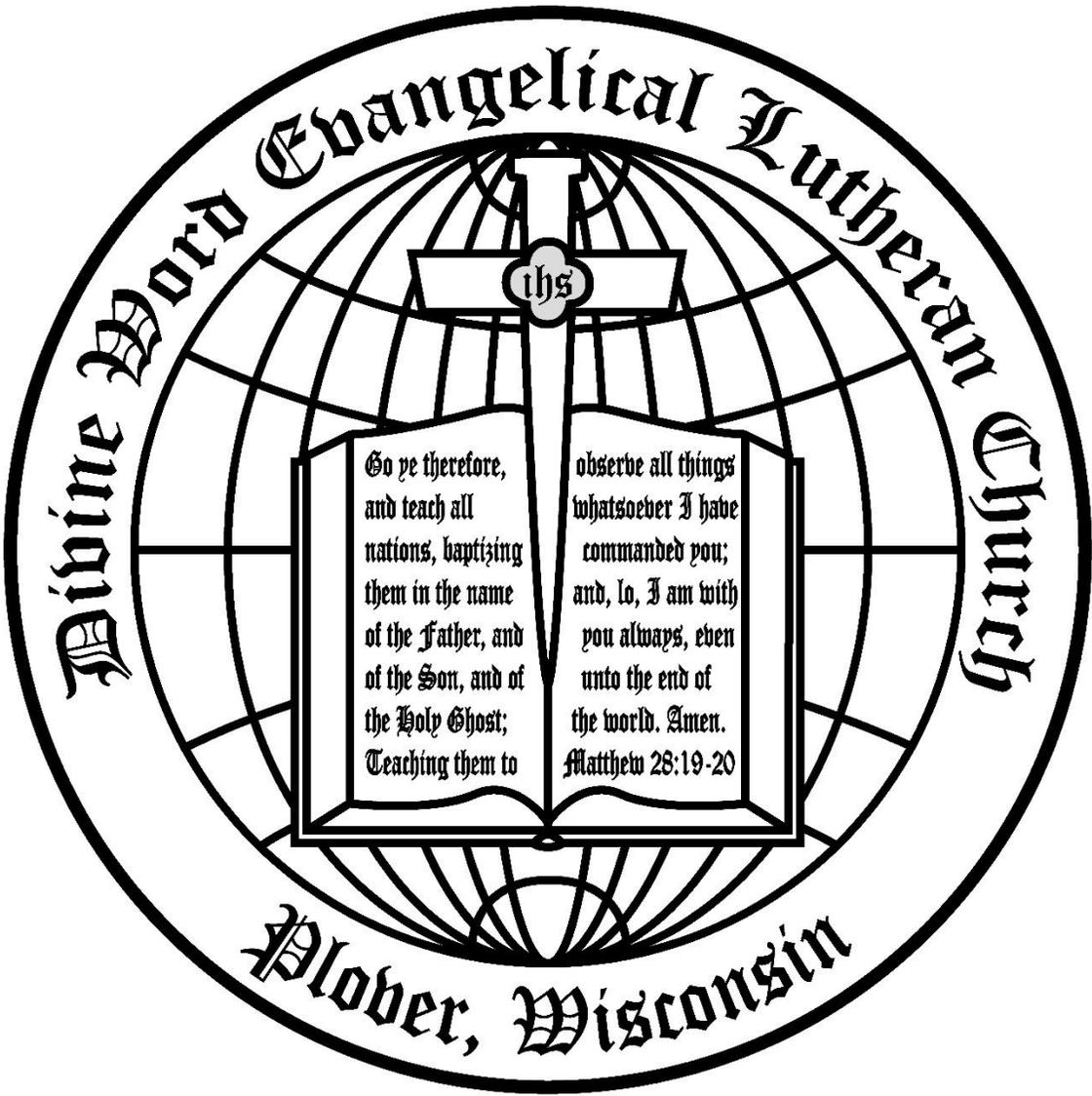


# CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS



**DIVINE WORD EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
PLOVER, WISCONSIN**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I	_____	NAME
ARTICLE II	_____	ARTICLES OF FAITH
ARTICLE III	_____	PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE
ARTICLE IV	_____	CHURCH AFFILIATION
ARTICLE V	_____	CHURCH MEMBERSHIP
ARTICLE VI	_____	POWERS AND RIGHTS OF THE CONGREGATION
ARTICLE VII	_____	THE PUBLIC MINISTRY
ARTICLE VIII	_____	OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION
ARTICLE IX	_____	REMOVAL FROM OFFICE
ARTICLE X	_____	MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION
ARTICLE XI	_____	SEPARATION OR DISSOLUTION
ARTICLE XII	_____	REPEALS AND ALTERATIONS

### BYLAWS

ARTICLE I	_____	MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION
ARTICLE II	_____	QUORUM
ARTICLE III	_____	THE CHURCH COUNCIL
ARTICLE IV	_____	BOARDS OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL
ARTICLE V	_____	COMMITTEES OF DIVINE WORD
ARTICLE VI	_____	DUTIES OF CHURCH COUNCIL OFFICERS
ARTICLE VII	_____	ELECTION OF THE CHURCH OFFICERS
ARTICLE VIII	_____	RECEPTION INTO MEMBERSHIP
ARTICLE IX	_____	TRANSFER, RELEASE, OR REMOVAL FROM MEMBERSHIP
ARTICLE X	_____	DISCIPLINE IN THE CONGREGATION
ARTICLE XI	_____	REPEALS AND AMENDMENTS OF THE BYLAWS

## **DIVINE WORD'S MISSION STATEMENT**

Jesus said, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)

*Divine Word exists to point everyone to Jesus through teaching and sharing His Word.*

## **PREAMBLE**

**WHEREAS**, It is the will of our Lord Jesus Christ that His disciples should preach the Gospel to the whole world (Mark 16:16, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8) and that this mission for His Church might be accomplished, He has commanded that Christians unite in worship (Hebrews 10:24-25) practice fellowship with one another (Acts 2:42), witness to all people (Acts 1:8), help each other grow in the Word (Ephesians 4:11-14), serve the needs of all people in Christian love (Ephesians 4:7-16, Mark 10:42-44, John 13:35, Galatians 6:10), administer the Office of the Keys as His Church (John 20:21-23, Matthew 18:15-20), and maintain decency and order (I Corinthians 14:40) in the Church; and

**WHEREAS**, The history of the Christian Church of all times shows that certain agreements and regulations are helpful to attain properly the purposes and fulfill the obligations of congregations; therefore be it

**RESOLVED**, That we, a congregation of Lutherans in and near Plover, Wisconsin, do herewith, in the name of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and by subscribing our names hereto, adopt the following **CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**.

## **CONSTITUTION**

**ARTICLE I** \_\_\_\_\_ **NAME**

The name of this congregation shall be:

Divine Word Evangelical Lutheran Church (Consisting of Divine Word in Plover and The Word in Stevens Point, hereafter referred to as Divine Word)

**ARTICLE II** \_\_\_\_\_ **ARTICLES OF FAITH**

### **SECTION 1**

This congregation accepts and confesses all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the verbally inspired and inerrant Word of God and submits to this Word as the only infallible authority of all matters of faith and life (2 Timothy 3:15-17)

## **SECTION 2**

This congregation accepts and confesses all the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 as true statements of scriptural doctrine.

They are:

- A. The three Ecumenical Creeds
  - 1) The Apostles'
  - 2) The Nicene
  - 3) The Athanasian
- B. The Six Lutheran Confessions
  - 1) Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism
  - 2) Dr. Martin Luther's Large Catechism
  - 3) The Unaltered Augsburg Confession
  - 4) The Apology of the Augsburg Confession
  - 5) The Smalcald Articles
  - 6) The Formula of Concord

## **SECTION 3**

This congregation accepts and confesses these symbolical books without reservation, not insofar as, but because they are the presentation and explanation of the pure doctrine of the Word of God and a summary of the faith held by the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

## **SECTION 4**

No doctrine shall be taught or tolerated in this congregation which is in any way at variance with the Holy Scriptures and these symbolical books.

## **SECTION 5**

All controversies which may arise in this congregation shall be decided and adjusted according to this norm of doctrine and practice.

# **ARTICLE III \_\_\_\_\_ PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE**

## **SECTION 1**

The continuing purpose of this congregation, as a gathering of Christians, is to serve all people in God's world with the gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of Holy Scriptures (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15).

## **SECTION 2**

The primary objective of this congregation shall be to proclaim the law and gospel in our congregation, community, and the world (2 Timothy 4:2), so that, through means of grace, the Holy Spirit might:

- A. Lead Sinners to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ for life and salvation (Luke 24:46-48).

- B. Strengthen believers in faith and sanctification (Romans 10:17).
- C. Equip believers as disciples stewards, witnesses, and servants to share the gospel and live their faith (Ephesians 4:11, 12; Matthew 5:16).

**ARTICLE IV \_\_\_\_\_ CHURCH AFFILIATION**

This congregation shall affiliate itself only with a church body that holds to all the truths of God’s Word in doctrine and practice and is bound to the confession of faith as set forth in Article II, if, and as long as, such a church body exists.

**ARTICLE V \_\_\_\_\_ CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

**SECTION 1 CLASSIFICATION**

- A. Baptized members of the congregation are those who have been baptized into the Christian faith in the name of the Triune God (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:16).
- B. Communicant members are those baptized souls who confess Jesus Christ to be their Lord and Savior and have stated their adherence to all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, without qualification, as the only rule and norm of faith and life, and have declared their agreement with the chief parts of Christian doctrine as written in Dr. Martin Luther’s Small Catechism
- C. Voting members are those male communicant members (1 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:12) who have declared their agreement with this Constitution by their membership at Divine Word.
- D. UW-Stevens Point WELS students who are members in good standing at their home church have associate membership at Divine Word. They are welcome to use their God-given blessings in ministry at Divine Word to the glory of our Savior and to the service of their fellow Christians. They have all rights of membership except for voting rights.

**SECTION 2 PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

"God is love" (1 John 4:8), and his love ever moves him to bless the members of his church with physical and spiritual gifts (1 John 3:1; James 1:17). In return for all of these undeserved blessings, we love him (1 John 4:19) and show that love with the works that we do. The exercise of such love we acknowledge as both a privilege and a responsibility. Some of the privileges and responsibilities to be noted are the following:

- A. Our God has given us his Word, the one thing needful (Luke 10:42), which alone can save our souls and tell us how to live a God-pleasing life (2 Timothy 3:15-17). Consequently, members of his church will consider it a distinct privilege and a responsibility to:
  - 1) Hear and receive the Word of God diligently (Luke 11:28).
  - 2) Provide and promote opportunities for Christian education (2 Peter 3:18).

- 3) Bring up their children in the training and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).
  - 4) Share the gospel with all people (Acts 1:8).
- B. Our God has given us two sacraments: Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, which are means that our Lord uses to bring his grace to us. Consequently, members of his church will:
- 1) Have their children baptized early in life, for "baptism now saves you also" (1 Peter 3:21).
  - 2) Frequently partake of Holy Communion (1 Corinthians 11:23-26), if they are recognized as such who can properly examine themselves (1 Corinthians 11:28). Only those in our confessional fellowship of faith are permitted to commune at our altar. (Close Communion-1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Corinthians 6:14-15; Romans 16:17).
- C. Our God has given us the privilege and responsibility of being managers over a certain portion of his estate and assures us he will graciously bless our faithful management (2 Corinthians 9:6). Therefore members of his church will under grace:
- 1) Continually remember that all their possessions, time and abilities are really a trust from God (James 1:17).
  - 2) Cheerfully decide in their hearts (2 Corinthians 9:7) the portion of their possessions and time and abilities which they will regularly devote to the Lord for use in carrying out that which the congregation has made its concern, not omitting the work of the church-at-large (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 9:14; 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-11; 1 Peter 4:10).
  - 3) If eligible, become voting members and regularly attend the voters' meetings and lend the congregation their counsel and aid.
- D. Our God has implanted within us Christians the new man, who desires to live righteously (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24). Consequently, members of his church will:
- 1) Not live in obvious acts of the sinful nature (Galatians 5:19-21), but lead a Christian life (Galatians 5:22-25).
  - 2) When they have erred, permit themselves to be admonished and corrected by their fellow Christians in the spirit of Matthew 18:15-18.
  - 3) Refuse to hold membership in any organization whose teachings and practices conflict with the Word of God (e.g. lodges) (John 5:23; 8:31,32; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

### **SECTION 3 CHURCH DISCIPLINE AND EXCOMMUNICATION**

Christian discipline shall be exercised in this congregation according to Matthew 18:15-18 toward those who err from the faith or who in other ways have given offense. Those members who become evident as impenitent sinners must be excommunicated. At all times this shall be done in the spirit of the gospel, namely, to regain the erring. In order that the congregation may be "perfectly united in mind and thought" (1 Corinthians 1:10), a unanimous vote of the voters' assembly is necessary for excommunication.

**SECTION 4 LOSS OF RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES**

Those who have been excommunicated from the fellowship of this congregation lose all rights and privileges in the congregation and its property.

**SECTION 5 REINSTATEMENT**

When, by the grace of God, a person who has been excommunicated repents of his sin, he is to be reinstated with all former rights and privileges of this congregation (2 Corinthians 2:6-8).

**ARTICLE VI \_\_\_\_\_ POWERS AND RIGHTS OF THE CONGREGATION**

**SECTION 1**

In all matters of Christian faith and life the Word of God is supreme (Psalm 119:105).

**SECTION 2**

In all matters not decided by the Word of God the congregation, represented by the voters' assembly, shall have the right of decision (Romans 12:10; 14:19; Ephesians 5:21).

**SECTION 3**

The church council, any other elected committee or organization within the congregation, and any of its elected or appointed officers shall have no power or authority beyond that conferred upon them by the congregation. However, the church council in an emergency may act in the name and for the welfare of the congregation. Such action must be submitted for approval at the next voters' meeting.

**SECTION 4**

No group or society may be organized within the congregation without the approval of the congregation. The congregation shall be assured that the aims of such a group are in complete harmony with the congregation's aims before it grants its approval (1 Corinthians 1:10; 12:25).

**ARTICLE VII \_\_\_\_\_ THE PUBLIC MINISTRY**

**SECTION 1**

The congregation has the exclusive right to call pastors, teachers, and staff ministers.

**SECTION 2**

The office of pastor in this congregation shall be conferred only upon such men who are qualified for this ministry and publicly and without reservation profess their acceptance of and adherence to Article II of this Constitution, and such acceptance and adherence shall be required of them in the call extended by the congregation (Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9).

**SECTION 3**

The offices of teacher and staff minister in this congregation shall be conferred only upon such individuals who are qualified for these ministries and are in accord with the confessional standard of the congregation as set forth in Article II of this Constitution (Ephesians 4:11-16; Romans 12:6-8).

**SECTION 4**

In case of a vacancy in the office of pastor, teacher, or staff minister the congregation shall notify the president of the district that he may assist in temporarily filling the vacancy and in giving his good counsel in regard to the calling of a new pastor, teacher or staff minister.

**ARTICLE VIII \_\_\_\_\_ OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

**SECTION 1**

The first New Testament congregation at Jerusalem chose men "full of the Spirit and wisdom" (Acts 6:1-6) to aid the apostles in the administration of its affairs. This congregation shall choose officers and committee members with like qualifications (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

**SECTION 2**

The listing of the officers and their duties is given in the Bylaws.

**SECTION 3**

The respect and esteem of the congregation are due these officers in the performance of their duties, and they shall be given its cooperation. They shall conduct themselves in a manner befitting their responsible office (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

**ARTICLE IX \_\_\_\_\_ REMOVAL FROM OFFICE**

**SECTION 1**

If anyone who holds an office in the congregation willfully neglects his duty and upon due admonition does not amend; the congregation has the right and eventually the duty to remove him from office and to elect another in his place (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

**SECTION 2**

Sufficient and urgent causes for removing a pastor, a teacher, or a staff minister are persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of duty or established inability to perform the duties of his office (1 Timothy 3: 1-7; Titus 1:6-9). In such a case, the advice and good counsel of the appropriate district officer shall be sought.

**ARTICLE X \_\_\_\_\_ MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION**

Meetings of this congregation shall be held at such times and in such manner as stated in the Bylaws. The meetings shall give the voters of this congregation the opportunity to hear, discuss and take necessary action in matters pertaining to the welfare of this congregation and of the church-at-large.

**ARTICLE XI \_\_\_\_\_ SEPARATION OR DISSOLUTION**

**SECTION 1**

If at any time a separation should occur in this congregation, the property and all equipment of this congregation shall remain with that portion of the membership which adheres to this Constitution, regardless of number.

**SECTION 2**

In the event of termination or dissolution of the congregation, the church council shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the congregation, dispose of its remaining assets, if any, exclusively for the purposes of the congregation, by distributing, at the direction of the voters' assembly, the remaining assets to (and only to) one or more organizations with which the congregation is in fellowship, which shall at the time qualify as exempt organization(s) (under section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1994 or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Code).

**ARTICLE XII \_\_\_\_\_ REPEALS AND ALTERATIONS**

**SECTION 1**

Articles II, III, IV,V, VI, Sections 1 and 2, VII, Sections 1-3, VIII, Sections 1 and 3, IX and XII, Section 1 of this Constitution shall be and remain unalterable and irrevocable, inasmuch as they express clear, scriptural teachings.

**SECTION 2**

Proposals to alter or repeal any alterable or repealable article of this Constitution or to add an article shall be submitted in writing to the church council, and shall be publicly announced on two Sundays immediately preceding a regular business meeting of the voters' assembly and posted in the church during that period.

**SECTION 3**

Such a proposal shall be discussed in the meeting in which it is presented and voted on in the next regular meeting of the voters' assembly.

**SECTION 4**

A two-thirds vote of the voting members present shall be required to alter or repeal any alterable or repealable article of this Constitution or to add an article hereto.

## **SECTION 5**

Any and all Bylaws may be repealed or amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at any regular meeting, provided that public notice of this proposed action shall have been given the congregation on at least two Sundays prior to the time of the meeting, and provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing to the church council for its study and recommendation.

# **BYLAWS**

## **ARTICLE I \_\_\_\_\_ MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION**

### **SECTION 1**

During the fiscal year (September 1 - August 31), regular meetings of the congregation's voters will be held in January (normally the 3rd Sunday), April (normally last Sunday), and August (normally last Sunday)

### **SECTION 2**

The church council shall set the exact date, time and place of the meetings, unless otherwise specified by the congregation. Announcements of the meetings shall be given in print and/or orally on at least two Sundays prior to the time of the meeting.

### **SECTION 3**

Special meetings of the congregation may be called by the church council, or the pastor, or upon written request of three voting members. Such meetings must be announced according to the general rule set forth in Section 2 with the purpose(s) clearly stated.

### **SECTION 4**

The regular {August} meeting shall be designated as the annual meeting.

### **SECTION 5**

The order of business for the regular meetings may be as follows:

- A. Opening with a devotion
- B. Reading and approval of minutes of the previous regular and any intervening special meetings
- C. Ratification of new members; transfer, release or removal from membership
- D. Ministry reports and recommendations (outreach, adult spiritual growth, etc.)
- E. Unfinished business
- F. Recommendations of the church council and new business
- G. Elections
- H. Financial reports
- I. Adjournment with prayer

## **SECTION 6**

The meetings shall be conducted according to good, Christian order. Robert's Rules of Order may be followed for parliamentary procedure.

## **SECTION 7**

No one shall bring to any meeting a charge or complaint against any member or against a pastor, a teacher, or a staff minister unless he has first admonished him in a Christian manner in the spirit of Matthew 18:15-20.

## **SECTION 8**

Only voting members present at the meeting shall have the right to vote or have the right to make a recommendation to be considered for a vote.

## **SECTION 9**

Voting membership shall be restricted to male communicant members who have reached the age of 18.

## **SECTION 10**

By joining Divine Word, members who fit the qualifications in Section 9 become a voter.

## **SECTION 11**

It shall be the privilege and duty of a voting member of this congregation to:

- A. Conscientiously and prayerfully exercise his right of suffrage in all measure that will advance the work of Christ's Kingdom both locally and in the church at large.
- B. Willingly serve in any office or capacity for which his talents and abilities equip him.
- C. Faithfully and regularly attend meetings of the voting membership.
- D. Assist with wholehearted diligence in administering the temporal and spiritual affairs of the congregation.
- E. Encourage by personal example, friendly interest, and judicious counsel such eligible communicant members who are not yet voting members to consider seriously accepting the responsibilities and privileges of voting membership.

## **SECTION 12**

In the event of a tie vote, the President shall cast the deciding vote.

## **SECTION 13**

The Pastor(s) is/are entitled to vote. He is, if possible, to be present at all meetings and is to advise the congregation wherever he can.

**ARTICLE II \_\_\_\_\_ QUORUM**

The voting members present at a properly announced meeting of the congregation shall constitute a quorum.

**ARTICLE III \_\_\_\_\_ THE CHURCH COUNCIL**

**SECTION 1 STRUCTURE AND POWERS**

- 1.1. The voters' assembly shall elect by ballot at its annual meeting, specified in the Bylaws, Article I, a church council composed of as many members (but not fewer than the number of corporate officers required by state law) as the voters' assembly by resolution shall from time to time determine.
- 1.2. The church council shall control the corporate property of the congregation according to the direction given to it by the voters' assembly. The church council is hereby empowered to borrow money, pledge the assets of the congregation, sell, lease or otherwise dispose of the real and personal property of the congregation all at the direction of the voters' assembly. It shall also have the right to acquire property by any legal means as directed by the voters' assembly. The president and the secretary (or the vice-president, in the secretary's absence) are hereby designated as the persons who shall sign all documents of the congregation.
- 1.3. The term of one half of the members, if possible, shall expire each year, such expired terms to be filled by election at the annual meeting of the voters' assembly. Each member shall serve until his successor is installed.
- 1.4. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the church council. The principal of the school and any staff minister may be advisory members of the church council.

**SECTION 2 TERM OF OFFICE**

The term of office for each council member shall be two years. No council member shall serve more than three consecutive full terms. He shall again be eligible for election to the council one year after the expiration of his third consecutive term of office.

**SECTION 3 ORGANIZATION**

At the first Council Meeting following the Annual Voters' Meeting, the council members will review the ministry plans for the next fiscal year. Council members may hold more than one office.

**SECTION 4 INSTALLATION**

As soon as possible after the election of church council members, the new members of the church council shall be installed in office at a regular service and shall thus be presented to the congregation.

## **SECTION 5 MEETINGS**

The church council shall meet regularly, normally once each month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president. The council shall not convene to transact business without the knowledge of the pastor. A majority of the members of the council shall constitute a quorum.

## **SECTION 6 RESPONSIBILITIES**

The members of the church council shall adorn their high office with a godly way of life and be good examples to the congregation (1 Timothy 3:8-12). They shall be responsible for the spiritual and material affairs of the congregation under the guidance of the pastor. They shall be accountable for good order in the services. They shall particularly care in love for their fellow members who have special needs (Galatians 6:9-10). The members of the church council shall consult together concerning the total spiritual and physical well-being of the congregation giving due attention also to the work of the Lord in the church-at-large. The church council shall implement resolutions of the voters' assembly and carry out such assignments as are directed to it by the voters' assembly. It shall recommend to the voters' assembly the annual budget of the congregation.

## **SECTION 7 COUNCIL VACANCIES**

The congregation as a whole has the exclusive right to elect its own Church Council, except where a vacancy occurs. In such case, the Church Council has the right to appoint a person to fill the unexpired term of office. Such appointment is to be ratified by the congregation at the next voters' meeting.

## **SECTION 8 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The President, Vice President, and Secretary, shall constitute an Executive Committee to function in the name of the Council in circumstances provided by these Bylaws or when so instructed by the Church Council.

## **SECTION 9 EMERGENCY EXPENDITURES**

The Church Council shall have the authority to spend up to \$1,000.00 in any one emergency. A unanimous vote of all Church Council members present at such a meeting is needed for the approval of such expenditure.

**SECTION 1 BOARDS**

To see to the execution of the ministry of Divine Word, the seven boards listed in Article IV are established. The boards have specific functions. They are:

- A. Charged with developing the operational strategies and action plans to execute the congregation's mission, establishing the operational policies, and coordinating the actions including priority setting in their assigned areas of ministry within the overall policies, priorities, and goals established by the Church Council.
- B. Empowered to appoint as many work groups, action committees and task forces as they find necessary to carry out their work.
- C. Directed to organize and enable others to carry out the work of the church. They are not envisioned to be the actual workers who carry out the ministry plans of their board.

Because these units are decision making and authoritative bodies, these would not be appropriate points for service for the women of the congregation.

**SECTION 2**

Most of the boards will consist of a minimum of two members. The chairman is elected by the voters. Other members are appointed by the council upon the recommendation of the appropriate chairman. In a two man Board, the second man shall serve as the secretary to maintain a record of decisions.

**SECTION 3 ADULT DISCIPLESHIP BOARD**

- 3.1 The Adult Discipleship Board shall consist of at least {two} voting members including the chairman, who shall be a member of the Church Council. The remaining member(s), who need not be member(s) of the Church Council, shall be appointed by the chairman for a one year term and such appointment is to be ratified by the Church Council. The chairman of the Adult Discipleship Board will also serve as the congregational Vice-President.
- 3.2 This board shall be concerned with the spiritual growth of the adult members of the congregation. It shall provide for and promote opportunities for them to be faithful in using the means of grace so that they may be strengthened in their faith, equipped to share it with others, prepared for works of service, and encouraged to practice good stewardship of all God's blessings. It shall prepare annual budget recommendations for those items of the congregation's business for which it is responsible.
- 3.3 This board is accountable to the Church Council and shall report to it through the board chairman.

#### **SECTION 4 CHILDREN DISCIPLESHIP BOARD**

- 4.1 The Children Discipleship Board shall consist of at least {two} voting members including the chairman, who shall be a member of the Church Council. The remaining member(s), who need not be member(s) of the Church Council, shall be appointed by the board chairman for a one year term and such appointment is to be ratified by the Church Council. The principal of the Lutheran elementary school may be an advisory member of the Children Discipleship Board.
- 4.2 This Board shall be concerned with the spiritual growth of the children and youth of the congregation. It shall provide for and promote opportunities for them to be faithful in using the means of grace so that they may be strengthened in their faith, equipped to share it with others, prepared for works of service, and encouraged to practice good stewardship of all God's blessings. It shall formulate all policies to be followed in those phases of the congregation's work which involve the education of the children and youth. It shall prepare annual budget recommendations for those items of the congregation's business for which it is responsible.
- 4.3 This committee is accountable to the church council and shall report to it through the board chairman.

#### **SECTION 5 ELDERS BOARD**

- 5.1 The Elders Board shall consist of at least (three) voting members including the chairman, who shall be a member of the Church Council. The elected President of the congregation and the Pastor(s) will serve as ex officio members. Board members shall be appointed for a one (1) year term by the board chairman and such appointment is to be ratified by the Church Council.
- 5.2 This board shall be concerned with the spiritual welfare of the Pastor(s) and congregational members, individually and corporately, and the supervision of everything pertaining to congregational worship. They serve as the Pastor's chief assistants and together with the Pastor(s) are accountable for each soul in the congregation.
- 5.3 This board is accountable to the church council and shall report to it through the board chairman.

#### **SECTION 6 OUTREACH BOARD**

- 6.1 The Outreach Board shall consist of at least {two} voting members including the chairman, who shall be a member of the church council. The remaining member(s), who need not be member(s) of the church council, shall be appointed by the chairman for a one year term and such appointment is to be ratified by the Church Council.
- 6.2 This board shall establish and maintain an active program for the congregation to reach out to the neighborhood and the community with the gospel. It shall also promote the work that the congregation does together with its fellow congregations as a synod. It shall prepare annual budget recommendations for those items of the congregation's business for which it is responsible.

6.3 This board is accountable to the Church Council and shall report to it through the board chairman.

#### **SECTION 7 PROPERTY BOARD**

- 7.1 The Property Board shall consist of at least {two} voting members including the chairman, who shall be a member of the Church Council. The remaining member(s), who need not be members of the church council, shall be appointed by the chairman for a one year term and such appointment is to be ratified by the Church Council.
- 7.2 This board shall supervise the repair and upkeep of the congregation's property and facilities.
- 7.3 This board is accountable to the Church Council and shall report to it through the board chairman.

#### **SECTION 8 STEWARDSHIP BOARD**

- 3.1 The Stewardship Board shall consist of at least {two} members, including the chairman, who shall be a member of the Church Council. The remaining member(s), who need not be member(s) of the Church Council, shall be appointed by the Council for one year terms.
- 3.2 This board shall be responsible for the financial affairs of the congregation. This board will oversee the ministry activity of the steward of receipts and the steward of disbursements. Financial affairs this board will oversee includes:
- Collecting and disbursing of offerings and funds
  - Presenting a proposed annual budget to the Church Council
  - Negotiating approved debt by the congregation
  - Serving as a liaison with outside groups as it relates to financial affairs - Sharing financial reports to the Council and Voters
- 3.3 This board shall be responsible for encouraging the use of the time and talents of the congregation.
- 3.4 This board is accountable to the Church Council and shall report to it through the board chairman.

#### **SECTION 9 NOMINATION BOARD**

At the April meeting of the Church Council the president shall direct the nomination board, consisting of Church Council members who are completing the second year of a two-year term to begin the process of nominating eligible voters of the congregation for upcoming vacant positions on the council. Through newsletters and bulletins, the nomination board shall let the congregation know which council positions are open. The nomination board will follow the guidelines as listed in Article VI of the Bylaws.

## **SECTION 10 MEMBERSHIP OF BOARDS**

The number of members on the boards may be increased by resolution of the council. Additional temporary offices and committees may be established or dismissed by the council as needs may warrant.

## **SECTION 11 EX-OFFICIO MEMBERSHIP**

The pastor and president by virtue of their offices are members of all boards and committees and are to be informed of all meetings of all boards and committees so that they may attend if they desire to do so.

# **ARTICLE V \_\_\_\_\_ COMMITTEES OF DIVINE WORD**

## **SECTION 1**

Committees are generally made up into these groups:

- A. A work group is a standing committee whose task by its very nature cannot be divided into specific timed goals but has ongoing, continuous responsibility.
- B. An Action Committee is a temporary group assigned to execute a specific task or goal within the vision. They do a specific portion of the ministry goals and when that part of it is done they are finished. Such groups would be formed to carry out some segments of publicity, operate a VBS, build a building, design a system for better integrating new members, conduct an area canvass, follow up on a section of the canvass, etc. As the board develops its strategies and lays out the action plans to execute their strategies, action committees would be assigned to the individual or related groups of action plan steps in fulfillment of a strategy. Action committees can be of any size.
- C. A Task force is a temporary group of individuals who have usually been asked to research a subject and develop recommendations for a board to consider. It is recommended that task forces be relatively small groups (ideal, five, but no more than seven).

## **SECTION 2**

Generally, the committees function in these ways:

- A. These groups either execute an action plan or develop one to accomplish a specific task.
- B. Members of committees normally ought not to be asked to serve on more than two units at any one given time. If they are service on a standing committee, each year they should be asked if they would want to serve another year.

Because these groups do not have policy making powers and must seek Board approval for their plans, their membership may be made up of both men and women.

**ARTICLE VI \_\_\_\_\_ DUTIES OF CHURCH COUNCIL OFFICERS**

**SECTION 1 PRESIDENT**

The president shall preside as chairman of all business sessions of the congregation and Church Council and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him. He shall have general supervision of the affairs of the congregation and conduct all its business affairs according to established good order. He shall sign all deeds, mortgages, notes, leases, and all other legal documents directed to be executed by the congregation. He shall assure that the congregation's financial records are audited annually and that a report of the audit is presented to the voters at the meeting following the close of the fiscal year. In the absence of the president, the vice-president shall assume the role of chairman. The president is an ex officio member of all boards and committees.

**SECTION 2 VICE PRESIDENT**

The Vice-President will be the chairman of the Adult Discipleship Board. During the absence or inability of the President to serve, he will then perform the duties of the president. His duties as Adult Discipleship Board chairman would then be given to one of his board members. As Vice-President, he shall be available for whatever duties the President shall assign to him as his representative. In the absence of the secretary, he shall have the authority to countersign legal documents on behalf of the congregation.

**SECTION 3 SECRETARY**

The secretary shall record accurately the proceedings of all meetings of the congregation and the Church Council. He shall be responsible for the legal records of the congregation. He shall have the authority to countersign all deeds, mortgages, notes, leases, and all other legal documents executed by the congregation and assist in the orderly conduct of its business affairs according to established good order. He shall also perform such other duties as may be assigned to him by the congregation.

**ARTICLE VII \_\_\_\_\_ ELECTION OF THE CHURCH OFFICERS**

**SECTION 1**

The president shall activate the Nomination Board at its April meeting to perform its duty. The pastor is an ex officio member of this committee.

**SECTION 2**

After receiving from the secretary a list of expired terms of office, the nominating board shall select from the voting membership a slate of candidates for the vacancies in keeping with the scriptural requirements stated in Article VIII, Section 1 of the constitution. Each candidate shall be informed of the responsibilities of the office to which he is nominated. Consent of each nominee is necessary for candidacy.

**SECTION 3** The nominating board shall report to the {August} meeting of the Church Council the status of selecting the slate of candidates for the election meeting. The candidates' names shall be published and also posted (with the nominating committee members' names) at least two Sundays before the election. Additional recommendations for nominations may be made in writing to the nominating board through any voting member. The board shall consider such written nominations and take appropriate action {cf. Section 2} posting any revisions.

**SECTION 4**

At the annual meeting the voters' assembly shall hear the recommendations of the nominating board and proceed to elect by ballot. Nominations will also be open to the floor at the election meeting. A majority of votes cast shall be necessary for election.

**ARTICLE VIII \_\_\_\_\_ RECEPTION INTO MEMBERSHIP**

**SECTION 1 APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**

Persons who wish to be received into membership in this congregation (other than through the sacrament of holy baptism or rite of confirmation) shall bring their request to the attention of the pastor or the Church Council, The Council shall honor the request when accompanied by a letter of transfer, a recommendation from a sister congregation, or a profession of faith, provided that qualifications for membership, as specified in Article V of this Constitution, have been met. Such action of the Council shall be ratified at the next regular or special meeting of the voters' assembly. Notice of such receptions shall be reported to the entire congregation.

**SECTION 2 CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS TO ALL MEMBERS**

Since reception into membership signifies acceptance of and submission to this Constitution and Bylaws, each individual or family shall be given a copy of the same prior to their reception so that they may become familiar with its provisions.

**SECTION 3 PRIVILEGES AND DUTIES OF COMMUNICANT MEMBERS**

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

- A. Grow in the Christian faith and life through faithful use of the means of grace, searching the Scriptures at home and in fellowship with other members of the congregation and its agencies, and partaking of the Lord's Supper frequently.
- B. Live a morally decent life before God and men, abstaining from open works of the flesh (Ga1.5:19-20), and so conducting themselves at all times as to bring credit rather than blame upon the Church of Jesus Christ.
- C. Provide for the proper Christian training of their children by instruction at home and through the agencies of the church.
- D. Contribute toward the maintenance of the congregation and the extension of the Kingdom of God at home and abroad to the limit of their financial ability.

- E. Place their God-given talents and abilities at the disposal of the Pastor(s), the officers, and other agencies of the congregation as set forth in its Constitution and Bylaws, so that the purposes and functions of the congregation may be effectively implemented.

## **ARTICLE IX \_\_\_\_\_ TRANSFER, RELEASE, OR REMOVAL FROM MEMBERSHIP**

### **SECTION 1**

Those desiring a transfer or release from membership shall bring their request to the attention of the pastor or the Church Council for action to be ratified at the next meeting of the voters' assembly.

### **SECTION 2**

Transfer of membership shall apply only to those who desire membership in a congregation which is in agreement with this congregation in doctrine and practice. Release from membership shall apply when affiliation is sought with those denominations not in agreement with this congregation in doctrine and practice.

### **SECTION 3**

The names of members whose whereabouts are unknown and cannot be established within a period of one year shall be removed from the membership list of the congregation and, placed in a file designated "Whereabouts Unknown." Such membership is terminated and shall be reported as such to the next regular meeting of the voters' assembly.

### **SECTION 4**

Members released, transferred, or removed have no further rights in this congregation and its property.

## **ARTICLE X \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE IN THE CONGREGATION**

All discipline in this congregation shall be administered in accordance with the order of discipline stated in Matthew 18:15-20, I Corinthians 5:1-5, and other related New Testament passages. The following procedure shall be followed under the direction of the Pastor(s) and the Board of Elders.

### **SECTION 1 EXCOMMUNICATION**

- A. It should be understood that excommunication has a two-fold purpose:
  - 1. To save the soul of the excommunicated: "To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Corinthians 5:5).
  - 2. To safeguard the saving faith of the congregation: "Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed." (I Corinthians 5:6-7).

- B. The Pastor(s) and the Board of Elders in conjunction with the Church Council shall administer church discipline in accordance with Matthew 18:15-20 and Article V, Section 3 of this constitution in behalf of the congregation. If the member does not respond to the Christian admonition, the individual shall be brought before the church for excommunication. He shall be notified by certified mail and shall be requested to attend the next regular meeting of the congregation. Failure to heed the summons to appear (unless there is a good reason) shall be considered as evidence of impenitence and the final step of excommunication shall be carried out by the church (This shall require a unanimous vote). The person's name shall be transferred to the mission file of the congregation or given to the Board of Evangelism. Excommunication not only releases the individual from all responsibilities to this congregation, but it also excludes the member from the privileges of church membership, such as Christian burial, Holy Communion, transfer to sister congregations, and of any claim against the properties of this congregation. Such a person, however, will at all times be cordially welcome to attend all divine services in our church.

## **SECTION 2 REINSTATEMENT**

Persons who have been excommunicated from membership for whatever reason shall be restored with all rights and privileges when they repent and ask for forgiveness from the congregation. Both acts of discipline and restoration shall be made known to all communicant members by whatever method the Pastor(s) and the Board of Elders deem most suitable.

## **SECTION 3 PROVISIONS PERTAINING TO CHURCH OFFICERS AND BOARD CHAIRMEN**

Any officer of the Church Council, board chairman of the Church Council of this congregation or financial officer of this congregation who willfully neglects the duties of their office and has been duly admonished may be deposed by a three-fourths majority vote of the voting members present in a regular meeting of the voter's assembly. The Board of Elders shall initiate such disciplinary action. When an office is made vacant by deposition, resignation, death, or excommunication of the incumbent, a successor to such office shall be appointed by the Church Council. In the case of the office of the President, the appointee shall serve such office until the next election of the voters' assembly.

## **SECTION 4 PROVISIONS PERTAINING TO PASTOR(S), TEACHERS, AND STAFF MINISTERS**

Sufficient grounds for deposing a Pastor or duly called or contracted teacher shall be persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, or willful neglect of official duties or evident and protracted incapacity or 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 Board of Elders, or in the case of the teacher, by the Board of Christian Education. Should such charges be substantiated by clear evidence, the individual shall first be given an opportunity to resign his position in the congregation. Such opportunity having been given and declined, the above-mentioned board or boards shall, after consultation with the appropriate officers of the Western Wisconsin District of the Wisconsin Synod, notify the voting

membership of the situation, and shall submit the matter for action at a special meeting of that body. A three-fourths majority vote of the voting members present shall be required to depose a Pastor or teacher. Should the occasion to depose a Pastor or teacher ever arise, the intended deposition will be announced by the Chairman of the Board of Elders at regular divine services on two Sundays preceding a special meeting of the voting members called for that purpose. All voting members shall be notified by mail at least two weeks in advance.

**ARTICLE XI \_\_\_\_\_ REPEALS AND AMENDMENTS OF THE BYLAWS**

Any and all Bylaws may be repealed or amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at any quarterly meeting, provided that public notice of this proposed action shall have been given the congregation on at least two Sundays prior to the time of the meeting and provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing to the Church Council for its study and recommendation.