

THE BYLAWS OF IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA

1. ARTICLE MISSION, VISION AND CORE VALUES

- 1.1. MISSION STATEMENT: We, at Immanuel Lutheran Church, are called by God to lead people to love God and one another, to build a healthy community of disciples in Christ Jesus, and to serve others.
- 1.2. VISION STATEMENT: Our faith, at Immanuel Lutheran Church, is built upon God, as revealed in Holy Scripture and made known to us in Jesus Christ. We practice and grow our faith in God and in relationship with one another through worship, and through service as well as through personal and small group learning experiences.
- 1.3. CORE VALUES:
 - Centrality of the Gospel
 - Unity Among Members
 - Authentic Relationships
 - Transparency and Openness of Communication
 - Worship
 - Outreach
 - Biblical Education

2. ARTICLE MEMBERSHIP

2.1. RECEPTION OF MEMBERS

- 2.1.1. Baptized members are received: through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism at Immanuel; by the consent of one or both parents or guardians in the case of children who have been baptized in another Christian congregation; or by transfer from a sister congregation.
- 2.1.2. All those who are eligible to be received as baptized members by means of one of the above shall be approved for such privilege by the Board of Nurture. Communicant members are received: through the profession of faith; by reaffirmation of faith; or by transfer from a sister congregation. All those who are eligible to be received as communicant members by means of one of the above shall be approved for such privilege by the Board of Nurture.
- 2.1.3. Voting membership may be held by communicant members who: have been instructed according to the Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther; have attained the age of ~~18~~ majority; declare their acceptance of the constitution and bylaws of this congregation.

2.2. PRIVILEGES AND DUTIES

2.2.1. BAPTIZED MEMBERS

It shall be the privilege and duty of the baptized members of this congregation to conform their entire lives to the rule of God's word. As such, they shall:

- 2.2.1.1. Continue to grow in the Christian faith and life through faithful use of the means of grace, searching the scriptures at home and in fellowship with others of God's family.
- 2.2.1.2. Live a God-pleasing life and so bring credit and praise to our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2.2.1.3. Serve their Lord Jesus with their time and abilities as God has blessed them.
- 2.2.1.4. Contribute financially toward the maintenance of the congregation and the extension of the Kingdom of God at home and abroad as God has prospered them.
- 2.2.1.5. Not be a member of a secret society or of any organization whose principles and conduct conflict with the word of God.

2.2.2. COMMUNICANT MEMBERS

It shall be the privilege and duty of the communicant members of this congregation to conform their entire lives to the rule of God's word. As such, they shall:

- 2.2.2.1. Continue to 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.
- 2.2.2.2. Live a morally decent and God-pleasing life before God and men, abstaining from open works of the flesh (Galatians 5:18-21), and so conducting themselves at all times as to bring credit and praise to our Lord Jesus and not blame upon the Church of Jesus Christ.
- 2.2.2.3. Provide for the proper Christian training of their children by instruction at home and through the agencies of the church.
- 2.2.2.4. Place their God-given time and abilities at the disposal of the Ministers of Religion, the officers and other agencies of the congregation as set forth in the constitution and bylaws, that the purposes and functions of the congregation may be effectively implemented.
- 2.2.2.5. Contribute financially toward the maintenance of the congregation and the extension of the Kingdom of God at home and abroad to the limit of their personal gifts and resources.
- 2.2.2.6. Not be a member of a secret society or of any organization whose principles and conduct conflict with the word of God.

2.2.3. VOTING MEMBERS

It shall be the privilege and duty of voting members of this congregation to:

- 2.2.3.1. Faithfully attend all meetings of the Voters' Assembly and conscientiously and prayerfully exercise their right of suffrage in all measures that will advance the work of Christ's Kingdom both locally and in the church at large.
- 2.2.3.2. Willingly serve in any office or capacity for which their talents and abilities equip them. Assist with wholehearted diligence in administering the temporal and spiritual affairs of the congregation.

2.3. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by:

- 2.3.1. Transfer to a sister congregation.
- 2.3.2. Peaceful release to join a Christian congregation outside of the fellowship of this congregation.
- 2.3.3. Resignation.
- 2.3.4. Death.
- 2.3.5. Whereabouts unknown following a minimum period of one year.
- 2.3.6. Moving away from the area normally served by this congregation, failing to seek a transfer or peaceful release following a minimum period of one year and by failing to respond to the efforts of the Pastor and/or the elders.

- 2.3.7. Self-exclusion when the member living in the area normally served by this congregation has not participated in worship and/or the sacrament of Holy Communion for a minimum period of one year and has not heeded the admonition or efforts of the Pastor and/or the elders.
- 2.3.8. Excommunication is to be applied to any member who conducts himself in an unchristian manner, that is, to one 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. In such a case the elders are to apply church discipline in behalf of the congregation. If the member refuses to repent and thus amend his sinful life after proper admonition and discipline, the elders shall make recommendation for excommunication of said member to the Voters' Assembly. The member shall be notified in writing and have the right to make representation to the Voters' Assembly. A three-fourths majority ballot vote of members present shall be required for excommunication.
- 2.3.9. A person whose membership has been terminated is released from all responsibilities of this congregation. As well, at termination of membership, said person forfeits all rights and privileges 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 is not reinstated into membership. However, such a person as has had his membership in this congregation terminated either by his own action or by the action of the congregation, will at all times be cordially welcome to attend all divine services in our church.

3. ARTICLE MEETINGS

- 3.1. Regular meetings of the Voters' Assembly shall be held in the spring and fall during each calendar year. In addition to administrative board reports, the spring meeting shall hear the auditors' report, and in every even year, include the election of officers and Parish Planning Council members. The fall meeting shall hear a report from the Parish Planning Council and administrative boards on the future plans for the development and expansion of Christ's work in our midst as well as consideration and acceptance of the budget for the following year. Every regular meeting of the Voters' Assembly shall be announced in two consecutive Sunday bulletins or by means of written notification to members.
- 3.2. Special meetings of the Voters' Assembly may be called by the Parish Planning Council, a Minister of Religion or at the request of ~~25~~ 35 voting members of the congregation. Notice of the date and time of such a meeting, and of the nature of the business to be transacted, shall be given in two consecutive Sunday bulletins and/or by means of ~~written~~ email notification to members with a minimum of two weeks notice.
- 3.3. Order of Business at Regular Meetings shall normally be as follows:
- Record of attendance
 - Scripture reading and/or prayer
 - Minutes of previous meeting(s), including special meetings
 - Unfinished business
 - Treasurer's Report
 - Reports from committees of the Voters' Assembly
 - Reports of administrative boards
 - State of the parish report by Ministers of Religion
 - New business
 - Adjournment

The Chairman may, with the consent of the Voters' Assembly, vary the above order in the interests of efficiency. In general, for the purpose of order, the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall prevail. In the event of a tie, the Chairman shall cast the deciding vote. There shall be no voting by proxy.

4. ARTICLE OFFICERS

- 4.1. The officers of the congregation shall be a Chairman, Vice-chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. These shall be elected from among the voting membership by the Voters' Assembly for a two year term of office. All terms of office shall begin on September first in the year of their election to office with the exception of the Treasurer whose term of office will begin on the January first following his election to office.
 - 4.1.1. The Chairman shall preside at all meetings of the Voters' Assembly. He shall, to the best of his ability, enforce the constitution and bylaws of the congregation and carry out the expressed will of the congregation as embodied in the resolutions of the Voters' Assembly. All boards, committees, auxiliaries, groups, etc. in the congregation shall be responsible to the Chairman, and he shall be welcome at any and all meetings of such groups, either in person or as represented by such person or persons as he may appoint. He shall also call and preside over the meetings of the Parish Planning Council and shall endeavour to coordinate the functions, plans and activities of the congregation in all its parts for the total furtherance of the work of Christ's Kingdom in our midst. In January of each year the Chairman shall appoint an Auditing Committee consisting of any two qualified communicant members other than the Treasurer and Financial Recording Secretary to audit the financial records of the congregation. The Auditing Committee shall submit the report at the spring meeting of the Voters' Assembly in each year.
 - 4.1.2. The Vice-chairman of the congregation shall, in the absence of the Chairman, act for and in the stead of the Chairman. He shall also be available for whatever duties the Chairman shall assign to him as his representative.
 - 4.1.3. The Secretary shall be present at all Voters' Assembly meetings and at all meetings of the Parish Planning Council and shall enter the minutes of all meetings of said groups in a permanent record book over his signature. This record book shall be the property of the congregation. He shall conduct all official correspondence of the Voters' Assembly and the Parish Planning Council under the supervision of the Chairman. In general he shall perform all the duties normally pertaining to his office and such additional duties as the Voting Membership may delegate to him.
 - 4.1.4. The Treasurer shall be responsible for accurate recording of congregational receipts and disbursements and budgeted and actual expenditures according to proper accounting procedures. He shall present a written, duplicated financial report at Voters' Assembly meetings and a preliminary report at the Parish Planning Council meetings. He shall submit permanent financial records for annual audit. As well, the Treasurer shall be responsible for monthly remission of offerings for missions and church agencies and for prompt payment of salaries and bills authorized by the congregation or the boards and Chairman as duly constituted sources.

5. ARTICLE PARISH PLANNING COUNCIL

5.1. COMPOSITION

- 5.1.1. The Parish Planning Council shall consist of the Chairman, Vice-chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and ~~twelve~~ **ten** elected voting members of the congregation and all called Ministers of Religion. (It is understood that the word "chairman" is gender non specific and can denote either male or female representation.)
- 5.1.2. **Parish Planning Council models and provides leadership in helping the congregation carry out its Mission and Vision. The Core Values at Immanuel Lutheran Church are respected at all times.**

5.2. FUNCTIONS

- 5.2.1. The Parish Planning Council is a forum where the activities of the administrative boards may be discussed, evaluated, and coordinated, and where all such activities may be integrated into an overall congregational program. Further, the Parish Planning Council shall:
- 5.2.2. Serve as liaison between the called Ministers of Religion, the officers of the congregation and the various administrative boards in planning the total work of the congregation.

5.2.3. Settle jurisdictional disputes between the administrative Boards.

5.2.4. Should a dispute arise between the Board of Elders and Pastor, the Circuit Counsellor will be called in or the District Synod President or one of his appointed representatives.

5.2.5. Present to the Voters' Assembly at its fall meeting a yearly plan of activity for the entire congregation as well as long range plans for the development and expansion of Christ's work in our midst. Development of this plan may be undertaken at a special meeting or retreat arranged at the discretion of Parish Planning Council.

5.2.6. Prepare the agenda for the meetings of the Voters' Assembly.

5.2.7. Set the dates and times for the meetings of the Voters' Assembly. See Article 2.1 under Meetings.

5.2.8. Appoint the Nominating Committee in January of the election year.

5.2.9. Fill unexpired terms or shortages of personnel by appointment.

5.2.10. Parish Planning Council may strike ad hoc committees as needed from among its membership and/or the congregation.

5.2.11. The Parish Planning Council shall appoint a non-Council member as Financial Recording Secretary, who shall be responsible for the accurate recording of individual donations. The Parish Planning Council shall appoint a Head Teller to recruit Tellers who will accurately count, record, and deposit all receipts.

5.2.12. The Parish Planning Council shall be available at all times for any additional functions which the Voters' Assembly may wish to confer upon it.

5.3. MEETINGS

The Parish Planning Council shall normally meet monthly. Additional meetings may be called by the Chairman of the congregation or by one of the called Ministers of Religion. A quorum will be seven elected members.

6. ARTICLE BOARDS

6.1. COMPOSITION

6.1.1. This congregation shall have ~~three~~ six administrative boards. (Education, Elders, Fellowship, Nurture, Outreach, and Property Management.) ~~Parish Planning Council will appoint at least two members (one of whom shall serve as chairman) from Parish Planning Council to each board for one year terms.~~

6.1.2. The Chairman shall ~~directly~~ supervise the work of ~~the~~ each board.

6.1.3. Boards are also empowered to appoint additional members from the congregation as required. Each board may strike ad hoc committees as needed from among its membership and/or the congregation.

6.1.4. The Voters' Assembly shall elect one member to each board who represents their respective Board on the Parish Planning Council.

6.2. FUNCTION

~~6.2.1. The Board of Nurture shall be responsible for the overall spiritual welfare of the congregation. This includes the areas of congregational worship, Christian education, stewardship and fellowship. The Parish Planning Council shall appoint, in consultation with the ministers of religion, three of its male members to serve as elders in the area of spiritual care and discipline within the Board of Nurture. The Elders meet separately to discuss concerns which are related only to the Elders and/or the Pastor.~~

The Board of Education shall be responsible for developing, equipping and maintaining youth and adult Christian education programs for the congregation and community at large.

6.2.2. The Board of Elders shall be responsible for the spiritual care and discipline of the congregation. The Board of Elders shall be responsible for efficiently managing the employees of Immanuel including the Minister(s) of Religion.

6.2.3. The Board of Fellowship shall be responsible for food and drink preparation/clean up for functions held at the church building.

6.2.4. The Board of Nurture shall be responsible for spreading the gospel and fostering relationships within the congregation.

6.2.5. The Board of Outreach shall be responsible for equipping and motivating the congregation for the work of spreading the gospel to all people.

6.2.6. The Board of Property Management shall be responsible for the proper maintenance and repair of church property and the general protection of the congregation against loss or damage of whatever kind.

6.3. MEETINGS

6.3.1. Each administrative board shall meet as needed to carry out its functions. Meetings shall be called by the board chairman.

6.4. GENERAL DUTIES AND POWERS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE BOARDS

6.4.1. Each administrative board shall normally submit a report of its activities and plans at each regular meeting of the Voters' Assembly, and on such other occasions as the Voters' Assembly shall require. Such reports shall include specific recommendations (if any) for congregational action and/or approval.

6.4.2. Each administrative board shall initiate and carry out such activities and programs within the congregation as will enable it to effectively perform the functions and duties assigned to it by the constitution and bylaws, or by specific resolution of the Voters' Assembly.

6.4.3. Each administrative board shall be empowered to administer all funds set aside for its work by budget appropriation or by special resolution of the Voters' Assembly, however, the Voters' Assembly or Parish Council may, at their discretion, restrict such expenditures to conform with the actual financial condition of the congregation at any given time.

6.4.4. Each administrative board shall keep a permanent set of minutes for each meeting, and such minutes shall be the property of the congregation.

7. ARTICLE NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

- 7.1. Elections of all elected officers and board members shall be held at the spring Voters' Assembly every even-numbered year.
- 7.1.1. A nominating committee, chosen by the Parish Planning Council shall present a slate of candidates for all elected positions. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. No person shall be nominated without his consent or without being properly advised of the full nature and responsibilities of the position for which he was nominated.
- 7.1.2. Parish Planning Council Members shall be elected
- 7.1.3. All officers shall be elected by a ~~maority~~ majority ballot vote and voting shall continue until a clear majority has been established after the candidate or candidates receiving the lowest number of votes has been eliminated in each succeeding ballot. Proxy voting is not allowed.
- 7.1.4. Officers and Parish Planning Council members shall be inducted into office in a public worship service of the congregation in the month of September (see Officers Article 3).
- 7.2. In case of a vacancy in an elected position, the Parish Planning Council shall appoint a successor to fill the unexpired term.
- 7.3. No member of the congregation may hold more than one elected position at any one time.
- 7.4. An elected officer or board member will be removed from office if:
- 7.4.1. his voting membership is terminated.
- 7.4.2. he is deemed to be neglectful or abusive of his office, position or Christian life and is then removed by a three-fourths majority vote of the Parish Planning Council or the Voters' Assembly. Any officer or board member who is removed from office by the Parish Planning Council has the right of appeal to the Voters' Assembly whose decision shall be final.

8. ARTICLE CALLING OF MINISTERS OF RELIGION

- 8.1. When a Minister of Religion, ordained or commissioned, is to be called the Parish Planning Council shall appoint a Call Committee to prepare a slate of candidates to be submitted to the Voters' Assembly. Every member of the congregation shall have the privilege of making one or more nominations. The Call Committee shall also ask the President of the synodical District for recommendations.
- 8.2. In the screening process, the Call Committee shall submit all names to the District President for information and evaluation. After receiving information and recommendations from the District President, the Call Committee shall present to the congregation, by means of a public announcement, a slate of at least ~~five~~ three preferred candidates, together with a biographical sketch of each.
- 8.3. At the Voters' Assembly, called for the purpose of electing a new Minister of Religion, the preferred slate may be amended by means of a three-fourths vote of those present.
- 8.4. Election of a candidate for call shall be conducted by means of a secret ballot vote. A simple majority is needed in order to determine the disposition of the call. A candidate receiving a majority vote on the first ballot shall be declared elected. When a second or succeeding ballot is required for a majority, the candidate receiving the fewest votes and all candidates receiving less than fifteen percent of the votes cast shall be dropped from the slate, unless fewer than two candidates receive fifteen percent or more of the votes cast, in which case the three highest candidates shall constitute the slate.

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Balloting shall continue until a majority decision is reached. The tally of the votes cast for each candidate shall be announced after each ballot.

- 8.5. The election shall, if possible, be made unanimous by a rising vote, and the call shall be sent to the Minister of Religion elect.