

BY-LAWS
PEACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH – McCOOK, NE

ARTICLE I MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 BAPTIZED MEMBERS

Baptized members are all members who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and who desire to be under the spiritual care of this congregation. This includes both Baptized children and adults. This Baptism may have taken place at this congregation or any Christian congregation where this Rite is properly administered. Children may be Baptized members even though the parents are not Baptized members of this congregation.

Section 2 COMMUNICANT MEMBERS

A. COMMUNICANT MEMBERS DEFINED

Communicant members are Baptized members who have been instructed in the teachings of the Word of God as taught by The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LC-MS) and have agreed to the following commitments:

1. To uphold the Confession of Faith as set forth in Article III of this constitution and abide by the membership requirements of Article IV.
2. To attend Divine Services regularly and partake of Holy Communion often.
3. To be willing to assist, as God has blessed, in extending God's Kingdom here on earth with faithful stewardship of time, talents, and treasures.

B. RECEIVING COMMUNICANT MEMBERS

Members may be received as communicants by:

1. The Rite of Confirmation as youth or adults.
2. Transfer from a congregation in fellowship with the LC-MS, with the approval for membership by the Board of Elders and then reported to the Church Council.
3. Reaffirmation of Faith, or Profession of Faith, in cases where their membership in a Lutheran Congregation has lapsed. A prospective member must speak with the Pastor and receive the approval of the board of Elders.

Section 3 VOTING MEMBERS

Voting members are all communicant members, at least 18 years of age who have signed the constitution and have been accepted by the voting members present.

1. It is the duty of every voting member to attend the Congregational Voters Meetings. By failing to attend such a meeting, a member waives the right to vote on questions presented at that meeting. Voting by proxy is prohibited.

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2. It is the duty of every voting member to accept nomination for office, committee appointment, etc., if possible, and participate in the business activities of the congregation.

Section 4 TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

A. Baptized and Communicant Membership

1. Transfer to other congregations - Communicant members desiring to join a congregation in fellowship with LC-MS shall present their request for transfer to the Pastor and/or Elders, to whom authorization is granted to issue such transfer. Such transfers may then be issued and shall be reported to the Church Council.
2. Joining other churches - In cases where communicant members have joined other congregations outside of our own fellowship they shall, upon verification and recommendation of the Pastor and/or Elders, be considered to have terminated their membership and their names shall be removed from the active membership list by a resolution of the Church Council.
3. Non Resident Inactive - Communicant members who are known to reside outside the area of ministry of Peace Lutheran Church, and having not been active in worship for at least 12 months, shall be:
 - a. Contacted by the Board of Elders or Pastor encouraging them to join a sister congregation.
 - b. If there is no response within 90 days, with information concerning a transfer or request for a release, a second contact will be made to encourage the member to join a sister congregation, with a copy also being sent to the nearest known LC-MS congregation.
 - c. If no response is received within 90 days of the second contact, with information of a transfer or release, the issue shall be submitted to the Board of Elders for resolution.
4. Resident Inactive - Communicant members who are known to reside within the area of ministry of Peace Lutheran Church, and having not been active in worship for at least 12 months, shall be:
 - a. Contacted by Board of Elders or Pastor encouraging them to return to worship.
 - b. If there is no response within 90 days, a second personal contact will be made by Pastor of the Board of Elders.
 - c. If no response is received within 90 days of the second contact, the issue shall be resolved by the Board of Elders.
5. Whereabouts Unknown - The names of Communicant members whose whereabouts are unknown and cannot be established shall, after a period of one year, be moved to inactive status by action of the Board of Elders.
7. Excommunication
 - a. An unrepentant member shall be admonished, in accordance with the various steps prescribed in Matthew 18: 15-17, whenever that procedure is possible.

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- b. If a sinner continues to be unrepentant, the matter will be forwarded to the Pastor and the Board of Elders for church discipline.
- c. Fruitless admonition of a manifest and impenitent sinner shall result in recommendation for excommunication.
- d. The excommunication of a member shall require a 2/3 majority vote of the members present at a regularly scheduled Congregational Voters Meeting. The member under discipline shall be deprived of the right to vote until the question at issue is decided. After sincere repentance an excommunicated person shall receive absolution and be reinstated by the Pastor and the Board of Elders. This action shall be reported to the Congregational Voters Assembly.

B. Status

A person whose membership has been inactivated has forfeited all rights of a member in this congregation and all claims upon the property of the congregation as such, or upon any part thereof, so long as the person is not reinstated.

ARTICLE II CONGREGATIONAL VOTERS MEETING

A. A regular Congregational Voters Meeting shall be held three times a year, during the months of January, April, and October on the third Sunday of each respective month. The church council shall have the authority to change the regularly scheduled date of the voters meeting should a scheduling conflict arise. The annual budget shall be adopted at the October meeting with the budget commencing January 1st. The officers shall be elected at the January meeting with terms commencing March 1st of that year.

B. A special Congregational Voters Meeting may be called by the Pastors, the President, a majority of the church Council, or by petition of any ten voting members. The petition shall state the reason for calling such a special meeting and no other business shall be conducted.

- 1. The church president shall validate the signatures on the petition.
- 2. The president shall be responsible for scheduling the meeting.

C. At least ten days prior notice shall be given for every Congregational Voters Meeting in the church bulletin and the agenda posted on the church bulletin board. The purpose of the meeting shall be announced in the call of the meeting. Whenever a Congregational Voters Meeting has thus been announced, twenty voting members present shall constitute a quorum. A simple majority shall be required for approval of all items of business, except as otherwise provided herein.

D. For amending the Articles of Incorporation or the Constitution and By-laws, or the erection of a building, or the purchase or sale of real property, or the removal of a pastor or teacher or some other member from office, a resolution shall be presented and a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of members present shall be required for adoption of the same. The proposal must be announced in the call of the meeting.

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**ARTICLE III VACANCIES AND THE CALLING OF PASTORS,
D.C.E.'s AND OTHER CALLED SPIRITUAL WORKERS**

A. Pastoral vacancy

In the event of a vacancy in the pastoral office, the Church Council shall immediately arrange for a special meeting with the responsible District official or the Circuit counselor to select a vacancy pastor.

B. Nominations

A list of suitable candidates for Pastor, D.C.E., or other spiritual worker shall be requested from the responsible District official by the church President. Voting members may submit names of nominees who are listed on the current appropriate official synodical roster to the call committee for inclusion on the list of suitable candidates. Only persons who have been included on the list of suitable candidates shall be eligible to be called.

Upon the recommendation of the responsible District official, the Congregational Voters Meeting may decide to fill an office by placement of a graduate of an LC-MS college or seminary.

1. The call committee shall consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary, the senior members of boards (Elders, Trustees, Education and Evangelism). The church President shall be responsible for selecting two members at large from within the voting membership of the congregation.
2. The purpose of the call committee is to research the information provided and formulate a short list of suitable candidates to be presented to the council for recommendation to the voters.

C. Ballot

The printed ballot for the call shall consist of the list of all suitable candidates as formulated by the call committee. The Board of Elders shall determine the order in which the candidates are listed and may state its preferences. The ballot of candidates shall be posted within the church for members review and within the timeline as regulated by all voters meeting requirements.

D. Method of Election

At a Congregational Voters Meeting properly convened, the names and information as to the backgrounds and qualifications of the candidates shall be placed before the voting members. No nominations from the floor will be accepted. On the first ballot each voting member shall vote for one candidate. When the results are announced, those candidates receiving less than 10% of the votes shall be eliminated from further consideration.

On the second and subsequent ballots, each voting member shall vote for one remaining candidate and the candidate receiving the fewest votes will be eliminated; if

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one candidate receives the majority of all votes cast, balloting will cease, then the candidate will be declared elected by unanimous vote.

The President, on behalf of the congregation, will extend an official divine call to the successful candidate. If the call is rejected, the call committee will be reconvened.

ARTICLE IV ELECTED OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION

The elected officers of this congregation shall be: a President; a Vice-President; a Secretary; a Treasurer; a Financial Secretary; members of the Boards of Elders, Trustees, Education, and Evangelism. All officers must be voting members of the congregation and hold active membership for a minimum of one year.

The Boards of Trustees, Education, and Evangelism shall consist of three (3) members each. The Board of Elders shall consist of seven (7) members including five (5) members elected by the Congregational Voters Meeting, together with the President and the Vice-President, who shall be Elders ex officio with all the powers and duties accorded to the Elders, according to the Congregational job description for the Board of Elders.

A. The President, Vice-President and the Board of Elders shall be restricted to male voting members only.

B. Officers shall be elected for the terms specified in these By-laws, and shall hold office until their successors shall have been installed or appointed.

C. All officers shall be elected for the terms of three (3) years. No person shall be permitted to be an elected or appointed church officer for more than six consecutive years.

ARTICLE V CHURCH COUNCIL

A. Membership

The Church Council shall consist of the Pastors: D.C.E.; the President of the congregation; the Vice-President; the Secretary; the Treasurer; the Financial Secretary; members of the Boards of Elders, Trustees, Education, and Evangelism. The voting members of Church Council shall consist of the President of the congregation; the Vice-President; the Secretary; the Treasurer; the Financial Secretary; members of the Boards of Elders, Trustees, Education, and Evangelism. All called positions are ex-officio members.

B. Meetings

It shall be the duty of the Church Council to meet once a month, at a regular time, to consider and discuss matters pertaining to the general welfare of the congregation and

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to present recommendations and reports to the congregation. The Church Council shall also act in matters committed to it by the Congregational Voters Meetings, and in case of emergency, between voters meetings. All boards represented on the Council shall hold a regularly scheduled meeting prior to the regularly scheduled Council meeting. Times and dates of these meetings shall be published.

C. General business – The council shall transact or supervise all legal and general business of the congregation. They will have no authority beyond that which is conferred upon them by the constitution and by-laws or the voters assembly. Powers delegated may at any time be altered or revoked by the voters assembly.

D. Committees

1. Nominating Committee - The Nominating Committee shall consist of the President, the Vice President, the Secretary, and the member from each Board (Elders, Trustees, Education, Evangelism) whose term last expires. The Nominating Committee shall seek a willingness to accept responsibilities of the office and permission to have name put into nomination from each prospective nominee. No voting member may be nominated for an office of the Church Council until such member has been a member of this congregation for at least one full year prior to the election. The slate of nominees shall be presented and published two (2) Sundays prior to the January meeting. The Nominating Committee shall seek at least two nominees for each office. Additional nominations may be made at the Congregational Voters Meeting with the consent of the nominee.
2. Budget Committee - The President, Vice-President, and all other members of the Church Council, not assigned to the Nominating Committee, shall be members of the Budget Committee. The Budget Committee shall meet to draw up a proposed budget and present it to the Church Council at the September Church Council meeting. The final proposed budget shall be posted and available two weeks prior to the voters meeting.

ARTICLE VI ELECTION OF CONGREGATIONAL OFFICERS

A. Election shall be by secret ballot, and majority vote of those present and voting is required.

B. Newly elected officers shall attend all appropriate meetings and work closely with the present officers from the date of their election through the installation of their respective office. The officers shall be installed and assume their duties on the first Sunday in March following the January election. Applicable job descriptions shall be provided to those newly elected officers.

C. In the event of a vacancy in any office, the Church Council shall appoint a successor to serve for the unexpired term.

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ARTICLE VII COMMITTEES OF THE CONGREGATION

A. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall consist of nine members plus the Financial Secretary serving as chairman. They shall meet weekly to count, record, and deposit the church offerings. Members of the Finance Committee shall be elected for a term of 3 years elected in January. Three members of the Finance committee shall be elected on an annual schedule. The Nominating Committee shall seek two nominees for each vacancy.


B. Worship Committee

The membership and duties of the Worship Committee will be determined by Board of Elders and the Pastor(s).

C. Special Committees

There shall be such special committees as the Church Council shall, from time to time, constitute and appoint. The purpose of such a special committee shall be stated by the Church Council and may be altered, expanded, or contracted by the Church Council at any time. When the purpose of the committee has been achieved, a final report shall be made to the Church Council, which shall dissolve the committee.

Authorized by:

	<u>12-10-13</u>
Fred Gleason, President	Date
Peace Lutheran Church	
McCook NE	