

**MISSION STATEMENT OF
BETHLEHEM EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
PORTAGE, WISCONSIN**

Bethlehem is a community of Christians committed to serving our Lord, Jesus Christ, not only here in Portage, but also throughout the world, wherever and whenever He gives us the opportunity.

We respond to the Grace of God through spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ in worship, Sunday School, Vacation Church School, Confirmation and Adult Classes; through our service to our neighbors in time of need; and through the way we support and nurture one another with our financial giving and stewardship. We reach our beyond our community as we serve in active participation with the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin in the ELCA.

We reach out to others through our ministries of:

Christian Education
Worship and Music
Social Ministry
Evangelism
Stewardship
Property Management
Finance

**BYLAWS OF
BETHLEHEM EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
OF PORTAGE, WISCONSIN**

Section I - CONGREGATION MEETING.

- Item 1. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time and place to be determined by the Congregation Council, but not earlier than January 15, or not later than February 15, each year.

Section II - ELECTIONS

- Item 1. Nominees shall be presented by a Nominating Committee for each vacancy to be filled.
- Item 2. Further nominations may be made by any voting member of the congregation at the annual meeting of this congregation.

Section III - DUTIES OF THE CONGREGATION COUNCIL OFFICERS AND APPOINTEES.

- Item 1. The President shall preside at meetings of the congregation and of the Congregation Council, and be responsible for following through on the recommendations of the Congregation Council.
- Item 2. The Vice-President shall preside at meetings of the congregation and of the Congregation Council in the President's absence. The Vice-President shall be responsible for any duties assigned by the President.

- Item 3. The secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation and of the Congregation Council in a volume provided by the congregation, which shall be preserved permanently in its archives.
- Item 4. The financial secretary shall receive and keep record of all income from contributing members and other sources.
- Item 5. The treasurer shall keep the books of account of the congregation and shall receive from the money counters all funds and disburse them on proper orders, making monthly remittance of benevolence receipts to the treasurer of the synod.
- Item 6. The treasurer and the financial secretary shall make written reports of all financial transactions to the Congregation Council monthly and to the congregation, together with a satisfactory audit, at its Annual Meeting. All financial officers shall give corporate surety, in amounts determined by the Congregation Council for which the premium shall be paid by the congregation. Fidelity coverage provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be deemed a fulfillment of this requirement.

Section IV - Reports.

- Item 1. At the annual meeting of the congregation, an annual report of the Congregation Council shall be presented. The pastors, the secretary, the financial secretary, and the treasurer(s) shall submit reports in writing.

Section V - Fiscal Year.

- Item 1. The fiscal year of the congregation shall be from January 1 through December 31st. All schools, auxiliaries and organizations of the congregation shall conform thereto.
- Item 2. At the annual meeting the president of each auxiliary organization shall submit a brief report of the activities to be included with the Congregation Council report.
- Item 3. At the annual meeting the treasurer of each auxiliary organization shall render a properly audited report to the annual meeting, or a summary of such reports may be included in the auditors' report.

Section VI - Committees.

- Item 1. **Christian Education.** There shall be a committee on Christian Education. The committee on Christian Education shall appoint a Christian Education Coordinator on an annual basis who will be the chairperson of this committee. This committee, in association with the pastor(s), shall oversee the conduct and promotion of the school and the activities of all organizations within the congregation. It shall encourage the use of teaching and worship materials published or approved by the ELCA, and seek to introduce the church's periodicals and books of family devotion into the homes of the congregation. One of the primary aims of the committee on Christian Education shall be to bring the call to the ministry of the Gospel and to other full-time church vocations to the attention of qualified youth of the congregation.
- Item 2. **Property.** There shall be a committee on Church Property. This committee shall see to the proper maintenance and protection of all property of the congregation, and shall take care that the same is kept in good repair.
- Item 3. **Evangelism.** There shall be a committee on Evangelism. This committee shall stimulate and lead all members of the congregation in continuous and,

from time to time, concerted endeavors to reawaken the spiritually indifferent and to reach others, who are as yet unwon, with the Gospel and attach them to Christ's Church. To this end, the committee shall devote itself to deepening spiritual life of members of the congregation and shall periodically study the congregation in the context of its surrounding community.

- Item 4. **Finance.** There shall be a committee on Finance, of which the treasurer shall be a member ex officio. It shall prepare a draft budget for the succeeding year including this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in its behalf by the ELCA and the synod, and shall submit such draft budget to the Congregation Council for its action and later presentation to a meeting of this congregation. The committee shall exercise oversight of all the financial affairs of the congregation to make sure that they are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies to the synodical treasurer. It shall, subject to the approval of the Congregation Council, be responsible for the congregation's investments, and its total insurance program. It shall also provide for annual audits of the accounts of the treasurer and the financial secretary, if there be one, as well as of the accounts of the school and organizations within the congregation.
- Item 5. **Social Ministry.** There shall be a committee on Social Ministry. The purpose of this committee shall be to extend Christian compassion and helpfulness to the ill, the aged, the orphaned, the underprivileged, the imprisoned and, in general to persons of all ages in need of aid in body or soul. It shall strive to enlist in these efforts as many as possible of the individual members and organizations of the congregation. This committee shall further have the duty to study social conditions, primarily in the local community, in order to bring the cleansing and healing light of Christian truth to bear upon critical problems through thoughtful Christian discussion of facts and issues.
- Item 6. **Stewardship.** There shall be a committee on Stewardship, of which the treasurer shall be a member ex officio. It shall be the function of this committee to evoke and promote the expression of Christian faith in daily living; to teach the Christian use of money; to diffuse knowledge of the congregation's local, national and world-wide ministries; and to lead all its members to higher levels of proportionate giving for the Lord's work. This committee shall also be responsible for the annual Every Member Visit and other congregational efforts which lead to informed and grateful giving.
- Item 7. **Worship and Music.** There shall be a committee on Worship and Music. It shall assist the Congregation Council in seeing that the services of God's house are conducted regularly and in accordance with the liturgy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, that competent ushers are recruited and trained, and that hymnals and other devotional materials are provided and properly cared for. This committee shall supervise, and strive to advance the welfare and effective service of, the choirs of the congregation. It shall arrange for the care of paraments, vestments and musical instruments and, in consultation with the pastors, the organist and the choir director, it shall furnish music supplies appropriate for the use in the worship of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Section VII COMMUNICATIONS

- Item 1. All auxiliaries, committees, and other organizations of the congregation shall report in writing monthly to the Congregation Council and annually to the congregation.

Section VIII - DECISION MAKING

- Item 1. Wherever possible, decisions shall be made at the committee level and reported to

the Congregation Council which shall have the privilege of review and final judgment on all matters. The Congregation Council is encouraged to delegate responsibility for decisions so as to promote congregational participation and responsibility.

Section IX - ANNUAL BUDGET

- Item 1. The Annual Budget shall be prepared by the finance committee with recommendations from each committee and the Pastor(s). The budget shall then be considered by the Congregation Council and submitted to the congregation for final approval.

Section X - COUNCIL AUTHORIZATION TO BORROW (1/24/99)

- Item 1. The Congregation Council has authority to borrow up to and including \$20,000 (Twenty Thousand Dollars) without going to the congregation for approval.

Section XI - MEMBERSHIP

Categories of membership activity shall be Active, Inactive and "Removed."

- A) ACTIVE - Active members shall be all who have a recorded communion and a financial contribution of record in the preceding calendar year.
- B) INACTIVE - Any active member who fails to record both a communion and a financial contribution in a calendar year shall automatically become inactive and may be notified of such change in membership status by the Congregation Council in writing.
- C) "REMOVED" - After three consecutive years an inactive member shall automatically become "Removed" from the church roll. Such change shall be noted by the Congregation Council though notice in writing need not necessarily be given.

Section XII - RESTORATION TO MEMBERSHIP

Those persons who have been "Removed" from the church roll of this congregation can be restored to Active Membership by:

- A) Making at least one financial contribution of record in a calendar year, and
- B) Receiving Holy Communion (and having such participation in the Lord's Supper recorded) at least once in the same calendar year (as A), and
- C) Speaking with a Pastor of this congregation about restoration to membership.