

**The Bylaws of the Congregation of  
Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church  
1120 Walker Street  
Port Townsend, Washington**

**January 2021**

**BYLAWS**

**COMMUNION PARTICIPATION**

- \*C4.02.01. Holy Communion is the Lord's Table. This Congregation invites all who desire to receive the Lord Jesus Christ in Holy Communion to participate.
- \*C4.02.02. Anyone who does not desire to receive Holy Communion is invited to come forward to the altar rail to receive a blessing.
- \*C4.02.03. Children who do not commune may come to the altar for a blessing.

**MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND**

- C5.05.01. This congregation maintains the Mission Endowment Fund of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church as defined herein. This Fund shall be referred to in this section as this Fund or the Fund.
- C5.05.02. All management, investments, and program support for this Fund shall be determined by the Fund Committee, approved by the Congregation Council, and reported to the congregation.
- C5.05.03. Committee Membership:
  - a. The Committee shall consist of three members all of whom shall be voting members of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church. At each annual meeting, the congregation shall elect one member for a term of three (3) years. No member shall serve more than two consecutive three (3) year terms. After a lapse of one (1) year, former Committee members may be reelected. The senior pastor and the president or vice president of the Congregation Council shall be advisory members of the Committee. The Congregation Council of the congregation shall nominate for the Committee and report at the annual congregational meeting in the same manner as for other offices and Committees. In the event of a vacancy on the Committee, the Congregation Council shall appoint a member to fill the vacancy until the next annual meeting of the congregation, at which time the congregation shall elect a member to fulfill the term of the vacancy. No more than one member of the Committee may be a member of the Congregation Council.
  - b. The Committee shall meet quarterly, or as required to be in the best interest of the Fund.

- c. The Committee shall elect from its membership a chair and recording secretary. The chair, or member designated by the chair, shall preside at all Committee meetings.
- d. The recording secretary of the Committee shall maintain complete and accurate minutes of all meetings and supply a copy thereof to each member of the Committee. Each member shall keep a complete copy of minutes to be delivered to his or her successor. The recording secretary shall also supply a copy of the minutes to the Congregation Council.
- e. The Committee shall work with the congregation's treasurer in maintaining and coordinating complete and accurate accounts for the Fund. The chair shall sign check requests and all other necessary documents on behalf of the congregation in furtherance of the purposes of the Fund. The books shall be reviewed annually by the Congregational Council's Audit Committee (Constitution paragraph 13.03) or by a certified public accountant.
- f. The Committee shall report on a quarterly basis to the Congregation Council and, at each semi-annual meeting of the congregation, shall render a full, current and complete account of the administration of the Fund during the preceding year.
- g. The Committee may request other members of the congregation to serve as advisory members.
- h. At the expense of the Fund income, and with the approval of the Congregation Council, the Committee may provide for such professional counseling on investments or legal matters as it deems to be in the best interest of the Fund.
- i. Members of the Committee shall not be liable for any losses which may be incurred upon the investments of the assets of the Fund except to the extent such losses shall have been caused by bad faith or gross negligence. No member shall be personally liable as long as he/she acts in good faith and with ordinary prudence. Each member shall be liable only for his/her own willful misconduct or omissions, and shall not be liable for the acts or omissions of any other member. No member shall engage in any self dealing or transactions with the Fund in which the member has direct or indirect financial interest and shall at all times refrain from any conduct in which his/her personal interests would conflict with the interest of the Fund.

C5.05.04. Acceptance of all gifts, bequests, and real property shall be authorized by the Committee with the approval of the Congregation Council.

C5.05.05. All assets shall be invested at the direction of the Committee with the approval of the Congregation Council, to be held in the name of the Mission Endowment Fund of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church of Port Townsend, Washington.

C5.05.06. Recommendations to hold, sell, exchange, rent, lease, transfer, convert, invest, reinvest, and in all other respects to manage and control the assets of the Fund, including stocks, bonds, debentures, mortgages, notes, or other securities, as in their judgment and discretion they deem wise and prudent, are to be made by the Committee for approval by the Congregation Council with subsequent execution by the delegated member of the Committee.

C5.05.07. Distribution of income. To enhance the mission outreach of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church apart from the general operating and mission share budget of the congregation, the congregation establishes the following:

- a. The Committee shall determine what is principal and what is income according to accepted accounting procedures.

- b. Gifts and bequests to the Fund shall have 10% of the initial principal distributed to congregational related ministries following the categories established by these guidelines as an expression of “First Fruits Giving” and to encourage tithes and offerings. After such initial distribution the balance of the gift or bequest shall be invested with the funds of the Mission Endowment Fund of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church.
- c. Income from the Fund shall be distributed annually and at such other times as deemed necessary and/or feasible to accomplish the following purposes:
  - 1) Annually, 10% of the income of the Fund shall be reinvested in the Fund principal;
  - 2) The amount distributed shall not be less than \$2,000 to any one beneficiary program, unless the distribution is in response to a specific request;
  - 3) Between 0-30% for special projects within the local area wherein the congregation resides;
  - 4) Between 0-30% for special ministries within the Southwestern Washington Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
  - 5) Between 30-90% for world-wide ministries.
- d. Consistent with the fund purpose of enhancing the mission outreach of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, and within the arenas and percentages defined above, the beneficiaries of and the amounts distributed from this Mission Endowment Fund shall be determined by the Committee, approved by the Congregation Council, and reported to the congregation annually or more often.
- e. Grace Lutheran’s Endowment Committee will consider funding applicants that do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status.

## COLUMBARIUM

- C7.01.01 Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church maintains a columbarium and offers perpetual use to its members. The most recent Certificate of Ownership shall be utilized as the contract between the niche owner and Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church. This contract contains sufficient detail to ensure the satisfaction of both parties.
- C7.01.02 This section of the Bylaws will serve to provide information regarding any move of the Columbarium.
  - a. Funding of a move to a new location if the congregation should dissolve will be provided by:
    - 1) the columbarium fund
    - 2) sale of this congregation’s property
    - 3) Endowment Fund principal
  - b. Funding for a move due to the congregation moving to a new location or enlarging the columbarium will be included as a line item in the proposal to move or enlarge.
  - c. Notification of family members of the niche owner will be provided to the best of this congregation’s ability by:
    - 1) search of this congregation’s records to find any living relatives
    - 2) if any are found, written notice of the new location and niche number shall be provided to the family member(s)

- 3) if none are found, written notice of the new location and niche number shall be provided to the Southwestern Washington Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for safekeeping.

C7.01.03

The following options are provided for owners of columbarium niches to sell, transfer, or relinquish an unused niche.

- a. An owner of a columbarium niche is defined as the person or persons whose name is on the original ownership certificate or the legally authorized representative of the estate of an owner.
- b. An owner of a columbarium niche may sell, transfer, or relinquish their niche using the following options, provided that the niche has not had any engraving ordered or completed, and no ashes are currently in the niche.
  - 1) An owner may sell or transfer the niche to a family member or another member of Grace Lutheran Church for an amount up to their original cost with permission of the Church Council.
  - 2) An owner may relinquish the niche back to Grace Lutheran Church and receive a refund of up to \$1,000 with permission of the Church Council.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

\*C8.05.01 A confirmed member in good standing desiring to change membership to another Lutheran congregation, shall, upon request, receive a Letter of Transfer.

\*C8.05.02 A confirmed member who does not, for a period of one year, partake of Holy Communion, support the church with offerings, and does not appear to desire to participate in the life and worship of the congregation shall be visited by the pastor(s) and the congregation's officers and be encouraged to active participation. If, after such a visit, the confirmed member does not actively participate, said member may be removed from the congregation's active member roll after consultation from Congregational Council.

### **CONGREGATIONAL RECORDS**

\*C9.12.01 The records of the congregation shall be and remain the property of the congregation. The pastor(s) shall be responsible for the maintenance of the records, except as otherwise provided herein. Upon the termination of his or her service to the congregation, the pastor shall have brought the records up-to-date prior to his or her departure. The records shall consist of:

- a. The roster of baptized, confirmed, and voting members.
- b. The official acts performed by the pastor (weddings, funerals, baptisms, and confirmations).
- c. The minutes of the meetings of the congregation and the Congregation Council, for which the secretary of the congregation shall be responsible.
- d. The financial records of the congregation, for which the Minister of Resources shall be responsible.
- e. The pastor shall report annually to the congregation a summary of his or her ministerial acts.

## **CONGREGATION MEETING**

- C10.01.01. The annual budget meeting shall adopt the budget as presented and/or amended, and shall elect a member of the Nominating Committee. Elections of officers, if required to fill a vacancy, may be considered, as well as other Congregation Council approved items. This meeting shall be convened in January of each year.
- C10.01.02. The annual election meeting shall elect such officers and Congregation Council members as required by the Constitution and these Bylaws. Budget adoption, if an amendment is required, may be considered, as well as other Congregation Council approved items. This meeting shall be convened in the month of May or June.
- C10.02.01. Business at special meetings shall be confined to the purpose for which the meeting was called.
- C10.04.01. The current rosters of voting, confirmed, and baptized members shall be available at each meeting of the congregation.

## **CONGREGATION COUNCIL**

- C12.01.01. Membership and duties of the Congregation Council:
  - a. Since it is incumbent upon all members of the congregation, according to Chapter 8 to make diligent use of the Word of God in public worship and to attend the Lord's Supper, all council members shall honor and participate in these privileges.
  - b. Only one member of a household may serve on the Council at a given time, with the exceptions of the Representatives of the Auxiliaries: Women, Men, and Youth.
  - c. Council members may appoint a member of their committee to represent them at the council meetings in the event of their absence. This representative shall not be counted to determine the quorum and shall be welcome to attend the entire council meeting and be granted the privilege of voice, but not vote.
  - d. The Congregation Council has authority between meetings of the congregation to choose delegates to any group or meeting in which the congregation is entitled to representation.
- C12.02.01. Term of Office:
  - a. As stipulated in the Constitution, all officers and members of the Congregation Council shall serve for a term of two (2) years, with the exception of the Representatives of the Auxiliaries who shall each be elected to serve a one year term.
  - b. The following rotation shall be followed. The offices and positions assigned to year "A" and to year "B" shall be retained in this scheme of rotation.
    - 1) In year "A" the following officers and council members shall be elected:
      - (a) President
      - (b) Minister of Resources (Treasurer)
      - (c) Minister of Evangelism
      - (d) Minister of Mission, Community Service, and Social Ministry
      - (e) Minister of Christian Learning and Youth
    - 2) In year "B" the following officers and council members shall be elected:
      - (a) Vice President
      - (b) Secretary

- (c) Minister of Stewardship (Financial Secretary)
- (d) Minister of Worship
- (e) Minister of Congregational Concerns and Fellowship
- (f) Minister of Facilities

c. In the event of a vacancy, the remaining term may be filled by council action. For purposes of election, a term of more than 14 months shall be considered a full term.

C12.04.01. Responsibilities of the Council members:

- a. President: presides over meetings of the congregation and council; appraises and correlates congregational needs and council activities; provides leadership to the council; insures adherence to the constitution and resolutions of the congregation; and makes special efforts to be accessible to members of the congregation and the pastor.
- b. Vice President: presides over meetings of the council and the congregation in the absence of the president and shall act as parliamentarian at both council meetings and congregational meetings.
- c. Secretary: keeps the minutes of council and congregation meetings and performs all secretarial duties for the council.
- d. Minister of Resources: serves as the treasurer of the congregation and ascertains that the congregational funds are disbursed in accordance with the decisions of the congregation and the council provides financial management for all congregational funds; provides a monthly financial report at each regularly scheduled council meeting. The Minister of Resources serves as advisor to the Budget Committee.
- e. Minister of Worship: organizes the Worship Committee and participates with the pastor in planning worship services and programs; provides for leaders and assistants for services; provides for altar care; oversees the music program.
- f. Minister of Facilities: provides for the maintenance, repair and improvement of the buildings and grounds of the congregation and coordinates the use of the facilities; plans for budget expenditure relating to the upkeep of the facilities; schedules routine and seasonal maintenance on equipment; is responsible to see that adequate insurance coverage of all kinds is maintained; maintains the inventory of congregational property.
- g. Minister of Evangelism: develops and executes programs for assisting members in sharing the Gospel; develops program of visits to prospective members and outreach into the community to bring new believers in Christ into the fellowship of the congregation.
- h. Minister of Christian Learning and Youth: For Learning, develops and coordinates programs for educational opportunities for all members to include the Sunday School, Midweek School, Adult Education, and with the pastor, the Confirmation program; For Youth, seeks opportunities for and coordinates the efforts of the young persons of the congregation and their organizations; provides the council and the congregation with information relating to the special concerns of youth.
- i. Minister of Mission, Community Services, and Social Ministry: For Mission, fosters the congregation's knowledge of and involvement in the programs and activities of the ELCA, its affiliated organizations, other Lutheran and Christian congregations, and appropriate ecumenical groups; For Community Service, seeks opportunities for and coordinates in efforts of the congregation,

- organizations, and individuals relating to the concerns and needs in our community; For Social Ministry, provides information on current social and political issues to the congregation and makes available Biblical and theological resources for the development of Christian perspective on contemporary problems; leads the congregational members in involvement of their moments, their money, and their minds in these community, national, and world concerns.
- j. Minister of Stewardship: establishes uniform procedures of accounting for all monies and donations received and deposited into congregational accounts; records and reports all individual giving by members and friends of the congregation, or appoints a financial secretary to accomplish this task; coordinates a motivating program to encourage all members to contribute to the support and growth of the congregation and its programs by a more meaningful understanding of the stewardship of their money, moments, and minds. The Minister of Stewardship serves as advisor to the Budget Committee.
  - k. Minister of Congregational Concerns and Fellowship: provides programs that will draw the membership into a close-knit family unit, upholding, assisting, helping, and comforting each other and offering support and service to those outside the “family” unit as well; sponsor events, programs, and situations that are conducive to the development of God-pleasing interpersonal relationships; prepares each member for service to our neighbors; promote harmony; develops the congregation into an extended “family” bound by the bonds of love.
  - l. The Representatives of the Auxiliaries: Women, Men, and Youth: represent the concerns of their organization to the congregation; coordinate the activities of the auxiliary with the whole congregation.

## **CONGREGATION COMMITTEES**

### C13.01.01. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee has the primary responsibility with the Congregation Council for carrying out the day-to-day legal and financial business of the congregation.

- a. The President and Secretary shall have the authority to sign legal and business documents for the congregation implementing decisions of the congregation and the Congregation Council. Both signatures shall be required on documents which require the approval of the congregation.
- b. The Minister of Resources (Treasurer) shall have the authority to sign checks and to make other routine transactions on congregational accounts. The Executive Committee will appoint one or more other officers of Council members who will be authorized to sign checks and make routine transactions in the absence of the treasurer.
- c. The President and Minister of Resources shall have authority for access to the congregation’s safe.
- d. Special accounts or financial instruments in which congregational funds are invested (other than the primary checking and savings accounts) shall require the signature of at least two Executive Committee members (other than the pastor) to accomplish any transactions.
- e. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for drafting or reviewing drafts of proposed amendments to the Constitution and changes to the Bylaws. The

Committee shall ensure that the language of proposals is clear and consistent with those portions of the Constitution and Bylaws that would not be changed by the proposal. The Committee will also be responsible for seeing that the procedures for amending the Constitution or changing the Bylaws contained in Chapters 17 and 18 of the Constitution are followed.

C13.02.01

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee will seek to identify at least one nominee for each office or council position that is open for election. Nominations may also be made from the floor during the Congregational Meeting. The consent of all nominees shall be obtained prior to the submission of their name to the congregation. The representatives of the Auxiliaries shall be nominated by the Auxiliary to the Nominating Committee and be submitted by the Congregation Council to the congregation for election.

C13.03.01

Audit Committee

- a. The Audit Committee shall audit the financial records maintained by the Minister of Resources and the Minister of Stewardship at least once each year and/or at any time when a new Minister of Resources or Minister of Stewardship requests.
- b. On completing an audit, the committee will report its findings and recommendations, in writing, to the Congregation Council. These reports shall be made a part of the minutes of the council.
- c. The Audit Committee may request assistance of the Minister of Resources or Minister of Stewardship on matters relating to congregational financial records and accounting procedures.
- d. The Minister of Resources and/or the Minister of Stewardship may request the assistance of the Audit Committee on matters relating to congregational financial records and accounting procedures.

C13.04.01

Mutual Ministry Committee

The Mutual Ministry Committee shall meet with the pastor(s) on a regular basis with the intent of careful listening and clarifying expectations, sharing, and communicating of personal and professional concerns, reviewing and reflecting on our mutual ministry, and praying and caring for one another. There will be no records kept of the meetings, and the Committee shall have no authority for action. As necessary, the Mutual Ministry Committee shall advocate for the pastor(s) with the Congregation Council and congregation.

C13.05.01

Call Committee

The Call Committee, once appointed by the Congregation Council, shall select its own chair and secretary. As required by Chapter 9.01 of the Constitution, it will obtain the advice of the bishop of the Southwestern Washington Synod of the ELCA in accomplishing its work, and will ensure that all constitutional provisions relating to the calling of a pastor are observed.

C13.06.01

Budget Committee

A Budget Committee shall be appointed by the Congregation Council. The chair of the Budget Committee shall be the Vice President of the Congregation Council. The Minister of Resources and the Minister of Stewardship shall act in an advisory capacity. The Budget Committee shall seek congregational advice in an open hearing prior to the preparation of a proposed Annual Budget. The initial proposed Annual Budget shall be presented to the Congregation Council at its September



meeting and will be made available to the members of the congregation prior to the Annual Stewardship Program. Any additions or deletions to the budget shall be acted on by the Congregation Council and a final proposed Annual Budget shall be presented to the congregation for adoption at the January Semi-Annual Meeting.