

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH



BY-LAWS

December 8, 2019

**Member of The American Association of Lutheran Churches
(TAALC)**



The
American Association
of Lutheran Churches

Christ Lutheran Church By-Laws

BY-LAWS

Page	Title	Contents
3	PART I	Communion Practices
3	PART II	Conflicting Loyalties
4	PART III	Membership
5	PART IV	Discipline
6	PART V	The Pastor
6	PART VI	Meetings of the Congregation
7	PART VII	Officers, Council, and Board of Trustees
9	PART VIII	Parish Records

Christ Lutheran Church By-Laws

01.

Part I

COMMUNION PRACTICES

("cf." Article II of the Constitution)

1. This congregation requires all of its members, who have been prepared to receive the Sacrament, to participate regularly in Holy Communion.
2. Preparation for Holy Communion will normally be provided for persons as young as ten years of age. Exceptions may be provided for children younger than ten years of age, if they are considered ready by their parents, and the pastor, and are presented and approved by the Church Council.
3. Participation in Holy Communion shall be open to members of other congregations who accept the Lutheran teaching in regard to this Sacrament.
4. Participation in Holy Communion shall be open to visitors who are baptized, know Christ as their Lord and Savior, have honestly confessed their sins, and believe that under the bread and wine Christ gives us His true body and blood.
5. It shall be made known to prospective participants that the belief of this congregation is:
 - a. Participation in the Lord's Supper is the reception of "the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ given with bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself for us to eat and drink."
 - b. We hold that a person is well prepared and worthy who believes these words. "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins." But anyone who does not believe these words, or doubts them, is neither prepared nor worthy, for the words "for you" require simply a believing heart.
6. Record of participation in Holy Communion shall be maintained.
7. If a member of another congregation communes, notice shall be sent to the pastor of that congregation per the participant's written request. (Note: last page of the bulletin offers them this format.)

02.

Part II

CONFLICTING LOYALTIES

("cf." TAALC By-Laws February 17, 2011 B07.01 and B07.02 Part VII page 51)

1. This congregation shall not participate in the services or rituals of organizations, secret or open, which are avowedly religious or practice forms of religion without confessing faith in the Triune God and in Jesus Christ as Son of God, only Savior from sin, death, and the power of the devil, and teach salvation by good works, nor shall the buildings of Christ Lutheran Church be used for such purposes.
2. Those who are on the Roster of Pastors of this Association shall not take part in such ceremonies.

Christ Lutheran Church By-Laws

03.

Part III MEMBERSHIP (“cf.” Article VI of the Constitution)

Mark 16:16 New International Version “*Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*” We understand that Holy Scripture establishes Baptism as the only Rite initiating one into membership in the Christian church.

However for the right order of the congregation, we have established what is required to be a member of this congregation.

A. Members

1. Members of the congregation shall be those who are designated as such at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter, and who maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its by-laws. There shall be no membership restrictions with respect to race, color, national origin, or sex.
2. Members shall be:
 - a. Baptized in this congregation and have completed Catechism in this congregation, or
 - b. Baptized previously in the name of the Triune God and have completed Catechism in this congregation, or
 - c. Baptized in this congregation as an adult and have completed the Pastor’s New Member Training, or
 - d. Baptized previously in the name of the Triune God and have completed the Pastor’s New Member Training, or
 - e. An applicant for membership who has been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God presents a Letter of Transfer which certified that that person is a confirmed member in good standing of a Lutheran congregation shall become a member of this congregation upon approval by the Church Council... The acceptance of the applicant shall be reported to the congregation, or
 - f. An applicant for membership who presents baptism in the name of the Triune God and evidence of confirmation in a Lutheran congregation but does not have a Letter of Transfer shall be admitted to confirmed membership when the Church Council has determined that the applicant meets the standards of Christian faith and life indicated in the Constitution and By-Laws and has affirmed that faith before the congregation.
3. Voting Members shall be defined as those members who have, within the past year;
 - a. Participated in Holy Communion, and
 - b. Contributed to the well-being of the congregation. and
 - c. Reached the age of sixteen, except for vote on corporate matters or real property and finance, then having reached the age of majority as recognized by the State of Maryland.

“...a person eighteen years of age or more is an adult for all purposes whatsoever and has the same legal capacity, rights, powers, privileges, duties,

Christ Lutheran Church By-Laws

liabilities, and responsibilities as prior to July 1, 1973, persons had at twenty-one years of age, and the “age of majority” is hereby declared to be eighteen years.” Maryland Age of Majority Law

B. Discontinuance of Membership

1. A member in good standing, desiring to change membership to another TAALC congregation or a congregation in pulpit and altar fellowship with TAALC, shall, upon request, receive a Letter of Transfer.
2. A member in good standing, desiring to change membership to another congregation that is not a TAALC congregation or a congregation in pulpit and altar fellowship with TAALC, shall, upon request, receive a Letter of Peaceful Release.
3. A member who does not, for a period of one year, partake of Holy Communion, support the church with offerings, does not appear to desire to participate in the life and worship of the congregation, shall be visited, if geographically feasible, by the pastor and an officer of the congregation and encouraged by them to return to active membership. If, during the second year, they do not actively participate, the member’s name shall be removed from the membership roster and a written notice of this action shall be provided to that person.

04.

Part IV DISCIPLINE

(“cf.” Article VII of the Constitution)

In exercising discipline as provided in the Constitution, recognizing that for the good of the Body we should teach and admonish one another, discipline in the congregation shall be exercised in accordance with Matthew 18: 15-19, and if brought to the church, the following procedure shall be used.

1. A person, who is requested to appear before the Church Council for possible discipline, shall be advised in writing no less than ten days prior to the hearing. The written notice shall include the time and place of the hearing and shall specify the exact reason for the possible discipline. If that person fails to appear at that time and place without valid excuse, the Church Council may proceed with the hearing and may reach its conclusions without the person’s presence.
2. Should the person be found guilty by a unanimous vote of the members of the Church Council, the Council shall impose one of the following:
 - a. Censure (a judgment involving condemnation) before the Church Council or the congregation, or
 - b. Suspension from membership until proof is given of sufficient repentance and amendment, or
 - c. Exclusion from membership and denial of the Sacraments.

Christ Lutheran Church By-Laws

In the event of the imposition of (b) or (c) above, the action of the Church Council shall be in writing.

3. Right of Appeal:

The member against whom the disciplinary action has been taken by the Church Council shall have the right to appeal the decision to a regular or special congregational meeting. Such right may not be abridged and the decision of the congregational meeting (majority of voting members present) shall be final.

4. Further Consideration:

Disciplinary action may be reconsidered and revoked by the Church Council upon receipt of:

- a. Evidence that injustice has been done, or
- b. Evidence of repentance and amendment.

05.

Part V

THE PASTOR

(“cf.” Article VIII of the Constitution)

1. When the congregation is ready to initiate the Call for a pastor, it shall contact TAALC Presiding Pastor to receive the process and protocol.
2. When the congregation is ready to initiate the Call for an assistant pastor they shall contact TAALC Presiding Pastor to receive the process and protocol. A Call for an assistant pastor shall be issued only with the concurrence of the pastor of the congregation.
3. A Call for a pastor shall normally be for an indefinite time.
4. A Call for an assistant pastor may be for a defined time.
5. If a pastor receives a Call to another ministry, the pastor shall consult the Church Council, or, if desired, the congregation, before reaching a decision. The pastor shall announce a decision as quickly as possible, normally within three weeks. The pastor shall notify TAALC Regional Pastor and Presiding Pastor and the president of the Church Council of their decision. When a Call has been accepted the pastor shall terminate the present ministry as soon as feasible, normally within a month.

06.

Part VI

MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION

(“cf.” Article IX of the Constitution)

1. 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 not less than ten days in advance of the meeting.
2. Only those on the voting member roster may vote. Said roster shall be available at each meeting of the congregation.

Christ Lutheran Church By-Laws

3. The annual meeting shall include reports from all the organizations/committees of the congregations. Such reports including a financial statement, shall be submitted in writing to the Council President not less than twenty-one days before the meeting.
4. The nominating committee shall nominate one or more candidates for each office to be filled and shall secure the consent of each nominee. The list of nominees shall be announced to the congregation in conjunction with the announcements of the meeting of the congregation at which the elections are to take place. In addition to the candidates submitted by the nominating committee, additional nominations may be made from the floor.
5. Unless otherwise ordered, parliamentary procedures shall be in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

07.

Part VII

OFFICERS, COUNCIL, AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

("cf." Article X of the Constitution)

A. Membership and Meetings of the Church Council:

In as much as the membership and composition of the congregation permits, the following is to be established for the Officers, Council, and Board of Trustees.

1. Only a voting member of the congregation shall be eligible for membership on the Church Council.
2. If a vacancy occurs on the Church Council, the Council, may fill the vacancy until the next annual meeting of the congregation. Should the unexpired term be one year or less, it shall not be considered in determining eligibility for succession.
3. A member of the Church Council who is absent from two consecutive regular meetings, without notice, shall be consulted by the president of the Council. If a member is absent from three consecutive meetings without valid reason, the Council may declare the office vacant.
4. A Quorum for any regular meeting of the Church Council shall be two-thirds of its membership.
5. A special meeting of the Church Council may be called by the pastor and the president or any three members of the Church Council. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated and included in the notifications. An attempt shall be made to notify all members of the Church Council of such a meeting.
6. The Church Council shall consist of not less than seven members or more than twelve members. At its annual meeting, the congregation shall elect approximately three members to serve for a term of three years and fill any vacancies which have occurred since the previous annual meeting.
7. At its first meeting following the annual meeting of the congregation, the Church Council shall select from its own membership, a president, a vice-president, and a treasurer who shall be president, vice-president, and treasurer of the Church Council for the congregation; and

Christ Lutheran Church By-Laws

elect a council secretary and a financial secretary who may or may not be a voting member of the Church Council based on appointment or election. The pastor is a non-voting member of the Council.

B. Duties and Responsibilities of the Church Council:

(“cf.” TAALC By-Laws July, 2005 F14.05.10 page 69 and F14.07.03 page 71)

In addition to the duties and responsibilities provided elsewhere in these by-laws, the Church Council shall:

1. Serve as the Board of Trustees. This board shall be responsible for all matters relating to legal and corporate affairs. All legal documents shall be signed by the president and vice-president.
2. Secure necessary staff other than the pastor.
3. Review annually the salary of the pastor and other staff.
4. Receive reports regularly from the Recording Treasurer and the Treasurer to ascertain that the expenditures are within the budget approved by the congregation.
5. Prepare a budget for submission to the annual meeting of the congregation.
6. Assure that the Treasurer and all Council Authorized Check Signers are knowledgeable in basic bookkeeping and/banking skills
7. Secure appropriate Directors and Officers Liability Insurance.
8. Select annually a financial reviewer who shall audit the fiscal records of the congregation and report the findings in writing to the Church Council.
9. The Church Council shall not encumber any property of the congregation without the congregation’s prior approval.
10. Be responsible for the property of the congregation so that its use is normally limited to the functions of the congregation. Should groups or individuals not associated with the congregation desire to use such property, application shall be made to the Church Council for review and rejection or approval.
11. Establish the permanent, standing, committees, and others on an as needed basis, and supervise their activities. There may be the following committees:
 - a. Christian Education,
 - b. Worship and Music,
 - c. Stewardship and Evangelism,
 - d. Outreach,
 - e. Parish Life, and
 - f. Church Property.
12. Establish temporary committees as required and supervise their activities.
13. The Church Council shall appoint a nominating committee not to exceed three members, and include no more than two members being Council members. This committee shall provide

Christ Lutheran Church By-Laws

nominees for election at the annual meeting. Nominees are to be submitted to the Council at least four weeks prior to the annual meeting.

14. Exercise discipline in accordance with the provisions of these by-laws.
15. Convene at least once each year a meeting of each committee to meet with the Church Council to review the life, work, and program.
16. Have authority between meetings of the congregation to choose delegates to any group meeting in which the congregation is entitled to representation.

C. Duties of Officers:

1. The president shall preside at meetings of the Church Council and of the congregation.
2. The vice-president shall preside at the meetings of the Church Council and of the congregation in the absence of the president.
3. The secretary shall have custody of the minutes of the Church Council and shall provide copies to the church secretary.
4. The treasurer shall have custody of all funds of the congregation and shall disburse such funds in accordance with the decisions of the Church Council.
5. The recording treasurer in conjunction with the treasurer shall maintain the records of all contributions and make regular reports to the Church Council, the church secretary, and to members as required by the Council.

08.

Part VIII PARISH RECORDS

The records of the congregation shall be and remain the property of the congregation. The pastor shall be responsible for the maintenance of the records except as otherwise provided herein. Upon the termination of service to the congregation, the pastor shall have brought the records up to date prior to departure. The records shall consist of:

1. The roster of voting members, and
2. The ministerial acts performed by the pastor, and
3. The minutes of the meetings of the congregation and the Church Council for which the church secretary shall be responsible, and
4. The financial records of the congregation, for which the treasure and recording treasurer shall be responsible.

The pastor shall report to the secretary of TAALC such statistics as may be required and shall annually report to the congregation a summary of ministerial actions.

Should the congregation be dissolved, the official records of the congregation shall be deposited in the archives.