultimately rests with the Delegates unless granted to others as specified in these Bylaws.

- 2.15 The Delegate Assembly empowers those they elect to the Board of Ministries to serve on their behalf between Delegate Assembly Meetings except in those areas specifically designated to the Delegate Assembly (Bylaws, Article I, Section 2, 2.12).

Section 3 Quorum

The Delegate members present at a properly announced meeting of the congregation shall constitute a quorum.

Article II Board of Ministries

Section 1 Membership

- 1.1 Membership on the Board of Ministries is open to Delegate members of the congregation who “are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:3), who lead a Godly life and serve as good examples to the congregation (I Timothy 3:8-12), and who are willing to demonstrate their gift of leadership within the congregation (Romans 12:6-8).
- 1.2 The Board of Ministries shall consist of seven elected leaders. The Pastor and the head of the Elders shall serve as ex officio members. The elected offices are:
- 1.2.1 President
 - 1.2.2 Secretary
 - 1.2.3 Treasurer
 - 1.2.4 Adult Discipleship Leader
 - 1.2.5 Youth Discipleship Leader
 - 1.2.6 Property Administrator
 - 1.2.7 Outreach Leader
- 1.3 The members of the Board of Ministries will adorn their office with an honest way of life and be good examples to the congregation in keeping with I Timothy 3:8-12.

Section 2 Responsibilities

- 2.1 The members of the Board of Ministries shall be responsible for the spiritual and material affairs of the congregation, under the guidance of the Pastor. They shall be accountable for good order of services and shall particularly care in love for their fellow members who have special needs (Galatians 6:9-10).
- 2.2 The Board will implement resolutions of the Delegate Assembly and shall carry out such assignments as are directed to them by that Assembly. In the administration of these assignments, the Officers of the Board of Ministries may delegate tasks to committees as appropriate. All committees are accountable to the Board of Ministries through the appropriate Officer under whom the committee is organized. That Officer is solely responsible for all decision making on the committee. The Officer is ultimately responsible for the actions and recommendations of that committee as well as for dispute resolution. In all matters, the principle of Christian love should be present, recognizing that we serve Christ by serving others.
- 2.3 It will be the duty of the Board to consider and discuss all matters pertaining to the general welfare of the congregation, to review all reports, and to present them to the congregation. The members of the Board will consult together concerning the spiritual and physical well being of the congregation, giving due attention also to the work of the Lord in the church-at-large. The individual Board members will be responsible for recruiting congregational members into areas of ministry that fit their talents.

- 2.4 The Board of Ministries will control the property of the congregation according to the direction given to them by the Delegate Assembly. The Board is hereby empowered to borrow money, pledge the assets of the congregation, sell, lease or otherwise dispose of the real and personal property of the congregation, all at the direction of the Delegate Assembly. It will also have the right to acquire property by any legal means as directed by the Delegate Assembly. The President and the Secretary (or the Treasurer in the Secretary's absence) are hereby designated as the persons who will both sign all legal documents of the congregation.
- 2.5 The Board of Ministries is authorized to act in behalf of the congregation between meetings of the Delegate Assembly except in those areas specifically designated to the Delegate Assembly (Bylaws, Article I, Section 2, 2.12).

Section 3 Terms of Office

- 3.1 The term of office for each Board member shall be two (2) years, except for the President, whose term shall be one (1) year. No board member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms, except as noted in paragraph 3.2 below.
- 3.2 The initial term for the President begins after the first election held under these Bylaws and ends when the next annual election is held. He may be elected to two (2) additional terms. The initial term for the Secretary, Adult Discipleship Leader, and Property Administrator begins after the first election held under these Bylaws and ends two years later when the annual election is held. They may be elected to one (1) additional term. The initial term for the Treasurer, Youth Discipleship Leader, and Outreach Leader begins after the first election held under these Bylaws and ends when the next annual election is held. They may be elected to two (2) additional terms.
- 3.3 After completion of the maximum number of successive terms, a previous Board member is eligible for re-election to the Board one (1) year after expiration of their last term.
- 3.4 No elected Officer shall hold more than one position at a time. In the event of a vacancy, the Board of Ministries may appoint a qualified person to fill the vacancy until the next regularly scheduled election. At the end of the vacancy term, he remains eligible to be elected for two (2) full terms on the Board. If a qualified candidate is not identified, the position shall remain vacant until suitable candidates are identified and subsequently appointed or elected as outlined in these Bylaws.

Section 4 Meetings

The Board of Ministries shall meet regularly, normally once each month. The Pastor or the President may call special meetings. The Board of Ministries shall never convene to transact business without the knowledge of the Pastor. A majority of the members of the Board shall constitute a quorum.

Section 5 Indemnification

The congregation shall indemnify all Officers and others acting in behalf of the congregation against all claims by third parties of any nature which arise out of actions taken in accordance with these Bylaws and in the proper performance of the responsibilities entrusted to them by the congregation. The congregation shall procure Officer and Director's liability insurance, as well as general and bonded liability insurance covering teachers, etc.

Article III Duties of Elected Officers

Section 1 President

- 1.1 *General Duties*—The President shall have general supervision of the affairs of the congregation subject to the regulations of the Delegates and these Bylaws, and conduct all its business affairs according to established good order. In the absence of the President, the Board shall appoint a

temporary Chairman. The President is an ex officio member of all boards and committees.

- 1.2 *Specific*—The President shall prepare agendas for, and chair all business sessions of the Board of Ministries and the congregation. He will sign all deeds, mortgages, notes, leases and/or all legal documents that the congregation directs to have executed. The President is authorized to carry out the duties of the Treasurer should the Treasurer be unable to carry out his duties.
- 1.3 *Extensions of Responsibility*—The President will perform such other duties as may be assigned by the congregation, and may appoint committees, organizations, and service groups, with the approval of the Board of Ministries, to assist in these and other responsibilities.

Section 2 Secretary

- 2.1 *General Duties*—The Secretary shall accurately record the proceedings of all meetings of the Delegate Assembly and the Board of Ministries. He shall assist in the orderly conduct of business affairs of the congregation according to established good order.
- 2.2 *Specific*—The Secretary shall be responsible for the legal records of the congregation. He will sign all deeds, mortgages, notes, leases and/or all legal documents that the congregation directs to have executed. The Secretary is authorized to carry out the duties of the Treasurer should the Treasurer be unable to carry out his duties.
- 2.3 *Extensions of Responsibility*—The Secretary will perform such other duties as may be assigned by the congregation, and may appoint committees, organizations, and service groups, with the approval of the Board of Ministries, to assist in these and other responsibilities.

Section 3 Treasurer

- 3.1 *General Duties*—The Treasurer is responsible for the financial affairs of the congregation. He is designated as an alternate, in the absence of the Secretary, to sign all deeds, mortgages, notes, leases and/or all legal documents that the congregation directs to have executed.
- 3.2 *Specific*—The Treasurer shall receive from the Financial Secretary a monthly report of all monies received and credit the same to the proper accounts. He shall make disbursements according to instructions from the Board of Ministries as directed by the congregation. He shall make monthly reports to the Board of Ministries, regular reports to the Delegate Assembly, and special reports as requested by the Board of Ministries. He shall submit his records annually, or at any time the Delegate Assembly desires, for audit. He shall direct the budget committee in the preparation of the annual congregational budget. In the event he is unable to carry out his duties, the President or Secretary shall have the authority to do so.
- 3.3 *Extensions of Responsibility*—The Treasurer will perform such other duties as may be assigned by the congregation, and may appoint committees, organizations, and service groups, with the approval of the Board of Ministries, to assist in these and other responsibilities. The position of Financial Secretary is a standing appointment that is accountable to the Treasurer. Appointment of the Financial Secretary shall be conducted within the guidelines of Article VI of the Bylaws.

Section 4 Adult Discipleship Leader

- 4.1 *General Duties*—The Adult Discipleship Leader shall be concerned with the spiritual education and growth of the adult members of the congregation. He shall provide for, and promote, opportunities for them to be faithful in using the means of grace so that they may be strengthened in their faith, equipped to share it with others, prepared for works of service, and encouraged to practice good stewardship of all God's blessings.

- 4.2 *Specific*—The Adult Discipleship Leader shall assist the Pastor in preparation and conduct of various adult Bible studies. He shall also be responsible for congregational stewardship and worship programs. This includes, but is not limited to, ushers, altar guild, musicians, and choir. These functions may be delegated to various committees in accordance with Article VI of the Bylaws. The Adult Discipleship Leader is solely responsible for all decision making on any committees under his authority. The Adult Discipleship Leader is responsible for all committee actions and is accountable to the Board of Ministries for all such delegated actions.
- 4.3 *Extensions of Responsibility*—The Adult Discipleship Leader will perform such other duties as may be assigned by the congregation, and may appoint committees, organizations, and service groups, with the approval of the Board of Ministries, to assist in these and other responsibilities.

Section 5 Youth Discipleship Leader

- 5.1 *General Duties*—The Youth Discipleship Leader shall be concerned with the spiritual education and growth of the children and youth of the congregation. He shall provide for, and promote, opportunities for them to be faithful in using the means of grace so that they may be strengthened in their faith, equipped to share it with others, prepared for works of service, and encouraged to practice good stewardship of all God's blessings.
- 5.2 *Specific*—The Youth Discipleship Leader, with the help of the Pastor, is responsible for youth education in the areas of Christian Day School, Cradle Roll, Sunday School, and Confirmation. He shall also be responsible for youth programs such as Lutheran Pioneers. These, and other youth discipleship areas, may be delegated to various committees in accordance with Article VI of the Bylaws. The Youth Discipleship Leader is solely responsible for all decision making on any committees under his authority. The Youth Discipleship Leader is responsible for all committee actions and is accountable to the Board of Ministries for all such delegated actions.
- 5.3 *Extensions of Responsibility*—The Youth Discipleship Leader will perform such other duties as may be assigned by the congregation, and may appoint committees, organizations, and service groups, with the approval of the Board of Ministries, to assist in these and other responsibilities.

Section 6 Property Administrator

- 6.1 *General Duties*—The Property Administrator shall be responsible for ensuring that the facilities and property of the congregation are properly maintained. If the congregation undertakes any building or other facilities modification projects, he will be responsible for ensuring that such projects are developed and carried out in support of the congregation's overall objectives as set forth by the Board of Ministries and approved by the Delegate Assembly.
- 6.2 *Specific*—The Property Administrator will ensure that the following service efforts are performed on a regular basis: church cleaning, lawn mowing, building maintenance, grounds upkeep, and equipment supply and upkeep (copier, computer, video, audio, and janitorial). These efforts may be delegated to various committees in accordance with Article VI of the Bylaws. The Property Administrator is solely responsible for all decision making on any committees under his authority. The Property Administrator is responsible for all committee actions and is accountable to the Board of Ministries for all such delegated actions.
- 6.3 *Extensions of Responsibility*—The Property Administrator will perform such other duties as may be assigned by the congregation, and may appoint committees, organizations, and service groups, with the approval of the Board of Ministries, to assist in these and other responsibilities.

Section 7 Outreach Leader

- 7.1 *General Duties*—The Outreach Leader shall establish and maintain an active program for the congregation to reach out into the neighborhood and the community with the Gospel through public

relations, active evangelism, and other appropriate techniques.

- 7.2 *Specific*—The Outreach Leader shall have specific responsibility for ensuring that the outreach efforts of the congregation are developed and carried out in support of the congregation’s overall objectives. These outreach efforts include, but are not limited to: fellowship, new visitor follow up, advertising, canvassing, church directory, and Vacation Bible School. He shall also be responsible for developing and proposing the long-range plans of the congregation to the board of ministries and congregation for implementation. He shall serve as the contact for information sharing between Star of Bethlehem and the Synod, particularly in the areas of home and world missions and Synodical budget matters. These efforts may be delegated to various committees in accordance with Article VI of the Bylaws. The Outreach Leader is solely responsible for all decision making on any committees under his authority. The Outreach Leader is responsible for all committee actions and is accountable to the Board of Ministries for all such delegated actions.
- 7.3 *Extensions of Responsibility*—The Outreach Leader will perform such other duties as may be assigned by the congregation, and may appoint committees, organizations, and service groups, with the approval of the Board of Ministries, to assist in these and other responsibilities.

Article IV Election of Officers

Section 1 Nominating Committee

The Board of Elders shall serve as the Nominating Committee. The Pastor is an ex officio member of this committee.

Section 2 Selection of Candidates

- 2.1 After receiving a list of expiring terms from the Secretary by the first of September, the Nominating Committee shall select a slate of candidates from the Delegate Assembly. In selecting candidates, the Nominating Committee shall adhere to the Scriptural requirements stated in Article VIII, Section 1 of the Constitution and Article II, Section 1 of the Bylaws. Each candidate shall be informed of the responsibilities of the office to which he is nominated, and must provide his consent to be included on the list of candidates.
- 2.2 The Nominating Committee shall report the status of selecting the slate of candidates to the Board of Ministries at their October meeting. Once selected, the slate of candidates (and the names of the Nominating Committee) shall be published and posted at least three (3) Sundays prior to the election. During this time period, any Delegate member may submit, in writing, additional recommendations to the Nominating Committee. The Committee shall consider such written nominations and take appropriate action, posting any revisions as necessary.

Section 3 Elections

At the November Delegate Assembly meeting, the Delegates shall hear the recommendations of the Nominating Committee and proceed to elect by ballot. Nominations shall not be open to the floor at the election meeting. A majority of votes cast is required for election.

Section 4 Installation

As soon as possible after the election, the new Officers of the Board of Ministries shall be installed into office at a regular church service and shall thus be presented to the congregation.

Article V Board of Elders

Section 1 Qualifications

Membership on the Board of Elders is open to Delegate members of the congregation who “are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:3), who lead a Godly life and serve as good examples to the congregation (I Timothy 3:8-12), and who are willing to demonstrate their gift of leadership within the congregation (Romans 12:6-8).

Section 2 Responsibilities

- 2.1 *General*—The Board of Elders shall concern themselves with the total spiritual life of the congregation. In addition, they shall tend to the needs of the called workers to ensure that they receive whatever spiritual, temporal, and moral support they need to carry out their ministry for the congregation.
- 2.2 *Specific*—The Board of Elders shall ensure that doctrine and practice in the church conform to the Word of God and the provisions of the Constitution, and that assistance is given the Pastor in administering the Spiritual affairs of the congregation. They shall encourage people to feed their faith and to continue to grow their relationship with Christ through regular use of Word and Sacrament. They shall be responsible for visits to the ill or shut-in. This may be accomplished through a Shepherding Committee accountable to the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders shall assist the Pastor in visiting, admonishing, and encouraging members who have strayed from the faith or manifested a lack of concern for God’s Word or the use of the Sacraments. The Board of Elders shall also serve as the Nominating Committee for selecting candidates for the Board of Ministries and the Board of Elders.
- 2.3 *Extensions of Responsibility*—The Board of Elders will perform such other duties as may be assigned by the congregation, and may appoint committees, organizations, and service groups, with the approval of the Board of Ministries, to assist in these and other responsibilities.

Section 3 Terms of Office

- 3.1 The Board of Elders shall be elected in accordance with the procedures stated in Article IV of the Bylaws. There shall be one Elder elected at the first annual election. The Board of Ministries shall determine the number of members necessary to oversee the Spiritual needs of the congregation.
- 3.2 The term of office for each Elder shall be two (2) years. No Elder shall serve more than three (3) consecutive full terms. He shall again be eligible for appointment or election one (1) year after the expiration of his third consecutive term of office.
- 3.3 In the event of a vacancy, the Board of Ministries may appoint a qualified person to fill the vacancy until the next regularly scheduled election. At the end of the vacancy term, he remains eligible to be elected for three (3) full terms on the Board. If a qualified candidate is not identified, the position shall remain vacant until suitable candidates are identified and subsequently appointed or elected as outlined in these Bylaws.

Section 4 Installation

As soon as possible after the election, the new Officers of the Board of Elders shall be installed into office at a regular church service and shall thus be presented to the congregation.

Section 5 Organization

The Board shall, at its own discretion, elect a chairman from its own membership. The chairman shall serve as an ex officio member of the Board of Ministries.

Section 6 Meetings

The Board of Elders shall meet regularly, normally once each month. The Pastor or the chairman may call special meetings. The Board of Elders shall never convene to transact business without the knowledge of the Pastor. A majority of the members of the board shall constitute a quorum.

Article VI Committees and Appointed Positions

Section 1 Membership

Membership on committees and appointed positions, other than the Board of Ministries or Board of Elders, will generally be open to all communicant members, provided such membership or activity does not put a woman in a position of authority over men, thereby violating the divine principal of headship (I Timothy 2:12-14). Additionally, those who would be committee members or appointees should be those who are willing to demonstrate their gift of leadership within the congregation (Romans 12:6-8). Committee members and appointees shall carry out their duties in a God pleasing manner and in Christian love toward their family of believers.

Section 2 Authorization

The Board of Ministries is authorized to establish committees and appoint members of the congregation to specific positions outside of the Board of Ministries or the Board of Elders. The Board of Ministries shall assign an Officer the responsibility for the actions of a particular committee or position. That Officer is solely responsible for all decision making of any committees or positions under his authority.

Section 3 Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall receive and deposit all contributions for the congregation, shall keep an accurate account of the same and deliver a report of them to the Treasurer, indicating the proper account to be credited. The Financial Secretary shall submit the books for audit annually, or at any time that the congregation desires. The Financial Secretary shall distribute to all members an annual report of their contributions by January 31st of each year.

Section 4 Term of Appointment

Appointees and committee members shall be appointed for a term of one (1) year. Appointees and committee members may serve up to four (4) consecutive terms. They are again eligible for appointment one (1) year after the expiration of the fourth consecutive term of appointment.

Section 5 Ex Officio Membership

The Pastor and President, by virtue of their offices, are members of all committees and are to be informed of all meetings of all committees so that they may attend if they desire to do so.

Article VII Reception into Membership

Section 1

Persons who wish to be received into membership in this congregation, other than through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, shall bring their request to the attention of the Pastor or the Board of Ministries. The request shall be honored when accompanied by a letter of transfer, a recommendation from a sister congregation, or a profession of faith—provided that qualifications for membership have been met as specified in Article V of the Constitution. Persons to be received through the rite of confirmation shall first be approved by the Board of Ministries. Such action of the Board shall be ratified at the next regular or special meeting of the Delegate Assembly. Notice of such receptions shall be reported to the entire congregation.

Section 2.

Since reception into membership signifies acceptance of and submission to this Constitution and Bylaws, each individual or family shall be given a copy of the same prior to their reception so that they may become familiar with its provisions.

Article VIII. The Transfer, Release, or Removal from Membership

Section 1

Those desiring a transfer or release from membership shall bring their request to the attention of the Pastor or the Board of Ministries for action to be ratified at the next meeting of the Delegate Assembly.

Section 2

Transfer of membership shall apply only to those who desire membership in a congregation that is in agreement with this congregation in doctrine and practice. Release from membership shall apply when affiliation is sought with those denominations not in agreement with this congregation in doctrine and practice.

Section 3

Members with whom the congregation has been unable to communicate, despite diligent efforts to do so, may be removed from the membership list by action of the Board of Ministries, to be ratified at the next meeting of the Delegate Assembly.

Section 4

Members released, transferred, or removed have no further rights in this congregation and its property.

Article IX Repeals and Amendments of the Bylaws

Any and all Bylaws may be repealed or amended by a majority vote of the Delegate members present at any Delegate meeting, provided that public notice of this proposed action shall have been given the congregation on at least two Sundays prior to the time of the meeting and provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing to the Board of Ministries for its study and recommendation.