

## By-Laws

### Article I Organization of the Church

The current organization of the church is shown on the chart found at this link [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#). The voters' assembly holds the final authority for the strategic ministry plan (SMP) and policies, elects the council and board members, approves the budget, and extends Divine Calls. The church council serves the voters' assembly by overseeing the SMP, making decisions that don't require voter approval, and overseeing the boards and Ministry Action Teams (MATs). The board members are elected by the voters' assembly, but report to the church council. Ministry Action Team (MAT) leaders are appointed by their church council representative unless the MAT has adopted another approved procedure. The MAT leader appoints the other members of their MAT after consultation with their church council representative.

### Article II Meetings of the Congregation

#### Section 1 - Number of Meetings

The voters' meetings of the congregation shall be held semi-annually, at a minimum. Elections are held in April for terms beginning July 1. Strategic ministry planning and the budget for the fiscal year beginning in January are voted on in November. It is recommended to hold open forums throughout the year to provide ministry updates and get feedback from the congregation.

#### Section 2 - Date and Time of Meetings

The church council shall set the exact date, time, and place of the meetings, unless otherwise specified by the congregation. Announcements of the meetings shall be given in print and/or orally on at least two consecutive Sundays prior to the time of the meeting. In extenuating circumstances (Divine Call meeting, emergency, etc.) that dictate a shorter time frame, the Church Council may set aside normal protocol.

#### Section 3 - Special Meetings

Special meetings of the congregation may be called by the church council, or the pastor, or upon written request of three voting members. Such meetings must be announced according to the general rule set forth in Section 2 with the purpose clearly stated.

#### Section 4 - Order

The meetings shall be conducted according to good Christian order.

#### Section 5 - Admonishment

No one shall bring to any meeting a charge or complaint against any member or against a pastor or teacher unless he has first admonished him in a Christian manner according to Matthew 18:15-20.

#### Section 6 - Voting Membership

Voting membership shall be restricted to male communicant members who have reached the age of 18. Voting members shall sign, thereby indicating their acceptance, the official copy of the Constitution and By-laws at the meeting of the congregations in which they were received or as soon thereafter as possible.

### Section 7 - Quorum

Only voting members present at the meetings shall have the right to vote. The voting members present at a properly announced meeting of the congregation shall constitute a quorum.

### Section 8 - Attendance

Non-voting church members are welcome to attend, ask questions, and offer input.

## Article III Election of Church Council and Boards Members

The Church Council will appoint an ad hoc nominating committee to identify a slate of candidates to present at the April voters' meeting for election. The nominating committee shall select from the voting membership a slate of candidates for the vacancies and the names shall be published for at least two consecutive Sundays prior to the April meeting. The voters' assembly at its April meeting shall hear the recommendations of the nominating committee, add to the list if it so desires, and proceed to elect by ballot. A simple majority of votes cast shall be necessary for election.

## Article IV The Church Council

### Section 1—Membership

The church council shall be an 8 member board which shall consist of the congregation's President, Vice-president, Stewardship Chairman, Board of Education Chairman, Board of Elders Chairman, member at-large, Pastor, and Principal. Additional pastors are ex officio members of the Church Council. Members of the Church Council who aren't called workers are elected by the voters' assembly. The voters' assembly may add church council members as the needs of the ministry change.

### Section 2—Responsibilities

2.1 The members of the church council shall support the pastors in carrying out the ministry objectives of the congregation. They shall be accountable for good order in the services. They shall particularly care in love for their fellow members who have special needs (Galatians 6:9-10). The members of the church council shall consult together concerning the total spiritual and physical well-being of the congregation, giving due attention also to the work of the Lord in the church at large. They shall carry out assignments directed to them by the voters' assembly.

2.2 The church council, acting as a board of trustees, shall control the corporate property of the congregation according to the direction given to it by the voters' assembly. The church council is hereby empowered to borrow money, pledge the assets of the congregation, sell, lease or otherwise dispose of the real and personal property of the congregation, all at the direction of the voters' assembly. It shall also have the right to acquire property by purchase, trade, gift, or other means as directed by the voters' assembly. The president and vice-president of the congregation are hereby designated as the persons who shall sign all documents of the congregation.

2.3 The church council shall address complaints against any member or against a voters' assembly decision or action

### Section 3—Terms of Office

3.1 The term of office for each elected council member (besides the member at-large) shall be two years. No elected council member shall serve more than two consecutive full terms. He shall again be eligible for election to the council two years after the expiration of his second term of office.

3.2 The member at-large will serve a one-year term and he cannot be re-elected to consecutive terms.

3.3 The term of the president and the Board of Elders Chairman shall expire the same year, the Stewardship Chairman, Board of Education Chairman, and Vice-President the alternate year.

### Section 4—Installation

Prior to the beginning of their terms, the newly elected members of the church council and boards shall be installed into office at a regular service(s) and shall thus be presented to the congregation.

### Section 5—Meetings

5.1 The church council shall meet monthly. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president.

5.2 Each council member is expected to attend the meeting. Any chairman not able to attend should provide a representative from his area of ministry to carry out his duties.

5.3 The council members present at a properly announced meeting of the Church Council shall constitute a quorum.

### Section 6—Vacancies

In the event of a vacancy on the church council, the vacancy shall be filled by ballot at the next meeting of the voters' assembly from a list of candidates prepared by the last acting nominating committee.

### Section 7 - Duties of Officers

The following is an overview of each position. For more detail, refer to the job descriptions found at this link \_\_\_\_\_.

#### 7.1—President

The president will preside as chairman of the church council and voters' meetings of the congregation. He will have general supervision of the affairs of the congregation subject to regulations of the church council, sign all deeds, mortgages, notes, leases, and/or all other legal documents directed to be executed by the congregation and conduct all its business affairs according to established good order. He will oversee all the MATs under his area of ministry (i.e., Strategic Ministry Planning and any other MATs as shown in the organization chart). He will keep himself aware of what is going on with those MATs. He will give guidance, encouragement, and hold MATs accountable when necessary. He will report to the church

council and voters the activities of his MATs. He will answer questions presented to him by the church council or voters concerning his MATs. By virtue of his position, the president is an ex-officio member of all boards and MATs and may attend any meeting he desires.

#### 7.2—Vice-President-Secretary

The vice-president will act as the secretary to accurately record the proceedings of all meetings of the congregation and the church council. He will be responsible for the legal records of the congregation. He will have the authority to countersign all deeds, mortgages, notes, leases, and/or legal documents executed by the congregation and assist in the orderly conduct of its business affairs according to established good order. He will oversee all the MATs under his area of ministry as shown in the organization chart. He will keep himself aware of what is going on with those MATs. He will give guidance, encouragement, and hold MATs accountable when necessary. He will report to the church council and voters the activities of his MATs. He will answer questions presented to him by the church council or voters concerning his MATs. In the event that the president is absent or the position is vacant, the vice-president shall assume the duties of the president.

#### 7.3—Stewardship Chairman

The stewardship chairman will guide and encourage members to be faithful in using their time, talents, and financial treasure to support Gospel ministry work. He will oversee all the MATs under his area of ministry (i.e., Financial MAT, Endowment and Special Projects Fund MAT, Building and Grounds MAT, Cemetery MAT, Service/Volunteerism/Hospitality MAT, and any other MATs as shown in the organization chart). He will keep himself aware of what is going on with those MATs. He will give guidance, encouragement, and hold MATs accountable when necessary. He will report to the church council and voters the activities of his MATs. He will answer questions presented to him by the church council or voters concerning his MATs. He is an ex-officio member of all the MATs in his area of ministry. He will annually organize the ad hoc budget MAT to prepare the next year's budget proposal.

#### 7.4—Board of Education Chairman

The Board of Education Chairman will, in conjunction with the principal and faculty, lead the Lutheran Elementary School (LES) in its mission, vision, and objectives. He will oversee all the MATs under his area of ministry (i.e., KMLHS Delegates and any other MATs as shown in the organization chart). He will report to the church council and voters the activities of his board and MATs. He will answer questions presented to him by the church council or voters concerning his board and MATs.

#### 7.5 - Board of Elders Chairman

The board of elders chairman will lead the Board of Elders in its mission, vision, and objectives. He will report to the church council and voters the activities of his board. He will answer questions presented to him by the church council or voters concerning his board.

#### 7.6 - Member At-Large

The member at large position is intended to provide the church council with a voice that represents the congregation in general and not the interests of a specific area of ministry. The member at large position will be a one-year term. It may be used for the purpose of training a person for a future position on the church council. It may also be used to make use of a particular member's expertise and experience for that year's SMP goals.

## Section 8 - Removal from Office

See Constitution Article IX, Section 1. This process should be implemented by the Pastor(s) and Elders.

## Article V Boards

### Section 1—Membership

1.1 The Board of Elders shall consist of one elder for every 100 communicant members of St. John's (i.e., 1 elder for 1-99 communicant members, 2 elders for 100-199 communicant members, etc.). The voters' assembly may add board members as the needs of the ministry change.

1.2 The Board of Education will consist of the school principal and three lay members elected by the Voter's Assembly. The voter's assembly may add board members as the needs of the ministry change.

### Section 2—Responsibilities

Each Board is responsible for enabling, creating, planning, and overseeing the ministries entrusted to it.

2.1 The Board of Elders is to be concerned with the total spiritual life of the congregation. Elders should contact, visit, counsel, and encourage straying members. They are to recommend the release of members who fall into the categories listed in the article entitled "Transfer, Release, Removal or Excommunication from Membership." Elders will support the pastoral office. They will initiate and follow through with the process of removing errant called workers from office. Finally, they will work with the Pastor(s) to remove an errant person from an elected position. Board members are accountable to the Church Council and Voter's Assembly.

2.2 The Board of Education shall formulate all policies to be followed at St. John's Ev. Lutheran School. It shall meet regularly to discuss all matters related to the Lutheran Elementary School. Board members are accountable to the Church Council and Voter's Assembly.

### Section 3—Terms of Office

Terms of office for all Board members shall be two years and limited to two consecutive terms.

### Section 4— Installation

Prior to the beginning of their terms, the newly elected members of the church council and boards shall be installed into office at a regular service(s) and shall thus be presented to the congregation.

### Section 5— Meetings

In general, boards will meet monthly. The Chairman is the secretary unless he delegates that responsibility to another board member.

### Section 6— Vacancies

In the event of a vacancy on either board, the vacancy shall be filled by ballot at the next meeting of the voters' assembly from a list of candidates prepared by the last acting nominating committee.

### Section 7 - Removal from Office

See Constitution Article IX, Section 1. This process should be implemented by the Pastor(s) and Elders.

## Article VI Ministry Action Teams

### Section 1—MAT Organization

Each MAT will be self-organized in a way that makes sense for that particular group, in consultation with the Church Council representative . Example formats can be found at this link

---

#### 1.1- Leadership

Where the Church Council representative is not the leader of the MAT or there exists a current structure for choosing a leader, the Church Council representative recommends a leader for each MAT. The Church Council will approve the leaders for the MATs. Where Scripture allows (see 1 Timothy 2:11-3:16), the Church Council may approve female leaders of MATs.

#### 1.2- Membership

Under the guidance of their church council representative, each Ministry Action Team will add other members as necessary. Membership is voluntary. Congregation members can be a part of more than one MAT.

### Section 2—Responsibilities

Each Ministry Action Team is responsible for enabling, creating, planning, and overseeing the ministries entrusted to it. All Ministry Action Teams are accountable to the church council and the voters' assembly. The team leader is the secretary unless the position is delegated to another MAT member.

### Section 3—Terms of Office

For the sake of continuity, it is recommended that the Ministry Action Team Leaders serve for a minimum of two years. There is no limit to how long a person may serve on a MAT.

### Section 4— Meetings

Since each MAT is self-organized, they will meet in a way that makes sense for that group.

### Section 5— Vacancies

Vacancies occurring on MATs shall be filled through appointment by the MAT leader in consultation with the Church Council representative overseeing that MAT.

## Section 6 - Removal from MAT

If any MAT member willfully neglects his or her duty and upon due admonition does not amend, the congregation has the right and eventually the duty to remove him or her from the MAT. A replacement will be made according to the organization of the MAT. The Church Council representative and the Board of Elders should be consulted for advice and counsel.

## Article VII Duties of the Pastors and Teachers

The following is an overview of each position. For more detail, refer to the job descriptions found at this link \_\_\_\_\_.

The pastor's duties shall be:

1. To preach the Gospel in its truth and purity.
2. To administer the sacraments in accordance with the inspired Word of God and the Confessions as stated in Article II of this constitution.
3. To establish and maintain sound Lutheran practice at all times.
4. To watch over the souls of the congregation in an evangelical manner.
5. To visit the sick and the dying.
6. To admonish indifferent and erring members.
7. To be zealous for the winning of souls for Christ's Kingdom.
8. To be faithful in the spiritual care of the young.
9. To instruct the children in the saving truth according to Luther's Small Catechism.
10. To confirm.
11. To bury the dead.
12. To set a good example for his congregation by leading a godly life.
13. To train and equip members for ministry.
14. He will lead or oversee all the MATs under his area of ministry (i.e., Worship Support MAT, Evangelism MAT, Visitation MAT, Worship Planning MAT, Teen MAT, Youth MAT, Adult MAT, and any other MATs as shown in the organization chart). He will keep himself aware of what is going on with those MATs. He will give guidance, encouragement, and hold MATs accountable when necessary. He will report to the church council and voters the activities of his MATs. He will answer questions presented to him by the church council or voters concerning his MATs.

In general, his duty is to devote his time, strength, and ability to the general advancement of the kingdom of Christ and to the gathering of His harvest. By virtue of the pastoral office, the pastors are ex-officio members of all boards and MATs and may attend any meetings they desire.

The duties of the teachers shall be:

1. To instruct and train the children entrusted to them diligently and faithfully in the chief truths of the Word of God as they are revealed in the Scriptures and set forth particularly in the Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther.
2. To teach the children thoroughly in the spirit of the Gospel.
3. To maintain Christian discipline in the school.
4. To serve the congregation as an example by their Christian conduct.
5. To endeavor earnestly to live in Christian harmony with the pastors.
6. To submit to the supervision of the pastors and others who are responsible for the conduct of the school, and with the help of God to do everything within the limits of their call for the general advancement of Christ's Kingdom.
7. To assist with other agreed upon duties as circumstances may require.
8. To prepare young people for service to the Lord.

The duties of the principal in addition to what is stated above:

He will lead or oversee all the MATs under his area of ministry (i.e. Partners in Education MAT, Faculty MAT, and any other MATs as shown in the organization chart). He will keep himself aware of what is going on with those MATs. He will give guidance, encouragement, and hold MATs accountable when necessary. He will report to the church council and voters the activities of his MATs. He will answer questions presented to him by the church council or voters concerning his MATs.

## Article VIII Reception into Membership

### Section 1

Persons who wish to be received into membership in this congregation other than through the sacrament of holy baptism or rite of confirmation shall bring their request to the attention of the pastor or the church council. The council shall honor the request when accompanied by a letter of transfer or other recommendation from a sister congregation or when qualifications for membership, as specified in Article V of this Constitution, have been met. Such action of the council shall be ratified by the regular meeting of the voters' assembly and notice of such receptions reported to the congregation.

### Section 2

Since reception into membership signifies acceptance of and submission to this Constitution and By-laws, each family shall be given a copy of the same prior to their reception so that they may become familiar with its provisions.

## Article IX Transfer, Release, Removal, or Excommunication from Membership

### Section 1 - Transfer

1.1 Those desiring a transfer to a congregation that agrees with St. John's in doctrine and practice, shall bring their request to the attention of the pastor, elders, or church council for action to be ratified at the next meeting of the voters' assembly.

1.2 Members who choose to transfer to a congregation that agrees with St. John's in doctrine and practice are welcome to worship and commune, but no longer have voting privileges or the right to represent the congregation in an official capacity.

### Section 2 - Release

2.1 Release may occur when members:

- A. Have moved out of the area but haven't joined a church in our fellowship after being encouraged to do so.
- B. Leave no forwarding address.
- C. Have indicated they no longer wish to continue membership at this congregation.

2.2 Release will be carried out by the congregation after every effort has been made to locate or admonish them according to Matthew 18.

2.3 Release from membership shall apply when affiliation is sought with those denominations not in agreement with our congregation in doctrine and practice.

### Section 3 - Excommunication

Excommunication may be carried out when there is an open, manifest sin and outright impenitence. This action is taken by the church in love toward the individual(s). A harsh preaching of the Law is done to make them see their sin. With this action comes the announcement that the doors of heaven are closed unless the individual repents.

### Section 4

Members released, removed, or excommunicated relinquish all rights in this congregation.

### Section 5 - Right of Appeal

A lay person who has been subject to disciplinary action by this congregation shall have the right to appeal the action. The lay person shall be notified in writing by the congregation of the right to appeal within 30 days of the completion of the disciplinary action. Such an appeal must be filed with the president of the district to which the congregation belongs within 60 days of receipt of notification from the congregation.

## Article X Repeals and Amendments of the By-laws

Any and all by-laws may be repealed or amended by a majority vote at any voters' meeting, provided that public notice of this proposed action shall have been given the congregation on at least two Sundays prior to the time of the meeting and provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing to the church council for its study and recommendation.