

The Constitution,  
By-Laws,  
& Policy and Procedure Manuals  
for

Bethany-Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church &  
Early Childhood Education Center

Waynesboro, Virginia

1772

Updated February 18, 2015

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# Constitution of

Bethany-Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church and Early Childhood Education Center

Waynesboro, Virginia

Approved: March 8, 2009  
Signed: September 6, 2009

## Preamble

Whereas Christ has commissioned His followers to build His Church by spreading the Good News and using His Sacraments (Matthew 28:19-20), and

Whereas Christ teaches us to love God and love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-39),

Therefore, we, as His beloved disciples, declare our intention to do His will as expressed in the purposes listed below. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we will work together in Christian love to achieve these purposes in harmony with the principles and procedures outlined in this constitution and by-laws:

1. **Build the Church** at large and within by spreading the Good News of God's love and using His gifts of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. (Mt 28:18-20)
2. **Love and glorify God** in our daily lives and through corporate worship. (Ps. 25:1-2; 1 Cor. 10:31)
3. **Love our neighbors**, both near and far, through our words and deeds . (Matt. 22:39; Gal. 6:10; Matt. 7:12; Rom. 13.8)
4. **Grow in our understanding and use of His Word** through study, meditation, and prayer. (Ps. 19:14; Ps. 25:4-5; 2 Tim. 3:13-17)
5. **Strengthen Christian fellowship and the Public Ministry among us** through encouragement, admonition, faith, works and orderly procedures (Eph. 4:32; Heb. 13:17; 2 Tim. 3:15-17).
6. **Prepare God's people for works of service** so that the body of Christ may be built up in servant-leader, mission-vision living. (Eph. 4:12)

## **Mission Statement**

Sharing the love and life of Jesus Christ with all!

### **Article 1**      Name

The name of this congregation shall be Bethany-Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church and Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC) of Waynesboro, Virginia

### **Article 2**      Mission

The mission of Bethany-Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church and ECEC is “Sharing the love and life of Jesus Christ with all!”

### **Article 3**      Confession of Faith

The congregation and ECEC acknowledges and adheres to all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God, and all the symbolic books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 as the true and genuine exposition of the doctrines of the Bible.

The symbolical books are: the Ecumenical Creeds (Apostolic, Nicene, Athanasian), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, Luther’s Large and Small Catechisms, and the Formula of Concord.

### **Article 4**      Denominational Membership

This congregation and ECEC shall be a member of with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as long as the confessions and constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are in accord with the confessions and constitution of this congregation as laid down in Article III.

### **Article 5**      Membership

The membership of this congregation includes Baptized Members and Confirmed Members as defined in the bylaws.

## **Article 6**      Organization

### 6.1 Voters' Assembly

The Voters' Assembly shall consist of all voting members present at a regular or special meeting of the congregation. The congregation, through the Voters' Assembly, shall have final authority in managing its internal and external affairs.

### 6.2 Servant - Leadership Council

The Servant - Leadership Council (S-LC) shall be the governing body of the congregation and is responsible to administer all the congregation's affairs except the following matters for action only by the Voters' Assembly:

- 6.2.1      Call or remove a called worker.
- 6.2.2      Purchase or sell church property or buildings valued over 10% of the annual operating budget.
- 6.2.3      Adopt the Annual Spending Plan.
- 6.2.4      Dissolve the congregation.

### 6.3 Servant - Leadership Council & Ministry Teams

The S-LC and Ministry Teams of this congregation shall be such as the bylaws and Policies and Procedures Manual of this constitution prescribe. They shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them in the constitution or bylaws.

### 6.4 Spiritual Care

- 6.4.1      The Spiritual Care Ministry Team will administer, through the Senior Pastor, the spiritual care and nurturing of the congregation.
- 6.4.2      The Senior Pastor will oversee the spiritual care of the Congregation, in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, Article III Confessions of Faith, the purpose of the congregation, as stated in the Preamble and the Mission Statement.

**Article 7** Property Rights

7.1 If, at any time, a separation shall take place within this congregation, the advice of the officers of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod District in which the congregation holds membership shall be sought. If, despite all efforts to resolve differences in peace and love, a division into factions of the congregation shall occur, the property of the congregation and all benefits connected shall remain with the majority of the voters.

7.2 In the event that the congregation dissolves, all property shall be disposed of by the final voters assembly for the payment of debts and all just claims against the congregation, and any and all surplus and all rights connected therewith shall be conveyed to and become the property of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod District in which the congregation holds membership.

**Article 8** Decisions

All congregational matters decided by the Voters' Assembly shall be decided by a simple majority of the voting members present at a properly convened meeting of the Voters' Assembly, except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws.

**Article 9** Amendments

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the votes cast in a meeting of the Voters' Assembly. The wording of the amended constitution and bylaws shall be distributed to all members in a mailing as far in advance as possible, but no less than two (2) Sundays in advance. In addition, the revisions will be distributed to the congregation assembled for worship on two (2) different Sundays prior to the date upon which the amendment is presented for action.

# Bylaws of

## Bethany-Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church and Early Childhood Education Center

### Waynesboro, Virginia

#### **Article 1** Baptized Membership

Baptized members are all persons within the congregation who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God, whether children or adults, and come under the pastoral care of this congregation. It is expected of all baptized members that they:

- 1.1 Attend worship services faithfully and regularly;
- 1.2 Lead a Christian life as taught in Galatians 5:19-26;
- 1.3 Out of Christian love, submit to brotherly admonition, according to Matthew 18, when having erred or offended;
- 1.4 Contribute, as God has blessed them of their testimony, time, talents and treasures to the mission and ministry of the congregation and the extension of the church at large;
- 1.5 In due time, take a course of instruction in preparation for confirmed membership in this congregation;
- 1.6 Are not members of any organization conflicting with the Word of God.

#### **Article 2** Confirmed Membership

Confirmed members are all baptized persons within the congregation who have received a course of instruction in Christian doctrine which meets with the approval of the Servant - Leadership Council. In addition to the duties of baptized members, it is expected of all confirmed members that they:

- 2.1 Accept all Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament as the only divine rule and standard of faith and life;

- 2.2 Familiarize themselves with the doctrines of the Church, at least as set forth in the Catechism and declare acceptance of them;
- 2.3 Partake of the Lord's Supper regularly.
- 2.4 Provide for the Christian training of their children by making use of the educational agencies of the congregation;
- 2.5 Submit willingly and cheerfully to the policies already made or still to be made, provided such policies do not conflict with the Word of God.

**Article 3** Voting Membership

- 3.1 Voting members are all confirmed members who attend a Voters' Meeting. It is expected of all voting members that they shall:
  - 3.1.1 Faithfully attend all meetings of the Voters' Assembly;
  - 3.1.2 Serve faithfully, according to their God-given talents and their testimony to the Gospel, to meet the mission and ministry needs of the congregation.
- 3.2 Every confirmed member has the right and privilege to vote in all congregational meetings. This includes confirmed youth unless the matter under consideration is a legal one, such as when decisions involving contracts and other legal matters are made. It then would be controlled by the statutes of the Commonwealth of Virginia which require a legal voting age.

**Article 4** Termination of Membership

- 4.1 Transfers: A member desiring transfer to another Lutheran congregation shall apply to the Pastor and the Servant - Leadership Council. Upon approval by the Pastor and Servant - Leadership Council, the Pastor and Servant - Leadership Council shall issue a letter of transfer.
- 4.2 Joining Other Churches: In cases where communicant members of this congregation have joined a non-Lutheran congregation, they shall, upon the decision of the Pastor and the Servant - Leadership Council, be deemed to have terminated their membership in this congregation,

forfeiting all rights and privileges of such membership, and they shall be so informed in a letter of release.

- 4.3 Whereabouts Unknown: The names of members whose whereabouts are unknown and cannot be established within one year shall be removed from the membership list of the congregation and placed in a file designated "Whereabouts Unknown".
- 4.4 Mutual Care and Discipline: When it becomes evident and/or apparent that a member of the congregation is experiencing spiritual weakness and shows by his/her life that inward obedience of faith in the Gospel is failing, concerned and careful effort should be made to move toward such a person with the Word of God and in love restore him/her to the forgiving grace of Christ. It is important to note that such efforts are to be redemptive rather than punitive (Luke 17:3-4, Gal 6:1-2, Luke 6:37, Matt 7:1-2, 1 Peter 4:8).
- 4.5 The most helpful and effective ministry available is to be enlisted and this ministry will proceed evangelically on the basis of whatever action seems to be most productive of healing and restoration. The Pastor may enlist the help of the Servant - Leadership Council and others in order to apply this ministry according to their best spiritual judgment. If the person, under mutual care and discipline, is unwilling to hear the pleas and admonitions of his/her brethren and fails to repent and seek the mercy of God, the Pastor will ban said person from the Holy Communion and efforts will continue to be made to summon him/her to repentance and faith.

## **Article 5**

### Voters' Assembly

- 5.1 The Voters' Assembly shall meet at least once (1) a year. The day and hour of the annual meeting shall be set by the Servant - Leadership Council and publicized at four (4) weeks in advance. The notification shall contain an agenda of items to be considered as well as the slate of nominees for election.
- 5.2 The Voters' Assembly may meet at other times of the year subject to a call by the Servant - Leadership Council or at the request of any ten (10) voting members of the congregation. Notice of any such special meeting shall be publicized as far in advance as possible but no less than one (1) week in advance. The notice shall contain an agenda of items to be considered. No agenda items may be added once notification of any meeting is publicized. The President, Vice President, or their designated Leadership Council member shall preside at all Voters' Assembly meetings.
- 5.3 A quorum shall consist of all confirmed members present at a properly called Voters' Assembly.

## **Article 6**      Called Workers

The pastoral office of this congregation as well as other called positions shall be conferred only on those who profess and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in Article III of this Constitution and who are qualified and rostered by the denomination for their work. Pastors and other called persons shall be pledged to this confessional standard.

### 6.1      Calling into office

6.1.1    After authorization is received from the Voters' Assembly, the Servant - Leadership Council shall create a Call Committee. At least half of the Call Committee members shall not also be members of the Servant - Leadership Council.

6.1.2    The Call Committee shall consult with those in the affected ministry area and with the District office as part of their efforts to secure the names of candidates.

6.1.3    The Call Committee will present a final list of candidates to the Voters' Assembly for issuance of the call.

### 6.2      Discipline and Dismissal

6.2.1    In Christian love and lawful order, any called worker may be removed from office by the Voters' Assembly for any of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect or inability to perform the duties of office as included in the applicable Call document.

6.2.2    The Servant - Leadership Council shall carefully investigate charges on any of these counts. Should such charges be substantiated by clear evidence, and after consultation with the District President or his designated representative, the Servant - Leadership Council shall notify the voting members of the situation and submit the matter for action at a special meeting of that body. Such meeting shall be announced to all voting members by mail at least four (4) weeks in advance of the meeting and at regular worship services on the preceding two (2) Sundays.

6.2.3    A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Voting Members present at the Voters' Assembly shall be required to remove any divinely called servant from office.

**Article 7**      Officers

The four elected officers listed below shall serve as the legal trustees of Bethany-Trinity Lutheran Church and ECEC and shall be updated upon election of new officers with proper local authorities.

7.1      President

7.1.1    Preside at all meetings of the Voters' Assembly and the Servant - Leadership Council.

7.1.2    Enforce the constitution and bylaws.

7.1.3    Perform the general duties as are common for the office, including such additional duties as may be directed by the Voters' Assembly from time to time.

7.2      Vice President

7.2.1    Perform all of the duties of the President in the latter's absence and such other additional duties which may be directed by the Voters' Assembly or by the President from time to time.

7.2.2    Chair and appoint a Nominating Committee with the advice and consent of the Servant - Leadership Council.

7.3      Secretary

7.3.1    The duties shall be those commonly required of that office, especially the keeping and preserving of accurate records of all Voters' Assembly meetings, and handling such correspondence as the congregation may require.

7.3.2    Keep and make available minutes of all Servant - Leadership Council meetings.

7.4      Treasurer

7.4.1    Keep and preserve accurate records of all receipts and disbursements, and submit a written report of them at all regular meetings of the Voters' Assembly.

7.4.2    Assure accuracy and propriety of all financial transactions of the congregation.

7.4.3 Oversee and manage payments in accordance with the approved Spending Plan.

7.4.4 Disburse and account for Endowment funds.

## 7.5 Term of Office

Each officer shall serve for a term of two (2) years with no term limits. The term of office commences September 1 of the election year as prescribed in the Policy and Procedures Manual.

## **Article 8** Servant - Leadership Council

### 8.1 Membership & Qualities

The Servant - Leadership Council shall consist of two (2) voting members, elected at large by the Voters' Assembly, plus the four (4) congregation officers listed in Article 7. The Senior Pastor is a voting member.

It is desired for members of the Servant - Leadership Council to possess these qualities:

8.1.1 A Christ-like servant heart for the Kingdom of God

8.1.2 Leadership skills to build up the body of Christ and carry out His mission

8.1.3 A Visionary spirit so that the work of the church might keep in step with it's mission and ministry

### 8.2 Term of Office

The term of office shall be two (2) years, with the positions of President, Secretary, and the first Member At Large being elected on alternating years from the positions of Vice President, Treasurer, and second member At Large. Members may serve successive terms as they may wish.

### 8.3 Meetings

The Servant - Leadership Council shall meet at least quarterly and may be called more frequently at the request of the President or any three Servant - Leadership Council members. The Pastor shall be present with three members of the Servant - Leadership Council to constitute a quorum for

any meeting. The minutes shall fully disclose all actions taken and be signed by the President and Secretary. Minutes of the meetings shall be available to voting members upon request.

**Article 9** Authority of the Servant - Leadership Council

The Servant - Leadership Council shall have the authority to develop policies as required to execute the goals approved by the Voters' Assembly. Written policies shall be available upon request. The Servant – Leadership Council shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them by the constitution, its bylaws, or by the Voters' Assembly.

**Article 10** Responsibilities of the Servant - Leadership Council

The Servant - Leadership Council, as the chief governing Council of the congregation, shall act in all matters pertaining to the legal and general welfare of the congregation, except those reserved for the Voters' Assembly in Article VI. Section B of the constitution.

- 10.1 The Servant - Leadership Council shall see to it that all activities of the congregation and Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC) reflect the purpose and faith of the congregation.
- 10.2 It shall concern itself with establishing all policies governing the activities of the congregation and ECEC with the implementation of the mission, vision, budget, and plans adopted by the Voters' Assembly.
- 10.3 The Servant - Leadership Council may appoint any entity needed. It shall oversee and have authority over all other boards, committees, task forces, action teams, or other entities of the congregation and ECEC
- 10.4 Be responsible for establishing policies necessary to direct the overall program of the congregation and ECEC for the furtherance of Christ's Kingdom in our midst;
- 10.5 Maintain the financial integrity of the congregation and ECEC;
- 10.6 Encourage the Ministry Staff of the congregation and ECEC in their work through prayer, word and action and provide for the spiritual and physical health and welfare of the Ministry Staff and their families;

- 10.7 Exercise with the Pastor(s) discipline within the congregation with respect to all matters of membership of the congregation as provided in the Constitution and Bylaws;
- 10.8 Authorize the Ministry Staff of the congregation and ECEC to administer the day-to-day operations of the congregation and ECEC in accordance with its own policies and directives and those established by the congregation through its Voters' Assembly;
- 10.9 Direct the calling of special meetings of the Voters' Assembly as requested by the Pastor(s) or voting members;
- 10.10 Be responsible for the receiving of and acting upon, if necessary, feed-back and/or recommendations from members of the congregation and ECEC staff regarding aspects of its operations;
- 10.11 Establish and hold accountable appropriate action teams.
- 10.12 Should a vacancy occur, the Voters' Assembly shall elect a replacement at its next called meeting.
- 10.13 Be available for any additional functions that the Voters' Assembly may confer on it.
- 10.14 The Servant - Leadership Council will be responsible for maintenance of the Policy and Procedures Manual of congregational and ECEC policies to assist in the uniform and consistent administration of affairs of the congregation and ECEC. The manual shall not include any provision contrary to this Constitution and Bylaws concerning membership in the congregation; the rights and duties of persons holding office, the Servant - Leadership Council and Pastors or other called workers. It shall not create any contract rights not otherwise authorized in a manner set forth by this Constitution and Bylaws. Only the Voters' Assembly shall have the power to modify the manual with respect to sections dealing with functions of Pastor, officers, and Servant - Leadership Council.

**Article 11** Spiritual Care Ministry Team

The Spiritual Care Ministry Team will administer, through the Senior Pastor, the spiritual care and nurture of the congregation, as described in Article VI of the Constitution.

## 11.1 Membership and Qualifications

The Senior Pastor will appoint at least six (6) Elders to the Spiritual Care Ministry Team. Members of the Team must be mature Christians, actively involved in the life and ministry of the Congregation, committed to prayer and Bible study, and willing to commit the necessary time and energy to this ministry.

## 11.2 Responsibilities

11.2.1 Provide spiritual care to members of the Congregation under the direction of the Senior Pastor.

11.2.2 With the Senior Pastor, ensure that the Word of God is proclaimed in its truth and purity as governed by Article III of the Constitution.

11.2.3 Together with the Senior Pastor, exercise church discipline, as outlined in Article 4 of the Bylaws, maintaining authority over reception and terminations of membership.

11.2.4 Encourage faithful attendance at public worship, Bible study, an active prayer life and use of spiritual gifts.

11.2.5 Establish and oversee the Member Care Ministry of the congregation, as described in The Policy and Procedures Manual.

## **Article 12** Election, Removal from Office, and Vacancies

### 12.1 Nomination

12.1.1 The Vice President of the Servant - Leadership Council shall annually appoint a Nominating Committee whose responsibility will be to develop a slate of candidates for officers and Servant - Leadership Council members to be elected each year. The committee shall contain a majority who are not on the Servant - Leadership Council members, shall function for one (1) year only, and shall report the nominations to the election meeting of the Voters' Assembly. The Pastor shall be an advisory member of the Nominating Committee.

12.1.2 All nominees shall be voting members noted for their Christian knowledge, zeal, and experience in the spiritual work in the Kingdom. Specific criteria as listed in the by-laws for elected officials shall be reviewed with the candidates by the Nominating Committee prior to accepting any nominations. In addition to the Nominating Committee's slate of candidates, any voting member may nominate candidates. A call for nominations will be distributed to the congregation no less than two months prior to the election meeting. Nominations from the floor in the meetings will not be accepted.

12.1.3 Those elected by the voters may not receive compensation from the congregation and may not lead any group that reports directly to the Servant - Leadership Council, except a Call Committee or the Nominations Committee.

## 12.2 Election

Nominees who receive a majority of the ballots cast at the Voters' Assembly shall be elected.

## 12.3 Taking office

All elected officials will begin their term of office on the first (1st) day of the congregational calendar.

## 12.4 Removal from Office of Servant - Leadership Council Member

Any elected official who is unable or is willfully negligent in the performance of his official duties, may be removed from office by two-thirds (2/3) secret ballot vote of the Voters' Assembly. Such action shall be initiated by the Servant - Leadership Council.

## **Article 13** Endowments

The purpose of the Bethany-Trinity Lutheran Church and ECEC Endowments is to receive and invest funds for the purposes established by the congregation and ECEC presented in the following documents:

1. Bethany Trust and Endowment Funds
2. Policy For Stewardship of our Endowments

both of which are contained in the Policies and Procedures Manual of Bethany-Trinity Lutheran Church and ECEC. The management of these funds is the responsibility of Fund Steward Teams whose members shall be communicant members of Bethany-Trinity Lutheran Church and ECEC. All rules, regulations, and policies shall be made available upon request to any member of the congregation. The Fund Stewards shall provide a report annually to the Voters' Assembly.

**Article 14** Amendments

The bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the votes cast in a meeting of the Voters' Assembly. The wording of the amended constitution and bylaws shall be distributed to all members no less than two (2) Sundays in advance. In addition, the revisions will be distributed to the congregation assembled for worship on two different Sundays prior to the date upon which the amendment is presented for action.

Approved by Bethany Voter's Assembly: March 8, 2009

Approved by Southeastern District, LC-MC: June 11, 2009

Signed by Bethany Congregants: September 6, 2009