

BYLAWS

of

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Rockdale, Texas

We believe and confess that the church is the assembly of believers called and gathered by God around Word and Sacrament, and that the mission and ministry of the church is carried out within the context of individual congregations, which are able to work together locally and globally.

CHAPTER 1 – NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE CONGREGATION

B1.01. This congregation is organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable and educational purposes within the meaning of Internal Revenue Service Code Section 501 c) (3).

B1.02. Communion participation within the congregation:

- a. Participation in Holy Communion is for baptized persons who confess sin to Almighty God, believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, desire to live a new life in Christ, and believe in the real presence of Christ in this Sacrament for the forgiveness of sins. Registration forms or oral announcements shall be so devised as to make prospective participants aware of this Lutheran teaching.
- b. This congregation invites all of its members who have been prepared to receive the Sacrament, to participate regularly in Holy Communion.
- c. All children who are baptized members of this congregation and whose parents feel they are ready, shall be allowed to receive Holy Communion upon completion of the following:
 1. A short course about the meaning of Holy Communion
 2. Consultation with the pastor.
- d. Record of participation in Holy Communion shall be maintained.

B1.03. This congregation shall develop an organizational structure described in these Bylaws. The Church Council shall prepare and/or approve descriptions of the responsibilities of each staff person, committee, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions. Such descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions in the section on the Church Council.

CHAPTER 2 – POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

B2.01. Conflicting loyalties with the Word of God:

- a. While the buildings of the congregation shall be open to all people to share in its worship, instruction, pastoral care, and fellowship, the congregation rejects all fellowship with organizations, secret or open, which are avowedly religious or which practice forms of religion without confessing faith in the Triune God and in Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God incarnate to be our only Savior from sin, and which thus teach salvation by works.
- b. Ceremonies of lodges or other such organizations shall not be permitted in the buildings or premises of the congregation; nor shall its pastor(s) or lay assistant(s) take part in any such ceremonies wherever they are conducted.

CHAPTER 3 – MEMBERSHIP IN THE CONGREGATION

B3.01 Members of the congregation are classified as follows:

- a. Baptized Members
 1. A child, one or both of whose parents or guardians are members of the congregation, shall upon receiving Baptism, become a baptized member.
 2. A child, neither of whose parents or guardians is a member of the congregation, shall, upon receiving Baptism, become a baptized member of the congregation; unless for good reason the child is to be a baptized member of another congregation, in which case membership shall be transferred to that congregation.
 3. A child baptized in another congregation shall be received as a baptized member in the congregation when a transfer has been received.
 4. An unbaptized adult who has received instruction and has given evidence of an adequate understanding and acceptance of the teachings of the Word of God as confessed by the Lutheran Church, shall, upon confession of faith and Baptism, become a baptized member of the congregation.
 5. When one or both parents of baptized children are received into the membership of the congregation, such children shall be received as baptized members with consent of the member parent or parents.
 6. Where a baptized child is an orphan or a ward of someone and these people move into the area served by this congregation, the child may be received as a baptized member when it is commended to the care of this congregation by the congregation which baptized the child.
 7. When the parents of a baptized child are not themselves members of the Lutheran Church but move into the area served by this congregation and desire to have their child put within the pastoral care of this congregation, the child may be received as a baptized member.

b. Confirmed Members

1. A baptized adult, not previously a confirmed member of a Lutheran congregation, shall become a confirmed member of this congregation after having received instruction, having given evidence of adequate understanding of the teachings of the Word of God as confessed by the Lutheran Church, and having publicly affirmed this faith.
2. A baptized member of the congregation shall become a confirmed member through the rite of confirmation; except that an adult who has become a baptized member in accordance with the provisions of Section B3.01.4 of this Part of the Bylaws shall be considered a confirmed member without participation in the rite of confirmation.
3. An applicant for membership who presents a Letter of Transfer which certifies that the applicant is a confirmed member in good standing of a Lutheran Congregation shall become a confirmed member of the congregation upon approval of the Committee of Lay Ministry. The acceptance of the applicant shall be reported to the congregation.
4. An applicant for membership who presents evidence of confirmation in a Lutheran congregation but does not have a Letter of Transfer shall be encouraged to attend the adult class on the fundamentals of the Christian faith and be admitted to confirmed membership when the Committee of Lay Ministry has determined that the applicant meets the standards of Christian faith and life indicated in the constitution and bylaws and has reaffirmed that faith before the congregation.

c. Voting Members

1. The Church Council shall determine the roster of voting members of this congregation in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and bylaws. The roster of voting members shall be available at all regularly called meetings of this congregation. The term in good standing shall be defined to include:
 2. Those who partake of Holy Communion at least once during the past six (6) months;
 3. Those who contribute to the congregation treasury during the past six (6) months according to this congregation's records; and
 4. Those who participate in the life and worship of this congregation at least once during the past six (6) months.

B3.02. Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:

- a. A confirmed member in good standing desiring to change membership to another Lutheran congregation shall, upon request, receive a Letter of Transfer.
- b. A resident confirmed member who neither participates in the life and worship of this congregation nor partakes of Holy Communion for a six (6) month period will be contacted by a member(s) of the Committee of Evangelism and encouraged to resume participation on a regular basis. If this member does not participate in worship or Holy Communion during the next three (3) months, the pastor, possibly with a member of the committee of Evangelism, will make another contact. If a member does not resume a regular pattern of worship and Holy Communion, within three (3) months after this second contact, it shall be presumed that membership in this

- congregation is no longer desired. Corresponding contacts by mail or phone will be made with non-resident members, encouraging them to affiliate with another congregation. Upon appropriate recommendation from the Committee of Evangelism, the Church Council will remove a member from the active roster of this congregation and the member shall lose the right to vote and shall not be counted in the membership statistics of this congregation. Members removed from the active roster shall be kept on an inactive member roster for one (1) year following this action by the Church Council. A member on the inactive roster shall be encouraged to take part in the worship life of this congregation, or to transfer elsewhere, as the member may determine. If the member resumes a regular pattern of worship and Holy Communion while on the inactive roster, active membership shall be restored; otherwise the member shall be dismissed from this congregation, and if possible, be notified of this action. Upon appropriate recommendation from the Committee of Evangelism, the Church Council can waive specific requirements for worship attendance and partaking of Holy Communion due to circumstances beyond a member's control.
- c. A child, neither of whose parents or guardians is a member of this congregation, may be removed from the roster of baptized members by action of the Church Council upon appropriate recommendation from the Committee of Lay Ministry, if that child fails to participate in the life and the worship of this congregation.

CHAPTER 4– THE PASTOR

B4.01. When this congregation has voted to call a pastor, it shall issue a Letter of Call to the pastor-elect. It shall be signed by the president and the secretary of the meeting at which the Call was voted, and shall be attested by the signature of the Bishop. A call for additional clergy shall be issued only with the concurrence of the present pastor(s) of this congregation and in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph.

CHAPTER 5 -MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION

B5.01. Regular Meetings

- a. Regular meetings of this congregation shall be held in January and July of each year.
- b. Announcements of the time and place of the regular meetings of this congregation shall be made at least two (2) public services immediately preceding the meeting, said services to be at least a week apart; and in such publications as this congregation or the pastor(s) may periodically issue, or by written notice to the voting members mailed not less than ten (10) days in advance of the meeting.
- c. The current rosters of voting, confirmed, and baptized members shall be available at each meeting of this congregation.
- d. The regular meetings shall receive reports from all committees and organizations of this congregation. Such reports, including a financial statement shall be submitted in writing to the President of this congregation not less than ten (10) days before such meeting.
- e. The order of business at regular meetings shall be:
 - 1. Call to Order
 - 2. Opening Devotion

3. Approval of Agenda
 4. Approval of minutes of the previous meeting
 5. Reports of the Pastor(s), Church council, Committees, Organizations, and others
 6. Treasurer's Report
 7. Elections, if applicable
 8. Approval of Budget, if applicable
 9. Unfinished Business
 10. New Business
 11. Closing Prayer
- f. The July meeting of this congregation will include the election of the members of the church council.

CHAPTER 6 – OFFICERS, COUNCIL AND CHURCH COMMITTEES

B6.01. At semi-annual meeting, congregation shall elect two (on even years) or three (on odd years) to serve on the church council. Council members terms shall be staggered.

- a. For initial election in this new cycle, all five members shall be elected. Church council in its first session will determine term lengths (one or two years) for newly elected council members.

B6.02. Eligibility and Duties of Officers

- a. Only a voting member of this congregation shall be eligible to serve as a council member.
- b. President: The President shall preside at meetings of the Church Council and the congregation, coordinate work of the Council and committees, and provide leadership for the planning and execution of the work of the congregation.
- c. Vice President: The Vice President shall assume full duties of the President in the absence of the President.
- d. Secretary: The Secretary shall prepare, maintain and make available to the congregation the minutes of all Church Council and congregational meetings after approval of said minutes. Minutes shall not be required for executive sessions or special meetings dealing with private personal matters concerning individual members of the congregation.

B6.03. Treasurer: The Treasurer shall (i) serve as the financial officer of the congregation; (ii) oversee accounting and financial recordkeeping, (iii) arrange for financial reporting to the Church Council and congregation. (iv) supervise work of administrative assistant concerning financial matters.

B6.04 The council members shall be ex-officio members of all committees.

B6.05 Membership and Meetings of the Church Committees

In addition to the provisions of the Constitution the following shall govern membership on the committees and the conduct of their meetings:

- a. Only a voting member of this congregation shall be eligible for voting membership on the committees. Other persons may serve as advisory members or resource persons.

- b. Before committee chairs take office, they will be installed on any Sunday.
- c. Any vacancies in committee membership shall be filled by the Church Council in consultation with the proper committee chairman and the Pastor(s).
- d. Regular committee meetings shall generally be held each month on a day and time determined by each committee.
- e. A special meeting of a committee may be called by a pastor, the President, or the chairman of that committee. Adequate notice of such meeting shall be given to all members of that committee, the pastor(s) and the President.
- f. A quorum for any regular or special meeting of a committee shall be a simple majority of the membership of that committee.
- g. A member of a committee who is absent from three (3) consecutive regular meetings may be removed from the committee.

B6.06 General Duties, Powers, and Organization of the Committees

- a. Each committee shall organize, as needed, according to the guidelines and job descriptions reviewed and approved by the Church Council.
- b. Each committee shall submit a report (or minutes) of its activities at each regular meeting of the Church Council, and at each regular meeting of this congregation. Such reports shall include specific recommendations (if any) for action and/or approval.
- c. Each committee shall initiate and carry out such activities and programs within this congregation as will enable it to perform effectively by functions and duties assigned to it.
- d. Each committee shall be empowered to administer all funds set aside for its work by budget appropriation or by special resolution of this congregation. The Church Council shall be jointly and severally liable for all expenditures not authorized either by the budget or by special resolution of this congregation.
- e. Each committee shall be under the supervision of the church council. A council member shall be appointed liaison of that committee(s).
- f. Each Committee shall be under the direct control and supervision of the chairman of that committee. Following their appointment by church council, normally within two weeks, the chairperson shall appoint those individuals who are willing to serve. Notification of such appointments is to be given to the council.

B6.07 Duties and Responsibilities of Each Committee

- a. The Committee of Lay Ministry shall be responsible for: (i) caring for the spiritual welfare of the pastor(s), the staff, and the congregational members, (ii) enlisting members in the work of sharing the Gospel, (iii) strengthening the fellowship between members, and (iv) deepening faith and activity of the members. In consultation with the Pastor this committee will supervise the staff.
- b. The Committee of Evangelism and Outreach shall be responsible for caring for spiritual welfare and physical well-being of those outside the congregation. It will also oversee integration of new members into the life of the congregation. The Committee shall be responsible for planning, stimulating, coordinating, and supervising the ministry to community needs.

- c. The Committee of Parish Education shall be responsible for planning and administering the educational program of this congregation, determining policies, selecting appropriate volunteer staff, involving the young people of the congregation in the work of Christ, promoting genuine Christian fellowship for the young people of the congregation and providing the necessary means and facilities.
- d. The Committee of Stewardship shall be responsible for initiating programs for the development of good stewardship attitudes in the members of this congregation in regard to time, talents and treasures, for providing for the training and utilization of members of this congregation for the work of Christ's Kingdom, for proposing a budget to the Church Council and congregation and for providing for an annual audit of the financial records of the congregation.
- e. The Committee of Church Properties shall be responsible for proper maintenance and repair of the church property.
- f. The Committee of Worship and Music shall be responsible for the supervision of all matters pertaining to the congregational worship.
- g. The Memorial Committee shall be responsible for determining how monies given as memorials will be distributed and disbursed, and for approving the appropriateness of gifts given as memorials.
- h. The Church Council shall propose to the congregation such special policy committees as may from time to time be necessary or advisable.

B6.08 Organization, Duties and Responsibilities of the Nominating Committee

- a. The Nominating Committee shall consist of four (4) members to be elected at the January meeting of this congregation in an odd election year. The members shall serve for two (2) years and shall not serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms.
- b. A Pastor, or in the absence of a pastor, the President of the Church council shall serve as advisory member with no vote.
- c. The Nominating committee, as soon after the annual January meeting as possible, shall prepare a list of candidates for council members drawn from among voting members of this congregation. This list of candidates shall then be made available to the members of the congregation at least four (4) weeks prior to the July meeting.
- d. Following the publication of the Nominating Committee's list of candidates, any voting member of this congregation may submit, in writing, to the Nominating Committee additional names for inclusion on the list, and such names shall be placed in nomination by the Nominating Committee along with the candidates already chosen, provided:
 - 1. That such names shall be submitted at least two (2) weeks before the date of the July meeting of this congregation, and
 - 2. That the Nominating Committee, through consultation with the pastor(s) and the Committee of Lay Ministry, shall have investigated the status of the proposed candidates and found them spiritually eligible for office and willing to serve.
- e. The Nominating Committee, at least one (1) week before the date of the July meeting, shall publish to this congregation the final list of candidates for the positions to be filled. There shall be no additional nominations at the July meeting.
- f. At the January meeting of this congregation, the Nominating Committee shall present at least four (4) candidates for that year's Nominating Committee. Additional

nominations may be made from the floor, provided the consent of the candidate has been obtained.

B6.09 Organization, Duties and Responsibilities of the Audit Committee

- a. An Audit Committee of [three] voting members shall be elected by the Church Council.
- b. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Church Council. Term of office shall be three years, with one member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for reelection.

B6.10 Duties and Responsibilities of the Church Council

In addition to the duties and responsibilities provided in the constitution the Church Council shall:

- a. Review the budget prepared by the Committee of Stewardship and submits it at the January meeting of this congregation with its recommendation.
- b. Have authority between meetings of this congregation to choose delegates to any group or meeting in which this congregation is entitled to representation.
- c. At the January meeting of this congregation, present an action plan, with both long-term and short-term goals as well as long range plans for the development and expansion of Christ's work in our midst.
- d. Prepare the agenda for two (2) regular meetings of this congregation and set the dates and times.

CHAPTER 7 – DISCIPLINE

B7.01. In exercising discipline as provided in the constitution, the following shall be the procedure:

- a. A member, who is requested to appear before the Church Council for possible discipline, shall be advised in writing no less than ten (10) 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 this member fails to appear at the time and place without valid excuse, the Church Council may proceed with the hearing and may reach its conclusion in the absence of this member.
- b. Should a member be found guilty by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Church Council, the Church Council shall impose one of the following:
 1. censure before the Church Council of this congregation;
 2. suspension from membership until proof is given of sufficient repentance and amendment of life;
 3. exclusion from membership and denial of the Sacraments.
- c. In the event of the imposition of (1) or (2) above, the action of the Church Council shall be in writing.

Revision History

6/30/2024: Amending of Bylaws corresponding to change in Council Structure. Modified B5.01.f. Replaced chapter B.6 to reflect changes in structure.

7/??/2017: