

Bethel Lutheran Church
Revisions to the Constitution
January 2021

Bethel's elementary school was closed in 2018 and the preschool was closed in 2019. In the fall of 2019 a committee was formed to review the current constitution (the 2015 Constitution) and make any necessary changes. We considered leaving the sections dealing with the school and adding language to the effect that these sections would apply "if a school exists", but after review it was decided that would be more confusing than helpful and instead we should delete the references to the school and the school board but retain a copy of the 2015 Constitution in our archives in case we should at some point open another school.

During our review, it was discovered that we had not yet incorporated the changes from the last 3 Model Constitution for Congregations (2013, 2016 and 2019). We made all the required changes and many of the suggested changes. Exceptions are listed below.

We also found several places where our current constitution did not agree with our current practice and revised those sections (nominating committee, mutual ministry committee, youth/young adult member of council, pastoral support committee). We also fixed a few spelling errors and missing or extra words we found.

All of these changes were sent to the Synod for review in June 2020. The Synod came back with several suggestions for further changes to resolve some inconsistencies. After consulting with the church council, we made a number of changes to resolve these problems.

In the following, deletions are marked with strikethrough and additions are marked with underline. The changes are highlighted in yellow. In the final section changes made as a result of the Synod review are highlighted in yellow, and any previous changes to the same paragraphs are highlighted in blue.

Remove references to Bethel Lutheran School, the School Board, and the School Board Chair.

C10.01.01. The annual Meeting of the congregation shall be held in two parts.

- a. Part I of the Annual Meeting shall be held in the winter. The order of business at that meeting shall include:
 - 5) Election of officers of the congregation, ~~the Chair of the School Board and~~ other members of the Congregation Council and other elected positions.
- b. Part II of the Annual Meeting shall be held in the summer. The order of business shall include:

3) Reports of the Fiscal ~~Manager~~ Officer ~~and the Chairperson of the School Board.~~

C12.01.A10. Membership shall consist of the ex officio members (i.e., pastors), the officers, ~~the School Board Chair,~~ and six (6) or seven (7) additional elected members, filling the positions of Ministry Liaison, Project Manager Advisor, Human Resources Advisor, two Members at Large, and one Youth and/or/ one Young Adult Member at Large. Duties of these positions include (but are not limited to):

c. Human Resources Advisor is responsible for advising the Pastors, Bethel church ~~and school~~ staff, and Council on issues related to Human Resources, including hiring, firing, layoffs, and providing evaluations.

~~g. School Board Chair serves as a liaison from the School Board to the Senior Pastor and Senior Administrators; will preside over all School Board Meetings and will represent the School Board at Council meetings.~~

C12.10. The Congregation Council shall oversee the educational work of the congregation, including the Sunday school, ~~Day School,~~ and such other agencies as the congregation may have or establish for the purpose of Christian education.

~~C 13.05. A Bethel School Board is established. It shall be a standing committee. 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.~~

BYLAWS

C 13.05.01. ~~— The Bethel School Board~~

~~a. Its regular membership shall consist of at least five (5) and no more than seven (7) members at the discretion of the Executive Committee. The members shall consist of at least two (2) voting members of Bethel Lutheran Church. The chairperson shall be elected by the congregation at the winter annual meeting. The remaining regular board members shall be appointed jointly by the Lead Pastor, the principal of the school and the current school board members.~~

~~b. Additional Bethel School Board Bylaws are delineated in Appendix B.~~

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

C 13.05.A03. ~~— A covenant defining the internal relationship between Bethel Lutheran Church and Bethel Lutheran School shall be signed jointly by the President of the Congregation, the Chair of the School Board and the principal of the school and approved by the Congregation Council.~~

C 13.05.B03. ~~— The current covenant shall be a part of these continuing resolutions by attachment hereto.~~

C13.06. Renumbered to C13.05.

C13.07. Renumbered to C13.06

C13.08. Renumbered to C13.07

Deleted **Appendix B. Bethel Lutheran School Board Bylaws**

Other changes – Members of Council, Committees

C5.05. Change “endowment fund” to “endowment trust fund” in the second usage.

C5.05. This congregation shall have an endowment trust fund that will operate as specified in the articles approved by this congregation. The purpose of the endowment **trust** fund is to provide for work beyond the operational budget of this congregation.

C12.01.A10. and **C12.02.B10.** (Continuing Resolutions – Membership of the Congregation Council). Change the Youth Member at Large to a Youth and/or a Young Adult Member at Large to match our current practice.

C12.01.A10. Membership shall consist of the ex officio members (i.e., pastors), the officers, ~~the School Board Chair~~, and six (6) **or seven (7)** additional elected members, filling the positions of Ministry Liaison, Project Manager Advisor, Human Resources Advisor, two Members at Large, and one Youth **and/or/ one Young Adult** Member at Large. Duties of these positions include (but are not limited to):

f. Youth **and/or Young Adult** Member(s) at Large will serve as a direct liaison between Council and the youth/**young adults** of the congregation to ensure Bethel’s youth/**young adults** are appropriately represented in the process of guiding the ministry of the congregation. The positions will work with the Ministry Liaison and other Ministry Leads to foster relationships between these ministries and interested youth/**young adults** and enhance their participation.

C12.02.B10. Terms of office of the Youth Member at Large shall be one year and this term may be renewed twice as long as the member will remain in high school through the following spring after election. Terms of office for the five (5) **or six (6)** additionally elected members shall be two (2) years; terms may be renewed not more than three times.

C13.02.01. (Bylaws – The Nominating Committee). Change the number of members on the Nominating Committee to 3 to 5 from the previous 5 to match our current practice.

C13.02.01. The Nominating Committee

a. Its membership shall consist of **three to** five voting members of the congregation. Two of the members **shall should** be appointed by the Congregation Council and three members **shall should** be elected by the congregation at the winter annual meeting from nominations made from the floor. A pastor shall serve as convener and as an advisory member.

b. Members shall serve for a term of **one two years** except that the outgoing chairperson shall serve a **second third** year as a member of the committee

only. That member shall retain his/her classification as an elected or appointed member.

c. No member shall serve more than ~~two~~ three successive terms.

C10.01.01. a. 6) (Bylaws – Order of business for the winter congregational meeting). Change the number of members of the Nominating Committee to be elected to agree with the above changes to C13.02.01.

6) Election of ~~two~~ members of the Nominating Committee.

C13.04. Change Mutual Ministry committee to an optional committee.

C13.04. A Mutual Ministry Committee ~~may be~~ is established. It shall be a standing committee if established. The Mutual Ministry Committee shall serve as a confidant and as a support group to the pastors and staff of Bethel Lutheran Church.

C13.06.02. (Congregation standing committees – was C13.07.02.) Rename Youth Ministry to Youth/Young Adult Ministry and add an optional Pastoral Support Committee.

C13.06.02. Congregation Council Standing committees are established as follows:

g. Youth/Young Adult Ministry

This ministry seeks to create a nurturing environment for youth/young adults and their families through programs of education, spiritual growth, fellowship and service. It shall work for the involvement of young people in all aspects of congregational life.

l. Pastoral Support Committee

A Pastoral Support Committee may be established. The Pastoral Support Committee shall serve as a confidant and as a support group to the pastors of this congregation.

Bring the constitution up to date with the Model Constitution changes that had been made since we last updated our constitution:

Model Constitution changes for 2013. Incorporated all changes.

Model Constitution changes for 2016. Incorporated all changes except:

C12.12. Left our language as it was.

C13.04. Left our language and Bylaws as it was.

Model Constitution changes for 2019. Incorporated all changes except:

- C10.01. Left our language as it was.
- Chapter 11: Officers Left our language as it was but did change from “the congregation” to “this congregation”.
- C12.01. Left our language as it was but did change from “the congregation” to “this congregation”.
- C12.02. Left our language as it was but did change from “the congregation” to “this congregation”.
- C12.08. Left our language as it was.
- C12.12. Left our language as it was.
- C13.08. Omitted

C1.11. This section was numbered as C1.03 in our document. Changed the number to C1.11 to conform to the 2019 Model Constitution.

The codes for each of the constitutional provisions were standardized to conform to the Model Constitution system of Cxx.yy. In many places we previously had spaces after the “C” and no terminating “.”.

Other changes based on the Synod review:

***PREAMBLE.** The Preamble is a required paragraph and should have an “*” in front of it. Added the asterisk.

C9.01.01. Changed who signs the letter of Call to match current practice and the Model Constitution.

C9.01.01. When the congregation has voted to call a pastor, it shall issue a Letter of Call to the pastor-elect in a form approved by The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It shall be signed by the chairperson of the Call Committee and the President of the Congregation and the Communications Officer of the Congregation and shall be attested by the signature of the Bishop of the Synod.

C12.03. and C12.02.D03. Both addressed what should happen when there is a vacancy on the Council, but disagreed. We deleted Continuing Resolution C12.02.D03. and amended C12.03.

~~**C12.02.D03.** Unplanned vacancies may or may not be filled by the Congregation Council at its discretion. Members appointed by the Council to fill an unplanned vacancy shall serve until a successor who is elected at the next annual meeting to fill the remaining term takes office.~~

C12.03. No member shall be eligible to serve more than three consecutive full terms as an elected Congregation Council member, except for officers as specified in C11.04. Should a member’s place on the Congregational Council be declared

vacant, the Congregational Council ~~shall~~ may or may not elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next annual meeting.

C12.12. Addresses what constitutes a quorum for Council meetings. While our original paragraph was acceptable to the Synod, they recommended that we add language from the Model Constitution that included the pastor as part of the required quorum.

C12.12. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the lead pastor or interim pastor, except when the lead pastor or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent.

C13.06. Addresses the selection of a Call Committee. This is not a required paragraph, so our original version was acceptable to the Synod, but they suggested we add language to specify the size of the committee. This paragraph had previous changes: the number was changed to C13.05. and the other blue highlighted changes were from the Model Constitution changes.

C13.065. When a pastoral vacancy occurs or is planned in a position for which this congregation calls a rostered minister, a *Call Committee* of no fewer than 5 voting members shall be established by the Congregation Council. It shall be an ad hoc committee. The Call Committee shall do all things necessary to identify and recommend candidates for call to minister to the congregation.

C13.08. and C13.08.05. Chapter 13 covers Congregation Committees, but these two paragraphs included references to the Council. Bylaw C13.08.05 was a copy of a bylaw in Chapter 11 covering Officers and was not needed here. The blue highlighted changes are from the Model Constitution changes.

C13.087. Duties and terms of office of the officers of the congregation and members of its of committees and boards of this congregation shall be further specified in the bylaws and the continuing resolutions of this congregation.

C13.08.05. The Assistant Treasurer

- a. ~~A member of the church staff shall be appointed Assistant Treasurer by the Congregation Council.~~
- b. ~~The Assistant Treasurer shall conduct the day to day operations of the office.~~
- e. ~~The Assistant Treasurer shall be bonded.~~

C13.08.A10. This Continuing Resolution dealt with when new members of the Council will be installed, but it is in Chapter 13, which addresses Congregation Committees. The installation of new Council members is covered in C12.02.C10., so doesn't need to be addressed again.

C13.087.A10. ~~Newly elected/appointed members of the Congregation Council shall be recognized and installed the first Sunday after the annual meeting/ members whose terms continue shall also be reaffirmed on that Sunday.~~

C13.08.E08. This Continuing Resolution addresses procedures for the Council to conduct voting by email when necessary. But it is in Chapter 13 – Committees instead of Chapter 12 where it should be. We moved it to Chapter 12 and created Continuing Resolution C12.13.A21.

C12.13.A21. The Congregation Council may make motions and vote on motions by electronic mail (or other suitable technology) in order to expedite church business. In no case should topics requiring confidentiality be discussed using unsecure electronic methods. The following rules shall guide committees when conducting business in this manner:

- a. All committee members shall be notified and given at least 48 hours to respond to any motion distributed electronically.
- b. The presiding officer shall ensure adequate discussion takes place to resolve outstanding questions about the motion.
- c. If necessary to establish a quorum of voters, non-responding members shall be contacted by other means. Otherwise, non-responders will be considered as abstaining from the vote.
- d. If significant discussion takes place, the motion shall be re-stated before a final vote.
- e. The motion and vote shall be entered into the committee's minutes and confirmed by approval of said minutes at the next meeting.

C13.08. The Synod pointed out that we had omitted paragraph C13.08 from the Model Constitution, dealing with making the pastor an ex officio member of all committees. We had this covered in a Bylaw – C09.12.01.f., but the Synod suggested it would be better to include the Model Constitution paragraph rather than leave this as a Bylaw. We deleted C09.12.01.f, and added C13.08 from the Model Constitution, modified to retain the language of our original Bylaw.

~~**C9.12.01.f.** Is an ex officio member of all committees, ministries, boards and other organizations of the congregation except the Audit, Mutual Ministry and Call Committees.~~

C13.08. The lead pastor of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of this congregation except the Audit, Mutual Ministry and Call Committees.