

Bethel Lutheran Church
Revisions to the Constitution
August, 2010

This year, Bethel Lutheran Church Council has reviewed the church Constitution and found it was no longer accurate:

1. Mandatory changes from the Pacific Sierra Synod were not included.
2. Several items were no longer accurate.

The Council reviewed the document carefully, and made many changes, primarily within the text of the Continuing Resolutions.* However, some changes were made to the bylaws as well. Those are delineated below with a brief explanation.

Throughout the document, three changes have been made.

The terms winter and summer replace the terms January and June in reference to the semi-annual congregation meetings.

The term vice-president is replaced with the term president elect.

The following are mandatory changes from the synod (Changes are underscored):

Chapter 6: Church Affiliation

C.606 If this congregation considers relocation it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located, and the appropriate program unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.

C.607 If this congregation considers developing an additional site to be used regularly for worship, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate program unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action.

Chapter 8. Membership (Note: This chapter is still undergoing revisions by the lead pastor and council.)

C.8.02.c. Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and made a contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of the congregation.

C.8.02d. Associate members are persons holding membership ion other [Lutheran] [Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation....

The following changes are not mandated by the Synod, but requested for approval by the Church Council:

Chapter 9. Pastoral Office.

C.9.05.02 If a pastor receives a call to another congregation, the called pastor shall inform the Congregation Council prior to making an announcement to the congregation.

[Removed from this section is the statement that the pastor is to consult with the congregation/council *prior* to making a decision. It also removes the time frame for making such a decision and for leaving. Council's rationale for the change is as follows:

1. We have not followed this for some time.
2. It has the potential for abuse in that a pastor could play one congregation's offer against that of Bethel. ("If you want me to stay...")
3. The time frame provides no flexibility. There are circumstances that may necessitate a longer time for departure. The specific time frame parameters should be negotiated between the Pastor and the Council.]

C.9.12.01d. [Lead Pastor] Provides ongoing guidance and support to the Congregation Council, Executive Committee, and Ministry Groups.

[Removed from this section is the statement the pastor is to perform informal evaluations (Council & other organizations of the congregation) and make appropriate recommendations to the Council, Executive Committee, or President.) Council felt this appeared somewhat punitive and felt a more affirming, guiding role would enhance communication and support. It does NOT restrict the Pastor from providing relevant feedback as needed.]

Moved the descriptions of the Officers from Chapter 13 Congregational Committees, to Chapter 11, Officers. The specific duties of the officers are delineated in continuing resolutions, rather than bylaws.

Specific changes to the roles are as follows:

1. The President is authorized to pay bills and other financial obligations in the absence of the Fiscal Officer.
2. The President Elect: Assists The president with issues & projects, Familiarizes self with Committee, Board, Ministry functions, processes, and issues; Works with Stewardship Committee re: annual campaign; prepares notice of charges required in the process of discipline of a member (15.01) (currently part of the VP role).

[The rationale for moving these functions under Continuing Resolutions is so they can be modified more easily as needed, based on the needs of the Council to ensure it functions to best meet the needs of the congregation. Functions formerly assigned to the Vice President i.e., monitoring the Model Constitution from the ELCA and modify ours as needed, facilitate Ministry positions are updated & disseminated, assist pastors in planning leadership retreat were reassigned to the members at large. Changing these functions is helpful to ensure the President Elect is adequately prepared to assume the role of President in the following year.]

Chapter 12. .Congregational Council

12.03 The Council's term of service was changed to 2 years, with the maximum limit of three consecutive terms (staying with the 6-year limit). We also added the following: Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next annual meeting.

[Shortening the term of service will hopefully attract more to serve. The addition provides a mechanism to fill vacancies in a more timely fashion.]

12.05f. The Parish Administrator oversees the congregation's investments and its total insurance program; these actions are to be affirmed by Congregation Council.

[This is our current practice; Council does not have the expertise to be more responsible for the oversight of the investments and insurance. However, this is also now delineated as a function of the Audit Committee.] (Section 13.03)

13.05.01 The Bethel School Board bylaws have been extensively revised and were approved by Council. As this are by-laws, they also require approval by the Congregation. They will be appended to the Constitution as Appendix B. (See following pages)

* The entire revised Constitution will be posted on the website after the Congregation Meeting. Those who wish to see it prior to that time should contact [Mary Thomas](#) and she can send it to you electronically.

Bethel Lutheran School Board By-Laws

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The School Board exists to oversee and support a quality, Christ-centered environment that ministers to the spiritual, emotional, academic, and social needs of Bethel Lutheran School grounded in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Bethel Lutheran School is authorized by and under the jurisdiction of Bethel Lutheran Church, Cupertino, California. It operates as an extension in the area of education and as a mission outreach of Bethel Lutheran Church. The Preschool of this school is licensed by the State of California, Department of Social Services and operated in full accordance with the provision thereof. The total educational program of the school is consistent with or higher than the standards as prescribed by the State of California. An appropriate balance between formal Christian training and academic instruction shall be maintained thus providing an active expression of Christian love and concern as an integral part of the total Christian educational ministry of Bethel Lutheran School.

GENERAL POLICY:

No part of the revenue of this school shall be applied to the benefit of, or be distributed to, its members, officers, or other private persons. This school shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered which have been recommended by the School Board and approved by the Congregational Council. This school should not engage in activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purpose of this school.

SCHOOL BOARD:

The Bethel School Board is a standing committee of Bethel Lutheran Church. The Bethel School Board shall oversee the management of the school to ensure its actions are in congruence with the philosophy and mission of Bethel Lutheran Church.

The Bethel School Board shall consist of the ex officio members defined by the church constitution and bylaws: Lead Pastor, Church President, and School Board Chairperson; the Principal, Preschool Director and selected member(s) of the school administrative team; and five (5) to seven (7) additional members appointed jointly by the Principal of the school, the Lead Pastor, and the current School Board members. The appointed members shall consist of at least two (2) voting members of Bethel Lutheran Church and at least two (2) parents of students enrolled at Bethel Lutheran School.

1. Terms

- a. The Chairperson elected at the annual meeting shall serve a term of three years. The first set of regular board members appointed subsequent to the adoption of these bylaws shall serve for staggered terms of up to three years. Subsequently, members as needed shall be appointed each year for terms of three years.
- b. Members shall not be eligible to serve more than two successive full terms.
- c. A member's place on the ministry team/committee/board shall be declared vacant by the Congregation Council on recommendation of the ministry team/committee/ board chair if a member is absent from two successive regular meetings without cause; resigns,

becomes incapacitated or is otherwise unavailable; or fails to contribute to the work of the ministry team/committee. (Constitution: C13.07.H03)

2. Responsibilities of the School Board

The Bethel Lutheran School Board shall oversee the management of the school to ensure its actions are in congruence with the Christian philosophy and mission of Bethel Lutheran Church. The school board either corporately or through committees shall:

- a. Assume responsibility for policies and philosophy regarding the school.
- b. Assemble a selection committee when needed to fill an opening in the position of Principal, Director of the Preschool or other Senior School Administrative staff. The committee shall review conditions of employment, receive applications, and recommend a candidate to the school board for approval. The school board will pass approved candidates to the church council for final approval.
- c. Maintain operating policies and procedures.
- d. Meet monthly at a specified date and time set by the School Board
- e. Support and encourage the school staff in their tasks by word and by action.
- f. Communicate and affirm the Christian mission and purpose of the school.
- g. Seek God's direction and guidance through prayer and study.

3. Officers of the School Board

The elected officers of the Bethel Lutheran School's School Board shall consist of the Chairperson and Secretary. The Chairperson must be a member of Bethel Lutheran Church, Cupertino, California. The Secretary shall be elected by the School Board from its voting members. The Bethel Lutheran Church Treasurer in conjunction with the Bethel Lutheran Church Parish Administrator will provide oversight of budget and financial transactions.

4. Duties:

It shall be the responsibility of the following officers to perform the duties below and such other duties as required by the School Board.

- A. Chairperson- It shall be the responsibility of the Chairperson to:
 1. Preside at all meetings of the School Board or appoint a School Board member to preside in their absence.
 2. Appoint a replacement for all School Board vacancies, with the majority approval of the School Board.
 3. Ensure that the duties of the Principal are clearly defined by The Lead Pastor, School Board, and Search Committee.
 4. Elicit active participation from all Board members.
 5. Sign all necessary documents.
 6. Act as liaison to the Senior Pastor and Senior Administrators.
 7. Represent the School Board at Bethel Council Meetings.
 8. Attend Executive Committee meetings
- B. Secretary- It shall be the responsibility of the Secretary to:
 1. Keep minutes of all meetings of the School Board.
 2. Keep a record of attendance at School Board meetings.
 3. Handle all correspondence and documentation.
 4. Advise new School Board members of rules in the Constitution and Bylaws.

- C. Treasurer- It shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer to review and present a monthly financial report.

- D. Principal- It shall be the responsibility of the Principal as it pertains to the School Board to:
 - 1. Carry out the purpose of the school as set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws which specify an appropriate balance between formal Christian training and academic instruction.
 - 2. Assume responsibility for the educational and spiritual program of the school.
 - 3. Provide and maintain an adequate staff and faculty of effective qualified Christian instructors.
 - 4. Conduct annual staff evaluations, which affirm strengths and encourage growth.
 - 5. Provide opportunities for in-service training.
 - 6. Assume the primary responsibility for enforcing the registration rules that determine student enrollment.
 - 7. Receive and review applications for enrollment.
 - 8. Make decisions for enrollment and promptly inform parents.
 - 9. Establish strong lines of communication with staff, school families, church, and community that convey organizational developments, the Christian mission of our School, and vision for the future.
 - 10. Keep staff records as required by the State of California and the Health Department.
 - 11. Maintain and update the Parent Handbook for preschool and elementary grades.
 - 12. Respond to, and cooperate with, the School Board.
 - 13. Advise all teams of the School Board and Our Parents Organization.
 - 14. Attend monthly School Board meetings and provide status reports

- E. Preschool Director- It shall be the responsibility of the Preschool Director to:
 - 1. Carry out the Christian purpose of the school as set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws.
 - 2. Be responsible for the educational and spiritual program of the preschool while maintaining an attitude of Christian love and concern for the children and their families.
 - 3. Provide and maintain an adequate staff and faculty of effective qualified Christian instructors.
 - 4. Conduct annual staff evaluations, which affirm strengths and encourage growth.
 - 5. Provide opportunities for in-service training.
 - 6. Respond to, and cooperate with, the School Board and Principal.
 - 7. Keep accreditations current in compliance with State of California laws.
 - 8. Establish strong lines of communication with staff, families, and community.

- F. School Board Members shall be responsible to serve on at least one of the School Board teams which function as the organizational and reporting structure of the Board.
 - 1. Annual School Budget Preparation Team will be comprised of the Congregational Treasurer, Principal, Parish Administrator, and School Board member(s) which are responsible for creating an annual budget for review and approval by the School Board and Church Council.

 - 2. Marketing Team is comprised of assigned staff, auxiliary marketing team and School Board member(s) and is responsible for:
 - a. Creating and approving advertising for the school within the advertising budget.
 - b. Marketing the school.
 - c. Promoting the school through communication and advertisements.
 - d. Creating and distributing school brochures.

- e. Encouraging all parents of preschool and school-aged children in the congregation to enroll their children in Bethel Lutheran School.
- 3. Annual Fund Team is comprised of School Board Member(s) and volunteers and is responsible for directing the Annual fund raiser(s).
- 4. Strategic Planning Team is comprised of School Board Member(s), volunteers, and designated organizations and is responsible for:
 - a. Developing conceptual strategic plans and ideas to achieve the long-term vision.
 - b. Defining and communicating these strategies and plans to the School Board and Congregational Council
- 5. Personnel, Policy and Procedures Team is comprised of the Principal, Parish (or Business) Administrator, and School Board member(s) and is responsible for:
 - a. Defining staff hiring procedures.
 - b. Establishing and maintaining a salary scale for teachers.
 - c. Reviewing the benefit programs for staff and making recommendations in conjunction with the Parish Administrator.
 - d. Maintaining a policy manual.
 - e. Ensuring all changes are reflected in the Parent and Employee Handbooks and all other publications.
 - f. Generating personnel policies and procedures.
- 6. Liaison to Our Parents Organization is responsible for:
 - a. Serving on the Our Parents Organization executive board.
 - b. Actively participating in Our Parents Organization functions.
 - c. Communicating information to/from the School Board and Our Parents Organization.
- 7. Christian Ministry Team is comprised of School Board Member(s) and volunteers and is responsible for:
 - a. Working with staff and pastor to develop chapel themes for the school year
 - b. Working with staff and pastor to develop or maintain faith-building programs
 - c. Being prayerful at all times and supporting the entire school staff through ongoing prayer
 - d. Forming prayerful partnerships with other Christian schools in our area
 - e. Encouraging school families to participate in a faith community.