

# Bylaws

## **Part I-Communion Participation**

- B1.01** Participation in Holy Communion shall be open to all believers in Jesus Christ.
- B1.02** Record of participation in Holy Communion shall be entered upon the books of the congregation. If a member of another congregation communes, notice may be sent to his/her pastor upon request.

## **Part II-Conflicting Loyalties**

- B2.01** Ceremonies of lodges or other such organizations shall not be permitted in the church or on the premises of this congregation.
- B2.02** The pastor of this congregation shall take no part in any such ceremonies even if they are conducted outside of the church premises.

## **Part 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 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, 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 sent to the congregation in which the child is to be enrolled as a baptized member
  - c. Children baptized in other congregations 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 Congregation Council.

- d. Unbaptized adults who have received instruction and have given evidence of having adequate understanding and acceptance of the teachings of the Word of God as confessed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, shall, upon confession of faith and Christian baptism duly recorded as a ministerial act performed under the auspices of this congregation, 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 have given evidence of having adequate understanding and acceptance of the teachings of the Word of God as confessed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of 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 3.01d. of this Part of the bylaws shall be recognized as confirmed members whether or not, at the discretion of the pastor, they have participated in the rite of confirmation.
- c. Children who are baptized members of the congregation shall be admitted to confirmed membership through 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 Lutheran congregations shall be admitted to confirmed membership upon acceptance of their Letters 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 Lutheran Congregation 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 or pastor.

### **B3.03**

#### **Admission to Voting Membership**

The Congregation Council shall be responsible for determining the voting membership in accordance with the qualifications specified in the constitution and bylaws.

### **B3.04**

#### **Voting Membership**

- a. Membership is spelled out in chapter 8 of our constitution.
- b. Our financial obligation to Tri-County Ministries is based, In part, on our number of voting members.

- c. Members who move away shall be encouraged to transfer their membership. A confirmed member in good standing desiring to change his/her membership to another Lutheran congregation shall, upon request, receive a Letter of Transfer.
- d. Members 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, have thereby terminated their membership in the congregation and have surrendered all membership rights.

## **Part IV-Annual Meeting**

- B4.01** Announcement of the time and place of the annual meeting of the congregation shall be made at two public services immediately preceding the meeting, said services to be at least a week apart, and in such publications as the congregation or the pastor may periodically issue; or by written notice to the voting members mailed at least ten days in advance of the meeting.
- B4.02** The current roster of voting, confirmed, and baptized members shall be determined prior to each annual meeting.
- B4.03** A quorum for the conduct of business at annual and special congregation meetings shall consist of 50 voting members.
- B4.04** The order of business at the annual meeting shall be:
- a. Opening devotions;
  - b. Approval of minutes of the previous meeting;
  - c. Reports of pastor, Congregation Council, treasurer, committees and others;
  - d. Elections;
  - e. Approval of budget;
  - f. Unfinished business;
  - g. New business;
  - h. Closing prayer.
- B4.05** In the following cases voting shall be by written ballot unless a motion to suspend the rules has been passed:
- a. To elect the officers and members of boards;
  - b. To adopt or amend the articles of incorporation, constitution, or bylaws of the congregation;
  - c. To call a pastor or to request his/her resignation;
  - d. To sever membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America;
  - e. To dispose of, encumber, or purchase real property;
  - f. When requested by ten or more voting members present.

**B4.06** Except as otherwise provided in the constitution and the bylaws, all matters shall be decided by a simple majority vote of those present and voting.

**B4.07** No one shall be declared elected unless he/she has received a majority of the votes cast.

**B4.08** Unless otherwise ordered, parliamentary procedures shall be in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

## **Part V-Property Ownership**

**B5.01** Title to all real or personal property acquired by the congregation, its organizations, or individuals for use by the congregation and its organizations, shall be held by the congregation.

**B5.02** Real property shall not be purchased, disposed of, or encumbered in any manner except by resolution adopted by not less than a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at a legally called meeting of the congregation.

## **Part VI-Officers and Boards**

### **B6.01 Congregational President**

Purpose: Lead congregation in attaining church goals and aims

Term: One year, limited to two consecutive elected terms

Duties shall include but not be limited to:

- 1) Preside over all general church and Congregation Council meetings
- 2) Be a delegate to church synod and conference assemblies
- 3) Provide leadership and direction for the Congregation Council
- 4) Assist in setting agenda for council and church meetings

### **B6.02 Congregational Vice President**

Term: One year, limited to two consecutive elected terms

Duties shall include but not be limited to :

- 1) To assume presidential responsibilities in absence of the President
- 2) Serve on the Tri-County Council
- 3) Assist all boards as necessary

### **B6.03 Congregational Secretary**

Term: One year, limited to two consecutive elected terms

Duties shall include but not be limited to:

- 1) Record and report minutes of all Congregation Council meetings
- 2) Record and report all minutes of all congregational meetings

### **B6.04 Congregational Treasurer**

Term: Term of office shall be three years, with the third year being a year the Treasurer serves ex-officio member of the Congregation Council and in an advisory capacity to the newly elected treasurer as needed

Duties shall include but not be limited to:

- 1) Maintain all financial records of the church's general fund and budget
- 2) Report financial status to the Congregation Council monthly
- 3) Assist Trustees with information as required to set up a church budget
- 4) Provide special financial report as required and an annual report

### **B6.05 The Board of Deacons**

Purpose: The Board of Deacons under the leadership of the pastoral staff, shall be responsible for the spiritual life and concern of the congregation. This shall include but not be limited to, developing programs of evangelism and fellowship, oversee congregational worship, and encourage a healthy and consistent congregational prayer life.

Term: Three years, limited to two consecutive elected terms.

Membership: The Board of Deacons shall have five members elected at the annual meeting of the congregation in such a way that the terms of approximately one-third of the members expire each year.

Duties shall include but not be limited to:

- 1) Elect a chairperson from its membership who shall attend and report to the Congregation Council.
- 2) Conduct regular meetings not less than once each month at such time and place as the board itself may determine.
- 3) Establish a Worship Committee to organize and plan the worship services.
- 4) Organize congregation members to pray with the pastor prior to worship services.

- 5) Secure congregation members to assist with the serving of communion at Sunday worship and special worship services.
- 6) Oversee and recruit ushers for Sunday worship and special worship services.
- 7) Secure scripture readers and greeters for Sunday worship services.
- 8) Act as an advisory board to assist the pastor when requested in matters concerning the confirmation program and evangelism.
- 9) Review year end membership status.

### **Worship Committee Job Description**

Purpose: The Worship Committee appointed and directed by the Board of Deacons and working along with the pastoral staff, will see to scheduling and organization of Sunday worship and special worship services and oversee the music program.

Duties shall include but not be limited to:

- 1) Sunday and Special services worship format
  - a. Liturgy selection
  - b. Hymn selection
  - c. Bulletin planning
  - d. Worship music
- 2) Worship Music
  - a. Secure organists/accompanists
  - b. Oversee Choirs and scheduling
  - c. Secure song leaders as needed
  - d. Plan and schedule special music as needed
- 3) Lay Worship Assistants
  - a. Assist pastoral staff with recruiting and training Lay Worship Assistants
  - b. Schedule Lay Worship assistants for Sunday worship.
- 4) Musical Equipment and Worship Space
  - a. Oversee maintenance of organ, pianos, and hand bells.
  - b. Contribute input into matters concerning remodeling, updating, and/or decoration of the sanctuary worship space.

## **B6.06 The Parish Boards of Education**

Purpose: The Parish Boards of Education under the guidance of the pastoral staff, shall be responsible for the Christian Education life of the Congregation. This shall include but not be limited to developing Christian Education programs as well as planning and scheduling Christian Education events and activities for all ages. The duties of the Parish Boards of Education shall be carried out through a Youth Board and an Adult Board.

Term: Three years, limited to two consecutive elected terms.

Membership: The Parish Education Boards shall each have three members elected at the annual meeting of the congregation in such a way that the terms of approximately one-third of the members expire each year.

### The Youth Board of Education

Duties shall include but not be limited to:

- 1) Elect a chairperson from its membership.
- 2) Conduct meetings as needed.
- 3) Send a representative to Congregation Council meetings
- 4) Organize and select materials for a Sunday School program.
- 5) Recruit teachers for a Sunday School program.
- 6) Work with pastors and other congregation members to plan other youth and family activities.
- 7) Oversee and/or develop a Vacation Bible School program.
- 8) Assign and assist Sunday worship acolytes.

### The Adult Board of Education

Duties shall include but not be limited to:

- 1) Elect a chairperson from its membership.
- 2) Conduct meetings as needed.
- 3) Send a representative to Congregation Council meetings.
- 4) Organize and promote adult and family education programs for the congregation.

## **B6.07      The Board of Trustees**

Purpose: The Board of Trustees under the guidance of the pastoral staff, shall develop stewardship, financial, and fund raising programs for the congregation. This shall also include establishing an annual budget and managing the financial affairs of the congregation. The Board of Trustees is also responsible for overseeing the maintenance and care of all the congregational properties.

Term: Three years, limited to two consecutive elected terms

Membership: The Board of Trustees shall have five members elected at the annual meeting of the congregation in such a way that the terms of approximately one-third of the members expire each year.

Duties shall include but not be limited to:

- 1) Elect a chairperson from its membership who shall attend and report to the Congregation Council.
- 2) Conduct regular meetings not less than once each month, at such time and place as the Board of Trustees itself may determine.
- 3) Appoint an auditing committee with Congregation Council approval, composed of two persons not members of the Board of Trustees.

- a) The auditing committee shall audit all financial records of the congregation proper including all special accounts, investments, and savings certificates and present its report to the annual meeting in writing.
  - b) The auditing committee shall carefully examine all insurance policies to determine the amount and kind of insurance in force and include this report in its statement.
- 4) Be responsible for the care and upkeep of the material properties of the congregation. The congregation requires that its Board of Trustees shall observe the following rules regarding the use of its properties:
- c) The property of the congregation shall be for the use of the congregation in its normal function as a Lutheran Church and shall not be used in any way not in harmony with the purpose of the congregation.
  - d) Buildings which are the property of the congregation shall not be lent or rented to any group or individual not affiliated with the congregation or with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America unless application for such use had been approved by not less than three members of the Board of Trustees.
- 5) Prepare an annual budget for submission at the annual meeting.
- 6) Appoint and direct the activities of whichever committees may from time to time be necessary.
- 7) Report its activities to the annual meeting of the congregation and at such other times as the congregation may decide.

## **B6.08      The Congregation Council**

**Purpose:** The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**Membership:** The elected officers and representatives of the boards named in this article together with a pastor, and a representative from each church organization shall constitute the Congregation Council. All members shall be voting members of the congregation. The president of the congregation shall be its chairman and the secretary of the congregation its secretary.

**Duties as prescribed in the constitution, the Congregation Council shall include:**

- 1) Conduct regular meetings not less than once each quarter, at such time and place the Council itself may determine.
- 2) Have general oversight of the life and work of the congregation, subject to the provisions of the constitution and bylaws.
- 3) Secure such help as necessary to carry on the work of the congregation, such as organists, choir director, parish worker, secretaries, intern, custodian etc., and fix their salaries.

## **B6.09 Congregation Council Membership Vacancy**

A member's place on the Congregation Council may be vacant if the member:

- 1) Ceases to be a voting member of this congregation, or
- 2) Is absent without cause from three successive regular meetings or from four meetings in the year of the Congregation Council.

## **Part VII-Nominating Committee**

### **B7.01 Nominating Committee**

Purpose: A nominating committee shall procure a slate of officers to be presented to the congregation for election at the annual congregational meeting. Their selection and duties are as follows:

- 1) A nominating committee of three members shall be appointed by the Congregation Council from the list of council members who retired the preceding year.
- 2) The members of the nominating committee shall serve for the year following their selection. They shall nominate one or more candidates for each office to be filled and shall secure the consent of each candidate to serve if elected.
- 3) The candidates selected by the nominating committee shall be made known to the congregation in conjunction with the announcements of the special or annual meeting at which the election is to take place.
- 4) In addition to the candidates submitted by the nominating committee, additional nominations may be made from the floor.

## **Part VIII-Staff Support Committee**

### **B8.01 Staff Support Committee**

A Staff Support Committee of three persons may be established at the discretion of pastor(s).

## **Part IX-Call Committee**

### **B9.01 A Call Committee**

When a pastoral vacancy occurs two voting members shall be chosen by the Congregation Council to serve on the Tri-County Call Committee. The term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor(s).

## **X-Pastoral Reports**

### **B10.01 Pastoral Reports**

The pastor shall be responsible for keeping accurate record of membership and his/her ministerial acts, on forms provided by the congregation and which shall remain the property of the congregation. The pastor shall report these statistics to the congregation annually, and, when required, to the secretary of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Upon leaving the congregation, the pastor shall complete and submit the records of his/her ministry up to the time of his/her departure.

## **Part XI-Tri-County Council**

### **B11.01 Tri-County Council**

Two persons shall represent Trinity Lutheran Church of Cooperstown on Tri-County Council. They shall be appointed to office by the officers of the Congregation Council. One appointee shall preferably be a member of the Congregation Council. Term of office shall be two years, and members are limited to two consecutive terms.

## **Part XII-Auxiliary Organizations**

### **B12.01 Service and Fellowship Groups**

Purpose: The responsibilities of the Service and Fellowship Groups shall include serving and furnishing food for funerals and other special events as determined by the Congregation Council.

Duties and membership:

- 1) All men, women and family members are automatically members of a Service and Fellowship Group by virtue of their membership in Trinity Lutheran Church of Cooperstown.
- 2) There shall be at least two chairpersons for each group. The chairpersons shall be rotated annually for a term of two years each unless the individual(s) agrees to continue in this position for a third year.
- 3) There shall be a Steering Committee consisting of at least four past chairpersons. The responsibilities of the Steering Committee shall include but not be limited to:
  - a. Rotating Chairmen annually for each Service and Fellowship group.
  - b. Review and update annually membership lists of the groups.
  - c. Disburse funds at least annually and report income and disbursements in the Congregation's Annual Report .

## **B12.02 Women of the ELCA (WELCA)**

Purpose: As a community of women, created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, and support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the Church, the society, and the whole world.

To accomplish this purpose we commit ourselves to:

- 1) Come together for study.
- 2) Participate in the life and work of our congregation, our community, and beyond.
- 3) Support financially the total program of the Women of the ELCA
- 4) Appoint people to serve on altar guild.
- 5) Appoint a committee to record and preserve the ongoing history of Trinity congregation.

## **B12.03 Altar Guild**

Purpose: The Altar Guild is responsible for the seasonal paraments, wall banners, chancel embellishments and set up of Holy Communion. The pastor serves as advisor.

Duties: Shall include but not be limited to:

- 1) Weekly dusting of altar and chancel area.
- 2) Polishing and general care of brass communion items.
- 3) Change paraments and banners seasonally.
- 4) Responsible for eternal candle lighting and maintenance.
- 5) Responsible for all communion set ups.
- 6) Set up communion registration cards in the Narthex.
- 7) Notify office when communion and candle supplies are running low.

## **B12.04 Disciples on the Prairie**

Purpose: The Lay Disciples program is a ministry of the Eastern North Dakota Synod of the ELCA in cooperation with Luther Seminary. It was established to provide education and training for lay ministers who would assist in the ministry of word and sacrament as well as education and visitation in their own parishes under the guidance of a mentoring pastor. As such, it is a means for one to experience an intentional process of life-long Christian education, and to equip one for service as needed in the congregation and beyond.