

**BY-LAWS OF
TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, INC
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA
NOVEMBER 2019**

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(Revised November 2019)

ARTICLE I

PURPOSE

The purpose of these By-Laws is to guide the members of Trinity Lutheran Church in the implementation of the purpose of the congregation as stated in Article II of the Constitution. As such, these By-Laws are meant to be a clarification of, and subordinate to, the Constitution.

These By-Laws are to be utilized in facilitating the efficient operations of the congregation's business in support of our mission and in an atmosphere of Christian love and community.

ARTICLE II

MEMBERSHIP

There are three types of membership: baptized, communicant, and voting. All are defined in Article IV of the Constitution.

A Process of Admission

- 1 Baptized Members are received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, or through the consent of one or both parents in the case of children who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God at another Christian congregation.
- 2 Communicant Members are received by one of the following processes:
 - a Rite of Confirmation: Confirmation itself being a reception into church membership, all who are thus received by this sacred act become communicant members.
 - b Transfer: Persons requesting membership in Trinity Lutheran Church, with a communicant letter of transfer from another Lutheran Congregation in fellowship, provided they conform in all respects to the requirements of membership in this congregation, shall be received into such membership upon approval of the Pastor and Board of Elders. Announcement of such will be made at the next meeting of the Church Council and Voter's Assembly.
 - c Profession of Faith or Reaffirmation of Faith: Other persons shall submit their application for membership to the Pastor (or an Elder) and, after having

completed the Pastor's Information class or otherwise given satisfactory evidence of qualification for communicant membership to the Pastor and Board of Elders, they shall be accepted into communicant membership upon the approval of the Pastor and Board of Elders. Announcement of such will be made at the next Church Council and Voter's Assembly.

3 Voting Members are received by the following process:

- a Reception: All communicant members meeting the Constitutional requirements for voting membership shall be added to the rolls of voting membership provided they assume the duties of voting membership as defined below.
- b Duties: It shall be the duty of every voting member to attend the Voter's Assemblies. By failing to attend such meeting, a member waives the right to cast his vote during that meeting. Voting members shall accept nomination for office, committee appointments, etc., if possible, and all voting members shall generally participate in the business activities of the Voter's Assembly upon which they are qualified to vote.

4 Recording of memberships:

- a Trinity will establish a membership roll of Baptized Members, Communicant Members, and Voting Members. Additions, deletions, and changes will be initiated by the Pastor or Chairman of the Board of Elders.

B Process of Termination

1 Communicant and Voting Membership shall be terminated for the following reasons:

- a Transfer to Other Congregations: Communicant members desiring to join a congregation in church fellowship shall present their request for transfer to the Pastor and Board of Elders, to whom authorization is granted to issue such transfer. Such transfer of membership shall be announced at the next Church Council or Voter's Assembly.
- b Joining Other Churches: In cases where communicant members have joined another congregation outside our own fellowship they shall, upon the recommendation of the Pastor, be considered such as have terminated their membership and their names shall be removed from the membership list upon the approval of the Board of Elders. Such action shall be announced at the next Church Council and Voter's Assembly.
- c Whereabouts Unknown: The names of members whose whereabouts are unknown and cannot be established, or have not received the Lord's Supper for a period of two years shall be removed by the Board of Elders, and such membership terminated. Prior to such termination, the Board shall solicit

possible information or knowledge of these individuals from within the congregation and other sources.

- d Excommunication: Any member who continues to live as a manifest and impenitent sinner shall be admonished in love according to 1 Cor 5:1-7 and Matt 18:15-20. If he refuses to amend his sinful life after proper admonition, he shall be excommunicated. The Board of Elders shall attempt to return the member to the Christian life. Intimate details that would cause undue embarrassment to the member, such as may make continued active membership in the congregation difficult, will not be open to general assembly disclosure. A vote approving excommunication requires two-thirds majority of those present at a properly convened Voter's Assembly.
- e Self Exclusion: Such members who disregard the Lord's commands and promise concerning the frequent use of the Word and Sacrament within a two year period shall, in the event all efforts to encourage the use of the Word and Sacrament have failed and after careful consideration, the Board of Elders and Pastor shall declare such membership as terminated by such members exclusion of themselves. Official notice shall be sent to the member and announcement of such action made at the next Council meeting and Voter's Assembly.

2 Termination Status

- a Any member whose communicant membership has been terminated for any reason other than transfer to another congregation in fellowship has forfeited all rights of a member of this congregation. Such termination not only releases them from all responsibilities to this congregation, but also excludes them from the privilege of church membership, such as receiving Holy Communion, a Christian burial, and transfer to another LCMS congregation. Any termination of membership relinquishes all claims upon the property of the congregation as such or any part thereof.
- b Membership terminated may be reinstated following Pastor's instruction class or profession of faith, upon recommendation of the Pastor and approval of the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE III

MEETINGS OF THE VOTER'S ASSEMBLY

A Meetings

- 1 The Voter's Assembly shall conduct two regularly scheduled meetings (one in November and one in May) during the calendar year. The agenda for the May meeting shall include the election of officers and Church Council members. The agenda for the November meeting shall include the approval of an annual budget.

- 2 Special meetings of the Voter's Assembly may be called at the discretion of the Council or Pastor.
- 3 Every Voter's Assembly shall be announced (by word or in the bulletin) at a Sunday service prior to it. When a meeting has been thus announced, it shall be considered a properly convened and legal meeting capable of transacting business.

B Quorum

- 1 The voting members present at a regularly scheduled Voter's Assembly shall constitute a quorum. For amending the Articles of Incorporation, the Constitution and By-Laws, the erection of buildings, the purchase or sale of real property, or the removal of a pastor or teacher or some other member from office, a two-thirds majority shall be required for adoption of a resolution, unless otherwise provided by State Law.
- 2 At special Voter's Assembly meetings at least 50 voting members shall constitute a quorum.
- 3 In the absence of a quorum, those present may fix the date for an adjourned meeting for which at least seven (7) days written notice shall be given to the congregation. The members who are then present at such adjourned meeting shall constitute a quorum.

C Published Agenda

- 1 An agenda for each regularly scheduled Voter's Assembly shall be published in the church bulletin at least one (1) Sunday prior to the meeting. Any item requiring a vote of the congregation at a regularly scheduled meeting must be submitted to the President at least thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled meeting.

D Order of Business

- 1 The following shall be the order of business for a Voter's Assembly:

Opening Prayer
Reading of the Minutes
Treasurer's Report
Reports and Recommendations of Auxiliaries, Officers, and Boards
Unfinished Business
New Business
Adjournment
Prayer and Benediction

- 2 In addition to principles laid down in Scripture, the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be followed.

ARTICLE IV

ELECTION OF CONGREGATIONAL OFFICERS

A Procedure

- 1 A Nominating Committee appointed by the Council in February shall present a slate of candidates for election to each office of the Council at the May meeting of the Voter's Assembly, and will take office on June 1 following election. The slate is to be presented in the Sunday bulletin at least one week prior to the Voters Meeting. Additional nominations may be made from the floor provided the nominee concurs with his name being placed on the slate. All nominees for election to the Church Council must have been a communicant member of the congregation for at least six months and be at least 18 years of age.

B Term of Office

- 1 Church Council members shall be elected to a specific office or position on the Church Council for a term of two years. Council members shall be permitted to hold the same office or position for two consecutive terms only. In the event of a vacancy on the Council, a temporary successor shall be appointed by the Council to serve until the next Voter's Assembly at which time a successor will be elected to fill the remainder of the term or the appointment shall be ratified by the Voters at the next regular meeting. An Officer of the congregation, or a member of the Church Council, who has served two consecutive terms in the same position, should not serve an additional term in their current position. In the event that no successor has been elected or has qualified when the respective term expires, such Officer or Council Member shall be allowed to continue until a successor is qualified or elected.
- 2 "To promote the continuity of Church Council membership the office of President and Vice President shall be elected in odd years. The Treasurer and Secretary shall be elected in even years. The Chairpersons for Christian Education, Evangelism, Property Management and Stewardship shall be elected in even years. The Chairpersons for Social Ministry, Youth, and Elders shall be elected in odd years."

ARTICLE V

OFFICERS

The officers of this congregation shall be: The President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

ARTICLE VI

CHURCH COUNCIL

A Church Council Members

- 1 The Church Council shall be composed of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chairman of the Board of Elders, Chairperson of the Boards of Stewardship, Property Management, Evangelism, Christian Education, Social Ministry, and Youth Ministry. The Pastor(s) and other called church workers shall be ex-officio members of the Council but shall not have voting privileges.

B Duties

- 1 It shall be the duty of the Church Council to meet once a month to consider and discuss all matters pertaining to the general welfare of the congregation as presented by the various boards in written reports and to present recommendations to the congregation. The Church Council shall act in matters committed to it by the Voter's Assembly and in cases of emergency, between congregation meetings. It shall annually approve the Board members, and Financial Examination Committee, and any other necessary Standing Committees. Church Council will handle human resource issues related to any hired church staff positions or support personnel. This does not include the hiring and termination of called church workers.

C Financial Examination

- 1 All of these books shall be examined annually by a minimum two person committee appointed by the President of the congregation, and a report of such examination shall be submitted to the congregation. The extent of the examination shall be determined by the Church Council.

D Restrictions

- 1 The Church Council shall not have the right to purchase, encumber, sell, make commitments binding, or give property of the congregation, unless the Voter's Assembly has given authorization in an official meeting.
- 2 However, during each fiscal year the Church Council shall have the right to expend congregation funds for needful and necessary materials, not already approved in the annual budget, in an amount not to exceed a cumulative total of ten percent of the total annual budget.

- 3 The Office of the Holy Ministry, the administration of the Sacraments, and the application of the Office of the Keys in accordance with Holy Scripture and Lutheran Confessions, prescribe that only men shall be eligible to perform these distinctive functions.

E Operations Manual

- 1 The Church Council shall develop the mission and goals of the congregation for the review and approval of the Voter's Assembly. Each Board Chairperson shall have a service (job) description outlining their duties or responsibilities and have an operations plan that includes a purpose statement, goals, objectives, and action plans that support the overall congregational mission plan. Church Council should review these annually.
- 2 At the creation or inception of a standing committee, the committee should submit an operating plan to include purpose statement, goals, objectives, reasonable time frame of operation and action plans which support the reason for inception.
- 3 Building use policies and fees, staffing (church employees) policies and any other similar policies shall also be included in this Operations Manual and may be changed upon approval by Church Council at any time.

F Miscellaneous

- 1 Except as otherwise noted provided by these By-Laws, all ministries, organizations, and existing standing committees are accountable to the congregation through the Church Council.

ARTICLE VII

DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS

For more specific information, please refer to the Service Descriptions section in the Manual of Operations for Trinity Lutheran Church.

A Duties of Officers

- 1 The President shall:
 - a Prepare the agenda for and preside at all meetings of both the Voter's Assembly and Church Council. He shall see that all resolutions of the congregation are carried out. He is an ex-officio member of all Boards and Committees of the congregation.

2 The Vice President shall:

- a Perform the duties of the President in his absence.

3 The Treasurer shall:

- a Receive and record in financial documents kept for such purpose deposits in the congregation's designated depository, all congregational monies, including offerings, contributions, special collections, loans, subsidies, bequests, etc.
- b Submit a report at each Voter's Assembly. Such report shall show receipts and disbursements compared with budgeted amounts.
- c Have general responsibility for all financial matters in conjunction with the Board of Stewardship.
- d Be a member of the stewardship board.

4 The Secretary shall:

- a Keep and read accurate minutes of the meetings of the Voter's Assembly and of the Council for the permanent records of the congregation.
- b Ensure the maintenance of the Constitution and By-Laws of the congregation and corporate records.
- c Ensure the maintenance of other data with historical significance.

B Duties of Church Council Members

- 1 The duties and responsibilities of the Church Council Board Chairpersons can be found in the Service Descriptions section in the Manual of Operations for Trinity Lutheran Church.

ARTICLE VIII

CALLED POSITIONS

A Initiating the Call

1 Vacancy

- a When a vacancy exists in a Called position, the President of the Congregation shall appoint a Call Committee. The Call Committee will either defer to the existing job description or prepare a full job description. Nominations to the Call Committee will be solicited from the congregation.

2 New Position

- a Before a Call Committee can be formed for a new “called” position, the Church Council must first prepare and submit for approval at a Voter’s Assembly, a job description and a qualification list.

B Call Committee

1 Composition

- a The Call Committee shall be chaired by a member of the Church Council and include a member of the Board of Elders. The remaining members (at least five total) shall be selected from the congregation at large with a goal of having as much diversity as possible.

2 Duties

- a The Call Committee, utilizing the prepared job description and qualifications, will solicit nominations from the District and the congregation, obtain biographical data, conduct interviews and present the recommended candidates to the voters in either a regularly scheduled or special voter’s meeting.

3 Extending the Call

- a The list of candidates and biographical data shall be made available to the congregation at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting at which the call is to be considered. The election shall proceed by written ballot. After each ballot, the candidate receiving the lowest number of votes will be dropped from consideration. This procedure will be followed until one candidate has received a majority of all votes cast. Final action of such elections must be affirmed by a minimum of two-thirds (2/3) of the members voting. The unanimous support of the congregation for the candidate elected is desirable but not mandatory. To encourage unanimity, a non-binding vote to make the call unanimous may be taken.

ARTICLE IX

AMENDMENTS

These By-Laws may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the Voter’s Assembly by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the members present. Proposed By-Law changes must be formally announced at least thirty (30) days prior during the congregation’s worship services and be published in both the church bulletin and monthly newsletter.