

Final Version. Approved at the MAR-12-2006 Voter's Meeting. Adopted by the
Congregation on MAR-12-2006.

BYLAWS
of
HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH
Greenbelt, Maryland

PREAMBLE	2
ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP	2
Reception:	2
Termination:.....	3
Duties:.....	4
Privileges:	4
ARTICLE II- CALLING PASTORS.....	4
Congregation:.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
ARTICLE III - THE PASTORAL OFFICE	4
Purpose:.....	4
Organization:.....	4
Duties:.....	5
ARTICLE IV - MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION	6
Meetings:.....	6
Quorum and Voting Regulations:	6
Order of Business:.....	6
Authority:.....	7
ARTICLE V - ELECTED OFFICERS AND TERMS OF OFFICE	7
Elected Officers:	7
Eligibility to Hold Office:.....	8
Composition of Nominating Committee:.....	8
Nomination Procedure:	8
Election Procedure:.....	8
Terms of Office:.....	8
Succession to the Office of President:	9
Vacancy in Elected Office:	9
ARTICLE VI – THE STEERING COMMITTEE.....	9
Purpose:.....	9
Organization:.....	9
Duties:.....	9
ARTICLE VII – THE MISSION AND MINISTRY GROUP	11

Purpose:.....	11
Organization:.....	12
Duties:.....	12
ARTICLE VIII – THE CAREGIVERS GROUP	12
Purpose:.....	12
Organization:.....	12
Duties:.....	13
ARTICLE IX – THE CHURCH COUNCIL	13
Purpose:.....	13
Organization:.....	13
Duties:.....	14
ARTICLE X - AMENDMENTS	14

These Bylaws were adopted by this congregation, MMM-DD-YYYY, and supersede all documents of a similar nature previous to this date.

PREAMBLE

Robert's Rules of Order shall guide the business at all meetings of the congregation and the Church Council.

Any member of the congregation is welcome to attend any meeting of the Church Council, as well as meetings of groups and committees with the exception of the Caregivers Group. In the interest of the efficient conduct of business, such guests will be permitted to address the group only at the pleasure of the chair. Further, the chair may exclude such guests when the group finds it necessary to discuss a sensitive topic in executive session.

The Bylaws cannot be suspended, even by unanimous consent, except for where the Bylaws provide for their own suspension.

ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP

Reception:

- **By Baptism:** All those who have received Christian baptism and are under spiritual care of the congregation shall be included as baptized members. The transfer of a child must be requested by a parent or guardian of the child.

- **By profession of Faith and Confirmation:** All those who are baptized in the Christian faith and instructed in Lutheran doctrine shall be received as confirmed members in a public worship service.
- **By Transfer:** All those who desire to transfer their membership from Lutheran congregations to this congregation shall present a letter of transfer to the Pastor and the Caregivers and shall be received in a public worship service.
- **By Reaffirmation of Faith:** All those whose membership was terminated in a Lutheran congregation, may again become members by expressing their desire to the Pastor and the Caregivers and by reaffirming their faith in a public worship service.

Termination:

- **Transfer:** Members, upon their request, shall be granted a transfer to another Lutheran church which is in fellowship with this congregation.
- **Joining Other Churches:** In cases where members have joined a congregation other than those in fellowship with this congregation, they shall be considered to have terminated their membership at this congregation and shall be given a peaceful release.
- **Whereabouts Unknown:** The names of members whose whereabouts are unknown and cannot be established after a reasonable effort may be removed from the membership list. The Caregivers shall make recommendations to the Congregation in this matter.
- **Self-Exclusion Through Inactivity:** Members who choose to exclude themselves from membership shall be given a peaceful release, if requested. Members who have excluded themselves from the congregation for a period of one year (by not performing the duties of members as given in section C of this article) shall be contacted by Pastor / Caregivers regarding their membership intention. If after another year they have not indicated a desire regarding their membership, the Caregivers shall make recommendations to the Congregation in this matter.
- **Expulsion (Excommunication):** A member who persists in living as a manifest and impenitent sinner shall be dealt with by Pastor and Caregivers on the basis of Matthew 18:15-17. If after admonition, the person is still unrepentant, that person shall be excommunicated from the fellowship of Holy Cross by a vote of the congregation and no longer able to partake of the Sacraments. Excommunication will be removed following confession to Pastor and a vote of the congregation
- **Status:** Persons whose membership have been terminated have forfeited all rights as members of this congregation and all claims upon the property of the congregation, or upon any part thereof, so long as they are not reinstated into membership.

Duties:

Baptized and confirmed members shall endeavor to grow in faith by:

- Attending services of worship and other forms of Christian education.
- Conforming their lives to their baptismal vow.
- Making diligent use of the Lord's Supper.
- Participating in the life and support of the church.

Privileges:

The privileges accorded members include the opportunity to:

- Receive Communion.
- Election and appointment to groups/offices in the church.
- Vote in congregational meetings.
- The reception of a Christian marriage.
- Baptism of family members.
- The reception of a Christian burial.

ARTICLE II- CALLING PASTORS

At the time of vacancy or impending vacancy in the office of pastor or commissioned minister of religion, the President shall notify the District President and the Circuit Counselor and request the procedure for calling a new pastor. A procedure for the call process shall be approved by the Congregation.

Election of a new pastor shall be held at a subsequent Congregational Call Service by ballot. The candidate receiving a majority of the votes shall be regarded as called by the congregation. The Circuit Counselor, or his representative, shall be invited to all call services.

ARTICLE III - THE PASTORAL OFFICE

Purpose:

The Pastoral Office is the servant ministry conferred upon pastors by God, through the call of the congregation to exercise in public the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the Sacraments on behalf of all.

Organization:

The Pastoral office is defined to be the called Pastor.

Duties:

Upon being installed the pastor is authorized and obligated to:

- Proclaim and teach the Word of God in its full truth and purity as contained in the Bible and professed in the Book of Concord of A.D. 1580
- Administer the Sacraments in accordance with their divine institution.
- Perform the functions of a pastor in an evangelical manner; e.g., aid, counsel and guide all members; visit the sick and dying; and admonish the indifferent and the erring.
- Guard and promote faithfully the spiritual welfare of the members. In particular, instruct the catechumens, both children and adults, in the Scripture and thus prepare them for confirmed membership in the church.
- Guide the congregation in applying the divinely ordained discipline of the church.
- Promote and guide the mission activity of the congregation.
- Assist the congregation in adopting administrative policies and procedures which will help carry out Christ's mission
- Assist the congregation to be good stewards offering training and encouragement.
- Serve the congregation as an example of Christian conduct.
- Endeavor earnestly to live in unity with the members of the congregation and fellow workers and sister congregations in the Synod.
- Pastor shall not leave conflicts unresolved, but shall seek to resolve all conflicts quickly and in a Christian manner, being open to the views of all parties involved, so that the ministry and mission of Holy Cross are not adversely affected
- Pastor shall not allow Holy Cross to operate in a financial manner that may jeopardize the mission of Holy Cross.
- Pastor shall not allow any communications that do not reflect the ministry and mission of Holy Cross.
- Pastor shall not permit any group to use Holy Cross facilities whose activities might conflict with the desire outcomes and faith of Holy Cross without securing the approval of the Church Council
- Assist the congregation in searching for Spirit-given unity with other Christian congregations through dialogue and shared activities.
- Do everything possible by the grace of God to edify and build the church of Christ, both locally and universal.

Relationship of Pastor to the Steering Committee, the Caregivers Group and the Mission & Ministry Group

- Pastor shall be accountable to these groups and committees for accomplishing the mission and ministry of Holy Cross
- Conducting all ministry in keeping with the standards of faith and practices of Holy Cross
- Ensuring compliance of all staff and chairpersons with the policies of Holy Cross
- Providing the various groups adequate information to carry out their tasks
- Relating with integrity, honesty, and straightforwardness to the Group.
- Reporting to the groups and committees on any incident that may be deemed to impact the congregational or worship life of Holy Cross

- Pastor can remove, after consultation with the Church Council, any coordinator or leader who repeatedly fails to carry out their responsibilities.
- Pastor will supervise the music ministry; this includes hiring music director and/or organist with input from the Church Council

ARTICLE IV - MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION

A Congregational meeting shall allow all confirmed members who have attained the age of 18 years to participate. Nothing in this article shall be binding on the conduct of a Congregational Call Service.

Meetings:

- Regular meetings of the Congregation shall be held twice a year, once for election of officers and once to vote on the budget.
- Special meetings of the Congregation may be called by the President of the congregation, the Church Council, or upon written request signed by at least 5% of the Congregation members. The date, place, and agenda of a Congregational meeting shall be publicly announced at least two weeks prior to the date of such meeting.

Quorum and Voting Regulations:

- Quorum: 10% of the eligible Congregation membership shall constitute a quorum.
- There will be no voting by proxy. Accommodation may be made for those who cannot attend due to chronic physical impairment which prevents them from attending in person.

Order of Business:

All meetings of the congregation shall be conducted in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws. In questions of parliamentary procedure not covered by this Constitution and Bylaws, "Robert's Rules of Order" shall prevail.

Regular Meetings:

The following order of business shall be used at regular meetings.

- 1) Opening devotion.
- 2) Taking of attendance and certification of quorum.
- 3) Presentation of the minutes from previous meetings, including special meetings.
- 4) Unfinished business.
- 5) New business.
- 6) Reports.

- 7) Announcements.
- 8) Adjournment with closing devotion/prayer.

Special Meetings:

The following order of business shall be used at special meetings:

- 1) Opening devotion.
- 2) Taking of attendance and certification of quorum.
- 3) Presentation of any minutes pertaining to announced business.
- 4) Special business as listed on agenda.
- 5) Announcements.
- 6) Adjournment with closing devotion/prayer.

Authority:

Responsibility for the following matters shall be vested in the Congregation and shall never be delegated to another group or person:

- The Congregation is the final authority regarding all matters, financial or otherwise that shall arise in the church.
- Electing officers.
- Approving the annual budget.
- Adopting resolutions respecting the District or Synod.
- Issuing a call to fill a pastoral vacancy or any other called position in the congregation.
- After consideration of proposals submitted by the Call Committee, adopting resolutions setting forth the procedure for filling a pastoral vacancy.
- Approving major building plans and initiatives.
- Nominating candidates for office in the District or Synod.

ARTICLE V - ELECTED OFFICERS AND TERMS OF OFFICE

Elected Officers:

The elected officers of this congregation shall consist of the following positions:

- Steering Committee Officers: Three elected officers to perform the duties described in Article VII – The Steering Committee (President, Vice President/Secretary and Treasurer)
- Mission and Ministry Officers: Three elected officers to perform the duties described in Article VIII – Mission and Ministry Group

Eligibility to Hold Office:

Only Congregational members over the age of 18 and not under church discipline are eligible to hold an office, and no person may hold more than one elected office at one time.

Composition of Nominating Committee:

The Nominating Committee shall consist of a representative of the Steering Committee (selected by the Steering Committee), a representative of the Mission and Ministry Group (selected by that Mission and Ministry Group), a representative of the Caregivers Group (selected by the Caregivers Group) and two members of the congregation (not currently holding an office) appointed by the President. The Nominating Committee shall choose its own chair. The Nominating Committee serves for two years or as necessary to fill such vacancies as may exist.

Nomination Procedure:

The Nominating Committee shall propose a list of candidates for the elected positions who meet the eligibility requirements and are willing to serve. The Church Council, by majority vote may approve the list or ask the Nominating Committee to amend it. The list shall then be posted and made available to the congregation for consideration. At a Congregational meeting, the nomination list and any nominations from the floor will be voted on.

Election Procedure:

Elections shall be at a meeting of the Congregation. If there is only one nominee for each office, the slate may be accepted by acclamation unless there is a motion to vote on the offices individually. A voice vote shall be deemed sufficient unless there is a motion to vote by other means. The candidate receiving a simple majority of votes cast shall be declared elected. Should no election result on the first ballot, the name of the nominee having received the lowest number of votes shall be dropped from the list and another ballot taken. This procedure shall be repeated until a successful election results.

Terms of Office:

- The term of office for all elected officials shall start on July 1.
- Officers shall be inducted in a public service, as close to the beginning of their term of office as feasible.
- The term of office shall be two years.
- Terms shall run concurrently- elections shall be held every two years.
- The Officers may serve no more than three consecutive terms on any one committee.

- Under extenuating circumstances and upon resolution of the Congregation, exception may be made to above.
- In case of a replacement for a vacant office, the replacement serves until the end of the term.
- The Elected officers will be responsible to immediately, after election, begin the transition process to allow for transfer of information between the current and future officers.

Succession to the Office of President:

The order of succession to the office of President in case of a vacancy in that office shall be:

- 1) Vice-President / Secretary.
- 2) Treasurer.

Vacancy in Elected Office:

In case of a vacancy in an elected office the Nominating Committee shall select a successor to fill the unexpired term as soon as possible for approval by the Congregation.

ARTICLE VI – THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Purpose:

The Steering Committee is responsible for the administrative side of Holy Cross Lutheran Church.

Organization:

The Steering Committee shall consist of the President, the Vice-president / Secretary, the Treasurer and the Pastor.

The positions within the Steering Committee are assigned by the Steering Committee internally. The congregation elects the three officers during the first Congregational meeting of the election year. The Steering Committee shall decide which members will take on the specific roles and responsibilities within the group.

Duties:

- The Steering Committee is responsible for the management, finance, staff compensation and upkeep of the facilities of Holy Cross.
- The Steering Committee assumes the legal responsibility of the congregation in signing all documents, as directed by the congregation
- The Steering Committee shall supervise the maintenance of the building and grounds
- The Steering Committee shall perform other duties as assigned in these by-laws, or by the Congregation

- The Steering Committee shall have authority to call up for examination the records of all organizations within the congregation, and hold such records for as long as thirty days
- The Steering Committee may in eminent cases temporarily relieve from office any official, group member or committee member of the congregation. They shall also dispossess all church property from them. As soon as practical the Steering Committee shall present the case to the Congregation for adjudication
- Settle disputes between organizations. Appeals may be made at the next Congregational meeting.
- The Steering Committee shall examine any proposed constitution or bylaws changes or amendments prior to adoption.
- The Steering Committee shall have final approval of all building use policies
- The Steering Committee shall set the dates, times, and agenda for the Congregational meetings.
- When a pastoral vacancy occurs, The President shall initiate actions to call a pastor, as described in Article II

Duties of the President:

- The President shall be the executive officer of the congregation and preside at all meetings of the Congregation, the Steering Committee, the Church Council, and any other congregational meetings called for the purpose of conducting church business.
- Appoint person(s) subject to approval by the Church Council to represent the Congregation at District Conventions, District/Synod meetings, or other external functions.
- Perform such other duties as shall be assigned by the Church Council or the Congregation.
- Shall be responsible for publicizing the date, time and place for regular and special meetings of the Congregation.
- When a Pastoral vacancy occurs, shall initiate actions to call a Pastor, as described in Article II.
- The President shall have the power to enter into contracts and incur other obligation of church resources when necessary to prevent severe loss or damage to church property.
- Along with the other officers and at the advice of the Pastor and Church Council, be responsible for the employment, compensation, discipline and performance of the church staff.

Duties of the Vice President / Secretary:

- Assist the President in the execution of presidential duties and responsibilities, and substitute for the President during the President's absence in the order of precedence listed in Article V.
- Be responsible for recording the proceedings of all Congregational meetings and Church Council meetings, and maintain a permanent record at church of the minutes from these meetings.
- Keep the roll of attendance at all Congregational and Church Council meetings.
- Make the minutes of these meetings available and submit the minutes for adoption at the following regular meeting.
- Keep the congregation informed of the decisions of the council by preparing a summary of these meetings for the newsletter.
- Be the custodian of the corporate seal and all church records pertaining to this office, including the records of the history of Holy Cross, the Bylaws, the Constitution, standing resolutions, and other documents to be determined by the Church Council.
- Keep an accurate record of all the officers, groups and committee members elected by the congregation together with their respective terms of office.
- Perform such duties as shall be assigned by the Congregation and Church Council

Duties of the Treasurer:

- Keep and maintain an accurate account of any congregational monies received, deposited, and reconcile the records with the records of those appointed to assist in these accountings.
- Disburse payments in accordance with standard business practices only for expenditures authorized by voucher from a member of the Church Council or a designated representative.
- Render a written monthly report of the financial condition of the congregation, in a format approved by the Church Council. This report will be disseminated at the discretion of the Church Council.
- Keep and safeguard the congregation's financial documents and records.
- Prepare and submit the books for an annual audit, or when requested by the Church Council. This audit may be internal or external at the discretion of the Church Council.
- Make certain that all specifically designated funds are so disbursed or protected.
- Prepare and submit the books for an audit when requested by the Church Council
- Make certain that all specifically designated funds are so disbursed

ARTICLE VII – THE MISSION AND MINISTRY GROUP

Purpose:

The purpose of the Mission and Ministry team is twofold:

- Responsible for Ministry programs within Holy Cross such as:
 - Worship Life

- Christian Education
- Fellowship
- Youth
- Responsible for Mission in the community such as:
 - Hospitality Committee
 - Social Ministry
 - Evangelism

The function of the Group shall be to develop, monitor, and supervise mission and ministry activities, not to implement or govern their day by day performance. The Ministry aspect of this organization deals with those programs, within Holy Cross that aim to build up and strengthen the faith and fellowship between members. The Mission aspect deals with sharing our faith and ministering to those outside of our church and in our community.

Organization:

The Mission & Ministry Team consists of three elected members. This committee has the right to appoint people to ensure that these ministries are carried out. It is not the responsibility of this team to carry out these ministries themselves. Pastor will be available to assist with this organization. The Mission & Ministry Team has the power to create a structure within their normal constraints, such as budget.

Duties:

This group will supervise the areas of ministry encompassing Worship, Christian Education, Fellowship, Youth, Hospitality, Social Ministry and whatever other ministries that might be assigned to it by the congregation at a congregational meeting. Not only does this organization supervise the mission and ministry aspect of Holy Cross but it also seeks to expand ministry opportunities within each of these functions, ministry and mission.

As needs of the congregation and community changes, new ministries will be created and other ministries will complete their original purpose and cease to exist. The group will be responsible to seek out the interests of the congregation so that it can continue to efficiently serve the needs of the congregation and community.

ARTICLE VIII – THE CAREGIVERS GROUP

Purpose:

The purpose of the Caregivers Group is to aid the Pastor in shepherding the congregation as well as seeing to the well-being of the staff of Holy Cross.

Organization:

The Caregivers Group consists of 3-6 members, dependent on congregational size. Members are appointed by the Pastor with input from the current Caregivers. The length

of term as a Caregiver may be flexible, but the end of terms for the Caregivers should be staggered to prevent excessive simultaneous turnover. Members must be approved by a majority vote of the Caregivers Group. One Caregiver has the duty to serve on the Church Council. An elected member of the Steering Committee or Mission and Ministry Group, who is also a member of the Caregivers Group, will satisfy this requirement. If no member of the Caregivers Group exists in the Steering Committee or the Mission and Ministry group, then the Caregivers Group will assign a member as a member of Church Council.

Duties:

- Provide assistance to the Pastor and staff in serving the spiritual needs of the congregation, including, where appropriate, counseling members and assisting the pastor in finding peaceful and God-pleasing solutions to personal problems within the congregation.
- Show concern for the spiritual, emotional, and physical welfare of the staff of Holy Cross.
- Assist the Pastor in counseling and encouragement of delinquent and inactive members with the goal of returning these persons to active participation in the worship life of Holy Cross.
- Assure that those unable to attend regular worship are visited.
- Furnish a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws to new members and persons intending to become members of the congregation. Provide new members with appropriate orientation and assistance so that they may participate effectively in the services, activities, and fellowship of the congregation.
- The Caregivers are responsible for the development of a method to rapidly disseminate information to their assigned portion of the congregation. A Caregiver shall be assigned to each new member as soon as practicable after the member's confirmation/reception.
- The Caregivers shall report on the activities of the Caregivers to the Church Council as needed and to the Congregation at least once per year.
- The term of office of Caregivers should be no more than three years.
- A Caregiver should serve no more than two consecutive terms.

ARTICLE IX – THE CHURCH COUNCIL

Purpose:

The Church Council is to carry out the wishes and planned programs of the congregation as they are established and voted on at an annual Congregational Meeting. This body is intended to coordinate the activities of the aforementioned groups.

Organization:

Church Council shall consist of the Pastor, the elected officers, including a representative of the Caregivers Group. This group shall meet quarterly. Special meetings may be called by the President, when necessary.

Duties:

- Function on behalf of the wishes and directions of the congregation
- Maintain the budget established by congregation
- Prepare agenda for congregational meetings
- Provide a yearly report of the congregation to the congregation
- Record and publish a record of deliberations

ARTICLE X - AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the Congregation by a majority of all members present, provided the proposed change has been announced at least one week prior to the meeting in which the amendment is voted upon.