

BY-LAWS
PEACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH – McCOOK, NE

ARTICLE I MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 BAPTIZED MEMBERS

Baptized members are all members who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and who desire to be under the spiritual care of this congregation. This includes both Baptized children and adults. This Baptism may have taken place at this congregation or any Christian congregation where this Rite is properly administered. Children may be Baptized members even though the parents are not Baptized members of this congregation.

Section 2 COMMUNICANT MEMBERS

A. COMMUNICANT MEMBERS DEFINED

Communicant members are Baptized members who have been instructed in the teachings of the Word of God as taught by The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LC-MS) and have agreed to the following commitments:

1. To uphold the Confession of Faith as set forth in Article III of this constitution and abide by the membership requirements of Article IV.
2. To attend Divine Services regularly and partake of Holy Communion often.
3. To be willing to assist, as God has blessed, in extending God's Kingdom here on earth with faithful stewardship of time, talents, and treasures.

B. RECEIVING COMMUNICANT MEMBERS

Members may be received as communicants by:

1. The Rite of Confirmation as youth or adults.
2. Transfer from a congregation in fellowship with the LC-MS, with the recommendation for membership by the Board of Elders to the Church Council for approval.
3. Reaffirmation of Faith, or Profession of Faith, in cases where their membership in a Lutheran Congregation has lapsed. A prospective member must speak with the Pastor and receive the recommendation of the board of Elders.

Section 3 VOTING MEMBERS

Voting members are all communicant members, at least 18 years of age.

1. It is the duty of every voting member to attend the Congregational Voters Meetings. By failing to attend such a meeting, a member waives the right to vote on questions presented at that meeting. Voting by proxy is prohibited.

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2. It is the duty of every voting member to accept nomination for office, committee appointment, etc., if possible, and participate in the business activities of the congregation.

Section 4 TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

A. Baptized and Communicant Membership

1. Transfer to other congregations - Communicant members desiring to join a congregation in fellowship with LC-MS shall present their request for transfer to the Pastor and/or Elders, to whom authorization is granted to issue such transfer. Such transfers may then be issued and shall be reported to the Church Council.
2. Release - Communicant members desiring to join a congregation other than a congregation in fellowship with LC-MS shall present their request for release to the Pastor and/or Elders to whom authorization is granted to issue such a release. All releases shall be reported to the Church Council.
3. Joining other churches - In cases where communicant members have joined other congregations outside of our own fellowship they shall, upon recommendation of the Pastor and/or Elders, be considered to have terminated their membership and their names shall be removed from the membership-list by a resolution of the Church Council.
4. Non Resident Inactive - Communicant members who are known to reside outside the area of ministry of Peace Lutheran Church, and having not been active in worship for at least 18 months, shall be:
 - a. Contacted by letter encouraging them to join a sister congregation.
 - b. If there is no response within 90 days, with information concerning a transfer or request for a release, a second letter will be sent to encourage the member to join a sister congregation, with a copy also being sent to the nearest known LC-MS congregation.
 - c. If no response is received within 90 days of the second letter, with information of a transfer or release, the issue shall be submitted to the voters for appropriate action.
5. Whereabouts Unknown - The names of Communicant members whose whereabouts are unknown and cannot be established shall, after a period of one year, be removed by a resolution of the voters and forthwith such membership will be terminated.
6. Excommunicated
 - a. An unrepentant member shall be admonished, in accordance with the various steps prescribed in Matthew 18: 15-17, whenever that procedure is possible.
 - b. Fruitless admonition of a manifest and impenitent sinner shall result in excommunication.
 - c. The excommunication of a member shall require the unanimous vote of the members present at a regularly scheduled Congregational Voters Meeting. The member under discipline shall be deprived of his right to

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vote until the question at issue is decided. After sincere repentance an excommunicated person shall receive absolution and be reinstated by the Pastor and/or Elders.

B. Status

A person whose membership has been terminated has forfeited all rights of a member in 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.

ARTICLE II CONGREGATIONAL VOTERS MEETING

A. A regular Congregational Voters Meeting shall be held three times a year, during the months of January, April, and October. The annual budget shall be adopted at the January meeting and the officers shall be elected at the October meeting.

B. A special Congregational Voters Meeting may be called by the Pastors, the President, a majority of the church Council, or by petition of any ten voting members. The petition shall state the reason for calling such a special meeting and no other business shall be transacted.

C. At least ten days prior notice shall be given for every Congregational Voters Meeting by mail or by bulletin. The purpose of the meeting shall be announced in the call of the meeting. Whenever a Congregational Voters Meeting has thus been announced, twenty voting members present shall constitute a quorum. A simple majority shall be required for approval of all items of business, except as otherwise provided herein.

D. For amending the Articles of Incorporation or the Constitution and By-laws, or the erection of a building, or the purchase or sale of property, or the removal of a pastor or teacher or some other member from office, a resolution shall be presented and a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of members present shall be required for adoption of the same. The proposal must be announced in the call of the meeting.

**ARTICLE III VACANCIES AND THE CALLING OF PASTORS,
D.C.E.'s AND OTHER CALLED SPIRITUAL WORKERS**

A. Pastoral vacancy

In the event of a vacancy in the pastoral office, the Church Council shall immediately arrange for a special meeting with the responsible District official or the Circuit counselor to select a vacancy pastor.

B. Nominations

A list of suitable candidates for Pastor, D.C.E., or other spiritual worker shall be requested from the responsible District official. Voting members may submit names of nominees who are listed on the current appropriate official synodical roster

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for inclusion on the list of suitable candidates. Only persons who have been included on the list of suitable candidates shall be eligible to be called.

Upon the recommendation of the responsible District official, the Congregational Voters Meeting may decide to fill an office by placement of a graduate of an LC-MS college or seminary.

C. Ballot

This Ballot for the call shall consist of the list of all suitable candidates. The Board of Elders shall determine the order in which the candidates are listed and may state its preferences.

D. Method of Election

At a Congregational Voters Meeting properly convened, the names and information as to the backgrounds and qualifications of the candidates shall be placed before the voting members. On the first ballot each voting member shall vote for one candidate. When the results are announced, those candidates receiving less than 10% of the votes shall be eliminated from further consideration.

On the second and subsequent ballots, each voting member shall vote for one remaining candidate and the candidate receiving the fewest votes will be eliminated; if one candidate receives the majority of all votes cast, balloting will cease, then the candidate will be declared elected by unanimous vote.

ARTICLE IV ELECTED OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION

The elected officers of this congregation shall be: a President; a Vice-President; a Secretary; a Treasurer; a Financial Secretary; members of the Boards of Elders, Trustees, Education, and Evangelism. All officers must be voting members of the congregation.

The Boards of Elders, Trustees, Education, and Evangelism shall consist of three (3) members each. The Board of Elders shall consist of five (5) members including three (3) members elected by the Congregational Voters Meeting, together with the President and the Vice-President, who shall be Elders ex officio with all the powers and duties accorded to the Elders, according to the Congregational job description for the Board of Elders.

A. The President, Vice-President and the Board of Elders shall be restricted to male voting members only.

B. Officers shall be elected for the terms specified in these By-laws, and shall hold office until their successors shall have been installed or appointed.

C. All officers shall be elected for the terms of two (2) years. No person shall be permitted to be an elected church officer for more than six consecutive years.

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ARTICLE V CHURCH COUNCIL

A. Membership

The Church Council shall consist of the Pastors: D.C.E.; the President of the congregation; the Vice-President; the Secretary; the Treasurer; the Financial Secretary; members of the Boards of Elders, Trustees, Education, and Evangelism.

B. Meetings

It shall be the duty of the Church Council to meet once a month, at a regular time, to consider and discuss matters pertaining to the general welfare of the congregation and to present recommendations and reports to the congregation. The Church Council shall also act in matters committed to it by the Congregational Voters Meetings, and in case of emergency, between voters meetings. All boards represented on the Council shall hold a meeting prior to the Council meeting.

C. Committees

1. Nominating Committee - The Nominating Committee shall consist of the President, the Vice President, the Secretary, and the member from each Board (Elders, Trustees, Education, Evangelism) whose term last expires. The Nominating Committee shall seek a willingness to accept responsibilities of the office and permission to have name put into nomination from each prospective nominee. No voting member may be nominated for an office of the Church Council until such member has been a member of this congregation for at least one full year prior to the election. The slate of nominees shall be presented and published two (2) Sundays prior to the October Meeting. The Nominating Committee shall seek at least two nominees for each office. Additional nominations may be made at the Congregational Voters Meeting with the consent of the nominee.
2. Budget Committee - The President, Vice-President, and all other members of the Church Council, not assigned to the Nominating Committee, shall be members of the Budget Committee. The Budget Committee shall meet to draw up a proposed budget and present it to the Church Council at the December Church Council meeting.

ARTICLE VI ELECTION OF CONGREGATIONAL OFFICERS

A. Election shall be by secret ballot, and majority vote of those present and voting is required.

B. Newly elected officers shall attend meetings and work closely with the present officers from October through December. The officers shall be installed and assume their duties on the first Sunday in January following the October election.

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C. In the event of a vacancy in any office, the Church Council shall appoint a successor to serve for the unexpired term.

ARTICLE VII COMMITTEES OF THE CONGREGATION

A. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall consist of nine members with the Financial Secretary as chairman. They shall meet regularly to count and record the church offerings. Members of the Finance Committee shall be elected for a term of 2 years. The Nominating Committee shall seek two nominees for each vacancy.

B. Worship Committee

The membership and duties of the Worship Committee will be determined by Board of Elders.

C. Special Committees

There shall be such special committees as the Church Council shall, from time to time, constitute and appoint. The purpose of such a special committee shall be stated by the Church Council and may be altered, expanded, or contracted by the Church Council at any time. When the purpose of the committee has been achieved, a final report shall be made to the Church Council, which shall dissolve the committee.