



BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Gurnee, Illinois

POLICY MANUAL OF THE CONGREGATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Article I – Introduction

- A. Purpose
- B. Relationship to Constitution and Bylaws
- C. Policy Manual Maintenance

Article II – Congregation Mission and Initiatives

- A. Mission
- B. Strategic Initiatives
- C. Pray – Eat – Love Paradigm
- D. Membership Commitments

Article III – Congregation Structure and Leadership

- A. Organization and Structure
- B. Extended Structure and Responsibilities

Article IV – Governing Board

- A. Functions and Responsibilities
- B. Leadership
- C. Election of the Board
- D. Functions and Responsibilities of Leaders

Article V – Board of Elders

- A. Functions and Responsibilities
- B. Leadership
- C. Structure of the Board
 - 1. Spiritual Oversight Team
 - 2. Worship Team
 - 3. Disciple Care Team
- D. Human Resources Board
- E. Altar Guild

Article VI – Pastoral Office

- A. Role of the Pastor
- B. Pastoral Goals
 - 1. Discipleship
 - 2. Care for Members and the Community
 - 3. Intentional Spiritual Outreach
 - 4. Equipping
- C. Structural Policies

Article VII – Preschool Board

- A. Functions and Responsibilities
- B. Leadership
- C. Election to the Preschool Board



D. Functions and Responsibilities of Leaders

Article VIII – Property Board

- A. Functions and Responsibilities
- B. Leadership Responsibilities

Article IX – Board of Christian Education

- A. Functions and Responsibilities
- B. Leadership Responsibilities

Article X – Additional Standing Boards and Teams

- A. Youth Board
- B. Generosity Team
- C. Care in Community Team

Article XI – Congregation Operating Policies

- A. Board of Elders Policies
 - 1. Marriage Policies
 - 2. Communion; Serving Communion
 - 3. Women Serving at Bethel
- B. Financial Policies
 - 1. Policies for Counters
 - 2. Policies for Gifts and Bequests
- C. Communication Policies
- D. Facility Use Policies
 - 1. Facility Use Overview
 - 2. Worship Use
 - 3. Personal Use by Members
 - 4. Use by Community Groups and Organizations
- E. Children and Youth Safety Policies
 - 1. Staff and Volunteer Safety Steps
 - 2. Background Checks
 - 3. Policies and Practices

Addenda

- A. Employee Handbook
- B. Preschool Handbook
- C. Pastor Position Description
- D. Staff Positions Descriptions



ARTICLE I – INTRODUCTION

POLICY OWNER: GOVERNING BOARD

- A. *Purpose*
- B. *Relationship to Constitution and Bylaws*
- C. *Policy Manual Maintenance*

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to define:

1. The structure of the offices and ministries of Bethel Lutheran Church (“the Church”)
2. The responsibilities of the offices and ministries of the Church
3. The policies by which the Church, including its elected, called, and lay ministry leaders, shall operate, govern itself, and oversee the ministry plans, administrative functions, and financial affairs of the Congregation as specified in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Congregation.

B. RELATIONSHIP TO CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

1. These policies are constrained by the powers, authority, and responsibilities delegated by the Congregation via the Constitution and Bylaws.
2. These policies shall be considered an extension of the Constitution and Bylaws but shall not supersede or conflict with any of their provisions.
3. These policies specify the practices used by the Church and its agents to carry out the responsibilities and define the expectations and limitations directed for all agents who act on behalf of the Church.
4. The policies stated in this document shall be guided by Biblical principles of outreach, fellowship, service, fairness, and Christian education.
5. Policies included in this document provide designated persons, committees, and all agents of the Church with the authority to act in accordance with the applicable policy without further approval.
6. Policies may be changed or superseded by action of the Policy Owners at any time, but must be submitted to the Governing Board per the manual maintenance process as specified in Article I.C.

C. POLICY MANUAL MAINTENANCE

1. The Governing Board will facilitate an annual review of the Policy Manual to see if any changes need to be made. Individual congregation members may also propose Policy Manual changes to the Governing Board at any time.
2. All Policy Owners must submit Policy Manual revisions to the Governing Board with the date of the meeting when the revision was adopted. The minutes for that meeting will include complete statements of any new, rescinded or amended policies or procedures (reflecting both removed language and new wording). A rationale may be noted in the minutes.
3. Revisions to policies are effective immediately. The Governing Board will notify the congregation of revisions via regular communication channels and post the revised Policy Manual on the website.
4. Three or more voting members of the congregation who disagree with a policy may request to meet with the Governing Board for discussion. If unresolved, the policy in question will be brought to the congregation for a vote at the next Voters Meeting.



ARTICLE II – CONGREGATION MISSION AND INITIATIVES

POLICY OWNER: GOVERNING BOARD

- A. *Mission*
- B. *Strategic Initiatives*
- C. *Pray – Eat – Love Paradigm*
- D. *Membership Commitments*

A. MISSION

Our mission is to help people to be disciples: life-long learners and followers of Jesus Christ.

B. STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

We seek to pursue this mission through the following initiatives:

1. Discipleship: As a congregation we will intentionally call our members to an ever-deepening discipleship—moving from head knowledge of the faith to “heart life.” We will lovingly build each other up in our faith and daily living while encouraging one another to speak the truth of God’s message to all people.
2. Care for Members and the Community: We will build supportive relationships with others by developing a connection as we serve them or serve together with them. This means caring for those already at Bethel, while also engaging those outside of Bethel.
3. Intentional Spiritual Outreach: We will intentionally go into our community to provide places to begin, develop and deepen spiritual conversations that lead toward the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We will work cooperatively with Christians in our community to build spiritual connections and conversations.
4. Equipping: We will coach, train, equip and encourage people in missional living, for multiplying the ministry and leadership of the gathering of believers at Bethel. Biblically speaking we “Equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12).

C. PRAY – EAT – LOVE PARADIGM

The Pray-Eat-Love paradigm helps describe how we approach these initiatives:



This model explains how someone experiences God’s word and growth at our congregation.

1. Pray: As God’s people, we join together to pray—worship, hear God’s Word, encourage faithful action, and pray for one another and those in the community around us.
2. Eat: That life of prayer leads us into our “neighborhoods” and “spheres of influence” to eat—share meals, plan events, join in acts of service, organize gatherings, start conversations with those we already know who may not know Jesus. We build relationships through spending time with those in our “neighborhoods”—where we live, work, go to school, play.
3. Love: Then we love those friends—share God’s love with them through words and actions. We look for opportunities in our friendships to tell people about the hope we have in Jesus.
4. Pray – Eat – Love happens in a continuous cycle.



D. MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENTS

1. Trust that Bethel is seeking to teach faith in Jesus according to God's Word, as best expressed in Lutheran theology according to the Lutheran Confessions, knowing that even if you are not certain about every teaching at all times, Bethel seeks God's truth and not our own truth.
2. Ask to be shepherded (cared for in your faith) and be held accountable in your life as a believer in Jesus.
3. Commit to encourage fellow believers at Bethel in their faith.
4. Serve the community around us—God's Kingdom—in partnership with this gathering of believers.
5. Support the mission of the congregation to bring the Gospel to those who need Jesus.

ARTICLE III – CONGREGATION STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

POLICY OWNER: GOVERNING BOARD

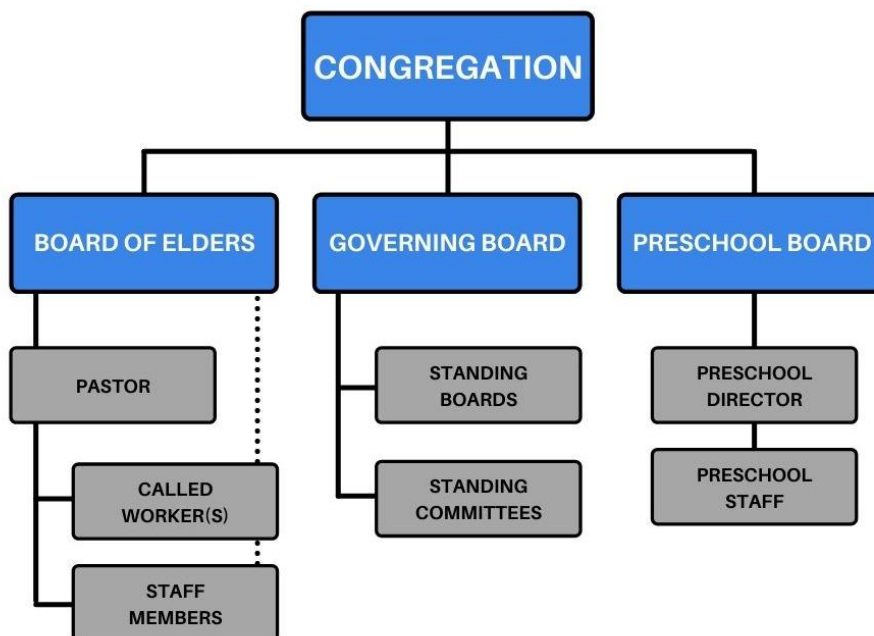
- A. *Organization and Structure*
- B. *Extended Structure and Responsibilities*

A. ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

The Congregation is the authorizing body for the organization and structure of the Church. The Church Governing Board, Board of Elders, Called Workers or Staff Members, boards, committees, and lay leaders derive their authority from the Congregation's voting membership via the Constitution and Bylaws. No group, committee, board, or employee has authority outside that which is assigned by the Congregation via the Constitution, Bylaws, and this manual.

The Church has three main bodies, with leaders elected by the Congregation: Board of Elders, Governing Board, and Preschool Board.

Figure 1: Leadership and Organizational Structure of Bethel Lutheran Church



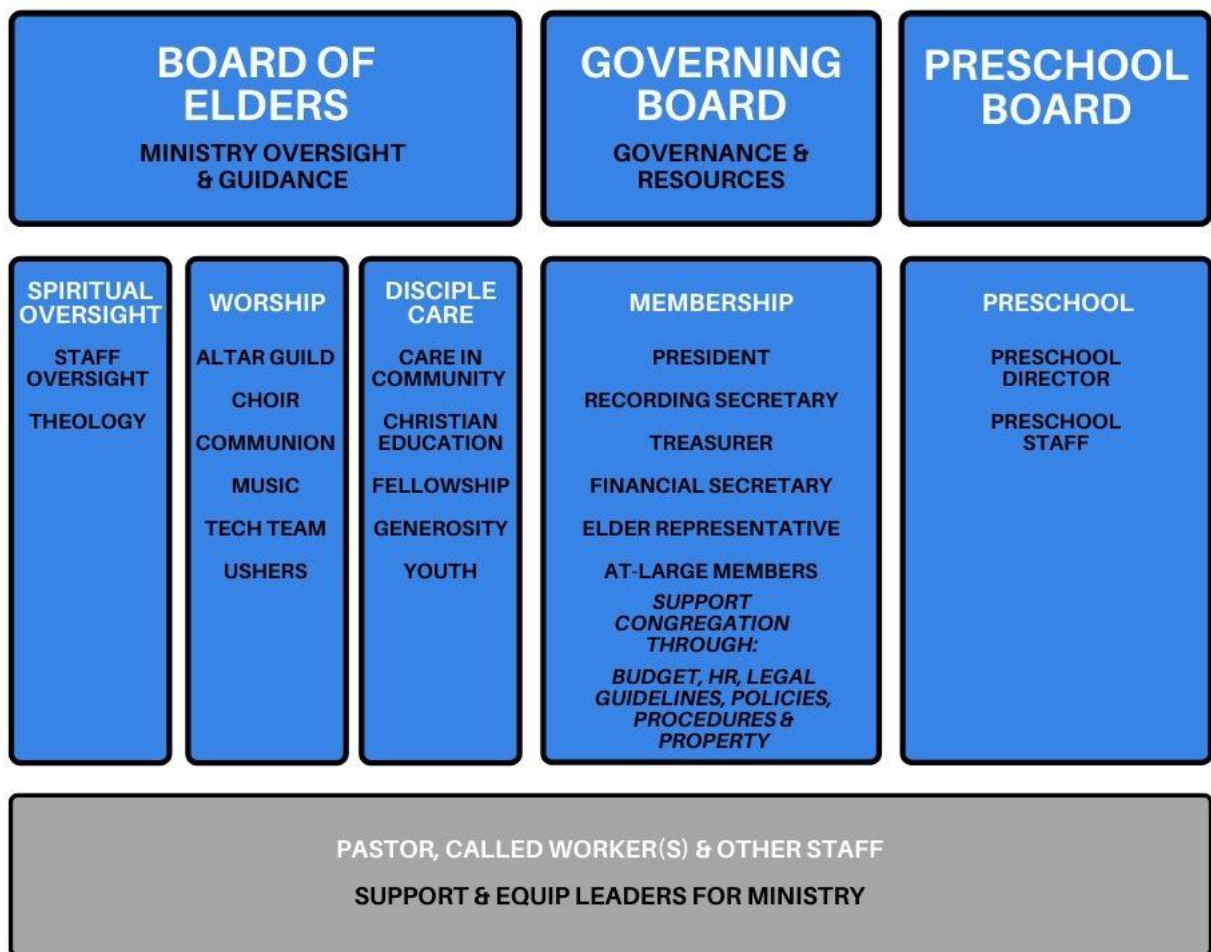


The Governing Board is responsible for operational and administrative matters, including resources (human and property), legal matters and finances. The Board of Elders oversees the ministry of the Church including developing and caring for disciples, overseeing worship, theology, and staff. The Preschool Board directs a Christian-based education for children prior to school age.

B. EXTENDED STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to the Church bodies and staff having their own focus areas, they also provide support for each other. A visual representation of the Church’s extended structure and high-level responsibilities is shown below.

Figure 2: Extended Structure of the Church and Responsibilities



ARTICLE IV – GOVERNING BOARD

POLICY OWNER: GOVERNING BOARD

- A. *Functions and Responsibilities*
- B. *Leadership*
- C. *Election of the Board*
- D. *Functions and Responsibilities of Leaders*



1. *President*
2. *Recording Secretary*
3. *Treasurer*
4. *Financial Secretary*
5. *Elder Representative*
6. *At-Large Members*

A. FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Board serves in a policymaking and oversight role, ensuring that the mission of the church is executed in accordance with the Constitution, Bylaws, Policies Manual, and decisions of the congregation. For responsibilities, see Bylaws Article V.I.

B. LEADERSHIP

The Governing Board consists of the following:

1. PRESIDENT
2. RECORDING SECRETARY
3. TREASURER
4. FINANCIAL SECRETARY
5. ELDER REPRESENTATIVE
6. AT-LARGE MEMBERS
7. EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS: The Pastor and any other Called Workers shall be ex-officio members of the Church Governing Board. Ex-officio members shall serve on the Church Governing Board in an advisory role only and may not make motions or vote.

C. ELECTION OF THE BOARD

1. Election of Governing Board members shall take place at the annual Voters Assembly meeting.
2. After each annual Voters Meeting, the elected members of the Church Governing Board shall elect from the Board to fill the leadership roles, with the exception of the Treasurer and Financial Secretary roles which are directly elected by the Voters Assembly.
3. Each Governing Board member shall be elected for a three-year term.
4. Every year one third of the members of the Governing Board will complete their terms and one third new members should be elected.
5. Any elected leader may be removed from office by the Voters Assembly by a ballot vote and in Christian and lawful order, for persistent adherence to false doctrine or scandalous life or for persistent neglect of official duties.

D. FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEADERS

1. PRESIDENT

The President shall:

- a. Serve as a voting member of the Church Governing Board.
- b. Preside at all regular and special meetings of the Voters Assembly. Be a member of and preside at the meetings of the Church Governing Board. Conduct all business in these meetings in the spirit of Christian love and in good parliamentary order.
- c. Prepare an agenda and order of business for each meeting of the Church Governing Board. Prepare an agenda for each meeting of the Voters Assembly.
- d. Together with the Recording Secretary represent the church in all legal matters.



- e. Appoint such other special committees as have been authorized by the Church Governing Board or the Voters Assembly, subject to the approval of the Church Governing Board.
- f. Have the authority to appoint a Vice Chair from the At-Large Governing Board members.
- g. Be the Registered Agent for Bethel Lutheran Church, a religious corporation, in the State of Illinois.

2. RECORDING SECRETARY

The Recording Secretary shall:

- a. Serve as a voting member of the Church Governing Board.
- b. Keep accurate minutes of the meetings of the Voters Assembly and Church Governing Board for a permanent record of the Congregation.
- c. Promptly provide a copy of the minutes to each officer of the Congregation.
- d. Provide highlights of the Voters Assembly meetings for church communications.
- e. Conduct all correspondence of an official nature of the Church Governing Board and Voters Assembly, unless otherwise provided by the respective bodies.
- f. Keep a record of attendance at all meetings of the Church Governing Board and Voters Assembly.
- g. Ensure an accurate list of the voting members of the Congregation is kept.
- h. Announce all regular and special meetings of the Voters Assembly in the weekly Sunday bulletins or in the worship service the Sunday preceding the meeting and the day of the meeting.
- i. Represent the Congregation in all legal matters as directed by the Voters Assembly.

3. TREASURER

The Treasurer shall:

- a. Serve as a voting member of the Church Governing Board.
- b. Be empowered by the Voters Assembly to have custody and control of all congregational funds.
- c. Require Payment Authorization Form for all bills by all boards, committees or persons who have properly ordered and received materials or services on behalf of the Congregation before payment is made. Maintain procedures for Payment Authorization.
- d. Pay all salaries, bills and charges that have been properly authorized within the budget approved by the Voters Assembly and those additional expenditures which are properly authorized by the Church Governing Board and Voters Assembly.
- e. Submit to the Church Governing Board those bills and charges that either exceed the budget or were not included in the budget for approval by the Governing Board or referred to the Voters Assembly, in accordance with the provisions of the Bylaws.
- f. Keep accurate records of cash receipts, disbursements and related records, according to current accounting standards; these shall remain the property of the Congregation.
- g. Submit the books and records to the Audit Committee for audit at the close of each year and whenever deemed necessary by the Church Governing Board, such as a change in either of the two elected positions.
- h. Submit a written report of the financial transactions at each regular meeting of the Voters Assembly.
- i. Prepare and submit the necessary financial or related reports or documents to the District, Synod, Internal Revenue Service and other agencies.
- j. Have the authority to appoint members to the Treasury Team to assist with accounts payable, payroll, and other treasury responsibilities, as needed.



- k. Assist the Board for Human Resources, as needed.
 - l. Refer to the *Lutheran Church Missouri Synod Congregational Treasurer's Manual* for additional information on various aspects of the duties of congregational treasurer.
4. FINANCIAL SECRETARY
- The Financial Secretary shall:
- a. Serve as a voting member of the Church Governing Board.
 - b. Recruit, train and oversee a team of Counters who assist with the counting of offerings. See Article XI.B.1 of this document for Counter policies.
 - c. Collect the weekly summary report of cash receipts from Counters and verify that the information is correct and balances. Submit any corrections to the Treasurer.
 - d. Maintain a current record of all cash receipts and individual contributions made by members through contribution envelopes; these remain the property of the Congregation.
 - e. Track offerings from all online giving platforms and matching programs (e.g., Joyful Response, PayPal Giving).
 - f. Submit the records of congregational receipts to the Audit Committee for audit annually after the close of the calendar year or whenever there is a change in either this elected position or the elected position of the Treasurer.
 - g. Submit a written report of the giving at each regular meeting of the Voters Assembly.
 - h. Provide members with an annual statement of their offerings.
 - i. Assign envelope numbers to members and order envelopes for members on an annual basis.
5. ELDER REPRESENTATIVE
- The Elder Representative shall:
- a. Serve as a voting member of the Church Governing Board.
 - b. Act as a formal communication link between the Board of Elders and the Governing Board.
 - c. Provide guidance and input.
6. AT-LARGE MEMBERS
- At-Large Members shall:
- a. Serve as a voting member of the Church Governing Board.
 - b. Assist with special projects, as needed.

ARTICLE V – BOARD OF ELDERS

POLICY OWNER: BOARD OF ELDERS

- A. *Functions and Responsibilities*
- B. *Leadership*
- C. *Structure of the Board*
 1. *Spiritual Oversight Team*
 2. *Worship Team*
 3. *Disciple Care Team*
- D. *Human Resources Board*
- E. *Altar Guild*



A. FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board of Elders assist the Pastor to “proclaim and interpret Scripture; represent the mercy and forgiveness of Christ,” especially through leading worship and administering the Sacraments; “train people as disciples; guide people in a life of prayer; and encourage faith” (Eugene Peterson).

General responsibilities:

1. Be directly concerned with all matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the Congregation.
2. Perform the Elder duties of the Congregation as described in this policy manual.
3. Annually, in August, recommend any revisions or additions to the Church Governing Board.
4. Arrange for special and appropriate observances of various Congregation anniversaries and other significant church events.
5. Study, review and understand the purpose and importance of church discipline in a Christian congregation and be prepared to carry out such discipline carefully, patiently, prayerfully, and with compassion in accordance with the Word of God.
6. Meet at least monthly to perform assigned duties and responsibilities and make reports to the Church Governing Board and Voters Assembly.

B. LEADERSHIP

1. CHAIRMAN

The Chairman of the Board of Elders shall:

- a. Be elected from the Elders for a term of one year beginning January 1.
- b. Be a member of the Church Governing Board unless the Board of Elders designates another representative. See Bylaws Article VI.B.
- c. In the absence of the Pastor, supervise the Staff Members.

2. SECRETARY

The Secretary of the Board of Elders shall:

- a. Be elected from the Elders for a term of one year beginning January 1.
- b. Keep accurate records of the minutes of the Board meetings for a permanent record of the Board.

The Pastor and any Called Workers shall serve as advisory members to the Board.

C. STRUCTURE OF THE BOARD

The Elders are divided into three separate teams: Spiritual Oversight, Worship, and Discipleship. Each team shall prepare and submit to the Budget Committee an annual estimate of expenditures and income for all Board of Elders programs.

The Board of Elders shall authorize expenditures within the budget approved by the Voters Assembly and comply with all Payment Authorization Policies and Procedures.

Teams will establish goals that support Bethel’s mission and periodically evaluate their progress toward the goals they set for themselves. Final decision-making and responsibility lie with each team, who are accountable to the entire Board of Elders and the Congregation. The Elders may recruit and train other volunteers from the congregation to serve with them.



1. SPIRITUAL OVERSIGHT TEAM

Spiritual Oversight Team Mission Statement: The Spiritual Oversight Team helps guide and provide leadership in the following areas: 1) Ensure Bethel's policies and practices on doctrinal issues abide by and align with LCMS guidelines and teachings. 2) Lead, motivate and support Bethel's overall mission. 3) Support Bethel Called Workers and Staff Members with workplace related matters.

Responsibilities:

- a. Regularly study and prepare materials to assist in the development of Bethel's mission.
- b. Be a catalyst in leadership to bring attention to the overall mission.
- c. Provide oversight of the doctrine taught in all aspects of Bethel's discipleship.
- d. Assist the pastor and Called Workers in their development of goals and carrying out their responsibilities.
- e. Assist the pastor in evaluating the day-to-day needs for other church staff.
- f. Develop salaries and benefit packages, while also advocating for the staff with other boards regarding their budget needs to carry out their responsibilities. If needed, designate a Human Resources Committee to assist with these responsibilities.

2. WORSHIP TEAM

Worship Team Mission Statement: Provide and support an inviting and encouraging worship experience at Bethel.

Responsibilities:

- a. Schedule the calendar of services and handle changes to the schedule.
- b. Oversee set-up, conducting of the service, and break-down for worship services.
- c. Ensure at least one Elder is present at all worship services.
- d. Assist Pastor, music director, organists, etc. in planning worship.
- e. Regularly evaluate the whole worship experience.
- f. Recruit, train, and coordinate additional worship team members, as needed.
- g. Recruit, train, and coordinate Communion Assistants and Ushers.
- h. Ensure that Pastor and musicians have materials, equipment and training for leading worship.
- i. Support the Altar Guild in their responsibilities.
- j. Coordinate the procurement of communion wine and other supplies.
- k. Schedule Communion Assistants.
- l. Welcome members and visitors at worship.
- m. Support other worship functions such as acolytes, readers.

3. DISCIPLE CARE TEAM

Disciple Care Team Mission Statement: Partner with staff and members in caring for the people connected with Bethel.

Responsibilities:

- a. Recruit, train, and coordinate additional Disciple Care volunteers.
- b. Provide for regular check-ins and communication with members.
- c. Coordinate care visits for families in need (hospital, shut-in, death, etc.).
- d. Coordinate care contacts and visits to members who have been absent from worship.
- e. Develop process for contacting inactive members and making recommendations for the removal of members if necessary.
- f. Provide for developing relationships with new disciples.
- g. Encourage current members and new disciples to be involved in faith-developing relationships and conversations.



- h. Coordinate with Generosity Team regarding the individual giving discipleship of members.

D. HUMAN RESOURCES BOARD

1. FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Human Resources (HR) Board, overseen by the Board of Elders, meets as needed to fulfill its responsibilities:

- a. Review, approve and recommend to the Governing Board the compensation, benefits and vacation arrangements for the staff, including, but not limited to, the Pastor, office staff, Preschool Director, teachers, musicians, and any other staff.
- b. Develop and maintain a staff organization chart.
- c. Develop and maintain an Employee Handbook to ensure compliance with all laws and fair treatment for all staff.
- d. Establish a performance review procedure for all staff.
- e. Develop any other policies and procedures necessary to provide for the needs of the staff.
- f. Serve as a primary resource for employees experiencing conflicts in the workplace.
- g. Ensure all information discussed in Human Resources Board meetings is kept confidential.

2. LEADERSHIP

The Chair of the Human Resources Board shall be elected by the Board from among its board members:

- a. Elder #1, appointed by the Board of Elders
- b. Elder #2, appointed by the Board of Elders
- c. Congregation member #1, appointed by the Board of Elders
- d. Congregation member #2, appointed by the Board of Elders
- e. Member of the Governing Board, appointed by the President
- f. Voting member of the Preschool Board, appointed by the Preschool Board
- g. The Pastor (Advisory Member)

E. ALTAR GUILD

1. FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Altar Guild contributes to Bethel by creating an inspirational and spiritual atmosphere in which congregants may worship.

2. LEADERSHIP

The Altar Guild works together as a team; members are appointed and overseen by Board of Elders.

ARTICLE VI – PASTORAL OFFICE

POLICY OWNER: BOARD OF ELDERS

- A. Role of the Pastor*
- B. Pastoral Goals*
- C. Structural Policies*



A. ROLE OF THE PASTOR

The Pastor is called by the congregation to “proclaim and interpret Scripture; represent the mercy and forgiveness of Christ,” especially through leading worship and administering the Sacraments; “train people as disciples; guide people in a life of prayer; and encourage faith” (Eugene Peterson).

B. PASTORAL GOALS

The pastor will teach, pursue, and embody the mission and goals of the congregation, while also encouraging and equipping the leadership and members of the congregation to accomplish the mission and goals.

1. Discipleship: The pastor will intentionally call our members to an ever-deepening discipleship—moving from head knowledge of the faith to “heart life.” The pastor will lead the members to lovingly build each other up in our faith and daily living while also encouraging the members to speak the truth of God’s message to all people. The pastor will:
 - a. Regularly teach about discipleship, especially using the PRAY-EAT-LOVE paradigm. See Article II.B.
 - b. Provide opportunities for new people and members to be continually encouraged in their membership commitments. See Article II.D.
2. Care for Members and the Community: The pastor will lead the way in building supportive relationships with others by developing a connection as we serve them or serve together with them. This means caring for those already at Bethel, while also engaging those outside of Bethel. The pastor will:
 - a. Ensure staff and leaders provide ways to support members of Bethel who are in need, through financial donations, in-kind donations, acts of service, and relationships. Staff and leaders will provide this support through equipping members of the congregation.
 - b. Develop partnerships, or encourage staff and leaders to develop partnerships, with community organizations that align (at least in part) with our mission and goals to serve the community. The Staff and leaders will maintain good communication with those community organizations, while also ensuring that the congregation regularly hears about their efforts.
 - c. Lead the congregation in seeking to serve the underserved (homeless, poor, marginalized, etc.) and in pursuing justice, mercy, and love in our community; this may include anti-racism, support for immigrants, dignity for those affected by crime, and compassion for those struggling with addiction.
 - d. Encourage and support the Care in Community Team who will organize and lead specific community-serving efforts.
3. Intentional Spiritual Outreach: The pastor will intentionally go into our community to seek out places to begin, develop and deepen spiritual conversations that lead toward the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We will work cooperatively with all Christians in our community, as far as our Lutheran Confessions allow, to build spiritual connections and conversations. The pastor will:
 - a. Model such spiritual conversations for the congregation, inviting others into those spaces so they also are part of those relationships.
 - b. Develop partnerships with LCMS Circuit churches, Gurnee churches (GO Together), and Waukegan churches (Mosaic), and any other congregations which align, at least in part, with our mission and goals, so that we may spur one another on in the Gospel and works of service.



4. Equipping: Biblically speaking, the pastor, staff, and leaders “equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12). The Pastor will lead Staff and leaders to coach, train, equip and encourage people in daily missional living and congregational leadership.

The pastor will:

- a. Regularly teach missional living and encourage members to use their spiritual gifts to envision how God may use them in His Gospel mission.
- b. Support equipping efforts by Staff and leaders.
- c. “Facilitate the ministry rather than do the ministry;” inviting and equipping others to serve in the congregation’s mission, distributing the responsibility beyond the Pastor and Staff.

C. STRUCTURAL POLICIES

1. The Pastor shall be an ex officio member of the Voters Assembly, the Governing Board, and the Board of Elders. The Pastor shall provide spiritual guidance and mission development support to these bodies.
2. The Pastor shall advise other boards and teams when called upon.
3. The Pastor shall arrange for additional pastoral services as may be necessary, including substitute pastors for the regular worship services during his absence and guest pastors for other appropriate occasions, such as mission festivals and other special church events, when deemed necessary and approved by the Board of Elders.
4. The Pastor shall arrange with local pastors affiliated with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to be on call during his absence to minister to the needs of the members of the Congregation and their families.
5. The Pastor shall provide to the Board of Elders an “Emergency Pastoral Absence” document which lists possible substitute pastors and provides guidelines if the Pastor becomes suddenly unavailable to perform his responsibilities for worship.
6. The Pastor shall be day-to-day supervisor of any Called Workers and Church Staff Members, including part-time workers (excluding the custodial staff who are supervised by the Property Board). The Pastor shall provide support, but not supervision, for the Preschool Director and Staff.
7. The Pastor shall not have access to the giving records of Bethel’s members or guests or the main safe.

ARTICLE VII – PRESCHOOL BOARD

POLICY OWNER: PRESCHOOL BOARD

- A. *Functions and Responsibilities*
- B. *Leadership*
- C. *Election to the Preschool Board*
- D. *Functions and Responsibilities of Leaders*

A. FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Preschool shall:

1. Provide, for a not-for-profit fee, Christian education and training for the preschool-age children of the congregation and others as enrollment permits.
2. Be responsible for the policies, curriculum, administration and direction of the Preschool and Preschool Director and staff.



3. Initiate a search and selection of candidates to recommend for employment as Preschool Director and teaching staff members. Conditions for employment: each person shall meet his/her respective position qualifications listed in the *Illinois Licensing Standards: Day and Night Care Centers*. In addition, the Preschool Director preferably shall be a communicant member of an LCMS congregation and be a bachelor-degree graduate of an LCMS college or university or equivalent approved by the Board of Elders.
4. If the Board for Preschool decides to employ a Director who is not a member of Bethel, strategies can promote a cooperative relationship between the Director and the congregation. The following guidelines apply. The Director shall:
 - a. Attend a worship service at Bethel at least once a month.
 - b. Attend Preschool Board and other congregational meetings to represent the Preschool ministry.
 - c. Attend congregational dinners and social activities whenever feasible.
 - d. Be involved in the worship service several times a year.
 - e. Promote the congregation's mission and ministry.
5. Coordinate with the Office Assistant and Property Board for the Preschool's use of Bethel facilities.
6. Submit an annual estimate of proposed Preschool expenditures and income to the Treasurer for inclusion in the preparation of a proposed budget. Set fee schedules for the Preschool. Determine who will be authorized for the Preschool to commit to expenditures within the budget approved by the Voters Assembly. Comply with the Payment Authorization Procedure.
7. Participate in the annual Christian Education Rally Day.
8. Appoint one of its voting members to serve on the Board for Human Resources.

B. LEADERSHIP

1. Chair
2. Vice-Chair
3. Secretary
4. At-Large Member #1
5. At-Large Member #2
6. The Pastor, the Preschool Director and a parent representative (who is a non-Bethel member) will be advisory members of the board.

C. ELECTION TO THE PRESCHOOL BOARD

1. The Preschool Board members shall be appointed to a two-year term, with the exception of the parent representative, who shall be appointed to a one-year term. Board members may be reappointed to serve additional terms.
2. To ensure continuity on the board, terms should not expire simultaneously.
3. Any elected, appointed, or employed person may be removed from office by the Voters Assembly by a ballot vote and in Christian and lawful order, for persistent adherence to false doctrine or scandalous life or for persistent neglect of official duties.

D. FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEADERS

1. CHAIR
The Preschool Chair shall:
 - a. Be elected by the Voters Assembly for a term of two years (term to begin January 1 of odd-numbered years).



- b. Appoint to the Preschool Board a Vice-Chair, Secretary and two At-Large Members, to be approved by the Governing Board. If possible, at least two of the members shall be a parent of a child currently or previously enrolled in the Preschool. Voting members of the board must be members of Bethel.

2. PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR

The Preschool Director shall:

- a. Be employed by the Preschool Board, after consultation with the Human Resources Board, with approval by the Voters Assembly.
- b. As directed by the Preschool Board, be responsible for the administration and operation of the Preschool, including supervision and training of the staff. Religious education of the Preschool students will be the shared responsibility of the entire Preschool staff.
- c. Be an advisory member of the Preschool Board.
- d. Report each month to the Preschool Board. The report shall include evaluations of Preschool programs, staff, facilities, finances, and adherence to state regulations.
- e. Submit an annual estimate of proposed Preschool expenditures to the Preschool Board. Conform to the procedures for committing to expenditures within the budget approved by the Voters Assembly. Comply with the Payment Authorization Procedure.
- f. Prepare public relations material and represent the Preschool to the parents and to the community. Provide Preschool news articles for church communications.
- g. Collect fees and tuition to be deposited by the Financial Secretary of the Congregation. Provide a record of fees and tuition paid.
- h. Comply with state of Illinois licensing guidelines.

- E. The Preschool Director and teaching staff shall be employed and supervised by the Preschool Board, after consultation with the Board for Human Resources, with approval by the Voters Assembly. The staff shall have job classifications established by the Preschool Board. Staff members shall perform their respective Preschool assignments consistent with their job classification and as directed by the Preschool Director.

ARTICLE VIII – PROPERTY BOARD

POLICY OWNER: PROPERTY BOARD

- A. *Functions and Responsibilities*
- B. *Leadership Responsibilities*

A. FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Congregation shall have power to acquire property of every kind and description to hold and use such property and deal with, or dispose of, any or all such property by sale, exchange, or gift, when necessary or expedient to carry out the purposes of the Congregation. See Article VIII of the Constitution for information about property rights.

The Property Board shall:

1. Have custody of the property of the Congregation according to proper resolution and instruction by the Voters Assembly.
2. Meet as needed to perform its assigned duties and make reports to the Church Governing Board and the Voters Assembly.



3. Systematically inspect the property and facilities of the Congregation for hazards and other required maintenance. Include recommendations for repair in the report to the Church Governing Board and Voters Assembly.
4. Employ a part-time person, approved by the Voters Assembly, after consultation with the Board for Human Resources, for the required custodial care of the facilities of the Congregation. Supervise the custodian, in conjunction with office staff. Provide for snow removal service and yard work, including lawn care and other maintenance.
5. Schedule use of Bethel facilities by the boards, committees, groups or members, consistent with the policy on facility use below.
6. Determine the amount of fidelity bond that shall be maintained for the Treasurer and Financial Secretary and financial assistants of the Congregation.
7. Provide the necessary insurance protection. Review and compare the types and amount for adequacy of coverage. Recommend any change to the Voters Assembly.
8. Update the inventory of all Congregational property and equipment; include the estimated or actual acquisition dates and current or replacement values.
9. Manage Property Board finances and records:
 - a. Provide a safety deposit box for Congregational documents. Include the State Charter, property deed, insurance policies, mortgage, history, copy of current contracts, Constitution and Bylaws, Policy Manual, and inventory of equipment, furniture and fixtures. Maintain a list of the documents kept in the safety deposit box on file with the Recording Secretary of the Congregation.
 - b. Deposit all money and checks received with the Financial Secretary of the Congregation.
 - c. Prepare and submit to the Budget Committee a budget which includes an annual estimate of expenditures and income for property management programs. Authorize expenditures within the budget approved by the Voters Assembly. Comply with the Payment Authorization Procedure.
 - d. Purchase items or services for property management programs without prior approval, provided each instance does not exceed \$2,000. However, for emergency situations to protect congregational property, the \$2,000 limit may be exceeded. In such case, notify the President of the Congregation promptly and report the expenditure to the Church Governing Board and Voters Assembly for ratification.
 - e. For non-emergency items or services estimated to cost more than \$2,000, obtain three bids and submit them to the Church Governing Board and the Voters Assembly for ratification.

B. LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Property Board shall consist of a Chair and additional members as deemed necessary to meet the objectives of the Board.
2. The Pastor shall be an advisory member of the Board.

ARTICLE IX – BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

POLICY OWNER: BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

- A. Functions and Responsibilities*
- B. Leadership Responsibilities*



A. FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board of Christian Education shall:

1. Provide for the following:
 - a. The Christian education and training of the children of the Congregation. Parents shall be encouraged to enroll their children in the Sunday School, pre-confirmation classes, Bible classes and other agencies for growth in Christian knowledge.
 - b. The continuing Christian education and training for its members and guests of all ages. The Christian education objective shall be to grow in knowledge of the Triune God and His Word through regular Bible study in the church and in the home. The Christian training objective shall be to grow in Christian living and thereby glorify God in all that we say and do.
 - c. If a Christian day school is established in the Congregation or in association with other congregations, it shall be the privilege and responsibility of every member to support and maintain such a parochial school and parents shall be encouraged to enroll their children therein.
2. Meet as needed to perform its assigned duties and responsibilities and make reports to the Church Council and the Voters Assembly.
3. Regularly encourage members to prepare for full-time professional service in the church by attending a college and seminary of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.
4. Appoint a Sunday School Superintendent(s), a VBS Director(s), and a Bible Study Coordinator for terms described below. Provide direction as required for each of these appointees.
5. Encourage attendance by Board members at institutes, workshops, rallies and conventions sponsored by the Circuit, District and Synod.
6. Annually observe Christian Education Rally Day, including recognition of Sunday School leaders, staff and teachers, Bible Study leaders, VBS leaders and Preschool Director and staff.
7. With the Generosity Team, enlist the necessary number of people to implement the Christian education programs of the Congregation.
8. Adhere to the safety policies as stated in Article XI.E of this document.
9. Schedule use of Bethel facilities for Christian education programs.
10. Prepare and submit to the Treasurer an annual estimate of expenditures and income for all educational programs. Use the procedures and authority for committing to expenditures within the budget approved by the Voters Assembly. Comply with the Payment Authorization Procedure.

B. LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Board of Christian Education shall consist of a Chair, a Vice Chair, and at-large members. The Pastor, Sunday School Superintendent(s), VBS Director(s), and Bible Study Coordinator shall be advisory members of the Board.
2. The Chair of the Board of Christian Education shall be appointed for a term of two years. The Chairperson shall appoint the Vice Chair and the members-at-large for two-year terms.
3. The Vice Chair of the Board of Christian Education shall assume the duties of the Chair, in the event of temporary absence of the Chair.

ARTICLE X – ADDITIONAL STANDING BOARDS AND TEAMS

- A. *Youth Board*
- B. *Generosity Team*
- C. *Care in Community Team*
- A. YOUTH BOARD



POLICY OWNER: YOUTH BOARD

1. FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Youth Board shall:

- a. Provide Junior Youth (7th and 8th grade), Senior Youth (9th through 12th grade), and young adults and families with opportunities to become involved in the work of the church, to grow spiritually, and to foster Christian fellowship and service.
- b. Meet as necessary.
- c. Ensure that plans are in place for Junior Youth, Senior Youth, and Family ministry which shall include the following:
 - 1) Spiritual growth through Bible study and prayer in cooperation with the Boards of Christian Education and Elders.
 - 2) Social fellowship and recreation.
 - 3) Christian service and charity.
 - 4) Christian perspective on current events.
- d. Adhere to the Youth safety policies as stated in Article XI.E of this document.
- e. Support and encourage parents of Junior Youth and Senior Youth.
- f. Schedule use of Bethel facilities for Christian education programs.
- g. Submit an annual estimate of Youth Board expenditures and income to the Budget Committee and comply with the payment Authorization Procedure. Deposit all money collected for Youth Board with the Financial Secretary of the congregation.

2. LEADERSHIP

- a. The Youth Board will be led by a member appointed as Chair.
- b. The Chair shall be appointed to a two-year term. A Chair may be appointed to serve additional terms.
- c. The Chair may appoint a Vice Chair, if needed.
- d. The Chair shall appoint others to serve on the Youth Board. Those serving on the Youth Board are not required to be members of Bethel.
- e. The Chair and members of the Youth Board shall participate regularly in worship.

B. GENEROSITY TEAM

POLICY OWNER: GENEROSITY TEAM

1. FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Generosity Team shall:

- a. Help Bethel members find ways to use their time, talent, and treasure to the glory of God.
- b. Coordinate expressions of gratitude and appreciation for those sharing their spiritual gifts with Bethel.
- c. Meet as necessary.

2. LEADERSHIP

- a. The Generosity Team will be led by a member appointed to the Chair position.
- b. The Chair shall be appointed to a two-year term and may serve additional terms.
- c. The Chair may appoint a Vice Chair, if needed.
- d. The Chair shall appoint others to serve on the Generosity Team. Those serving on the Generosity Team are not required to be members of Bethel.
- e. The Chair and members of the team shall participate regularly in worship.



C. CARE IN COMMUNITY TEAM

POLICY OWNER: BOARD OF ELDERS

1. FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Care in Community team shall:

- a. Serve as the hands and feet of Jesus in our community. The primary function is to work with Bethel's partners in the community, such as: Love INC and COOL Food Pantry.
- b. Meet as necessary.
- c. Ensure contributions made to the church and designated for Care in Community projects are recorded by the Financial Secretary and placed in a special account by the Treasurer.
- d. Ensure expenditures incurred by Care in Community members are turned in for reimbursement to the church office, following procedures outlined by the Treasurer.

2. LEADERSHIP

- a. All Bethel members are welcome to join the Care in Community team.
- b. A Chair shall be elected from the team.
- c. The Chair is responsible for communication with the Governing Board and the Congregation.

ARTICLE XI – CONGREGATION OPERATING POLICIES

POLICY OWNER: INDICATED BELOW

A. *Board of Elders Policies*

1. *Marriage Policies*
2. *Communion, Serving Communion*
3. *Women Serving at Bethel*

B. *Financial Policies*

C. *Communication Policies*

D. *Facility Use Policies*

E. *Children and Youth Safety Policies*

A. BOARD OF ELDERS POLICIES

POLICY OWNER: BOARD OF ELDERS

1. MARRIAGE POLICIES

a. God's Design for Marriage and Sexuality

Sexuality is God's gift to us as part of how He created us as male and female. He designed marriage between man and woman as mutually beneficial—including the mutual enjoyment of sexuality within the safety and commitment of marriage. Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 tells "married Christians that mutual, satisfying sexual relations must be an important part [of] their life together" (Timothy Keller, 232). "The Bible gives us a high view of sex. It is a sign and seal of our oneness with each other and with God...Sex is glorious....Sex between a man and a woman points to the love between the Father and the Son (1 Corinthians 11:3). It is a reflection of the joyous self-giving and pleasure of love within the very life of the triune God" (Keller, 234-235).

b. Whole Life Union

Bethel Lutheran believes that God's Word reveals only one design for marriage: one man and one woman. Marriage is designed as the union of heart, mind, and body of the complementary sexes in a whole life union.



c. Honoring God's Design for Marriage with Body, Soul, and Mind

Only marriage encompasses full bodily and spiritual intimacy as designed by the Creator. Marriage as an institution not only fosters healthy, loving relationships, it also curbs unhealthy ones as well (1 Corinthians 7:9–11). All sexual sins harm us body and soul (1 Corinthians 6:18). Chastity and purity in marriage or in singleness honor God and His institution of marriage.

d. Marriage is a Life-Long Commitment

God's original design and intention for marriage is a life-long bond. This bond comes from the commitment by husband and wife to learn to love one another daily, consciously choosing to show forth the love of God towards each other. This love and commitment sustains marriage—not merely a compatibility of interests and talents. While divorce can be justified scripturally in certain situations, adultery or desertion (which can also be seen to include abuse), it is always preferable for couples to forgive and work toward healing and strengthening their marriage. "What God has joined together, let not man separate," as the Savior says in Matthew 19.

e. Men and Women Honoring God's Design for Sexuality

If you are not sexually abstinent as a couple, you are asked to remain abstinent until the time of the wedding to honor God's intention for the gift of sexuality as that shared by husband and wife, using the time of abstinence to help build your oneness on the grounds of your faith in Jesus and your commitment to one another. It is with God's design of sexuality in mind that we consider living together before marriage as dishonoring God's order for our lives. It gives the appearance of marriage when there is no marriage yet. It gives the appearance of sin—sex outside of marriage—which inhibits a clear, Christian witness to family, friends, and the community. In addition, we are concerned for couples who live together before marriage because studies have shown that cohabitating couples do not benefit from living together prior to the wedding (Keller, 23).

If you are living together, you are asked to consider:

- Moving apart until the wedding. We will provide assistance in thinking about how you can do this according to your financial and other needs.
- Get married as soon as possible, likely in a small ceremony, while retaining the wedding date as a public celebration before God and your loved ones.

If you do not choose either of these options, Pastor will work with you regarding your specific situation, so that we can find a God-pleasing option in honoring His gift of marriage.

f. Honoring God's Design for Sexuality within Marriage

Bethel Lutheran affirms the Scriptural teaching that any kind of sexual union aside from that between a man and a woman falls outside of God's will and design for His Creation. As sinful people, we all face different ranges of sexual temptation that lure us away from God's will—temptations towards promiscuity, lust, pornography, same-sex attraction, and others. But those temptations do not need to define us, and just because we experience certain temptations does not allow us to rewrite God's design.



g. Marriage as One Man and One Woman

Bethel Lutheran believes that God's Word reveals only one design for marriage: one man and one woman. Marriage is designed as the union of heart, mind, and body of the complementary sexes in a whole life union. Therefore, we believe same-sex marriage, plural marriage, open marriage, or other definitions of marriage do not follow God's will for marriage. We affirm the official position of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod that homosexual unions come under categorical prohibition in the Old and New Testaments (Leviticus 18:22,24; Leviticus 20:13; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:9-10) as contrary to the Creator's design (Romans 1:26-27). Our pastors will not officiate over any marriages (at Bethel or elsewhere) inconsistent with these beliefs, and our church property may not be used for any marriage ceremony, reception or other activity that would be inconsistent with our beliefs and this policy.

h. Gospel-focused Ministry to Those Struggling with Sexual Sin

Bethel Lutheran Church adopts a commitment to remain Gospel-focused in our ministry to all people, including those who struggle with sexual sin. We recognize that all persons are by nature sinful and in need of the loving forgiveness that can only come from the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Therefore, while our beliefs about sexuality and marriage uphold God's intention for our lives, this will not preclude Bethel Lutheran from ministering with loving compassion to all members of our community—pointing out sin, proclaiming forgiveness in the cross, and pursuing a life that shines with God's light.

2. COMMUNION, SERVING COMMUNION

- a. The Lord's Supper is celebrated according to the Lutheran Confessions based on the teaching Jesus gave his disciples and us that He is truly present in this meal. Confident that our sins are forgiven, we experience our oneness with him and each other as he gathers us at his table. In this meal we share His true body and blood, given and shed for us, as he invites in Matthew 26:26-28: "Take and eat; this is my Body....This is my Blood...." Baptized Christians sharing these beliefs are invited to receive Communion. All others are invited to the altar for a blessing.
- b. Holy Communion shall be celebrated with common cup and individual cup on the first, third, and fifth Sunday (when there is one) of each month. Holy Communion shall also be celebrated at other special services as determined by the Board of Elders. An Elder shall be designated to procure the wine for Holy Communion on a regular basis.
- c. Elements used at Communion must be consecrated by an ordained LCMS minister.
- d. Communion will be served by the Pastor, or an ordained LCMS minister in his absence, with Communion Assistants from the Board or Elders, and/or former Elders, and/or other male members of the congregation as designated by the Board of Elders.

3. WOMEN SERVING AT BETHEL

Women may serve in any lay position at Bethel with the exception of Elder and Communion Assistant.

B. FINANCIAL POLICIES

POLICY OWNER: GOVERNING BOARD

1. POLICIES FOR COUNTERS

- a. Qualifications to be a Counter:
 - 1) Be a member of Bethel Lutheran church for a minimum of two years.



- 2) Be appointed and approved by the Financial Secretary.
 - 3) Complete Counter training.
- b. Counters shall:
- 1) Work in pairs at all times. No counter should be working alone.
 - 2) Complete counting as soon as possible after the church service, but no later than the Wednesday following the Sunday service.
 - 3) Complete counting in the church building, unless otherwise approved by the Financial Secretary.
 - 4) Provide for the security of such funds until a deposit is made.
 - 5) Deposit all congregational moneys in a depository designated by the Voters Assembly.
 - 6) Submit summary report of cash receipts to the Financial Secretary.
 - 7) Keep private all information regarding members and their giving.

2. POLICIES FOR GIFTS AND BEQUESTS

Bethel Lutheran Church joyfully accepts memorial gifts and bequests from both members and friends. These irrevocable gifts are to be used to support the mission of the church.

- a. All gifts will be acknowledged by a letter from the church office and recorded in a book of Memorials, available for viewing by members of the congregation, unless the gift is made by an anonymous donor. No plaques or similar attachments to purchases will be used to recognize the name of the person being honored.
- b. The Financial Secretary will record the gifts from members as part of their annual giving record.
- c. Designated gifts are directed by the donor to a specific purpose. The Church Governing Board, or a Memorial Sub-Committee, will maintain a list of suggested designated gifts (e.g., Building Program, Capital Improvement Fund). Any requests for designated gifts other than the existing list must be approved by the Church Governing Board. The Pastor or a member of the Church Governing Board will work with the donor to find a suitable designation that serves the current mission and needs of the church.
- d. Non-designated gifts (not directed by the donor to a specific purpose) will be kept in a special fund for future use as determined by the Church Governing Board. These funds will generally be used for purposes outside of the regular church budget, but they may be used for any purpose as approved by the Church Governing Board. The use of Memorial funds will be published in normal church communications.
- e. Non-monetary gifts (e.g., furniture, lawn equipment) require the approval of the Property Board prior to donation to determine that it meets the current needs of the congregation. The donor is required to properly assess the fair market value of the gift if they are using the gift for an IRS deduction. The church will provide a written acknowledgement of the gift, but not assess its value.
- f. Gifts of stocks or similar securities are accepted but will be sold for their cash value by the Church treasurer as soon as is prudent and appropriate. The cash derived from the sale will be applied as either a designated or non-designated gift, depending on the request of the donor.
- g. Property gifts (such as land or grave sites) may be held or sold by the Church depending upon the current mission and needs. Sale of such property will require approval of the Church Governing Board.

C. COMMUNICATION POLICIES



1. All standing Boards and Teams shall share updates with the congregation at Voters Meetings.
2. All standing Boards and Teams shall provide frequent updates to the congregation via Bethel's established communication channels (e.g., verbal announcements, email, mail, social media). The office staff may assist with this, as needed.

D. FACILITY USE POLICIES

POLICY OWNER: PROPERTY BOARD

1. FACILITY USE OVERVIEW

Bethel Lutheran Church's building and property are available for use by members for personal use, community groups and organizations (which include a Bethel member), community groups and organizations which are Bethel's partners, and community groups and organizations without a Bethel member. Decisions on appropriate uses will be governed by this policy, enacted by Bethel's Elders, Property Board, and Staff, on behalf of the congregation. This policy shall establish facility and property use guidelines which allow discretion by the decision makers.

2. WORSHIP USE

We at Bethel Lutheran rejoice in God's providence to us in the property we have. It is a gift of God, and we prayerfully desire to be good stewards of this gift. While the primary purpose of our property is for the worship and functions of Bethel Lutheran, we recognize that at times we may have the opportunity to share this property with other Christian churches or groups, including for worship services (including weddings and funerals). Any worship use (including services, rites, teaching) will be Christian, acknowledging that Jesus Christ is the only way to eternal life. Any requests for facility use for other religious activities at odds with the confession of the Christian faith will be denied.

a. ONE-TIME WORSHIP USE

- 1) If another LCMS church, pastor, or entity requests one-time use of a space for worship, permission may be granted by the Pastor in consultation with the Staff and Property Board Chair. The Board of Elders should be informed.
- 2) Requests by non-LCMS churches, pastors, or entities for one-time use of a space for worship must be brought to the Board of Elders for their approval. If approved by the Elders, the use must then be coordinated with the Staff and Property Board Chair.
- 3) Priority for granting requests for non-LCMS worship use will be given to GO! Together church partners or other local partners with whom we have established relationships in reaching out to Gurnee and surrounding communities.
- 4) Granting permission for a non-LCMS worship use does not constitute a statement of agreement in theology between the churches.
- 5) The following guidelines apply:
 - a) This priority may be adjusted for certain worship activities (e.g., charismatic demonstrations) which may be at odds with Bethel's belief and practice of worship. This will be determined by the Elders in consultation with the Pastor.
 - b) Worship use will also be declined to churches holding confessions at radical conflict with the Gospel of Jesus Christ as confessed by Bethel. This may include Catholic, Seventh-Day Adventist, and non-evangelical mainline denominations, along with non-Christian entities



such as Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons.

- c) Those conducting weddings must read and agree with Bethel's Marriage and Sexuality Statement, and they must not be from a congregation that conducts weddings outside of this policy.
 - d) Worship use may also be declined if the needs of the other church require substantial changes to the sanctuary, gym, or other location, including moving furniture (esp. in the chancel), audio/visual, musical instruments, or other needs.
- 6) Use of Bethel's equipment (including organ, other instruments, audio/visual, etc.) shall be governed by the Building Use Agreement.
 - 7) Any outside group granted permission for one-time worship use will require a volunteer sponsor from Bethel who will be responsible for unlocking/locking the building, oversight of Bethel equipment, etc. The outside group shall be responsible for cleaning up and/or paying a cleaning fee.
 - 8) Any outside group use is subject to the needs of Bethel, including rescheduling due to Bethel's worship needs.

b. ONGOING WORSHIP USE

- 1) Groups seeking ongoing worship use of Bethel space, whether LCMS or non-LCMS, will need to be considered by the Elders, Property Board, and the Governing Board.
- 2) Requests by another church for ongoing use of a space for worship must be brought to the Board of Elders for their approval. If approved by the Elders, the use must then also be approved by the Property Board, Church Governing Board, and finally the Voters.
- 3) Priority for granting requests will be given to LCMS entities, GO! Together church partners, or other local partners with whom we have established relationships in reaching out to Gurnee and surrounding communities.
- 4) Granting permission for a non-LCMS worship use does not constitute a statement of agreement in theology between the churches.
- 5) The following guidelines apply: See Article XI.D.2.a.5).
- 6) Use of Bethel's equipment (including organ, other instruments, audio/visual, etc.) shall be governed by a specific agreement written to establish the ongoing relationship with this outside group and their use of the facility— including building access rules, insurance and liability concerns, scheduling, working relationship arrangements, and rental fees.

3. PERSONAL USE BY MEMBERS

Members may request to use the facility and/or property of the congregation according to the guidelines established by the Property Board. Appropriate uses would include receptions, birthday parties, family gatherings, small meetings or activities. The facility shall not be used for the purposes of for-profit entities, commercial/retail sales, or business marketing events. Priority for building use will be given to congregational activities and any other events/groups which have been previously scheduled.

4. USE BY COMMUNITY GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

a. GROUPS WHICH INCLUDE A BETHEL MEMBER

A community group or organization which includes a Bethel member may request to use the facility and/or property of the congregation according to the guidelines established by the Property Board. The Bethel member shall be the responsible party



for the building and property use.

Appropriate uses would include non-profit organizations, community meetings, speakers or presentations, meals, and athletic events/practices. The facility shall not be used for the purposes of for-profit entities, commercial/retail sales, or business marketing events. Community groups and organizations shall be those which pursue goals aligned with Bethel's values and beliefs. (We do not require groups to be in full doctrinal agreement with Bethel in order to use our facility and property; however, the Elders—in consultation with the Pastor—shall determine if a group's goals substantially differ with Bethel's values and beliefs). Use by a community group or organization does not necessarily constitute an endorsement by Bethel Lutheran or its members. Priority for building use will be given to congregational activities and any other events/groups which have been previously scheduled.

b. **USE BY COMMUNITY GROUPS WHICH ARE BETHEL'S PARTNERS**

A non-profit community group or organization which partners with Bethel may request to use the facility and/or property of the congregation according to the guidelines established by the Property Board. The responsible party from the organization shall be granted temporary use of necessary keys and building access. Appropriate uses would include meetings, trainings, speakers/presentations, and events led by the organization. Community groups and organizations shall be those which pursue goals which are able to be seen as consistent in general with Bethel's values and beliefs as shown by the Church Governing Board, Elders, and/or Voters endorsement of that organization as Bethel's partner. (We do not require groups to be in full doctrinal agreement with Bethel in order to be recognized as a partner or an entity which receives support from Bethel; however, the Elders—in consultation with the Pastor—shall determine if a group's goals substantially differ with Bethel's values and beliefs). Priority for building use will be given to congregational activities and any other events/groups which have been previously scheduled.

c. **USE BY COMMUNITY GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS (WHICH DOES NOT INCLUDE A BETHEL MEMBER)**

A community group or organization which does not include a Bethel member may request to use the facility and/or property of the congregation according to the guidelines established by the Property Board. However, these requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis according to the relationship to the group members and the group's planned use of the facility and property. Bethel does not guarantee that every request can be granted—even if such requests are similar to previously permitted uses. The discretion in these decisions shall be given to the Staff, Property Board, and Elders.

If use is permitted, the organization will designate a responsible party for the building and property use. If necessary, keys and building access will be granted temporarily to this individual. Appropriate uses would include non-profit organizations, community meetings, speakers or presentations, meals, and athletic events/practices. The facility shall not be used for the purposes of for-profit entities, commercial/retail sales, or business marketing events. Community groups and organizations shall be those which pursue goals which are able to be seen as consistent in general with Bethel's values and beliefs. (We do not require groups to be in full doctrinal agreement with Bethel in order to use our facility and property; however, the Elders—in consultation with the Pastor—shall determine if a group's goals substantially differ with Bethel's values and



beliefs).

A use by a community group or organization does not necessarily constitute an endorsement by Bethel Lutheran or its members. Priority for building use will be given to congregational activities and any other events/groups which have been previously scheduled.

E. CHILDREN AND YOUTH SAFETY POLICIES

POLICY OWNER: BOARD OF ELDERS, BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND YOUTH BOARD

1. STAFF AND VOLUNTEER SAFETY STEPS

All staff and volunteers who wish to work with children and/or youth are required to:

- a. Sign the Ministry Safety document verifying that they have read and understood the children and youth safety policies and agree to comply with policy requirements.
- b. Complete required safety training modules.
- c. Consent to a background check.
- d. Attend Bethel for at least six months before serving in a leadership position with children or youth. Attendees of less than six months can volunteer in a supportive role while being supervised by leaders.

2. BACKGROUND CHECKS

- a. Bethel requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children's or youth activities or programming undergo a background check. Type of background check required is determined based on the position:
 - 1) Staff, Board Chairs, Sunday School teachers and other volunteers who work with children or youth on a regular basis are required to undergo a criminal background check.
 - 2) Special event, (e.g., VBS, one-day event) volunteers are required to have their name checked on the Department of Justice National Public Sex Offender Database and the Illinois State Police Murderer and Violent Offender Against Youth Database.
- b. Background checks ordered by Bethel are to be completed by a third-party company of Bethel's choosing.
- c. Background checks are valid for two years.
- d. The background check system should be run and maintained by one designated member from the Board of Christian Education and one designated member from the Youth Board.
- e. All information obtained from the background checks will be kept confidential.

3. POLICIES AND PRACTICES

a. ABUSE TOLERANCE

- 1) Bethel has zero tolerance for abuse in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at this church to act in the best interest of children and youth in every program.
- 2) In the event that staff or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors (e.g., policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual), it is their personal responsibility to immediately report their observations to the Board of Christian Education Chair or the Youth Board Chair.



b. STAFF/VOLUNTEER RATIOS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- 1) Bethel is committed to providing adequate staff and volunteer supervision in all children and youth ministry activities and programs. Groups up to and including 10 children require a minimum of two staff members or volunteers supervising. Groups larger than 10 children require a minimum of three staff members or volunteers supervising. For every additional five children, one staff member or volunteer will be required. If a worker is out of ratio, it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the children or youth leader onsite. This person will make diligent efforts to immediately bring staff member/volunteer to children and youth ratios into compliance with this policy.
- 2) Groups up to and including 20 youth require a minimum of two staff members or volunteers supervising. Groups larger than 20 youth require a minimum of three staff members or volunteers supervising. For every additional 10 youth one staff member or volunteer will be required. If a worker is out of ratio, it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the children or youth leader onsite. This person will make diligent efforts to immediately bring staff member/volunteer to children and youth ratios into compliance with this policy.
- 3) An adult should never be alone with a child or in a classroom, and, under no circumstances, is a child to be left in a classroom or anywhere unattended. This protects children from abuse, and it protects our staff and volunteers from accusation.

c. DISCIPLINE

- 1) Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behavior management of children or youth. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction of inappropriate behaviors.
- 2) If a youth is unruly or fails to comply with verbal warnings or instructions from staff/volunteers, that youth will be asked to leave (if not endangered by doing so) or the youth's parent will be contacted to pick up the youth. In the event of a fight or physical altercation, staff/volunteer will verbally redirect youth involved and will try to avoid physical intervention. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and to the Board of Christian Education Chair or Youth Board Chair.

d. TRANSPORTATION

- 1) Staff members and volunteers may need to provide transportation for youth. Youth should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. No youth will be alone with an adult in a vehicle.
- 2) Only authorized methods of transportation may be used. Church vehicles, individually owned vehicles and rented vehicles are authorized. Uber, Lyft, taxis and other ride share services are not authorized.
- 3) No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving church vans, or vehicles owned or rented, except in an emergency.



- 4) No drivers under age 25 may drive owned or rented vehicles.
 - 5) Parents of youth are required to sign the transportation agreement form prior to the event in which transportation is needed.
- e. PARENTAL CONTACT AND INVOLVEMENT
- 1) Parents who leave a child or youth in the care of our staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if their youth becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in programs. Therefore, contact information for each child and youth must be kept on file.
 - 2) Parents are encouraged to visit and observe any programs in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with youth programs will be required to complete a background check.
- f. SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS
- 1) It is anticipated that certain Youth Ministry activities may occasionally require overnight sleeping arrangements for youth and staff/volunteers (e.g., lock-ins, mission trips, National Youth Gathering). In the event an activity requires sleeping arrangements, staff members and volunteers will ensure the two adult policy is adhered to as stated in Article XI.E.3.b.2).
 - 2) As long as any youth are awake, one of the leaders must also be awake and monitoring youth to ensure safe behavior.
 - 3) In the event of a sleepover on campus that involves both boys and girls, boys and girls must sleep in separate rooms, properly supervised by youth leaders of the same gender.
- g. INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH
- 1) **VERBAL COMMUNICATION:** Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and youth should be positive and uplifting. Staff members and volunteers should not talk to youth in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, staff and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of youth.
 - 2) **SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS AND MATERIALS:** Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with youth and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any youth in the program. However, it is expected that from time-to-time youth ministry discussions and lessons may address age-appropriate issues related to purity, dating, sex and human sexuality. These lessons will convey to the youth the Lutheran Church's views on these topics. It is recommended that parents be notified in advance of these lessons. Staff members and volunteers of our Youth Ministry are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented printed materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of youth.
 - 3) **TEXT AND APP COMMUNICATION:** Text and app communication may be used in moderation as a way for leaders to communicate with the youth. Texts or app messages should be sent to the group rather than to individuals. This approach eliminates problems associated with one-on-one electronic



communication.

- 4) ONE-TO-ONE: We recognize that meeting the emotional needs of youth may occasionally require staff members and volunteers to minister on an individual basis. Staff members and volunteers should conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual youth at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed.
 - 5) PHYSICAL CONTACT: Bethel is committed to protecting youth in its care. To this end, our church has implemented a physical contact policy which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our youth. Side hugs, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and youth are important for youth's development and are generally suitable in the church setting. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to an immediate supervisor. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other youth or youth staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted as such when physical contact is open to observation. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff or volunteers in the Youth Ministry must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach. A youth's preference not to be touched must be respected. Youth staff and volunteers are responsible for protecting youth under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by staff or volunteers must be reported immediately.
 - 6) NUDITY: Staff and volunteers in our youth ministry should never be nude in the presence of youth in their care. In the event there is a situation that may call for the possibility of nudity (e.g., changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat), staff member/volunteer will submit a plan for approval to his/her supervisor concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes, with adults and youth separate.
- h. ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES AND CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION
- 1) Staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from children and youth positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Elders.
 - 2) Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a youth will be prohibited from participation in Youth Ministries. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective agencies.
 - 3) Any person found to have committed a prohibited act should be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children, youth or vulnerable populations at our church. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also



result in termination of employment from our church.

- 4) Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of employment of a staff member or employee. Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children, youth or vulnerable populations at our church.

Addenda

- A. Employee Handbook
- B. Preschool Handbook
- C. Pastor Position Description
- D. Staff Positions Descriptions