

THE BY-LAWS OF ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

WICHITA, KANSAS

November 20, 2011

ARTICLE 1

COMMUNICANT MEMBERSHIP

A. Application for Membership

Applicants for communicant membership in this congregation shall consult the Pastor or authorized member(s) of the ministry staff who shall determine whether such applicants are eligible for membership in accordance with Article IV of the Constitution. Applicants not familiar with the doctrines and confessions of The Lutheran Church shall be required to attend a course of instruction, and to make profession of their faith either before the congregation or, at the Pastor's discretion, before witnesses who are members of the Commission of Deacons, before being received as members.

Applicants from other Lutheran churches with whom we share pulpit and altar fellowship shall submit a letter of transfer from their former congregation to establish their eligibility for membership. In the case of applicants whose previous membership in a Lutheran congregation has lapsed, the Pastor may, in consultation with the Commission of Deacons arrange for a period of reinstruction prior to reaffirmation of faith of such applicant.

After applicants have given satisfactory evidence of their eligibility in accordance with the two preceding paragraphs, their admission as communicant members shall be recommended by the Pastor to the Commission of Deacons. The Commission of Deacons shall have the authority to act on such application on behalf of the Congregational Membership. The roster of new members shall be publicized in the various news media of the congregation.

B. Privileges and Duties

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

- Place their God-given talents and abilities at the disposal of the called workers, the officers, and other agencies of the congregation as set forth in its Constitution and By-Laws, so that the purposes and functions of the congregation may be effectively implemented.
- Contribute toward the maintenance of the congregation and the extension of the Kingdom of God at home and abroad as God has prospered them.

ARTICLE 2

MEMBERSHIP TERMINATION

A. Peaceful Release – The names of all members who are peacefully released shall be reported at the next Congregational Assembly Meeting.

1. Transfer to Other Congregation – Communicants desiring to join another Lutheran congregation shall present their request to the Pastor and/or the Commission of Deacons, to whom authorization is granted to issue such transfers.
2. Joining Other Churches – In cases where communicant members have joined another congregation outside the Lutheran Confession, they shall be considered as having terminated their membership, thus forfeiting all rights and privileges of such membership. Their names shall be removed from the membership list of the congregation by the Commission of Deacons.
3. Whereabouts Unknown – The names of members whose whereabouts are unknown and cannot be established, shall, upon the recommendation of the Pastor and the Commission of Deacons, be removed from the membership list by the Congregational Assembly, and forthwith such membership is terminated.
4. Request for Release – If a communicant member, for reason of conscience or otherwise, no longer wishes to remain a member, the request will be granted by the Commission of Deacons.

B. Discipline in the Congregation

1. Self-Exclusion – When a member of Ascension Lutheran Church has not communed for six (6) months, they shall be contacted by their respective Deacon and shall be admonished and encouraged. If such member has not communed after another three (3) months, they shall receive another contact by a Deacon and the Pastor. Additional admonition and encouragement shall be given. If, after a total of one (1) year, such a member has not communed and is not attending the worship service of the church, they shall be evangelically admonished by the respective Deacons or the Pastor and told that if such neglect continues for another three (3) months, it shall be interpreted as a sign for spiritual concern (Hebrews 10:25) and an indifference to church membership, privileges, and responsibilities. If then after a total of fifteen (15) months, the member has not responded to Christian admonition as outlined above, they shall be declared by the Commission of Deacons to have excluded themselves from this Christian congregation. The individual shall be notified of such action by certified mail. The individual's name shall then be transferred over to the Commission of Evangelism and Public Relations. However, the time period of fifteen (15) months may be extended in unusual cases as determined by the Pastor and Commission of Deacons and the member involved.

The names of all members who have excluded themselves shall be reported at the next regular Congregational Assembly Meeting by the Commission of Deacons. Such self-exclusion releases the individual from all responsibilities to this congregation, but it also excludes them from the privileges of church membership. Such a person, however, shall at all times be cordially welcome to attend all divine services in our church and continually encouraged to come back into the fellowship of this Christian congregation.

2. Excommunication – Excommunication is to be applied to any member who impenitently conducts themselves in an un-Christian manner; i.e., to one who openly adheres to false doctrine, gives evidence of an immoral and offensive life, or willfully despises the preaching of the Gospel and the Lord's Supper after proper admonition has been given by the Commission of Deacons. The Commission of Deacons shall administer church discipline on behalf of the congregation, and shall follow the Biblical principles outlined in Matthew 18:15-20. Should such a disciplined member remain impenitent, the Commission of Deacons shall recommend to the Congregational Assembly that he or she be excommunicated.
3. Reinstatement – A person whose communicant membership has been terminated has forfeited all rights of a member of this congregation. Persons shall be restored with all rights and privileges when they repent and ask forgiveness through the Pastor and Commission of Deacons. The names of all members who have been reinstated shall be reported at the next regular Congregational Assembly Meeting.
4. Officers – Any officer of the congregation who willfully neglects the duties of their office may be deposed by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present in a meeting of the Congregational Assembly. The Commission of Deacons shall initiate such disciplinary action. When an office is made vacant by deposition, resignation, death or excommunication of the incumbent, a successor to such officer or director shall be filled by an individual appointed by the President of the congregation in accordance with Article 6 of the By-Laws.
5. Staff – Sufficient grounds for deposing an ordained or commissioned minister shall be: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of official duties, or evident and protracted incapacity to perform the function of the sacred office. Charges on any of these counts shall be carefully investigated by the Commission of Deacons. Should such charges be substantiated by clear evidence, the Commission of Deacons will confront the individual and give them the opportunity to repent and change their ways. If they do not repent, the individual involved shall first be given an opportunity to resign their position in the congregation. Such opportunity having been given and declined, the Commission of Deacons shall, after consultation with the appropriate officers of the Kansas District, notify the congregational membership of the situation, and shall submit the matter for action at a special meeting of that body. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the voting members present shall be required to depose a pastor or others.

Should the occasion to depose a pastor or others ever arise, the intended deposition shall be announced by the Director of the Commission of Deacons at regular divine services on two (2) Sundays preceding a special meeting of the congregational members called for that purpose. All congregational members shall be notified by mail at least two weeks in advance.

ARTICLE 3

MEETINGS

Congregational Assembly Meetings – All those present at a Congregational Assembly Meeting shall constitute a quorum. This shall be considered a properly convened and legal meeting capable of transacting business.

A. Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the Congregational Assembly shall be held in the months of March and November.

An order of business at the March meeting shall be elections. An order of business at the November meeting shall be the adoption of the annual budget for the ensuing year.

The order of business for regular meetings shall be:

1. Devotion
2. Reading and approval of Minutes
3. Signing of Constitution
4. Reports of Officers, Commissions, and Staff
5. Unfinished Business
6. New Business
7. Adjournment
8. Prayer

A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the quorum shall be required concerning all matters pertaining to:

- amending the Articles of Incorporation
- amending the Constitution
- amending the By-Laws
- the erection of buildings/major facility modifications
- the purchase or sale of real property
- the removal of an ordained or commissioned minister
- the termination of membership or excommunication

A simple majority of the quorum shall prevail on all other matters including the approval of the annual budget and the election of officers, commission and committee members.

B. Special Meetings

1. Special meetings of the Congregational Assembly must be called by the President.
2. Special meetings of the Congregational Assembly must be convened when an ordained or commissioned minister is to be called.
3. Special meetings of the Congregational Assembly must be convened at the written request of at least ten (10) Voting Members.

4. The President shall cause to be notified, by telephone or other expeditious means, all members of the congregation of the day and time and the subject matter of any special meeting.

C. Meeting Notification

Two week notification shall be provided by verbal or written announcement for all Congregational Assembly meetings. This requirement may be waived by two-thirds (2/3) agreement by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE 4

EXECUTIVE BOARD

(A notional organizational chart of the relationships between officers and commissions is shown in the Appendix.)

- A. The Executive Board shall consist of the following officers:
 1. President
 2. Congregational Vice President
 3. Site Vice Presidents
 4. Congregational Secretary
 5. Treasurer
 6. Financial Secretary
 7. Called workers serving as ex-officio Members.
- B. Majority of eligible members present shall constitute a quorum.
- C. The establishment and conduct of all institutions and societies within the congregation shall at all times be subject to the supervision of the Executive Board. It shall integrate, coordinate, and appraise the work of the various Commissions and functions of the congregation. It shall finalize the proposed annual unified budget for the Congregational Assembly.
- D. Executive Board meetings shall normally be open to all communicant members of the congregation. By a majority vote of the Executive Board quorum, the Board may conduct a closed meeting.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- A. The Board of Directors shall consist of the Directors of all Commissions and all Officers. Called workers shall serve as ex-officio members. In the absence of a Commission Director, an alternate from the Commission may serve as a member of the Board of Directors.
- B. Majority of eligible Board members present shall constitute a quorum.
- C. Board of Directors' meetings shall normally be open to all communicant members of the congregation. By a majority vote of the Board of Directors quorum, the Board may conduct a closed meeting.
- D. Any matter a congregational member wishes to bring before the Board should be submitted to the President in written form prior to the meeting if possible.

OFFICERS AND CALLED WORKERS

(A notional organizational chart of the relationships between officers and commissions is shown in the Appendix.)

The Congregational Assembly shall elect from its membership a President, a Congregational Vice-President, Site Vice-Presidents, a Financial Secretary, a Congregational Secretary and a Treasurer, each for a term of two (2) years.

The terms of office shall be so arranged that either the President or the Vice-President and either the Financial Secretary or the Treasurer is elected in any one year. The Congregational Secretary term shall be concurrent with the Congregational Vice-President.

The elected officers of this congregation shall be at least eighteen (18) years of age and a voting member of the congregation. The offices of President and Congregational Vice-President will be filled by men.

- A. The PRESIDENT shall be the chief lay executive officer of the congregation and shall:
 - 1. Preside at all meetings of the Congregational Assembly.
 - 2. Be an ex-officio member of all Commissions and committees.
 - 3. Preside at the Executive Board meetings.
 - 4. Perform other duties assigned to him by the Congregational Assembly or these By-Laws.
 - 5. Sign legal documents on behalf of the congregation.

- B. The Congregational VICE-PRESIDENT shall be a member of the Board of Directors, Executive Board and shall:
 - 1. Assist the President in the performance of his duties.
 - 2. Preside at the Executive Board meetings in the absence of the President.
 - 3. Be an ex-officio member of all Commissions and committees under his direction.
 - 4. Preside at the Commissions' meeting under his direction.
 - 5. Preside, in the absence of the President, at Congregational Assembly meetings.
 - 6. Perform other duties assigned to him by the Congregational Assembly, President, or these By-Laws.
 - 7. Assume the duties of Congregational President if that office becomes vacant.
 - 8. Sign legal documents on behalf of the congregation.
 - 9. Oversight of budgets for those commissions under his direction.

Each SITE VICE-PRESIDENT shall be a member of the Board of Directors and the Executive Board and shall:

- 1. Preside at the site meetings under his/her direction.
 - 2. Be an ex-officio member of those Commissions and committees under his/her direction.
 - 3. Perform other duties assigned to him/her by the Congregational Assembly President, Congregational Vice-President, or these By-Laws.
 - 4. Oversight of budgets for those commissions under his/her direction.
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- C. The CONGREGATIONAL SECRETARY shall be a member of the Board of Directors and the Executive Board and shall:
 - 1. Record the minutes of the meetings of the Congregational Assembly, the Executive Board, and the Board of Directors in books provided by and remaining the property of the congregation, and filed in the Church Office.
 - 2. Maintain a current list of all voting members and a record of their attendance at Congregational Assembly meetings.
 - 3. Conduct the correspondence of the congregation.

4. Provide copies of resolutions to persons, Commissions, and committees affected by such resolutions.
 5. Perform other duties assigned by the Congregational Assembly, the Board of Directors, or these By-Laws.
 6. Attest to legal documents on behalf of the congregation.
- D. The TREASURER shall be a member of the Board of Directors and the Executive Board and shall:
1. Disburse the monies of the congregation according to the direction of the Congregational Assembly and the provisions of these By-Laws.
 2. Keep an accurate record of all disbursements, deposits, accounts, investments, and indebtedness of the congregation.
 3. Present a financial report to the Executive Board, the Board of Directors and to the Congregational Assembly.
 4. Make financial records available to the General Financial Review Committee.
 5. Sign legal documents on behalf of the congregation.
 6. Prepare and submit the annual report to the Secretary of State's Office.
- E. The FINANCIAL SECRETARY shall be a member of the Board of Directors, Executive Board and shall:
1. Attend and present a written summary statement of the recent month's activity at each regular meeting of the Executive Committee.
 2. Receive, through the Site Finance Committees, all monies of the congregation given as contributions.
 3. Maintain a record of contributions which can be identified as contributed by a given member and provide a record of contributions to individual members quarterly.
 4. Have the Financial Commissions deposit all monies received in the name of the congregation in a bank designated by the Executive Board, and furnish the Treasurer with a copy of such records and deposit slips.
 5. Provide a financial analysis as requested to the Commission of Stewardship.
- F. CALLED WORKERS
- The Operating Procedures Manual shall contain a job description of the responsibilities of the called workers.

ARTICLE 5

COMMISSIONS

(A notional organizational chart of the relationships between officers and commissions is shown in the Appendix.)

- A. All Commissions will submit their updated organizational structure and operating procedures to the congregational President annually. All proposed revisions shall be approved by the Executive Board. A copy will be kept on file in the church office. This will constitute a part of the Operating Procedures Manual for Ascension Lutheran Church.

- B. The Congregational Assembly will elect from its voting membership the following Commissions. From each of these Commissions, the Congregational Assembly will elect a Director to represent his or her Commission on the Board of Directors for a term of one year.
1. Education
 2. Evangelism & Public Relations
 3. Stewardship
 4. Youth Ministry
 5. Worship
 6. Caring Ministry
 7. Finance (Counting)
 8. Properties
- C. The Deacons are appointed by the Congregational President with the concurrence of the Director of Ministries Pastor. Their terms are open-ended. The voting membership shall annually conduct a vote of 'shall we retain' for each Deacon.
- D. The Finance (Counting) Commission may be an individual person with the approval of the Executive Board.
- E. Each Commission, excluding Deacons and Finance (Counting), will have (6) members that serve a term of two (2) years each. With the approval of the Executive Board, each Commission may alter the number of members to reflect the needs of the site or congregation that each respective Commission is serving.
- F. Each Commission Director, after Executive Board approval, may appoint additional ex-officio members to serve until the next election. The terms of service shall be arranged so that no more than half of the members of each Commission are elected in any one year.
- G. Those Commissions reporting to the Congregational Vice-President shall be responsible for the following congregation-wide functions:
1. Deacons
 - a. Based upon Lutheran doctrine and the nature of the duties of this Commission, only men noted for their Christian knowledge, zeal, and experience in the spiritual work of the Kingdom of Christ shall be elected to this Commission
 - b. Maintain the spiritual welfare of the called staff and congregational members, individually and corporately.
 - c. Supervise the ministry of the congregation including Word and Sacrament.
 2. Education
 - a. Administer the total educational program of the congregation (i.e., Sunday School, Adult Education, Pre-School, Open Arms, Vacation Bible School, etc.).
 - b. Promote participation in the congregation's educational programs.
 - c. Provide and maintain a church library for use by the congregation.
 3. Evangelism & Public Relations
 - a. Plan, promote, and implement an evangelism program in the congregation and community.
 - b. Provide for the assimilation of new members into the life and work of the church.
 - c. Proclaim the Gospel and publicize the activities of the congregation by various avenues available.
 - d. Promote world missions.

4. Stewardship
 - a. Initiate and maintain programs for the development of good stewardship attitudes with regard to time, talents, and treasures.
 - b. Administer an annual stewardship effort in the congregation that encourages first fruits giving.
 5. Youth Ministry
 - a. Administer and promote participation in the youth ministry of the congregation.
- H. Those Commissions reporting to the Site Vice-Presidents shall be responsible for the following site-specific functions.
1. Worship
 - a. Recruit and supervise volunteer personnel used in the preparation for and conduct of corporate worship.
 - b. Develop ways to enrich the worship life of the members of the congregation, including the use of new styles and variations in worship practice, as long as they are in keeping with Article III of the Constitution.
 - c. Coordinate, through committees or guilds, those activities pertinent to the worship activities of the congregation.
 2. Caring Ministry
 - a. Administer the benevolent services of the congregation.
 - b. Promote awareness and solutions of social needs in the congregation, community, state, nation, and world.
 3. Finance (Counting)
 - a. Provide for the reception and counting of all monetary contributions, and for the preparation of deposit slips, ensuring that at least two people—not spouses—are in attendance at all such activities.
 4. Properties
 - a. Provide for the proper maintenance and repair of all church property and church grounds.
 - b. Establish policies and fees governing the use, rental, or lending of church property and equipment.

ARTICLE 6

VACANCY OF POSITION

- A. If an elected position becomes vacant, the President shall appoint a voting member to fulfill the term remaining for that vacancy. The appointee will then be eligible to serve two full consecutive elected terms in that specific position following the appointed term.
- B. The same guidelines shall apply to officer and elected committee positions.
- C. The Deacons' terms are open-ended.

ARTICLE 7

COMMITTEES

The Standing Committees appointed by the President of the congregation shall be the:

- A. Auditing Committee
- B. By-Laws Committee

C. Procedures Manual Committee

D. Memorials Committee

The Congregational Assembly shall ratify these appointments.

The Congregational Assembly shall elect the Nominating Committee for a term of one year. The responsibilities of the Nominating Committee are:

- A. Present a slate of candidates to be elected at the March meeting of the Congregational Assembly.
- B. The slate of candidates shall be given to the congregation in written form at least one week prior to the March Congregational Assembly Meeting.
- C. The slate proposed by the Nominating Committee may consist of only one (1) name for each position on the ballot.
- D. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- E. Prepare ballots for use at the March meeting and constitute the Elections Counting Committee at that meeting.

The President may, as deemed necessary, appoint other committees. The duties of these other committees shall be defined at the time of appointment. Each committee shall elect its chairperson from its membership.

ARTICLE 8

AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

Auxiliary Organizations of this congregation must present their Constitutions to the Executive Board and the Congregational Assembly for approval. When called upon to do so, the auxiliary organizations of the congregation shall make a report of their activities and financial standing to the Executive Board.

Appendix – Organizational Chart

