

Bylaws of New Hope Lutheran Church

(Approved on 18 November 1988)

(As amended on 21 November 1993)

(As amended on 12 June 1994)

(As amended on 24 November 1996)

(As amended on 22 November 1998)

(As amended on 19 November 2000)

(As amended on 19 November 2006)

Preamble

We, the members of New Hope Lutheran Church, are called to witness to Jesus Christ in our community and the world. We shall provide innovative worship experiences, a dynamic music program, and a high-quality Christian education program. We shall share the Gospel of Christ through loving service in our community and the world, and support the mission of the Church through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Delaware-Maryland Synod.

Chapter 1 Congregational Year and Annual Meeting

Section 1 The congregation shall use a planning and fiscal year running from January through December. The planning cycle and process shall be described by the Congregation Council in a continuing resolution.

Section 2 In accordance with Chapter 10, Section 1, of the Constitution, the congregation shall hold an annual meeting in the month of November preceding the congregational year. Business at the annual meeting shall include, but not be limited to, approval of the ministries planned for the coming year, approval of operating and capital budgets for the coming year, and election of open positions on the Congregation Council and the standing committees.

Chapter 2 Membership

Section 1 In addition to the categories of membership defined in Chapter 8, Section 2 of the Constitution (i.e., Baptized, Confirmed, Voting, and Associate), a member of New Hope may be classified as Inactive if that member has not received communion or made a contribution of record in the preceding 12 calendar months. An inactive member shall return to his or her previous classification immediately upon receiving communion or making a contribution of record. Council shall establish a process for reaching out to those who may become inactive.

Section 2 A member who has been classified as Inactive may be removed from the rolls of the congregation. Removal from the rolls does not imply that the congregation should cease to minister to the person.

Chapter 3 Elections and Terms of Office

Section 1 Elections for Congregation Council and regular standing committees shall be by secret, written ballot. A three-person nominating committee consisting of council and non-council representatives shall submit a list of candidates to the council for certification of eligibility.

- Section 2* The term of service on the Congregation Council is limited to one three-year term; at least two years must pass before a Council member may be reelected. Terms shall be staggered such that one third of the terms expire each year.
- Section 3* The term of service as President, Vice President, and Secretary of the congregation is one year. Two consecutive one-year terms in a given office are permitted.
- Section 4* The Treasurer and the Financial Secretary are appointed by the council. They may or may not be council members. The term of service for these positions is one year. Multiple terms are permitted. The Treasurer and the Financial Secretary shall be ex-officio members of the Finance Committee.
- Section 5* The term of service in all standing committees is limited to two two-year terms. Two years must pass before the person may be reelected or re-appointed to that position. Terms shall be staggered such that one half of the terms expire each year.
- Section 6* Persons elected or appointed to the Congregation Council are not eligible to serve on either a regular or a special standing committee, with the exception of one council member on the nominating committee.
- Section 7* Persons elected to the Congregation Council, a regular standing committee, or other elected position are expected to attend the last meeting of the body before their terms begin and the first meeting of the body after their terms end. Officers and chairpersons shall be selected by each body for one year at the last meeting of the body in the previous year.
- Section 8* If an elected position becomes vacant during the year, the Congregation Council shall appoint a person to hold that position or office until the next annual meeting of the congregation, at which time the congregation shall elect a person to fill the position for the remainder of the term for the position.
- Section 9* If an appointed position becomes vacant during the year, the Congregation Council shall appoint a person to hold that position or office to fill the position for the remainder of the term for the position.
- Section 10* Terms of existing Council members at the time of the adoption of a new Constitution shall carry over to the period following adoption of the new Constitution.

Chapter 4 Officers

- Section 1* As stated in Chapter 11, Section 2 of the Constitution, the officers of the congregation shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. All officers shall serve on the Executive Committee of the congregation.
- Section 2* The President shall preside at all meetings of the congregation, the Congregation Council, and the Executive Committee, and shall ensure that adequate minutes are kept for those meetings. The President shall record and distribute action items assigned at those meetings, keep a list of outstanding action items, and record the closure of the item upon completion of the action. The President may serve as liaison to a regular or special standing committee or ministry team.
- Section 3* The Vice President shall preside at meetings of the congregation, the Congregation Council, and the Executive Committee in the absence of the President. The Vice President may serve as liaison to a regular or special standing committee or ministry team.
- Section 4* The Secretary shall take accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation and Congregation Council, present those minutes for approval at subsequent meetings, and preserve those minutes

permanently in a binder in the congregation office. The Secretary shall prepare, maintain, distribute, and (when appropriate) update the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the congregation. The Secretary shall prepare, sign, and (when appropriate) seal all official correspondence of the congregation. The Secretary may serve as liaison to a regular or special standing committee or ministry team.

Section 5 The Treasurer shall keep the books of account of the congregation and disburse funds on proper orders. The Treasurer shall make a written report of all financial transactions monthly to the Congregation Council and annually to the congregation (together with a satisfactory audit). The Treasurer shall give corporate surety, in an amount determined by the Council, for which the premium shall be paid by the congregation. The Treasurer may serve as a liaison to the Finance Committee. The Treasurer shall be an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee.

Chapter 5 Congregation Council

Section 1 In addition to the Pastor, or Pastors, and nine elected representatives from the congregation, the associates in ministry, if any, shall have voice on the Congregation Council.

Section 2 At the last meeting of the Congregation Council of each congregational year, the in-coming Council shall elect, from its membership for the next year, the officers of the Council for that year.

Section 3 At its last meeting of each congregational year, the Congregation Council shall appoint from its membership for the next year liaisons for that year to the standing committees; one liaison shall be appointed to each committee other than the Executive Committee. A liaison shall have voice but not vote on the committee to which he or she is appointed.

Section 4 The Council shall conduct annual performance reviews of the Pastors.

Chapter 6 Organization

Section 1 The congregation shall establish a number of regular standing committees and special standing committees. The sole difference between regular and special standing committees shall be that members of regular standing committees are elected by the congregation and members of special standing committees are appointed by the Congregation Council from a list of nominees. The congregation or Congregation Council may from time to time establish ad hoc committees. The purpose, membership, duties, authorities, responsibilities, and (for ad hoc committees) duration of each committee shall be defined in a charter prepared by the Congregation Council and approved as a continuing resolution. Regular standing committees shall include an Executive Committee, a Worship Committee, a Fellowship Committee, a Congregational Care Committee, an Education Committee, an Outreach Committee, a Witness Committee, a Stewardship Committee, a Finance Committee, and a Property Management Committee. Special standing committees shall include a Mutual Ministry Committee and a Human Resources Committee.

Section 2 The Executive Committee may act for the Congregation Council between meetings of the Council. Actions taken by the Executive Committee must be ratified by the Council at its next meeting.

Section 3 The Worship Committee shall plan and facilitate activities related to worship, including:

- 1) working with the worship planning team (pastors, music staff, and others) to plan the worship life of the community. This includes, but is not limited to, tone, setting, style, and environment.
- 2) ensuring that worship is accessible, welcoming, interesting, and relevant.
- 3) coordinating recruitment, training, and scheduling of worship assistants (including assisting ministers, lectors, communion assistants, ushers, sound technicians, and greeters) and an altar guild.
- 4) providing support and liaison as needed for musicians and artistic groups who enhance the worship experience.
- 5) coordinating the selection, acquisition, and/or preparation of worship resources and environment (in conjunction with the worship planning team).
- 6) providing worship-related educational opportunities.

The Committee shall consist of six elected members, one Council liaison, and the Pastor(s).

Section 4 The Fellowship Committee shall plan and facilitate activities related to the social life of the congregation, including:

- 1) ensuring that fellowship events occur on a regular basis for adults, families, and intergenerational groups.
- 2) ensuring that fellowship opportunities are accessible, welcoming, varied, and interesting.
- 3) acting as a resource for other committees' and groups' social activities.
- 4) ensuring that there is an opportunity for fellowship in conjunction with worship.
- 5) developing and maintaining guidelines and standard procedures for kitchen use.
- 6) coordinating the selection, acquisition, and/or maintenance of kitchen equipment and supplies.

The Committee shall consist of six elected members, one Council liaison, and the Pastor(s).

Section 5 The Congregational Care Committee shall coordinate and facilitate the activities of the caring ministries within the congregation. These ministries include but are not limited to:

- 1) health ministries.
- 2) Stephen Ministry.
- 3) support groups.
- 4) prayer ministries.
- 5) Friends Helping Friends.

The Congregational Care Committee shall also be responsible for:

- 1) ensuring regular, deliberate contact with each member (confirmed youth and adult) regarding their personal and congregational concerns.
- 2) promoting educational opportunities specifically related to physical and mental health.
- 3) compiling and maintaining a list of community resources for caregiving concerns.

The Committee shall consist of six elected members, one Council liaison, and the Pastor(s).

Section 6 The Education Committee shall plan and implement the educational life of the congregation. The committee shall:

- 1) promote religious education for all ages.
- 2) gather, organize and distribute educational materials to the congregation.
- 3) oversee and support all educational groups in the church.
- 4) encourage and train people to take leadership roles in the education process.
- 5) create new educational experiences for the congregation.

The committee shall consist of six elected members, one Council liaison, and the Pastor(s).

Section 7 The Outreach Committee shall plan and implement the service life of the congregation. The Committee shall:

- 1) encourage all members of the congregation to serve those in our community and throughout the world who have needs, as stated in Chapter 4 of the New Hope Constitution,
- 2) coordinate the service efforts of groups and individuals within the congregation,
- 3) coordinate with other congregations and other service organizations,
- 4) plan and implement specific service projects, and
- 5) allocate funds designated for outreach ministries.

The Committee shall consist of six elected members, one Council liaison, and the Pastor(s).

Section 8 The Witness Committee shall implement evangelism in the congregation. The Committee shall:

- 1) encourage all members of the congregation to witness to their faith in their daily lives.
- 2) coordinate with the Pastor(s) in the recruiting of new members and greeting of visitors.
- 3) publicize the activities of the congregation.

The Committee shall consist of six elected members, one council liaison, and the Pastor(s).

Section 9 The Stewardship Committee shall:

- 1) plan and implement the annual stewardship campaign.
- 2) plan and implement the stewardship education program.
- 3) plan and coordinate other special financial campaigns as needed.

The Committee shall consist of six elected members, a Council liaison, and the Pastor(s).

Section 10 The Finance Committee shall:

- 1) count and record all receipts and report the same to the Treasurer, the Council, and the congregation.
- 2) prepare an annual budget for submission to the Council.
- 3) schedule an annual audit.
- 4) prepare a set of practices and procedures for all financial transactions and financial records. These shall be submitted to the Congregation Council for publication as continuing resolutions.

The Committee shall consist of four elected members and the Pastor(s). The Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be ex-officio members of the Finance Committee.

Section 11 The Property Management Committee shall plan and implement the acquisition, construction, and maintenance of real and capital property of the congregation. This shall include the property and all materials necessary to operate and maintain it.

The Committee shall consist of six elected members, one Council liaison, and the Pastor(s).

Section 12 The Human Resources Committee shall be responsible for formulating and administering all policy regarding church staff, paid and volunteers. The Committee shall:

- 1) administer the Child Protection Policy.
- 2) set annual performance goals for the Pastors.
- 3) perform salary review of all staff and make recommendations for salary actions.
- 4) maintain the Personnel Policies.
- 5) perform other activities as designated by the Congregational Council or its Executive Committee.

The committee shall consist of five members. Four members shall be appointed by the Congregation Council Executive Committee, not including the Pastors. The fifth member will be the liaison to the Congregation Council, the Vice President of the Council.

Section 13 The Mutual Ministry Committee shall be responsible for the advocacy of the ministry of the staff of the Church. It shall do this with the advice of the Congregation Council.

The Committee shall consist of six appointed members, a council liaison, and the Pastor(s). The members shall be nominated by the Council President and the Pastor(s) and appointed by the Congregation Council.

Section 14 Each committee shall elect from its membership a chairperson to preside at its meetings. Each committee may elect a vice chairperson or secretary. Each committee shall appoint a representative to each ministry team it forms.

Section 15 Each committee may recruit, equip, and support ministry teams to carry out its activities. Ministry teams formed to perform a specific task within a stated time frame will be dissolved upon completion of the task. Ministry teams formed to perform on-going activities shall have a duration of one year, coinciding with the congregational year.

Section 16 Each regular standing committee shall report on its activities to the Congregation Council monthly and to the entire congregation at its annual meeting. If the Congregation Council feels that a particular activity of a committee or ministry team is inappropriate to the mission of the church, the Council may by majority vote direct the committee or ministry team to cease said activity.

Chapter 7 Financial Practices and Procedures

Section 1 The Congregation Council shall prepare and establish a set of practices and procedures for all financial transactions and financial records of the congregation. These shall be published as continuing resolutions.

Section 2 Except as otherwise prescribed by the practices and procedures defined in Section 1, the approval of a budget by the congregation authorizes the Congregation Council and the standing committees to expend the funds of the congregation in carrying out the ministries of the congregation.

Section 3 Voting privileges for purposes of entering into a contractual agreement by the congregation shall be accorded only to those members voting and present who are legally eligible, according to the laws of the State of Maryland.

Section 4 The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to 2.5% of the annual budget for items not included in the budget.