

# Messiah Lutheran Church

## Council Handbook

The purpose of this Handbook is to help new members of Council understand their roles and how they fit into the overall role of Council. The Handbook may also be useful for current or returning members to realize new ways to be a better member of Council. Finally, it may help any member of our congregation to better understand how Council functions at Messiah. Our hope is that this Handbook will be a dynamic document, and that it will be modified as appropriate based on our experiences.

*(Note: The Messiah Lutheran Church Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions are provided in Appendix 1 for convenience. Nothing in this Handbook should supersede those documents. If contradictions occur, and hopefully they are rare, the CBCRs take precedence.)*

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*(Sections 1 through 4 were approved by Council on October 4, 2012. The approval date for all other items is indicated on each.)*

# COUNCIL DUTIES

## **General Task of the Council**

To encourage the congregation to be the people of God and oversee its life and activities.

## **Responsibilities**

- to plan for the church's ministry,
- involve members of the congregation,
- support the relationship between pastor and staff
- be an example
- foster understanding
- arrange for pastoral service when without a pastor
- to emphasize the partnership with the Southeastern Synod and the church-wide units of the ELCA and
- to encourage the use of resources approved by the ELCA and synod.

## **Relationships**

The council is accountable to the congregation and is to maintain regular communication with its members. It shall be responsive to the will of the congregation, arrange regular communication with its members before and after its meetings, and involve as many members as possible in the life and ministries of the congregation. It shall submit a formal summary report of its activities to the congregation at an annual meeting.

## **Time Required**

- Members attend regular monthly meetings and special meetings when called.
- They may chair committees or serve as liaison to the council from those committees.
- They fulfill other requests as necessary.
- Length of one term will normally be two years.

## **Personal Example**

- Members attend worship regularly,
- receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion frequently,
- give regular financial support,
- support the pastor and other staff members in their mutual ministry,
- and live out their faith in daily arenas with God's help.

## **Other Expectations**

- Members may participate in an annual council retreat,
- should take advantage of growth opportunities provided by the congregation and synod,
- and should seek pastoral support and guidance.

## **Other Key Areas of Responsibility**

1. To secure support staff other than the pastor
2. To supervise the expenditure of the approved congregational budget
3. To prepare the proposed budget for the annual meeting.
4. To appoint an audit committee
5. To review salaries annually
6. To be responsible for the upkeep of the buildings and premises
7. To supervise the work and meetings of the standing committees
8. To exercise congregational discipline in accordance with the constitution
9. To review and evaluate the total work and mission of the congregation
10. To choose or elect delegates to meetings and appoint representatives to related groups
11. To fulfill other duties as stated in the Constitution, By-Laws, and Continuing Resolutions

## **The Council Coordinates, Deliberates, Manages, Plans and Leads**

A. The council COORDINATES the work and planning of the various committees and task forces within the congregation

B. The council DELIBERATES on the strengths and weaknesses of various proposals and weighs the merits of various programs designed to carry out the mission of the local parish.

C. The council MANAGES the resources of the congregation and exercises good stewardship of financial assets, as well as of people and talents.

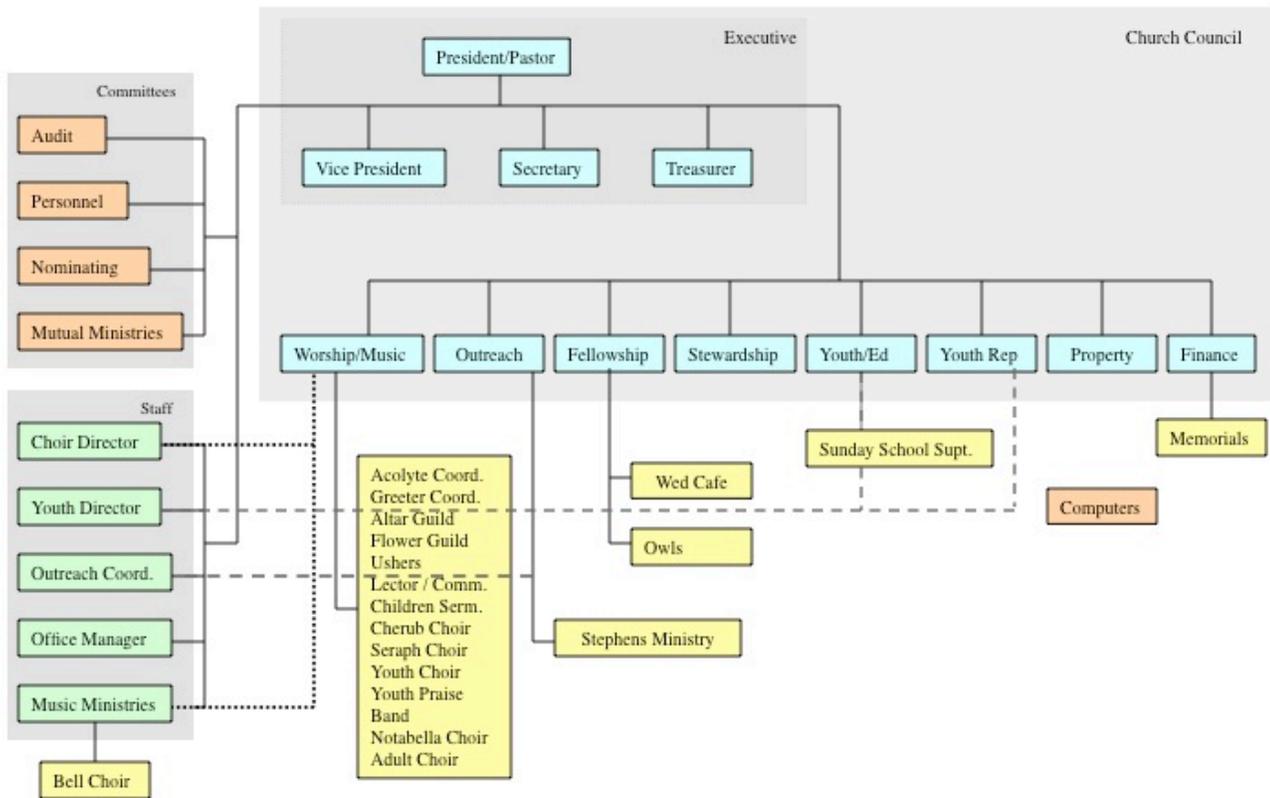
D. The council PLANS for the coming year and is attentive to long range planning for the well-being of the parish and its effectiveness in mission.

E. The council LEADS in taking bold steps for the sake of the gospel and strives to be a pioneer church in staking out new territory for exciting ventures of faith active in love.

## Council Structure

The structure of the Council is specified in the Constitution. It is composed of the four "officers" plus the chairs or representatives of up to eight committees. The officers are the president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer (which constitutes the Executive). The other members of Council represent Worship and Music, Fellowship, Outreach, Stewardship, Youth and Education, Youth, Property and Finance. There are additional committees within the Church which report either to one of the eight Council Committees, to the Executive, or the Pastor. Examples include the Personnel Committee, the Memorials Committee, and the Altar Guild.

The relationship between the various committees and staff positions is defined in the continuing resolutions for each, and is summarized here for easy reference.



## **The Church Council Year**

Fiscal Year: Jan 1 through Dec 31.

Council term: June 1 to May 31

Monthly Council Meetings: Usually the second Thursday of each month.

Executive meetings: During the week before each regular Council meeting

Purpose: set the agenda for the monthly meeting

Congregation Meetings:

Fall, usually in mid-November.

Purpose: To review and approve the yearly budget.

Spring, usually in early May.

Purpose: Elections of new Council and other Church positions as needed

Audit Committee Reviews:

Fall, typically by the end of the year with a written report to Council in December or January

Purpose: Policies, procedures, inventory, insurance

Spring, typically by May Council meeting

Purpose: Financial records and procedures

Budget Reviews and Recommendations:

Finance Committee Recommendations to Council: Late October – Early November

Purpose: Finance Committee sends recommendations to Council

Council Budget Meeting: Early November

Purpose: Council sends Recommendation to Congregation

Congregation Approval: Mid to late November

# The COUNCIL

First some comments on leadership in the church for new members. It is also helpful from time to time for "old" council members to back away from the work and routine. Create a little space for yourself to reflect on your position as council member. Enrich your perspective and renew your sense of direction. This section may help you do just that.

## A. What makes a leader a leader?

Who you are is as important as what you do and the skills you have. Your qualities and characteristics are integral to your leadership. Your faith, values, and styles give you identity as a leader. Therefore, it is important to keep your identity as a person. This is true for each of us, regardless of what positions we hold or the various involvements of our lives. Reflect upon two thoughts about your identity as a leader:

1) A key quality or characteristic we have as Christians is the confidence we have in our own worth. And our worth is wrapped up in the gift we have from God. That is, we are new persons, forgiven freely without our need to earn it. This quality of confidence, then, spills over into our confidence to be a leader. We can say to ourselves:

- I am a person who can make, and does make a contribution.
- I am a leader in this congregation, and it's OK to say that.
- As a leader, I value myself, and have confidence in myself.

2) A second key quality follows in the footsteps of the first. When we have confidence in ourselves, it is easier to value the worth of other persons. And this second characteristic is vital to our Christian service. What this says to us as leaders in council, therefore is simply this:

- We value other people, we do not use other people. We don't get what we can get out of them for our own ends. If other members of the congregation perceive that we as leaders are using them, then we will fail!

Members could feel used or abused when we do such things as fail to appreciate the work they do, when we seem more interested in filling a position than in the person filling it, when we fail to give people a chance to participate, or when we build walls between us and others.

Our identity as leaders includes the skills we have, our experiences, and the resources we can draw upon.

Reflect upon the two values outlined here which come from our faith relationship with Jesus. With these two in place, more can be learned and developed. More importantly, others are apt to forgive our shortcomings as leaders more readily when we value our own worth and we value the worth of others.

## B. Four roles for council to keep in mind

For a moment, forget about all the responsibilities and expectations that go with being a council member. Step back and ask yourself, "What roles am I to fulfill?" Regardless of whether I am responsible for stewardship, or church property, or any of the other program areas, are there roles that I should be fulfilling because I am on council?

The answer is, YES! *All* leaders should be enriched if they keep these roles in mind, and council leaders are no exception.

### 1) Catch and share the vision!

Council members need a sense of vision. They need some idea about "Who we are and why we're here" as a congregation. Council members have to verbalize this vision, internalize it, because the words used are not so important as is the attitude, the feeling, the sense that gets communicated when you speak to others about your congregation.

Your "Vision" is the response you give when someone asks you, "What is this congregation all about?" You have "the vision" when you can, in your own words, give an answer that doesn't sound like you are quoting the constitution, or a formal statement. Furthermore, the more council members share this vision in common the better. Then you are

conveying some sense of purpose that will make sense to others, and they "catch it" and share it!

## **2) Generate enthusiasm!**

Your role is to be excited about your congregation and your work on behalf of the congregation and your faith. Of course this must be sincere, from the heart. It doesn't matter whether you are the bubbly smiling outgoing type, or the more quiet reserved type, When you have enthusiasm and excitement it shows!

- The attitude of leaders is what people respond to more than words and actions. If a council member goes to a committee meeting and speaks in negative, defeatist tones, committee members lose heart. If the attitude is "business as usual," "let's get this over with so we can go home," committee members have little to rejoice about. It is a lot easier and more productive if leaders can spread some excitement and rejoicing!

This is your role as a council leader, even when there are some things going on that you do not like. Focus on the positive in your work with others. Deal with the problems where it will do the most good, in the right place, at the right time, with the people involved in the problem. Spread the good news and share your vision all the other times.

## **3) Be a People Grower!**

Being a "people grower" means we find ways to involve others in ministry, and we enable them to use the gifts God has given to them. We give them an opportunity to "stretch their wings," use their skills, try out some new ones, develop new understandings, become more mature in their faith.

When council members look over the past year to see if they accomplished anything, think first of people: How many people have grown as a result of council's involvement and congregational life? Perhaps some more people are involved. Maybe a new teacher discovered a new skill, or a chairperson learned how to develop an agenda. And maybe someone was challenged to reflect and

changed an attitude that needed changing, or someone gained a new insight about faith and life. Furthermore, someone may have really appreciated the support received for their ministry at their place of work.

## **4) Be a Group Builder!**

As a council member you are obliged to be a part of at least one group, most of them being small groups of fifteen or less persons. Group life in congregational life is almost taken for granted.

An important role for a council member is to help your own council and the committees on which you serve to function as effectively as possible.

You do not have to be the chairperson to do this. The ideal is that when a person completes service on a committee or task group, that person feels it was a good experience, enriching and productive.

If it is true that a camel is a horse planned by a committee, then that committee needed someone to help it understand and accomplish its task. Likewise, if it is true that a burned out person is the result of a year or more of boredom, frustration, and tension from serving on a committee, then that committee needed someone to help its members work together effectively.

The role of a council member, then, is to learn the skills of group life and to help a committee apply good group principles. One way for council members to prepare themselves for this role is to be an effective council, understand why it is, and apply the same to committees. A place to begin would be to regularly critique how council meetings are going, using the items included in this Help section.

## C. Keeping major responsibilities up front.

The responsibilities of the congregation council are stated clearly in the constitutions of the ELCA and our constitution.

### 1) General oversight

To begin with, you

*"have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation - in particular its worship life that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America."*

### 2) Duties of council

You will note that numerous duties listed in the constitution. One way of summarizing these duties is to say that you help the congregation to:

- Be alive!
- Develop mission and plans
- Involve members in ministry
- Administer the congregation.
- Support the pastor(s), other staff
- Be Involved!
- Be examples
- Promote peace and good will
- Provide pastoral care during sickness/absence of the pastor
- Be the church!
- Encourage partnership and cooperation with synod and ELCA
- Use resources approved by ELCA and SES

The normal monthly routine of council business makes it is easy to lose sight of what you are called upon to be and to do. Be involved in the annual overnight council retreat. Those who do say it makes a world of difference.

## D. Three levels of planning and how to use them.

### 1) Why plan?

Basically, to meet the needs of people and groups of people.

As we all know, it isn't enough to simply say, "We need new members," or, "We should do something to help our shut-Ins." That's like saying, "We should take a vacation" but never decide when, where, how, and how much will it cost.

Planning helps the congregation and council know what is to be accomplished, who is doing what, and how to avoid overcrowding the calendar in one time of the year, while having nothing scheduled for another.

Planning helps members know they are giving financial and leadership support to specific ministry objectives.

### 2) What Is Included In planning?

There are basic steps that help individuals and groups plan. The following are based on ideas for planning taken from "*Theology of Administration*", Augsburg Press, pages 32- 34:

- Develop and confirm a mission statement
- Gather data
- Identify needs
- Set goals
- Develop a strategy
- Implement the plans
- Evaluate results.

### 3) What are the three levels of planning?

#### Level One: Let's Do It!

The focus is on an idea that someone has, key people agree, and you go for it, usually developing a plan of action as you go. For example, a committee member suggests that now would be a great time to invite parents of young children to a series of sessions on child care. Sometimes this kind of planning is based on instinct or intuition. There is a

feeling or understanding that the idea fits very well into the congregation's purpose, meets needs, relates to other activities. The timing seems right, and so you do it.

Often good things come from "Let's do It" planning, and new visions unfold for the congregation. Frequently, the "idea" was a dream for quite awhile in the mind of the pastor or a lay leader.

There are risks. Important data may be overlooked or resistance might be greater than anticipated. There needs to be a willingness to abandon the idea if it doesn't meet expectations, and for people to feel "OK" about having tried.

At some point evaluations should take place and the seven steps in planning reviewed. Most likely, this would result in affirmation for what happened, and learnings would be identified that could help the next time a good idea comes along.

The value in "Let's do It!" planning is its spontaneity and its immediate results.

### **Level Two: We Can Do It!**

At this *level*, most if not all the steps in planning are more formal. A good example would be when the Stewardship Committee begins planning the fall program in March or April. The program is to have impact on all members and other programs so careful planning is essential. The purpose of the program is stated. Usually the theme conveys the message. Data is gathered and reviewed from previous annual programs. Present needs are identified, goals are set, strategy includes who is doing what, when, where, and how. Plans are implemented and evaluated.

The risk here is to rely on tradition and past experience and not follow the seven steps.

The value is in the "We can." We have our strategy and our resources; we planned to do it, we can, we will. There is affirmation and satisfaction in planning well and achieving results.

### **Level Three: What Should We Do?**

This is the "ought" level - what ought we do as the people of God? This type of planning focuses on comprehensive planning for the congregation. It intends to involve many people in the process and have long-range implications. It takes time. Emphasis is upon the first three steps, Mission, Data, Needs. There most likely is a task force appointed to manage the process. For example, a major building program is Level Three planning. Developing a five-year plan is another. A third example is when council and committees do a solid job of planning together for the next year's programs.

The risk here is dragging out the steps too long and losing initiative and energy for getting things done.

The value is on having a renewed sense of mission as a congregation. In the process new leaders emerge and present leaders experience growth.

Three levels of planning. All three have values. Council may wish to check on the ways planning happens in the congregation and what can be done to make improvements. Material resources and people resources to assist the congregation are available from the synod and the ELCA.

# THE COUNCIL-COMMITTEE CONNECTION

One measure of success for congregations is how well council and committees work together. If you need help in making the connection between council and committees, here are suggestions.

## A. Should there be committees and/or task forces?

Only five committees are identified as a must in the ELCA model constitution for congregations: council executive committee, nominating, audit, staff support, and call committees (the call committee only at the time of a pastoral vacancy). Otherwise, the constitution says, "Other congregational committees may be formed as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council." It also says that the duties for such committees shall be listed in the bylaws.

Lest you think committees are unnecessary, remember two things:

- 1) the congregational functions of worship, witness, service, learning and support must be carried on, and council would be greatly burdened if they tried to do it all themselves.
- 2) council duties include responsibility for involving members in worship, learning, witness, service, and support; and, council is to oversee the administration of the congregation. Thus, some committees are necessary, but just how many is council's decision to make.

So the next question is, should they be committees or task forces, or both? Make the distinction between the two: .

- Functional committees deal with ongoing functions of the congregation. Education, stewardship and evangelism continue year after year. They are necessary functions. How many committees are needed to include all the functions is up to the council.

- A Task Force is appointed to take on a specific task, with the understanding that its life is over when the task is done. For example, a task force might plan an anniversary or deal with a problem that overlaps several committees, such as hours for worship and Sunday School.

## B. Should council members be chairpersons or the liaison to a committee?

**There are at least three options:**

1) Some congregations assume that council members should be chairpersons. This is the way we have traditionally operated at Messiah. Having council members as chairpersons, we feel, strengthens the relationship with committees and provides clearer channels of communication.

The potential weakness of the model is that council can lose sight of its overall responsibility, the oversight of the entire life of the congregation. Individual council members as chairpersons may see their vested interest in their committee as a primary consideration.

If council members are to be chairpersons, nominating and electing people with specific committee assignments in mind is probably a better model than electing persons to be on council and then asking them which committee they want to chair.

2) Another option is for council to be open ended, and let the council members and committees decide who will chair. This leaves a mixed bag on council, but it could work.

3) A third option is for council members to be liaison to committees. In this option, council members serve on behalf of the entire congregation and serve to represent the particular committee assigned. They need not be experts in that committee's function, but they do need to be good communicators. The liaison role includes the following:

- Interpret council actions and decisions to the committee. They give brief reports

on the basic substance of the last council meeting, especially explaining actions that affect the committee's work. They state the actions or discussions of the council's response to committee reports and recommendations. They clarify those actions and council's rationale and restate the position they took on the committee's behalf.

- Speak on behalf of the committee at council meetings. To the written report they add verbal comments and explanations which explain the committee's position as well as their own. When needed, they arrange for the chairperson to be present.
- Serve on the committee as a committee member. As a committee member they assume responsibilities as agreed upon at meetings.
- Advocate for total congregational life. The committee can be helped to see their work as an integral part of the church's life. Also, committee members can be encouraged to keep the total mission of the congregation in mind and give support to the work of others.

### **C. When a we/they attitude between council and committees exists.**

Trust and partnership are essential ingredients in the council-committee relationship. Here are guidelines for fostering good working relationships:

1. Assignments to committees from council should be communicated clearly and precisely. Likewise, recommendations to council and requests for information must be precise.
2. Committees need to know that their area of responsibility is theirs and will not be taken over by the council or another committee. Likewise, committees need to be given freedom to develop their program.

3. Council should expect results from the committees. Progress should be reported, evaluations provided, timelines given for projects, so that council may know when to expect results. Council should have the right to challenge committees when committees are not accomplishing their goals.

4. Membership of committees should be carefully selected and recruited so that committee members will have a vested interest in results. Council should find ways to assist committees to build a team relationship if needed.

5. Give thanks when thanks are due. Affirmation and appreciation expressed sincerely go a long way to build a "We" rather than a "They" attitude. (These ideas are based on similar guidelines published by the Fortress Press, *Member of the Council*, p. 23, 1982.)

### **D. Should there be an "All Committee Time"**

Some congregations have established a specific day and time when all committees meet. Some councils make this system work very well, while others find it doesn't work well, or for long.

#### **1. Strengths of an All Committee Time**

All can be involved in a common devotional period and sense themselves to be an important part of the common purpose as a congregation. Everyone can be updated and receive an overview of what's going on. A common session is possible during which a consensus could be reached on setting new programs in place or agreeing on new directions. New ideas could be tested. Inter-committee communications can be direct.

This arrangement also strongly encourages persons to serve on no more than one standing committee, a healthy way to involve more people in leadership.

The pastor's role can be clearer in this approach, in that much of the pastor's work could be with council and committee chairpersons. The pastor could meet with more than one committee in one evening. In addition to providing vision, leadership,

inspiration and motivation, the pastor can be a "trouble shooter" and be available to answer questions.

Council needs to avoid allowing one dysfunctional committee having a negative impact upon other committees and council. Disbanding a committee for a year may be better than having people assigned to a committee that isn't functioning.

## **2. Weaknesses of an All Committee Time**

Committee membership is limited to persons who can attend at that time, whereas a committee determining its own meeting time can adjust its schedule. One way to overcome this problem is for those who cannot attend to serve as an extension of the committee by taking on a specific task and reporting to the chairperson.

The common time imposes a time line on all committees even if they have no business to conduct. One way to overcome this would be for committees with a limited amount of business to spend more time on developing their relationship, critiquing how they function, or dreaming new dreams. If committee members begin not to show up and numbers dwindle, the purpose of this time will be lost, and other committees will be demoralized. Overall, it can be a good idea. However, the idea seems to run out of steam from time to time. Some congregations have an All Committee Time quarterly or twice a year so that it doesn't lose its impact.

## **E. When there Is "No Report" two/three months In a row.**

A "No Report" from a committee chair does happen from time to time with most committees. But when it happens frequently, it is a signal to council that the committee needs help.

Council should check with the liaison and chairperson to find out what's happening. If minor adjustments are needed, fine. If some major problems exist, a consultation with the committee by another council member, pastor, or someone from the synod may be helpful.

If pastor and council are fully aware of the problem but feel that leaving things alone for awhile is best, then that understanding should be clear with council members.

## **HOW TO FUNCTION AS A COUNCIL LIAISON TO A COMMITTEE**

**At Messiah Lutheran Church, a Council member currently serves as Committee Chair and Council Liaison.**

### **1. Interpret council actions and decisions to the committee.**

Give brief reports to the committee. Actions and decisions related to committees are in council minutes. Copies could be given to committee members with verbal clarifications or additions. Explain the rationale for council action and your own position taken at the council meeting.

### **2. Speak on behalf of the committee at council meetings.**

Provide a written report to the council and add verbal clarification. Address issues from the committee's point of view as well as your own. Arrange for the chairperson or committee to be present at a council meeting if the report of an issue is best served by a face-to-face discussion.

### **3. Be a regular committee member.**

Assume responsibilities as a committee member both at the meetings and between meetings. On the other hand, encourage other persons to assume responsibilities and support them;

### **4. Be an advocate for total parish life.**

Help committee members to see their work as an important part of all that happens in the life of the congregation. At the same time, help keep them aware of other equally important concerns and programs and encourage the committee to support also the work of others.

# THE COUNCIL· CONGREGATION CONNECTION

The council-congregation connection is vital. Council needs to know how members feel and members need to know what council is doing. The task is never complete because the relationship is dynamic, always changing as situations and people change.

Typical areas of concern where help may be needed are suggested below.

## A. But we did communicate!

Council may get frustrated because, on the one hand, you may feel you did communicate with the congregation. For example, council noted in the newsletter and in the Sunday bulletin that the church sign was going to be replaced. Yet several members complain they didn't know that was going to be done, and they don't like the new sign.

True, some people never get the message!

However, getting the message across is not a simple matter. Some believe you have to tell people about something at least six or seven times in order to get their attention. Also, a variety of approaches is needed because one or two forms of communication seldom reach everyone.

So if you need help in keeping the connection, check out the ways communication is possible. If you are relying heavily upon only two to three forms to get your messages across, that's not enough. Try using five or six for most of the information you want to convey. And when you have something that really is important, pull out all the stops.

- Worship bulletin
- Newsletter
- Posters
- Bulletin boards
- Notes to parents from Sunday School
- First class letters

- Stories In local papers
- Ads In local papers
- Flyers
- Telephone network
- Shepherding program
- Person to person
- Small group meetings
- Committee network
- Organizations
- Announcements by laity
- Kiosk In narthex
- Banners
- Information booth at coffee hour
- Informal network

## B. Gaining support from "they".

### 1. When you need to know who "they" are.

"I wonder if 'they' will support us on this decision?" is a question often asked. The "they," of course, could mean many things: the congregation, a committee, organization, the "charter" members, the "younger" members, the best givers, and so forth.

Sometimes it is important to check "it" out. When Jack or Jane say "they", who do they mean? Maybe Jack means, "I'm not convinced". Maybe Jane means, "My sixth cousin and her family might not support this".

It Is Important to get "they" to support council. So target that person or group and find ways to convince them. Sometimes we avoid "targeting" because we know "they" won't like it so we'll try an end run; or we know "they" have too much influence and we don't want to condone that kind of power; or we may think "they" really aren't that important.

It's better to be upfront with "they," to deal directly and forthrightly, understand their positions, convince them if possible and encourage their support even if they don't fully agree.

### 2. When you need more Information.

There are times when council may need to know if this new program or worship schedule will

be supported. Before the final decision, check it out. You may need to test the idea with those most impacted by the decision. Those persons can help shape the content or direction. By checking with the right people, you can find out if the need really exists.

### 3. When you need to bite the bullet.

A word to the wise: There are those times when a "paralysis of analysis" exists. That is, you may be too cautious about making the decision. You may want more information than you can get. You may try to second-guess the impact. You may be looking for some assurance that everyone is going to be happy about this.

Sometimes you just have to bite the bullet on tough decisions. If you have done your homework, seek the support of "they", have specific ways to support the decision, you are ready for action. Just keep communicating, communicating, communicating!

### c. How do they feel about us?

Periodically it is a healthy thing to find out from members how they feel council is doing. This will help council identify the strengths of their relationship with members and areas they need to improve.

So have a checkup! Several approaches are possible:

- Survey all members.
- Survey a random sample.
- Hold small group "town council" sessions.

Some items that could be included in the survey are suggested below, adapted from *"Member of the Council"*, Fortress Press, page 48, 1982.

Does our congregation council:

- Have an open mind?
- Invite our suggestions?
- Provide procedures for input from members?
- Try to implement ideas from members?
- Explain when an idea is not adopted?
- Express appreciation?

- Do things as they have always been done?
- Feel it needs no additional input?
- Communicate decisions?

What do you feel are some of the strengths of council? How do you think the present system of congregational leadership could be improved?

### D. Is our vision in focus?

A very important question for council to consider! Who are we, and why are we here? What kinds of answers would council members give? Would the general membership agree?

A congregation can easily take vision and direction for granted. Here are suggestions for focusing on the congregation's purpose.

#### 1) Study the Statement of Purpose.

Involve the leaders of the congregation every year in a discussion, study, and action session. Use the church's "Statement Of Purpose" in the Constitution.

An important part of the study would be to have leaders reflect on where the congregation actually is in comparison to that ideal statement.

The next step would be to have leaders, committees and organizations do some specific planning to "close the gap" between the ideal and the actual.

#### 2) Develop a statement of mission.

Every third year Involve the congregation In revising or developing its own statement of purpose~ It could begin something like this:

*Whereas "The Church Is a people created by God In Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity In the world." (Model constitution, p. 5)*

*Therefore, We at Messiah Lutheran Church proclaim our purpose in this time and place to be... .*

The council and congregation would develop Its statement in more specific terms that give expression to meeting the needs of the congregation, the community, and the congregation's relationship with the synod and ELCA. The foci could be:

Congregation: How are we to be a nurturing community?

Community: How are we to be serving community?

Synod/ELCA: How do we express our Inter-dependence?

### **3) Ideas that could be used.**

In small groups, participants could make their own collage of what they see to be the congregation's mission. They would share their work with all participants.

Small groups could also study Chapter Four of the constitution and then write their own statement, using ideas generated from their statement.

All statements would then be brought into one statement. One or two persons could edit the statement, present it to council and the congregation, and then have official action taken to include it in the by-laws. Certainly, the statement should be used in worship periodically, printed in newsletters and reviewed when committees set goals.

## **COUNCIL MEMBER SUPPORT**

Tired of Council? Wondering why you're here? Feel like it's getting to be too much? Difficult to concentrate with so much else going on in your life between council meetings?

Council members need support. You made a long-term commitment, probably two years.

### **How do I get help when I need a lift?**

Council members, as a group, need to take care of themselves as well as the business of the congregation. There is much pleasure in serving, but there are also the hard times, and the commitment puts pressure on other aspects of your life.

Worship, of course, is essential for giving you a lift. This isn't a "duty" (I have to go to church because I'm on council) but rather the basic commitment upon which serving on council rests. You have a faith relationship and worship with the community of believers is the source of God's Word power for your life, through the Word and the Sacrament.

Another way to get a lift is through having a devotional period at council meetings. A few minutes can help set the climate for the meetings and give a perspective on the importance of your service.

Retreats are another way and have been mentioned in other sections. An annual overnight retreat lifts the spirit of many council members each year. If this isn't your council's pattern, seriously consider it. Yes, it takes time and would appear to place more pressure on your time commitments. But it works! '

One more suggestion: Council members could set certain meetings, say once a quarter, to spend one hour for council "uplifting" and less time on business. At such times, council members would spend time on themselves. Topics for sharing and discussion could be:

- Tell us about a favorite activity you did this past quarter.
- Tell us about some of the good things happening where you spend most of your time.
- Tell us some of the more difficult things that go on at work.
- What can we do to relate our faith to our daily life?
- In what ways do we see ourselves as "in ministry" during the week.
- How can our congregation support us, and all members, in their daily ministry?

### **Other support ideas.**

Some councils take time for social events with families/special friends.

Support from family and close friends is important if council members are to have a good experience in serving on council. Appreciation of these special people can be expressed by letter, Sunday morning recognition, and in other ways.

The installation of council members is a good time to give affirmation and appreciation. Added to the installation procedure could be such things as having retiring council members stand behind the new members, having family and special friends be recognized and come forward to stand with the council members, and having a reception following the service. Encourage council members to attend special events and workshops that are held for church leaders. Most of the time they are enriching and rewarding. One of the best benefits is the opportunity to meet and speak with council members from other congregations. The congregation could pay the registration fee if there is one.

# HOW TO FUNCTION AS A COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

## 1. Be a leader among leaders.

Be a leader who remains aware of the purposes of the church and has a commitment to its goals and programs, a leadership style that motivates others to share the task, perseverance in carrying out tasks, and effectiveness in conducting meetings.

## 2. Be an action-oriented leader.

A chairperson is a front-line leader. She or he and the committees are responsible for planning the programs and life of the congregation. This implies -

- a. Knowing what is involved in the committee's task.
- b. Setting goals and action plans that are specific, acceptable, reachable.
- c. Organizing the committee in ways that best help accomplish the goals.
- d. Evaluating and improving the ways the committee carries out its responsibilities.

## 3. Be a leader who gets help to do the work.

A successful helps people work by -

- a. Selecting and appointing people, appealing to their own motivations, interests, and skills.
- b. Listing and describing the jobs to be done and fitting the right persons to the right jobs.
- c. Monitoring the progress of committee work, encouraging the workers, and setting dates for completion of projects.

## 4. Be a leader who chairs meetings efficiently.

Such a person -

- a. Sets a calendar of regular meetings, convenes these meetings, and arranges for special meetings when necessary.
- b. Plans specific agendas and allows the committee to make agenda changes.
- c. Conducts the meetings and uses good group process to accomplish the tasks at hand.
- d. Reports or assigns responsibility for reporting committee minutes to the council.
- e. Represents the committee and speaks on its behalf to the council and the congregation.

## **A JOB DESCRIPTION FOR COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS**

### **DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Prepares agendas
- Arranges schedules
- Helps organize the committee
- Leads meetings
- Participates in group discussion
- Works out differences
- Brings discussions to conclusions
- Presents challenges
- Persuades peers
- Explains new plans and possibilities
- Asks and answers questions
- Relays messages
- Reviews literature
- Prepares reports
- Follows up on committee actions
- Counsels committee members
- Consults with others, especially the professional staff
- Attends the committee meetings
- Represents the committee at council, if no other person appointed

### **DESIRED SKILLS AND INTERESTS**

- Communicates effectively
- Is able to challenge and involve others
- Listens with empathy
- Is sensitive to others
- Gets along with others
- Makes logical decisions
- Is able to read, write, analyze, interpret, and explain
- Is able to plan and present proposals
- Has a special interest in the concerns of the committee or is committed to its cause
- Is willing to spend the time needed to chair the committee

# HOW TO GET A COMMITTEE FUNCTIONING SUCCESSFULLY

## 1. Make an agenda. Understand your responsibility

- Mail agenda well in advance
- Know the participants
- Review the local situation and assignments
- Be prepared to facilitate the agenda
- Name leadership

## 2. Categorize concerns. Define Immediate Tasks

- Identify top priority concern - what should be done right now.
- Identify level 2 concerns - what will have to get done.
- Identify level 3 concerns - what really should get done.

## 3. Idea Gathering. Brainstorm on Methods

- Gather all the ideas you can - good, bad, and otherwise - on how the job defined as top priority can get done.
- Do no evaluation or criticism now; it will only stifle ideas

## 4. Sort out the ideas shared

- Eliminate the less adequate; leave the good possibilities and work responses.
- Check to verify that all ideas are understood and heard correctly.
- Include what must be done immediately, retaining other Ideas that are good for future use.

## 5. Set goals that are:

- Specific
- Attainable
- Measurable
- Timeable
- Deal with top priorities in setting goals dealing with no more than can be handled immediately.

## 6. Plan future needs and work

- Set date for next meeting.
- Check on group's understanding and commitment to goals (Does everybody buy in?)

## 7. Assign Responsibilities

- Identify jobs and tasks to be carried out in order to reach goals.
- In other words, who will do what? when? how?
- Has anything been omitted?

## 8. Evaluation

- Review to find the successes and learn from them.
- Check on failures to see why they failed; avoid them next time.
- Evaluate only after the end date set in the goals has been reached.

## **ELEMENTS OF A GOOD COUNCIL MEETING**

Research has revealed that a major criticism of council meetings was that too much time seemed wasted. Conscientious, concerned, and capable council members who have some vision of the challenges of the church in their community and world have little patience for routine, half-hearted treading of water in council meetings. Following are some principles and procedures that will help a council or committee work effectively in meetings:

- Know the main purpose and tasks of the group.
- Give meetings an obvious beginning and a formal ending.
- Follow a planned agenda.
- Prepare written reports ahead of time, and present them concisely.
- Limit discussion to the subject at hand.
- Give all who desire to do so the opportunity to state approval or disapproval of a question that is before the group.
- Decide minor matters quickly, perhaps by consensus.
- Be sure that every member knows what was decided.
- Assign tasks not requiring involvement of the total group to an individual or small task group.
- Periodically allow time for a frank evaluation of how the meetings are experienced by the members and how well the group is fulfilling its tasks.

## **SETTING AN AGENDA**

The chair is responsible for proposing an agenda for a given meeting. Lay chairpersons may want to receive counsel and assistance from the pastor in preparing the agenda, and should ask whether he has any items which should be included. The agenda is the planned order of business. It indicates the main purpose and content of the meeting. In a democratic procedure, members are given an opportunity to revise the agenda at the beginning of the meeting. The following is the council agenda format:

Call to Order

Devotions

Committee Reports:

    Standing committee reports (Worship and Music, Evangelism, Stewardship, Christian Education,  
    Property, Fellowship, Youth)

    Other special committees

Pastor's report

Letters and announcements

Treasurer's report

Unfinished business

New business

Date and time of next meeting

Adjournment with a prayer

## **STEPS IN DEVELOPING AN AGENDA**

1. Establish the desired limit on the length of the meeting. (It may be lengthened by group formal action.)
2. List the matters to be considered.
3. Specify a block of time for each item.
4. Assign priority to the items according to their importance and urgency.
5. Invite the participants to review, alter, and then adopt the agenda.
6. Post the agenda on newsprint for all to see, or provide copies to all present.
7. Ask a member of the group to monitor progress and evaluate the meeting at its conclusion

# GETTING THROUGH A COUNCIL MEETING

## A. When the task isn't getting done

You could be in the middle of a discussion, trying to come to some decision on a matter before you. You're bogged down, not sure whether you ought to proceed. How do you get out of the predicament?

Five functions need to be active when a group is at work. Check to see if one or more of these functions need attention. By taking that time, you may resolve the problem.

### 1. Defining matters

Is the issue before you clearly defined? If not, participants may be attacking the discussion from different perspectives.

For example, the announced subject of a discussion might be, "Should we buy new choir robes?" But one person is talking about the music, another about the organist and another about ushering!

Someone needs to restate the issue or motion and the group needs to agree on the subject and stick with it.

### 2. Informing, getting the facts

Insufficient information could be a problem. The facts need to be stated and participants need to understand those facts and the feelings involved. If key information isn't yet available, someone or some committee needs to get the necessary information and report to the next meeting.

Sometimes participants know all the facts aren't in but still feel the need to discuss the issue. Call for a time limit on the discussion so that you can get on to other matters.

### 3. Clarifying ideas, suggestions or alternatives

Often contributors of ideas need to clarify or restate their main points so they are clear. Sometimes a contributor needs help stating an idea that he/she is still developing. So the group clarifies direction together. It is important that such contributions are commonly understood by participants.

### 4. Summarizing

All too often this ingredient is missing. Discussion is held. Points of view are numerous. It's time to decide. It is helpful to provide a fair summary of the information and points of view. Someone should do this briefly, maybe with help from others. The case for various sides need to be stated impartially. Action can then be taken.

### 5. Testing consensus

At times, ideas and feelings are entirely expressed and you're not sure agreement is near. Test things out. Ask! If the group is ready to vote or act by consensus, do so.

## **B. When we aren't working together**

You are all well-intentioned people, but for some reason you can't work things out at this meeting. Effectiveness is being blocked. Six functions require attention at times like that. Good relationships are usually intact when these six matters are cared for by a group. Check them out.

### **1. Harmonizing**

Everyone's different and has different ideas. Feelings get thrown in and each of us deals with feelings differently. It is helpful when members of a group can help to reconcile, disagreements and get people to explore their differences. To harmonize does not mean to ignore differences but to help group members see where they agree and disagree. In working through their differences, people often gain new Insights and come to agreement. If they don't agree, they may still learn and become clear about the differences.

### **2. Tension reducing**

Harmonizing helps, but so does the appropriate use of humor. It's not joke time nor putting somebody down type of humor that's needed, but rather help from someone naturally good at throwing in a little humor. That should be done at appropriate times.

### **3. Gate keeping**

Communication may not be flowing we" because not everyone is contributing. Someone needs to encourage more reserved folks to contribute, perhaps by saying, "Marlene, do you have ideas on this subject? Please share them."

### **4. Encouraging**

Everyone needs a little boost from time to time. Perhaps the group is hung up because no one is fulfilling the role of booster and some people are feeling down. Make sure encouragement happens!

### **5. Compromising**

Agreeable solutions need to be encouraged when members of a group are unwilling to yield. It's okay to give up on an idea, or some of it, to admit that new information and points of view have modified your position, to admit error. Some members of a group may do better than others at encouraging compromise.

### **6. Testing and setting standards**

Dissatisfaction with a group's norms and procedures may be placing a damper on participation by some group members. For example, the norm may be to avoid conflict at all cost. Or perhaps the group is in a rut over procedures for agenda-setting and discussion, making decisions or hearing reports. The group may need to encourage new ways of proceeding or different approaches.

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When the eleven functions stated above have been explored and found to be in operation, group relations have a greater chance of being positive and affirming. Good group process takes place.

## **c. When we don't listen well**

At times we just don't listen to one another. Communication is not working. Consider the following suggestions.

### **1. Begin with basics.**

Every group member has ideas, feelings convictions, and experiences which may be relevant. Every group member wants to share these ideas, feelings, convictions, and experiences. They want to speak clearly so that:

- their ideas are accepted.
- their ideas are heard and understood by others
- they make a contribution to discussion and decisions.

This kind of communication happens when a group member feels good about self and accepted by other group members. When respect and trust for one another exists, then discussion can be calm or heated, differences can be shared, feelings expressed, and decisions made.

So what gets in to way? Consider this:

### **2. When you want to communicate something:**

- Ask yourself: Do I feel safe enough in this group to express my thoughts and feelings? If not, why not?
- Begin with yourself. Remind yourself that you are a member of this group, you have contributions to make, and you are expected to make them. When you have a clear idea of what you want to say, just say it. When you have ideas and feelings that need testing, begin with a phrase like, "I'm not quite sure how to say this, but let me try ... ". Practice in your mind before the meeting, or test out your thoughts and feelings with someone before the meeting.
- Check your trust level of the group: If you feel you have to be reserved or sensitive to others because of your strong feelings, tell them how you feel and why it's important to you. If your experience is that you really cannot fully trust some members of the group, then try sticking to the basic facts and key ideas without elaborating, and hold back on some of those feelings, but not all of them! You may have to work through the lack of trust with someone on a one-to-one basis. Or the group may need to do team building to build trust.

### **3. When you have trouble really listening to someone else:**

Try the following ideas:

- Eye contact. Look at the speaker, not out the window.
- Allow the speaker to finish; don't cut a person off.
- Avoid assuming you already know what the speaker will say.
- Learn from the speaker; don't assume it isn't important.
- Listen to what the speaker is intending to say, even if the words don't quite say it. Help clarify so you can discuss the same subject.
- Accept the fact that the speaker has needs, and listen to those needs even though your needs may be different. Respond to what the speaker said before stating your thoughts.
- Let the speaker know you will listen non-judgmentally

#### **4. When other barriers prevent good communication.**

Sometimes other barriers prevent good communication, either in you or in some other members of the group. By recognizing them, you may be able to help overcome them. Sometimes you can deal with them directly in the meeting, but often more time is needed to identify them. Agree on the barriers, discuss them, and agree on how they will be handled in future meetings. Such discussions are good topics for a retreat or workshop.

- *Status and role ambiguities.* If persons feel they have low status, they become critical of other person's ideas. If they have high status, they may not listen.
- *Language differences.* The words being used can be misunderstood; they may have vague meaning or mean different things to different people. .
- *Personality clashes.* We have different temperaments. Some people are more supportive toward others; some have the need to be more controlling; some want more facts; some like to adapt themselves to the situation. It helps to understand our own personality and accept the personalities of others.
- *Emotions and feelings.* Sometimes we're defensive to protect our feelings. Sometimes our strong feelings, negative or positive, get in the way of good listening.

#### **5. When you don't know how to give feedback to the speaker.**

When you value the building of good relationships it is important to give feedback that is effective. Some ideas for doing that follow. (They are based on an unpublished paper by Judith S. Justad, University of Minnesota.)

- *Give feedback only after you are sure the person wants it.* Sometimes we are too quick with suggestions to people on how they should "improve" their ability to communicate. If they do not want advice, they will not receive it, they may become defensive, and your relationship could be impaired.
- *Give the facts; avoid assumptions.* Respond to what you can, what you heard, not what you think was meant.
- *Give feedback as soon as possible,* and be to the point so that it is better understood.
- *Give feedback appropriately.* Use open-ended questions, not, "Why did you ... "
- *Realize that the speaker is free to accept or reject your feedback.*
- *Give helpful feedback based on your observations,* not a criticism of someone's actions.

## **D. When feelings are hurt.**

Feelings do get hurt. And some people's feelings are hurt more easily than others.

People also handle their hurts differently. Try these hints for handling hurt feelings.

### **1. When you are hurt.**

- *Express your hurts*, either right away or later, preferable to the person or persons involved. It is better not to nurse the hurt silently, or later with outsiders and in ways which escalate differences.

- *Analyze the hurt*: Why are you hurt? Does it have more to do with some other things that are going on in your life right now? Are the hurts bringing back feelings from previous experiences, thus magnifying them? Do you feel you were hurt intentionally? Does the other person know you are hurting?

- *Interpret what is reality*: That is, come to some conclusions from your analysis and determine what needs attention. For example, you may have been hurt at the time, but now realize it was unfounded. Or, the hurt was real and you need to deal with it or it will affect your feelings and behavior in that group or with that person.

- *Plan what to do*: If the level of hurt is not deep, or encumbered with past experiences, talk it out with the person. If you feel you need to discuss it with someone, discuss it in confidence with the intent of solving the problem, not perpetuating it. If it is deep and encumbered, have a third party help work it out.

- *Why bother? Because it takes a lot of energy to harbor hurt feelings*. They get recycled and become even worse. You become distracted with it. The trust level needed to work together is impaired. Christ calls us to live in a forgiving relationship, and this we cannot do if we do not respect our feelings and deal with them in problem-solving ways.

### **2. When someone else is hurting.**

When someone in the group is obviously hurting, it is time to be sensitive and listen. It isn't the time for a rational, logical discussion on whether the person should or shouldn't feel that way. It is a time for catharsis, that is, to help the person:

- express the feelings, knowing we can accept those feelings
- gain self-understanding by verbalizing his/her understanding of those feelings
- talk with the other person(s) involved to bring about resolution.

When some or all of this is not possible or acceptable to the person, an appropriate person should help bring about catharsis at another time.

### **3. Keep in mind:**

Conflict is normal. We are human beings, created uniquely. Therefore we see things differently and have different needs from time to time. We each are gifted by God and want to make our contribution to the group. Acceptance of one another and tolerance toward one another are essential if we are each to use our God-given gifts and differences.

## E. When to consent and when to rule

Parliamentary procedure sets the rules for conducting a meeting. Without rules, confusion reigns, business falters, groups become frustrated. With parliamentary procedure there is a fixed agenda, a quorum is established, motions get made for discussion one at a time, decisions are made in orderly fashion, and group members feel good about their right to participate.

Still, questions do come up from time to time!

1. When some say: Can't we forget about parliamentary procedure and just conduct our business in a friendly sort of way?

No! Without rules to follow, members of a group can easily be manipulated. Perhaps more importantly, decisions could be poorly defined. "I move" are the two most important words for zeroing in on a particular item for discussion and decision.

2. When some say: Do we have to be "legalistic" and uptight about following all the rules?

No! Flexibility about parliamentary procedure works very well in council and committee meetings. For example, exploratory discussion before a motion is made helps shape the motion to be made. General agreement on minor changes in the motion avoids the need for voting on numerous amendments to the motion. However, when general agreement changes motions, it still is essential for the secretary to read back the motion before the vote is taken.

3. When some say: Can't we use consensus as our rule rather than motions and formal voting?

No, to doing without motions: A motion is needed to be clear about what is being decided.

Yes, to consensus instead of voting, if the group can reach consensus.

Consensus works when:

- The group has a high trust level. Individuals need to let their viewpoints be known and be open to persuasion.
- Full and open discussion of points of view is allowed within the time restraints agreed upon.
- Group members in the minority opinion who have changed their minds as a result of the discussion say so.
- Those in the minority opinion who still hold to their point of view can say:

*I had my say and I know you listened to me. I'll support the decision of the group.*

## **F. When council members don't support decisions.**

A frequent frustration is when support for decisions by those involved in making the decisions is not forthcoming. How often the real arguments against the decision, or the way someone really voted comes out after the meeting in the parking lot, or at home, or one week/on~ year later!

Cajoling group members with a "you better or else" warning doesn't work, and probably for some people nothing will work. But some things could be done to help group members affirm and give support to decisions.

### **1. Refer back to items A, B, and D above that deal with the meeting and consensus.**

### **2. Check the meaning of "silence" when some do not speak to the issue.**

Ask them to state where they are on the issue .

### **3. Clearly establish the norms for group functioning, and periodically review them.**

Agree on the expectations of this group, the role relationships of all the members, the standards followed, their openness to expressing differences.

### **4. Work at building your team support for one another.**

Remember, it takes time and energy to help individuals feel they really belong in a group. People need to feel included, they want to/need to develop a commitment to the purpose of the group, and they need to be involved in the action Qf the group. .

### **5. Look for unresolved power/authority issues.**

Do some feel others in-the group are the real decision makers? Do some feel the real authority is controlled by someone not even in the group? Is there a struggle between two or more persons to be in control? Power issues can impede group consensus. When a person believes that someone else has all the power, that person may not feel that giving support to decisions is necessary.

## **G. When the council should/should not act as a "committee of the whole"**

By and large a council should only act as a committee on a temporary basis. Council does its job well when it finds ways to involve other people in the tasks that need to be done. Even so, situations arise:

When a committee, for whatever reason is not functioning, and decisions need to be made that would normally relate to that committee. However, even then appointing a special task group that could take more time to work on the task may be advisable. For example, there is no fellowship committee; you want a congregational social; you appoint one or more persons to plan and implement.

When a congregation feels it is too small to have all the committees. A number of actions could be taken by council without benefit of committees. It may well be that the congregation just cannot find "anybody to do the work." However, that should be looked upon as temporary, and efforts can be made to find better ways of involving more people. Furthermore, one council member and one other person could be a committee!

When a special agenda or program is accepted by the council as their responsibility. On these occasions, an appropriate amount of time needs to be designated to deal with that matter.

## **H. When we need to improve our meetings.**

It is easy to fall into patterns and "ways of doing things" without realizing that the "spark" and enthusiasm has diminished. Periodically, groups need to take a look at how things are going. The following may be helpful.

### **1. When suddenly the meeting place makes you feel depressed!**

It may have been that way for a while and you got used to it. It's time to examine the meeting room: Is there enough space for group members? Are the chairs comfortable? Is there enough light? Is there sufficient circulation of air? Does the room look inviting? Given your options for making changes in the room or moving the meeting place, do what you can to improve the place you meet. It makes a big difference in morale.

### **2. When the meeting goes on and on and on .....**

Long meetings are usually unnecessary. Establish the agenda at the beginning of the meeting, and make specific time allocations for most of the items. Not all reports need to be discussed at length. Some matters should have been handled more thoroughly by committee, and they can be referred back to committee. You may need better ground rules for discussion. Everyone should be heard, but individuals need not repeat themselves! Refer back to items A and B above.

### **3. When you don't know what the hang-up is.**

Periodically, have a reflection or critique time. At the end of the meeting, allocate five or ten minutes to discuss how members feel about the meeting. What seemed to go well? Where do we need to make improvements? Council could review items "a" and "b" above and check how the group functioned in terms of caring for the tasks and caring for people. Once an area for improvement is identified, one or two specific suggestions could be made for the next meeting. It would be important, of course, to be reminded of what those improvements are to be at the beginning of the next meeting.

## **Job Descriptions**

### **Church Council and Staff**

#### **Messiah Lutheran Church Madison, AL**

**Note: The job descriptions given here are meant to clarify the roles of various committees and staff as they have evolved at Messiah Lutheran Church. These are meant to be a user-friendly introduction and elaboration on the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions.**

**These descriptions do not supersede the MLC Constitution Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions.**

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- d. Director of Outreach Ministries
- e. Youth Director

**Council Committees and Representatives  
Job Descriptions**

## **The Officers :**

The officers of the Church are defined by the Constitution to be the president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. They are sometimes referred to as the “Executive”.

The Officers have signing authority on all MLC checks (unless there is a potential conflict of interest, e.g. a check for a spouse or family member).

The duties of the officers are well defined in Chapter 11 of the Constitution. A few additional comments are included here for clarification.

**President:** The Pastor at Messiah Lutheran Church.

**Vice President:**

- a. Presides at all Congregation and Council meetings. The President may preside at Council meetings in the absence of the VP.
- b. Appoints a parliamentarian for Congregation meetings to enforce Roberts Rules.  
A parliamentarian is usually not required at Council meetings.
- c. Ensures that the discussion at all meetings is focused and productive. Council meetings should generally not exceed 1.5 to 2 hours.
- d. Collects all Facilities Usage and Fundraiser requests and presents them to Council for discussion and approval.
- e. Meets with the other officers a few days prior to the monthly Council meeting to discuss the agenda drafted by the Pastor/President.
- f. Distributes the final agenda to Council a few days before each meeting.
- g. Reminds Council members to email their monthly reports to the rest of Council to allow adequate review prior to each monthly meeting.
- h. Conducts quarterly open forum meetings with the Congregation to address questions and concerns.
- i. Assists Pastor and other Council members as needed.

**Secretary:**

- a. Takes the minutes at all Council and Congregation meetings.
- b. Archives all minutes and reports in a binder in the office.
- c. Communicates the decision of Council on Fundraising and Facilities Usage Requests.
- d. Coordinates the documentation of a quorum at Congregation meetings.
- e. Coordinates the distribution and collection of ballots at Congregation meetings (except in elections run by the Nominating Committee).

**Treasurer:**

- a. Keeps accurate financial records of the church with the assistance of the Financial Secretary.
- b. Only the Financial Secretary knows the contributions of individual members.
- c. Writes checks as needed.

## **EDUCATION AND YOUTH COMMITTEE**

The purpose of the Education and Youth Committee is to promote the education of the children, youth and adults of the congregation in Christian beliefs and heritage, and to foster the relationships and fellowship among the children and youth in our congregation.

### **A. Organization**

The committee shall consist of two standing sub-committees and the council rep for Education and Youth will chair them each. Each sub committee will meet at least quarterly.

1. The Education Committee shall consist, at the minimum, of the council rep for Education and Youth, the Pastor, the Sunday School Superintendent and a member of the Sunday School teaching staff.
2. The Youth Committee shall consist, at the minimum, of the council rep for Education and Youth, the council liaison for youth, Youth Director, and the youth group advisors.

### **B. Responsibilities**

That the objectives of this committee shall be carried out, the committee, either as a whole, through sub-committees, or through specifically designated individuals, shall;

1. Periodically evaluate the work of this committee and its job description, and make necessary changes.
2. Submit an annual budget request in the form and at the time requested by the Finance Committee.
3. Be responsible for the Christian nurture of children, youth and adults in the congregation, and through them, the community.
4. Establish objective, set policy for, and supervise the total education for: Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Confirmation classes, the church library, home Bible study groups, youth activity groups, and other educational groups.
5. Approve curriculum for all age groups, analyze the performance of each program and seek improvement.
6. Maintain a "people accounting system" to record members' participation in education and youth programs, and to follow up on uninvolved members. This includes maintaining a "working file" of the children and youth in the congregation by age and grade level.
7. Encourage in every member of the congregation the study of the Bible, privately and in formal and informal groups.
8. Delegate administration of educational and youth activities to qualified persons, interviewing and screening volunteers to assure a safe and Christian environment for the children and youth.
9. Exercise leadership in gathering lists of candidates for vacancies in the teaching and youth advisory staffs, and for properly calling teachers and advisors.
10. Support the educational programs of the congregation's organizations.
11. Consider special classes, courses, conferences and retreats for special purposes and special groups.
12. Consider provisions for special educational opportunities for the mentally and physically challenged.
13. Provide for professional growth of the educational and youth advisory staffs through conferences, conventions, and continuing education, and request funds for the same in the annual budget.
14. Maintain, improve, and cultivate the use of the church library. To this end, a church librarian shall be appointed, who shall have the responsibility for providing materials to the congregation, and recommending additions to the library. An audiovisual section of the library will be maintained.
15. Study and adopt, or adapt, helps suggested by the education department of the Southeastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

16. Annually examine the educational facilities and equipment. Make recommendations to the Property Committee as to upkeep, repairs, and replacements as needed. Make recommendations to the church council as to new equipment and facilities needed.
17. Encourage the youth of the congregation to participate in the educational activities as well as group activities and fellowship in a safe, Christian atmosphere.
18. Provide training and education for youth in the leadership and service opportunities within our congregation.
19. Encourage and promote fellowship with other Christian youth organizations within our community and synod.
20. Establish and maintain a "Cradle Roll" program.
21. Provide an annual report to the congregation at the May annual meeting.
22. Provide an annual inventory of the property and assets in the education and youth rooms.

### **C. Relationships**

The Education and Youth committee shall work with all other standing committees of the church to coordinate educational activities within the congregation. This committee shall provide, in conjunction with the Outreach committee, for the *inviting of individuals from the community for leadership and enrichment of the congregation's educational and youth activities*. This committee reports and is responsible to the church council.

### **D. Relevant Section in the Constitution: C13.06.B12.**

*(Approved by Council October 4, 2012)*

## **Fellowship Committee**

The purpose of the Fellowship Committee of Messiah Lutheran Church is to create a spiritual communion within the church and to develop friendly relationships among members and prospective members.

### **A. Organization**

The Fellowship Committee shall consist of a chairperson, council liaison (if appropriate), and four other members of the congregation. The committee shall meet twice a year for planning (early fall and spring) and as necessary to fulfill the statement of purpose.

### **B. Responsibilities**

1. To ensure regular fellowship on Sunday morning, typically between services.
2. To hold at least one major event each month including yearly events such as:
  - a. Mother/Daughter Event (Women's Event)
  - b. Father/Son Event (Men's Event)
  - c. Halloween Party
  - d. Picnics
  - e. Potluck Dinners
3. To ensure regular fellowship events within member's homes as interest arises
  - a. Member suggested events
4. To coordinate special interest groups, for example:
  - a. Men's Breakfast meetings
  - b. Playgroup
  - c. Agape Groups
5. To annually evaluate the work of the committee and its job description and make necessary changes.
6. To provide for the professional growth through conferences, conventions, and continuing education if needed.
7. To provide budget needs to the Finance Committee and monitor those needs throughout the church year.
8. To provide an annual report to the congregation at the May annual meeting

### **C. Relationships**

The Fellowship Committee reports to and is accountable to the church council. The committee also works with the Evangelism/Outreach Committee to coordinate the activities of special interest groups of the congregation. It is essential that the Fellowship Committee work and maintain a liaison with all other standing committees in the church.

### **D. Relevant Section in the Constitution: C13.06.E12.**

*(Approved by Council October 4, 2012)*

## **Finance Committee**

The purpose of the Church Finance Committee is to assume total responsibility for the finances of the congregation. This shall include developing and monitoring a church budget and financial recording and reporting system, disbursement, investment planning, and auditing of records.

### **A. Organization**

The Church Finance Committee shall consist of at least five persons including a chairperson, council liaison, Financial Secretary, treasurer, and a member for budget. This committee will meet quarterly or as necessary to fulfill the statement of purpose.

### **B. Responsibilities**

1. Budget - annual preparation
2. Receipts and disbursements of funds - treasurer
3. Financial recording and reporting of member giving
  - a. Recruit, train and schedule offering counters
  - b. Provide quarterly and annual personal finance statements - Financial Secretary
- 4.- Audit Committee - recruit members and ensure audit is completed in a timely manner. The Audit Committee will consist of 3 members, one member rotating annually. Financial records will be audited annually or more often if deemed necessary by this committee or the church council.
5. Investment of church funds
  - a. CDs
  - b. Checking
  - c. Savings
  - d. Other
6. Insurance - review and maintain policies and be point of contact for insurance representative
7. Record non-solicited gifts
8. Monitor the financial health of the congregation - prepare and distribute reports as needed
9. Annually evaluate the work of this committee and its job description and make necessary changes with approval from Council.
10. Provide for professional growth through conferences, conventions, and continuing education
- 11 . Provide an annual report to the congregation at the May annual meeting

### **C. Relationships**

The Church Finance Committee works in close cooperation with the Stewardship Committee as well as all standing church committees for budget planning and input. This committee reports to and is accountable to the church council.

### **D. Relevant Section in the Constitution: C13.06.G12.**

*(Approved by Council October 4, 2012)*

## **OUTREACH COMMITTEE**

The purpose of the Outreach Committee is to plan, organize, and supervise specific parish witness ministries designed to reach individuals for Christ.

### **A. Organization**

This Committee shall consist of the Church Council Representative and the following Sub-Committees. The Sub-Committees shall meet monthly or as necessary to fulfill the statement of purpose. The Sub-Committees shall report to the Church Council Representative.

### **B. Responsibilities**

#### **B1. Community Ministries Sub-Committee**

1. Promote congregation ministry in local missions and involvement in community and social ministries.
2. Direct and maintain a ministry for members in need of special care (ill, shut-ins, families in need of food, and hospital visits).
3. Provide publicity for the congregation through advertising, brochures, newsletters, and special mailings, and an active website.
4. Provide welcoming events for new members as needed.

#### **B2. Membership Sub-Committee**

1. In association with the Pastor seek out new members and maintain an on-going visitation program to the un-churched and those individuals new to the community.
2. Provide new and prospective member inquiry class
3. Strive to create a warm and friendly atmosphere in the place of worship. Coordinate the welcoming of Sunday morning visitors and follow-up.
4. Maintain the Welcome Center in the narthex
5. Maintain greeter and hidden greeter programs.
6. Direct and maintain a ministry to inactive members.
7. Direct and maintain ministries to provide care and recognition of current members (ex: provide devotional materials, workshops, recognize member's birthdays. New births, graduations, weddings, etc.)

#### **B3. National and Global Missions Sub-Committee**

1. Promote congregation ministry in national and global missions.
2. Maintain relationships with mission partners. (Missionaries, seminary students, sister churches, etc.)
3. Coordinate and promote evangelism efforts with other groups and committees within the congregation.

The Church Council representative shall work with the sub-committees to annually evaluate their work and job description, and make necessary changes with approval from Council.

The Church Council representative shall provide an annual report to the congregation at the May annual meeting.

### **C. Relationships**

The Outreach Committee will coordinate schedules and activities with the Director of Outreach. The committee shall also work with the Fellowship Committee identifying special interest needs within the Congregation. The

Outreach Council Representative reports to and is accountable to the Church Council.

**D. Relevant Section in the Constitution: C13.06.C12.**

*(Approved by Council October 4, 2012)*

## **CHURCH PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

The purpose of the Committee on Church Property is to care for the house of the family of God in its community. It will provide proper maintenance for all property owned by the congregation. Routine inspection is essential so that proper upkeep can be planned and major renovations can be adequately anticipated.

### **A. Organization**

The property committee shall be composed of a Chair-person and at least three other members from the congregation. The Property Council member will serve as the liaison between the Property Committee and Church Council. Specific responsibilities may be assigned to committee members for the following areas:

1. Church building
2. Educational Facilities
3. Church grounds and parking lot
4. Parsonage
5. Detached properties - rental property owned or used by the congregation.

The property committee shall meet as needed to ensure that they fulfill their purpose.

### **B. RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The property Committee shall:

1. Be responsible for developing plans for the acquisition of property, for building on such property, and for the acquisition of contents and equipment. Such plans shall be submitted to the Church Council for review and approval. A separate committee shall be established for overseeing all phases of major building or renovations projects a Church.
2. Provide for maintenance of all property, buildings, building contents and equipment.
3. Make recommendations to the Church Council for the use of church facilities by congregational groups, community groups, and private individuals. These recommendations shall include a proposed fee schedule. The committee shall administer such use policies as are established by the Church Council.
4. Maintain a current inventory of all church contents and equipment. This inventory shall be updated at least annually.
5. In conjunction with the Treasurer, annually review existing insurance coverage.
6. Develop an annual property budget for the upcoming year.
7. Annually evaluate the work of this committee and its job description, and make necessary changes with approval from Council.
8. Provide an annual report to the congregation at the May annual meeting.

### **C. RELATIONSHIPS:**

It is essential that liaison be maintained between the Committee on Church Property and all the other standing committees of the church in supportive ways. The committee is not to act as censor over the program and mission of the congregation but should seek to work constructively with the other standing committees to improve, adjust, or add to the church building and its furnishings. The committee reports to and is accountable to the Church Council. The Pastor shall be an ex officio member of the Property Committee.

### **D. Relevant Section in the Constitution: C13.06.F12.**

*(Approved by Council October 4, 2012)*

# Stewardship Committee

The purpose of the Stewardship Committee is to stimulate and promote Christian Stewardship principles and responsibilities of all members within Messiah Lutheran Church.

## A. Organization

The Stewardship Committee shall consist of a chairperson, council liaison, Financial Secretary and volunteer members of the congregation as needed. The committee shall meet as necessary to fulfill the statement of purpose.

## B. Responsibilities

1. Educate the congregation on good Christian stewardship practices through:
  - a. Pastoral support
  - b. Temple talks
  - c. Sunday School classes & Bible studies
  - d. Newsletters, bulletin inserts, pamphlets, flyers, etc.
2. Encourage Spiritual Gift assessment through:
  - a. Pastoral support
  - b. Sunday School classes & Bible studies
  - c. Newsletters, bulletin inserts, pamphlets, flyers, etc.
3. Monitor giving trends and report status to the council and congregation.
4. Direct congregational "Time and Talent" results to proper committees/church groups.
5. Coordinate annual Stewardship Program including:
  - a. Monetary Pledge & Time and Talent forms.
    1. Follow-up plan for those not participating.
    2. Positive reinforcement for those participating.
  - b. Offering envelope distribution.
  - c. Report to the council and congregation.
6. Set and monitor annual budget for the Stewardship Committee.
7. New member involvement.
  - a. First-call List
  - b. New-member packet (in coordination with Director of Outreach Ministries)
8. Annually evaluate the work of this committee and its job description and make necessary changes.
9. Provide an annual report to the congregation at the May annual meeting.

## III. Relationships

A. The Financial Secretary will act as liaison with the Finance Committee. This Committee shall work constructively with all other standing committees of the congregation. This committee reports to and is accountable to the Congregation Council.

## D. Relevant Section in the Constitution: C13.06.D12.

*(Approved by Council October 4, 2012)*

## **Worship and Music Committee**

The purpose of the Worship and Music Committee (WMC) of Messiah Lutheran Church is to help people celebrate their relationship with God and their relationships with one another through the many aspects of worshipful and musical expression.

### **A. Organization**

The WMC shall consist of a chairperson, council liaison, the Altar Guild chair, the usher coordinator, and at least two other members of the congregation. Any member of the congregation is welcome to become a member of the WMC. The ex officio members of this committee are the music director, choir director, and the pastor. The WMC shall meet quarterly or as necessary to fulfill the statement of purpose.

### **B. Responsibilities**

1. Ensure regular and appropriate conduct of the following:
  - a. Worship services in accordance with the teachings and practices of the ELCA
  - b. Seasonal and festival services held throughout the year
  
2. Help plan services for the following:
  - a. Easter/Ash Wednesday/Lent/Palm Sunday
  - b. Christmas/Advent
  - c. Reformation
  - d. Other appropriate festivals throughout the year
  - e. Weddings
  - f. Funerals / Memorial Services
  
3. Act as a liaison for the following groups within the WMC and to insure establishment of appropriate policies, guidelines and training:
  - a. Lectors
  - b. Communion Assistants
  - c. Ushers
  - d. Altar Guild

Procedures are available for Lectors, Communion Assistants, and Ushers. Guidelines are available for the Altar Guild.
  
4. Assist in providing for supply ministry in the event of pastoral vacancy or vacation; the church council will have input and will ultimately authorize decisions in providing this ministry
  
5. Assist in providing the opportunity for musical expression in worship through the establishment of the ongoing music program and the use of occasional special music
  
6. Assist in planning for the acquisition and maintenance of equipment and adornments for worship and of musical instruments that will enhance the worship experience at Messiah.
  
7. Annually evaluate the work of the WMC and its job description and make necessary changes with approval of Council.
  
8. Help provide for professional growth by being aware of, and attending when applicable, conferences,

conventions, and continuing education

9. Provide budget needs to the Finance Committee and monitor those needs throughout the church year

10. Provide an annual report to the congregation at the May annual meeting

**C. Relationship**

The Worship and Music Committee reports to and is accountable to the church council. In order to fully enhance the worship life of Messiah Lutheran Church, it is essential that the WMC work constructively with all other standing committees in the church. The Pastor shall be an ex officio member of the Property Committee.

**D. Relevant Section in the Constitution: C13.06.A12.**

*(Approved by Council October 4, 2012)*

## **Youth Representative**

The purpose of the Youth Representative is to serve as a voice for all of the youth of Messiah Lutheran Church on Council. Specifically, the Youth Representative is to serve as a liaison between Council and the Tween, Junior, and Senior Youth Groups.

### **Duties**

1. Communicate to the Church Council the status of the youth ministry program, contribute to the planning of future program events, and serve as an advocate program needs to Council.
2. Work with Council to enable all of Messiah youth to grow in their faith and take an active role in the Church.
3. Work with the Youth Director and the Chair of Education and Youth to develop a budget for the youth program to be included in the church budget planning process in October.
4. Present reports on youth activities at regular Council meetings and annual Congregational meetings.

### **Qualifications:**

1. Attend middle or high school while serving as Youth Representative.
2. Regularly attend and be active in the Junior or Senior Youth Groups.
3. Demonstrate a strong interest in leadership and service.

### **Relationships:**

The Youth Representative shall work with representative of other standing committees to coordinate the educational and fellowship activities of Messiah.

### **D. Relevant Section in the Constitution: C12.01.**

*(Approved by Council October 4, 2012)*

## **Other Standing Committees**

## **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

The purpose of the Audit Committee of Messiah Lutheran Church is to ensure that the financial records of the church are accurate, that assets and investments of the Church are well managed and protected, and that appropriate policies and procedures are in place to protect members of the congregation, employees, visitors, and the church property.

### **A. Organization**

The Audit Committee shall consist of at least three members. Members are selected and approved by Council. No member of the Audit Committee can be a member of the Council or Finance Committee. The Committee shall meet as often as necessary to fulfill their purpose.

### **B. Responsibilities**

(a) The Audit Committee shall be responsible for assuring that there is a thorough annual audit of the treasurer's books prior to May 31 of each year. An audit shall also be performed prior to whenever a new treasurer takes office.

(b) An additional annual audit will occur prior to November 30 of each year to audit policies, procedures, insurance, and inventory.

(c) The Audit Committee shall assure that any organization that has a separately held treasury account will be subject to an annual audit by the committee.

(d) An additional audit is required when a written request is received from not less than ten percent (10%) of the voting members of this congregation.

(e) The results of all audits shall be presented by the Chair of the Audit Committee at a monthly Council meeting with a detailed written report summarizing all findings and recommendations. The report shall include a summary of previous recommendations and actions taken by Council to address them.

### **C. Relationships**

The Audit Committee reports to and is accountable to the Church Council. The committee also works with and maintains a liaison with both the Finance and Property Committees to ensure that they obtain the information needed to conduct a thorough audit.

### **D. Relevant Section in the Constitution: C13.03.**

*(Approved by Council November 8, 2012)*

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The nominating committee will determine the slate of candidates that are to be placed on the ballot for election by the Congregation at the annual Congregational Meeting in May.

### A. Organization

*Membership shall consist of six voting members of the congregation, two of whom, if possible, shall be outgoing members of the Congregation Council. Membership shall be elected at the annual spring meeting for a term of one year. Members of the Nominating Committee cannot serve consecutive terms. The Pastor shall be an *ex officio* member of the Nominating Committee.*

### B. Responsibilities (duplicate of C13.02.01)

1. The committee shall meet as often as necessary to fulfill its purpose. It shall select its chairperson at its first meeting.
2. This committee shall be responsible for all elections, including the administrative functions prior to, during, and after elections, in which members of the congregation as a body cast a vote. This includes the election of officers, Congregation Council members, Sunday School Superintendent, and members of the Nominating Committee.
3. This committee shall prepare a slate of officers consisting of at least one candidate each for vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, and at least one candidate for each vacancy on the Congregation Council. All of these will be elected at the Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting in May.
4. Prior to publishing this slate of officer and Congregation Council nominations, this committee shall have determined that each proposed candidate is qualified to perform the duties of the office for which nominated. This committee shall also have explained to each candidate the duties of the office to which nominated and have obtained their consent to be nominated and serve if elected.
5. This committee shall present a slate of candidates for the Nominating Committee in accordance with C13.02 of the Constitution.
6. Should nominations be made from the floor, this Committee shall be responsible for verifying their validity, and integrating all nominations prior to the vote.

### C. Procedures

1. The Pastor as the an *ex officio* member of the Nominating Committee of the Nominating Committee shall convene the Nominating Committee in January to start working on the slate for the May meeting.
2. The Nominating Committee shall solicit candidates from the congregation by announcing in the newsletter, the bulletin, and through any other available forums (e.g. web site, bulletin boards) the positions available.
3. The Nominating Committee shall strive to present a slate that has at least two candidates for each office and committee representative position available.
4. The Nominating Committee shall consult with the current Council for candidates to consider for open positions.
5. The Nominating Committee is independent of the Church Council and is responsible for bringing forward the candidates it feels will best serve the mission of the congregation.
6. All candidates who are willing to serve if elected shall be placed on the ballot. The Nominating Committee may choose to recommend a single candidate for a position. Such candidates will have a designation on the ballot by their names.
7. The Nominating Committee may meet with all interested candidates and interview them, or use some other assessment tool to help in identifying the candidate's gifts, vision, call, etc.
8. Nominations from the floor shall be incorporated into the written ballot.

9. The Nominating Committee shall publish biographical statements of the candidates for officers, committee representatives and Nominating Committee candidates.
10. The Nominating Committee shall engage in a prayerful discernment process to determine the slate of officers, committee representatives, and nominating committee members.
11. The Nominating Committee will introduce the candidates at the Congregational Meeting before voting starts and allow each the opportunity to address the Congregation.

**D. Relationships**

The Nominating Committee reports to the President.

**D. Relevant Section in the Constitution: C13.02.A12.**

*(Approved by Council November 8, 2012)*

## **Personnel Committee**

The purpose of the Personnel Committee shall be to assist Council in maintaining job descriptions, evaluations, compensation, and guidelines for all non-ordained employees.

### **A. Organization**

The committee will consist of 4 members appointed by the Congregation Council for terms of 2 years. Two members will be appointed by the Congregation Council in January of each year. Members may serve consecutive terms and membership on this committee does not preclude service in any other capacity in the congregation.

### **B. Responsibilities**

1. Developing and maintaining job descriptions for all non-ordained personnel and submitting job descriptions to the Congregation Council for approval.
2. Seeking qualified personnel for vacancies or new positions on the Congregation staff at the direction of the Congregation Council. Presenting recommended candidates for these positions to the Congregation Council for their approval. (Rostered personnel are called by a Call Committee rather than the Personnel Committee.)
3. Preparing initial compensation recommendations for non-rostered new personnel when the position is offered. These recommendations must be approved by the Congregation Council.
4. Preparing compensation adjustment recommendations for all paid staff. These adjustments need to be prepared during the budget process and any other time it becomes necessary. These recommendations will be submitted to the Congregation Council for its approval.
5. Creating and updating any necessary personnel guidelines for non-rostered personnel which will be presented to the Congregation Council for its approval.
6. The Church Personnel Committee will review the Continuing Resolution that outlines its duties bi-annually.

### **C. Relationships**

The Personnel Committee reports to Council through the Executive Committee.

### **D. Relevant Section in the Constitution: C13.07.01.**

*(Approved by Council November 8, 2012)*

## **Sub-Committees and Positions**

## ALTAR GUILD

The purpose of the Altar Guild is to care for the worship space, including the altar, pulpit and baptismal areas, its furnishings, linens, paraments, and appointments. It will prepare the worship space for all services, including Sunday worship, special services, weddings, and funerals. It will also care for vestments of acolytes. The Altar Guild will strive to study and constantly grow in understanding of the worship practices of the church.

### A. Organization

The membership shall consist of communicant members or associate members of the congregation. The pastor, as leader of worship, is an ex officio member of the Altar Guild.

The officers are: president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. All officers are elected annually by the Guild for one-year terms.

### B. Responsibilities

The standing duties of the Altar Guild are:

1. housekeeping
2. Communion preparation
3. Baptism preparation and occasional services.

Specific duties are outlined in the Altar Guild Guidelines, which may be amended as needed by the members.

The Guild will use Altar Guild Handbook by S. Anita Stauffer as an authoritative manual. Any matter not addressed in the manual will be decided by a vote of the Guild with the advice of the Pastor. A copy of the manual will be kept in the Sacristy.

The officers of the Altar Guild have the following duties:

1. The president presides at meetings; assigns and supervises the work of the Guild, serves as a member of the Worship and Music committee. The president and treasurer prepare the proposed budget each year, and the president submits it to the Worship and Music committee chairman. The president informs the Worship and Music chairman of Altar Guild activities for the past year to be included in the chairman's annual report.
2. The vice-president presides at meetings in the absence of the president and assists the president as requested.
3. The secretary keeps a record of meetings and distributes copies of the minutes to the members. The secretary also keeps a list of Altar Guild members and publishes that list yearly.
4. The treasurer is responsible for purchasing all the supplies, keeping financial records and assisting the president in preparing the proposed yearly budget.

Additional duties may be divided among all members to assist the officers in their duties.

Guidelines for meetings of the Guild include the following:

1. Meetings will be held three times a year.
2. The annual meeting when the officers are elected will be held in the Spring.
3. Special meetings and elections may be called by the Pastor or Guild president.
4. The order of business at regular meetings is: call to order, attendance, devotions, reports, old business, new business and closing prayer.

Amendments to these resolutions may be made by a majority vote of all Altar Guild members voting in person or by absentee.

**C. Relationships:**

The Altar Guild is directly responsible to the Worship and Music Committee.

**D. Relevant Section in the Constitution: C13.06.A12.**

*(Approved by Council November 8, 2012)*

## Financial Secretary

The purpose of the Financial Secretary's position is to maintain the confidential giving records of all members and regular visitors and to inform all members / visitors of the status of their giving to Messiah Lutheran Church. As a member of the Finance Committee, the Financial Secretary provides current and projected income data and other support for the annual budget cycle.

### A. Organization

In accordance with the congregation constitution, (Para C12.05.01.):

The Congregation Council shall elect annually for the fiscal year a Financial Secretary who shall not be a member of the Congregation Council. The person elected Financial Secretary shall not be restricted to a maximum number of terms. The Financial Secretary shall maintain records of all contributions and make regular reports to the Congregation Council and treasurer.

The Financial Secretary shall issue to individual voting members quarterly statements of contributions to the congregation.

The Financial Secretary shall issue an annual report in consultation with the Committee for Stewardship.

### B. Responsibilities

The duties of the Financial Secretary are:

1. Receive, Record, and Maintain the annual Pledges of all members/giving units and visitors who provide an annual intent of giving.
2. Using CMS, record and maintain all offerings / gifts received from all members or visitors during regular or special services / events.
3. Periodically provide all members / visitors of the status of their annual gifts. If member / visitor had made a pledge for the current year, also provide the status of their gifts versus the currency of their pledge
4. Annually provide all members and visitors with an IRS approved statement of giving appropriate for certification of charitable giving for tax purposes.
5. Support the annual budget cycle by estimating the income projections for the next year. These estimates will be used to project the income vs. budget difference for the next year.
6. Maintain all manual and computer offering data in a strictly confidential manner. Personal or individual donor data may be released if the Financial Secretary believes the situation justifies the release of confidential data.

### C. Relationships:

1. The Financial Secretary is annually elected by the Church Council.
2. Supports the Finance Committee's constitutional requirements to:
  - a. oversee the receipt and disbursement of funds
  - b. record and report member giving
  - c. provide quarterly and annual giving statements to members.
3. The Financial Secretary shall act as the Stewardship Committee's liaison with the Finance Committee.
4. The Financial Secretary interfaces with the Memorial Gift Committee to ensure all gifts are accurately recorded and acknowledged. This coordination applies to gifts given by members and non-members and to individuals honored or memorialized.

### D. Relevant Section in the Constitution: C13.05.01. (Also C10.01.01 and C11.01.01.)

## **MEMORIALS and HONORARIUM COMMITTEE**

The purpose of the Memorials and Honorarium Committee is to provide a specific organization within Messiah Lutheran Church to maintain a consistent and functional approach to the giving and receiving of gifts presented in memory or in honor of a person, group, or activity.

Memorial Fund Policy:

- All purchases made with memorial funds will require Church Council approval.
- Memorial gifts / Honorariums will normally be designated for items on the Memorials Committee's suggested list or as approved by the Church Council.
- If sufficient funds are not received for a selected gift, the funds will be segregated until the Memorials Committee receives approval from the Council to add funds or redirect funds to other projects.
- Undesignated Memorial funds shall go into the congregation's Memorial Fund for future designation.
- Plaques or markers shall not be placed on items given to the Congregation.
- All items purchased by or given to the congregation shall remain the property of the congregation.

### **A. Organization**

The Church Council shall establish a Memorials Committee consisting of three members of the congregation and the Pastor. The Church Council shall appoint a new member each year. Each person, other than the Pastor, shall serve a three-year term with the possibility of serving a maximum of two terms. The Committee shall annually elect a chairperson.

### **B. Responsibilities**

The duties of the Memorials Committee are:

1. Coordinate with other committees and activities within the church to develop a list of potential memorial / honorarium gifts and the approximate cost of each item.
2. With the Pastor's assistance, coordinate with families, friends, members and others in the designation of specific memorial or honorarium gifts.
3. Ensure that all gifts are acknowledged to the donor in a timely fashion.
4. Notify the appropriate individuals or family of gifts received in honor of their loved one. This notification will include the donor and amount of the gift.
5. Ensure that there is an effective process to ensure that all gifts are accurately counted, recorded, and transmitted to the Memorials Committee.
6. Coordinate with the Financial Secretary in the issuing of year-end statements to meet IRS contribution requirements.

Specific committee duties and guidelines are outlined below.

1. One time actions of the Memorials Committee may be necessary to establish the context of this Memorial / Honorarium activity within this congregation and community.
  - a. Present an initial and follow-on Temple Talk, as necessary, to explain the functions of the Memorials Committee.
  - b. Design and produce a generic gift card to be used by donors who want to designate a gift in memory / honor of a deceased or living person, group or activity. These cards should be placed in a convenient and visible location to encourage their use by members and guests.

- i. Cards with concise directions should be placed in the Narthex, near the Welcome Center, or other appropriate location.
  - c. Design and produce a generic letter or card to donors to acknowledge receipt of a gift.
  - d. Design and produce a generic letter or card to be sent to the appropriate family member of friend of the honoree.
  - e. Confirm that instructions are available to and understood by offering counters to ensure the accurate reporting of all gifts received. This includes familiarity with the process to add new memorial / honorarium funds.
  - f. Establish a committee form or list to keep an independent record of gifts received. The listings on this form should be compared with the Financial Secretary's quarterly reports to ensure all gifts are correctly recorded and acknowledged.
  - g. Confirm with the Treasurer and Financial Secretary that guidelines are in place to ensure the appropriate recording and IRS approved acknowledgement of all gifts.
2. Preparation and maintenance of lists of potential memorial / honorarium.
    - a. Members of this committee shall meet as required to coordinate the preparation and updating of an appropriate list of recommended gifts and costs. (Five or six items may be sufficient.) A semi-annual meeting with standing committee chairs and other church activities should be called to ensure the currency of the list. Email or other telecommunication methods may be sufficient to keep this list updated.
    - b. This list should be available to the pastor, admin assistants, and others who may need to refer to the list.
  3. Coordinate with the pastor and other interested persons to support a member's decision process in the selection of specific gifts or funds.
  4. Members of this committee shall meet or telecommunicate as required to ensure the timely gift acknowledgement to both the donor and representative of the honoree.
    - a. Acknowledgements to donors should be sent a minimum of 30 days after receipt.
    - b. Notifications to families or other appropriate persons of gifts received in memory / honor of their loved one can be consolidated but should be sent within two months of the gift's receipt. (Individual donor amounts will be included as requested by donor.)
  5. Significant committee activities should be reported to Council through the Finance Chairperson.
  6. An annual report to the congregation should be included as an appendix to the Financial Chairperson's annual report normally presented to the congregation in May of each year.
    - a. This report should include a summary of gifts received and disbursements plus a proposed list of future "wishes."
  7. Recommended changes to these guidelines should be submitted through the Finance Chairperson for Church Council approval.

### **C. Relationships:**

This Committee shall report to the Finance Committee. It shall establish and review policies regarding Memorial Gifts and Honorariums and bring recommendations for the Church Council through the Finance Committee.

*(Approved by Council November 8, 2012)*

## **Sunday School Superintendent**

June 2017

The Office of Sunday School Superintendent shall be elected at the regular May

Congregation Meeting. The term of office shall be one year with no limit on the number of consecutive terms that may be served. The Nominating Committee shall submit at least one name for this Office for the ballot. Further nominations may come from the floor at the Congregation Meeting. Election procedures to this Office and filling a vacancy in this Office between elections shall follow the same procedures as Committee Representatives to the Church Council.

The Sunday School Superintendent will have various responsibilities and will collaborate all aspects of the Sunday School program with the Director of Youth and Christian Education Ministries. The Sunday School Superintendent shall serve under the direction of the Education and Youth Chairperson and shall be a member of the Education Committee.

With the assistance of this Committee and the Director of Youth and Christian Education Ministries, the Superintendent, by his/her own actions, through sub-committees, or through specifically designated individuals, shall be responsible for:

1. Evaluating and selecting a curriculum to be used in the Sunday School classes that is substantial, lively, and consistent with our Biblical faith and Lutheran doctrine. The Education committee shall approve this curriculum.
2. Recruiting and assigning of teachers in the Sunday School classes.
3. Scheduling of Sunday School classes and assigning classrooms.
4. Reaching out to encourage congregational members and visitors to participate in Sunday School.
5. Maintaining a "people accounting system" to record participation in Sunday School programs.
6. Collecting, counting and submitting the Sunday School offering.
7. Providing budget requests to the Education and Youth Chairperson.
8. Providing teachers with resources and training to foster teaching that is consistent with our Biblical faith and Lutheran doctrine and is grade/age level appropriate.
9. Providing for special programs, which include, but are not limited to: Rally Sunday, Christmas Program, and an end-of-the year Awards Program.
10. Providing for special awards and recognition for the children such as Bible memory verse awards and perfect attendance.
11. Providing for Sunday School outreach ministries.
12. Recognizing teachers' contributions during the year and at the end of the year awards.
13. Communicating regularly with the congregation (e.g. bulletin board, announcements, the church newsletter, and/or the church bulletin).

*(Approved by Council August 10, 2017)*

## **Staff Positions**

## Choir Director Position Description

The Choir Director is a paid Church staff position. He/she directs all duties/functions relevant to the Adult Choir and Youth Choir (grades 7-12). The Director shall work with the Director of Music Ministries to coordinate the overall music ministry of the church.

### ESSENTIAL DUTIES:

1. Coordinate and conduct Adult Choir and Youth Choir for regular and seasonal services of worship.
2. Conduct regular rehearsals including extra rehearsals as necessary for seasonal services and musicals. Rehearsals will be scheduled in cooperation with other church programs.
3. Plan music consistent with liturgical worship and seasons of the church year
4. Meet with the Director of Music Ministries and Pastor as necessary to plan and implement worship objectives.
5. Recruit, develop, and work with volunteers to sing in music programs.
6. Attend Worship and Music Committee meetings for planning purposes.
7. Oversee administrative details in coordination with the Director of Music Ministries that pertain to the Choirs. This includes submitting budget needs, maintaining a file system for music, securing copyright approvals, submitting repertoire selections for the church bulletin. A Choir Librarian may assist with these tasks.
8. Maintain a Christian attitude/behavior in dealings with the Pastor, church members, and the community as a representative of Messiah Lutheran Church
9. In consideration of these duties and the salary paid, the choir director should work a minimum of eight (8) hours per week.

### QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Understand that the Adult Choir's primary role is to lead congregation singing
2. Ability to work as a team player with the Pastor, Director of Music Ministries, staff, musicians and committees.
3. Ability to build trust in a group and on a one-on-one basis
4. Ability to empower people to sing
5. Ability to engage the worshiping congregation in the musical celebration of faith
6. Excellent communication skills
7. Organizational skills: time management, delegation, long-range planning, and budgeting
8. Ability to be self-motivated and function without direct supervision
9. Skill in managing volunteers which includes recruiting, training and nurturing others
10. Bachelor's degree in music and/or music education required. Master's degree preferred.
11. High degree of proficiency in directing choirs and supporting congregation singing
12. Accompanist skills preferred
13. A broad range of musical knowledge and ability to work with a variety of instruments
14. Knowledge and appreciation of Lutheran liturgical arts and practices preferred
15. Willing to improve knowledge and skills through course work, private instruction, workshops and/or professional associations. Continuing education monies may be used when available.

*(Awaiting Council approval.)*

## **POSITION DESCRIPTION: Director of Music Ministries**

REPORTS TO: Pastor

**POSITION SUMMARY:** Works to coordinate all aspects of music for services of worship of the congregation; directs all duties/functions relevant to the congregation music program. Accompanies or provides accompaniment for all services of worship. Consults with the Pastor as needed in carrying out these duties, integrated into the total mission of the congregation.

### **ESSENTIAL DUTIES:**

1. Coordinates and accompanies worship for all regular and special services.
2. Provides organ/piano music for all weddings, funerals, and memorial services in the church for which music is requested, when available. An additional fee is required for all weddings.
3. Accompanies concerts, dramas, plays, etc. as required.
4. Recruits, develops and supervises volunteer directors for youth, children, and hand bell choirs and instrumental groups as needed. Regularly scheduling these groups in worship.
5. Conducts regular rehearsals and lends support where needed to prepare soloists, choirs, contemporary music teams for regular and special services of worship.
6. Accompanies the Adult Choir and other groups as needed.
7. Meets with the Pastor to plan and implement worship objectives.
8. Recruits, develops and supervises volunteer musicians to support and accompany the music ministry of regular and special services of worship. If volunteer musicians are not available to achieve worship objectives, paid musicians may be contracted within Worship and Music Committee guidelines.
9. Plans with the Pastor and the Worship and Music Committee to develop special music programs outside of normal services of worship.
10. Attends staff and Worship and Music Committee meetings for planning purposes and acts as a liaison to all musicians.
11. Handles administrative details, such as submitting budget needs, coordinating the maintenance of musical equipment and materials, maintaining a file system for music, securing copyright approvals, submitting repertoire selections for the church bulletin, submitting articles for the church newsletter, maintaining a music instrument and equipment inventory, etc.
12. Encourages congregation members to use their musical gifts to the glory of God.
13. Engages the parish in an ongoing educational process regarding the place of music in liturgical celebration.
14. Coordinates and implements summer music camp for children.
15. Maintains a Christian attitude/behavior in dealings with the Pastor, congregation members, and the community as a representative of Messiah Lutheran Church.

QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Bachelor's degree in music and/or music education is preferred.
2. High degree of proficiency in accompanying worship and supporting congregational singing.
3. Knowledge and appreciation of Lutheran liturgical arts and practices preferred.
4. Accompanist skills required.
5. Choral skills preferred.
6. A broad range of musical knowledge and ability to work with a variety of instruments.
7. Ability to work as a team player with the Pastor, staff, musicians and committees.
8. Ability to empower the people to sing.
9. Ability to engage the congregation in the musical celebration of faith at worship.
10. Ability to be self-motivated and function without direct supervision
11. Excellent communication skills.
12. Organizational skills: time management, delegation, long-range planning, financial management and budgeting.
13. Volunteer management skills: recruiting, training and nurturing others.
14. Willing to improve knowledge and skills through course work, private instruction, workshops and/or professional associations. Continuing education funds may be used when available.
15. Ability to relate with empathy in group and personal interactions.

*(Awaiting Council approval.)*

## Office Manager JOB DESCRIPTION

**POSITION:** Office Manager (Church Secretary)  
Messiah Lutheran Church  
7740 Highway 72 West  
Madison, AL 35758  
(256) 721-0041

**GENERAL** The Church Secretary is under the direct supervision of the Pastor. The Secretary's first responsibility is to assist the Office of the Pastor in performing its ministries. Directives from Church Officers, Council Members, and recognized church groups are important, but secondary. All work to be done is placed in this reference.

**WORKWEEK:** Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon.  
As much as possible, errands for the church will be done during these hours, without reimbursement for Auto Expenses.

Overtime: No pay compensation, but compensation in the form of time off with pay may be given with the approval of the Pastor.

**SALARY:** Determined by Annual Church Budget  
Process: Salary increase will be reviewed with the annual church budget and be effective at the beginning of the budgetary year.

**VACATION:** Ten working days with pay per calendar year. They must be approved by the Pastor. Vacation days are non-cumulative, but can be redeemed for cash at the end of the budgetary year. If Secretary has been employed for less than six months, vacation must be approved by the Pastor and/or the Church Executive Committee.

**HOLIDAYS:** Nine days with pay per calendar year:

1. New Year's Eve Day
2. New Year's Day
3. Easter Monday
4. Memorial Day (observed) , .
5. Independence Day
6. Labor Day
7. Thanksgiving Day
8. Friday after Thanksgiving Day
9. Christmas Day

If Holiday falls on a non-work day, it may be taken off during the work Week as approved by the Pastor.

**PERSONAL  
or SICK**

**DAYS:** Total of five days per year. Advance notification and approval by the Pastor, it at all possible. Any additional days off must be counted as Vacation days or non-paid days off.

## Office Manager JOB REQUIREMENTS

### Personal Qualities;

1. An active Christian believer.
2. Receptive attitude and appearance.
3. Able to maintain confidentiality.

### Personal Skills:

1. Meet people comfortably.
2. Good telephone voice.
3. Able to deal with stressful situations.
4. Able to take initiative.
5. Be able to direct to appropriate source if unable to help.

### Professional Skills:

1. Typing
2. Word Processing
3. Computer Data Entry
4. Filing

### Duties of the Office Manager:

- To assist the pastor in performing his ministerial duties.
- To be a compassionate listener and maintain confidentiality.
- To handle all written correspondence and verbal communications of the Pastor when so directed.
- To keep up with petty cash expenses and make periodic reports to the Church Treasurer
- To provide written, verbal, clerical secretarial assistance for Church Officers, Committee Chairpersons, and Organizational leaders. This may include letters, forms, ordering of requested supplies/materials. The secretary is NOT required to perform the overall function of the above members.
- To relay messages between Council, Committee, and Congregational members, as requested.
- To receive incoming telephone calls, provide non-confidential information on a variety of requests, and/or direct to the appropriate person.
- To do church mailings. (to ask volunteers to help when necessary)
- To receive incoming mail and distribute to appropriate person(s). Open all bills, and give bill to the Treasurer.

- To receive incoming people, greet cordially, discover reason for visit, and assist as necessary.
- To prepare church bulletins and children's bulletins. Upon approval, distribute bulletins and accompanying worship books/supplies.
- To update the Church Newsletter Database.
- To update the Messiah Member Database.
- To copy, assemble, label, sort, and bulk mail the monthly newsletter, getting volunteers to help when needed.
- To order altar flowers for Sunday Services.
- To coordinate the church calendar, receiving request, and seeking appropriate approval of use of church facilities. Upon scheduling, notify janitor when appropriate.
- To call and remind worship assistant coordinators of newsletter deadline.
- To call and remind volunteer worship assistants of upcoming services.
- To report work days of Nursery Attendant to Treasurer for payroll.
- To coordinate and communicate with Montessori School of church functions that require use of the fellowship hall.
- To maintain church office files.
- To assist Pastor with membership records, write letters of transfer, and prepare baptismal and sponsorship certificates.
- Purchase supplies as needed for the Pastor and Church Office.
- Maintain office equipment, having equipment serviced as necessary.

*(Awaiting Council approval.)*

## Director of Outreach Ministries Job Description

This position is for a permanent part time staff member of Messiah Lutheran Church. Elimination of this position remains at the discretion of the Church Council.

Duties are described as follows:

1. Plan and manage a program in which current church members would visit regular church visitors and welcome them into the congregation.
  - A. Train church members to participate in the welcoming of regular visitors to worship.
  - B. Follow up with visitors to ensure that they are made to feel welcome at Messiah Lutheran Church.
2. Contact current church members who have become inactive with the goal of reintegrating them into the community.
  - A. Use the Spiritual Gifts of Faith and Service form as a starting place to contact inactive members.
  - B. Support the church committees by linking people who have expressed an interest in a committee's ministries with the people on that committee.
  - C. Continue a telephone ministry to households designated by the Pastor.
3. Help facilitate the creation of new groups within the church.
  - A. Identify leaders for these groups and help them get started.
4. Encourage communication about church programs within the congregation.
  - A. Help identify individuals who may be interested in serving church ministries and have not been asked.
  - B. Assist Committee Chairs in recruiting interested members and communicating the programs of these committees to the congregation.
5. Assist the Outreach Committee in overseeing the New Member Sponsor program.
  - A. Recruit and train new sponsor families.

Job Specifics:

20 hours a week to be paid at a rate commensurate with experience.

Reports to Pastor Scott Peterson.

*(Awaiting Council approval.)*

**Director of Youth and Christian Education Ministries June 2017**  
**Messiah Lutheran Church, Madison, Alabama**

**PURPOSE:**

The Director of Youth and Christian Education Ministries will oversee all youth group ministries in the congregation relating to youth in grades PreK – 12. Working under the supervision of the Senior Pastor and the Church Council, the Director of Youth and Christian Education Ministries will be responsible for direct instructional services to youth in grades 3 – 12, along with supervisory and administrative responsibilities related to Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and any other youth-oriented activity.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Develop, lead, and participate in programs/events:
- Develop and manage Youth Programs that integrate all youth grades 3-12 into the life of the congregation and the full mission of Messiah Lutheran Church.
- Facilitate, participate in, and implement local/regional youth mission work as well as conference, synod, and church-wide events.
- Encourage all youth, members and visitors, to attend worship, Sunday School, and other MLC activities.
- Collaborate with the Messiah ministry staff, volunteer leaders, parents, and the congregation. Coordinate youth group events, as appropriate, with other Messiah activities and also with youth groups from other churches or organizations.
- Develop leadership skills in youth and in adult volunteers.
- Mentor youth in developing their leadership skills.
- Ensure that all youth events are supervised appropriately and that all adults interacting with youth groups have completed the appropriate background requirements.
- Create awareness that faith formation is a lifelong process. Promote inter-generational activities and family ministries.

**COMMUNICATION:**

- Plan and coordinate publicity for all youth activities in coordination with MLC's Communication Director using a range of media, including, but not limited to, posting regularly the MLC Youth Facebook Page, Website, email lists, text services, phone calls, news media bulletin boards, and announcements.
- Maintain and update the online youth activity calendar and report changes to the church office.
- Submit photos and copy every month for publication to the MLC Website or "Messenger" Newsletter, and prepare articles and reports as needed.
- Communicate regularly with youth, parents, staff, and the congregation to ensure complete and transparent information exchange.
- Collaborate with other youth leaders in planning all publicity related to youth activities.

**CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION:**

- Trusting that the ministry belongs to the congregation, the Director of Youth and Christian Education Ministries will work with the volunteers of this church, actively seeking leaders to take participation in and ownership of youth programs. The Director of Youth and Christian Education Ministries will work with the Youth and Education Council Representative, Sunday School Superintendent, VBS staff, MLC staff, and other adult leaders to provide training and support as needed to ensure the quality and consistency of programs and will monitor and fill leadership voids as needed.
- Develop and implement a curricular scope and sequence spanning grades 3 – 12 that insures continuity of themes, topics, and studies that derive from the Holy Bible (scripture), Luther's Small Catechism, and the understandings of faith inherent in Lutheran doctrine.

- During the summer months, lead detailed planning for a full year of activities.
- Attend staff, planning, and Youth & Education Committee meetings as needed.
- Prepare budget(s) and track expenses for all youth programs.
- Work with teachers and volunteers to support their work.
- Observe classroom activities to insure agreed upon instructional format.
- Meet with volunteers, staff, and supervisor on a regular basis.
- Meet with staff at the end of an instructional unit, the end of the term, or at any point that an evaluation or review of outcomes or events is warranted.
- Conduct staff development seminars to enhance curricular offerings and delivery of services.
- Support the work of the VBS leadership and staff by overseeing the planning and implementation of VBS each summer.
- Other duties as assigned by the Senior Pastor.

#### **SCOPE OF WORK:**

The Director of Youth and Christian Education Ministries will serve under the supervision of the Senior Pastor, with final responsibility to the Church Council. The Director of Youth and Christian Education Ministries is expected to work with a high level of initiative and independence. This position requires regular weekend service and some travel with youth ministry programs and retreats. Some travel may require extended stays.

#### **REQUIREMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS:**

The Director of Youth and Christian Education Ministries must:

- Be a person of Christian faith who demonstrates an understanding of, and agreement with, Lutheran theology.
- Work toward involving both youth and adults to become involved in youth ministry, and demonstrate the ability to lead meetings of youth and adults to accomplish a given agenda, and enlist other members of the congregation to lead Bible studies, classes, retreats, and devotions.
- Demonstrate strong organizational and recruiting skills, while maintaining proper personal boundaries, and the ability to serve as part of the Messiah Lutheran staff and lay leadership team.
- Be proficient in the use of MS Office, e-mail, texting, and social networking communications.

*(Approved by Council August 10, 2017)*

## **Policies and Procedures**

## **FACILITIES COORDINATOR**

**(This position is not currently utilized. This description is maintained here in case it should be needed in the future.**

**In the absence of a Facilities Coordinator, facilities usage requests are forwarded to the Vice President who seeks approval from Council at a regular monthly meeting, or by email.)**

### **JOB DESCRIPTION**

The Facilities Coordinator will be the interface between the church office and non-members who wish to use the church facilities, and will coordinate the scheduling of such usage with the office manager. In addition, the coordinator will provide the requester with the church policy, usage guidelines, and form to complete the request.

The Coordinator will evaluate the requested usage with respect to the church policy and if no conflicts are found, will approve the usage. Any problems or questions will be presented to the Executive Committee and/or the Church Council for resolution.

The Coordinator will ensure that the cleanup is done properly following the event. Periodic reports of facilities usage will be submitted to the Church council.

### **APPOINTMENT**

The Facilities Coordinator will be appointed by the Church Council for a one year term and may serve consecutive terms with council approval. .

### **SCHEDULING**

Normal scheduling of facilities usage by church members, for church related functions, will continue to be done by the Office Manager. All other scheduling will be the responsibility of the Facilities Coordinator, working closely with the Office Manager when necessary. A master chart of all scheduling will be maintained in the church office. The Facilities Coordinator will work with the Office Manager to insure that there are no conflicts between using groups.

## **Facilities Use Policy and Procedures**

### **MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH Madison, AL**

The entire property of Messiah Lutheran Church is the gift of God and dedicated to promoting the Christian faith in accordance with Lutheran tradition.

#### **A. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to promote the use of our facilities in a manner consistent with the above statement so that God is honored with every use. Further, it is the purpose of this policy to establish the procedures for submission of requests for facility use, and the criteria for review of such requests.

#### **B. POLICY**

We believe that the spiritual objective of Messiah Lutheran Church can best be realized by programs and activities which implement the following basic functions: to proclaim the Word of God, to worship, to educate, to minister, and to "Reach Out" to our neighbors to draw them into the church of God. The regularly scheduled activities of this church shall take precedence over other activities. To the extent feasible, special activities, such as weddings, will be fit into the schedule.

The primary purpose of Messiah Lutheran Church is to carry out the mission and ministry of the congregation. As part of that mission, it desires to provide outreach to the community and has a number of longstanding relationships with community organizations. The congregation is willing to consider requests from organizations to share its facilities on a longer term basis.

#### **C. PROCEDURES**

This guide should help individuals and organizations request permission to use the congregation's facilities.

All requests for use of Messiah Church facilities must be submitted to the Church Office. Most requests will only require completing, signing, and submitting the Facilities Use Request. The requestor will be contacted as soon as possible once a decision has been made by the appropriate church representatives.

Requests submitted by members of Messiah will be scheduled by the Office Manager if possible, with advice from the Executive and Council if appropriate.

Requests for use of Messiah facilities by non-members will be referred by the Office Manager to the Vice President of the Congregation, who will present the request to the Executive Committee and the Church Council at the next meeting for the Council's decision. It is the responsibility of the person making the request to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for review.

Generally, use of the facilities is granted on a "first requested" basis. However, it is recognized that scheduling conflicts will occur. Conflicts in requests for the use of facilities shall be resolved using the following priority list (highest first):

- a. Regularly scheduled Messiah functions and activities.
- b. Messiah Church or sponsored organization functions.
- c. Request by a member of Messiah Lutheran Church.
- d. Church-affiliated charitable organizations.
- e. Non-church affiliated charitable organizations.
- f. Non-church affiliated nonprofit organizations.
- g. Other requests on a case-by-case basis.

Groups that are not part of MLC, or are not MLC-sponsored organizations, must execute a contract with the Messiah Lutheran Church Council. The contract will detail the conditions and responsibilities of the using group and the church. The Facilities Policy and Guidelines will generally apply. In case of a conflict between the Rules and Regulations and the contract, the terms of the contract will apply.

Messiah's congregational worship and programs have first priority for use of the building. The second priority is non-profit organizations that are supported by the congregation and then to other non-profit organizations. Lowest priority is given to for-profit enterprises.

Approval for the use of the grounds and/or facilities of the congregation does not constitute or imply endorsement of a group, its mission, or its positions. Groups approved to use congregation facilities are not to advertise the event in such a way as to imply endorsement by the congregation. All advertising must be approved by Council. No activities or advocacy may take place within the congregation, its buildings, or its grounds that conflict with the policies and practices of this congregation, the Southeastern Synod, or the ELCA.

Included in this guide are the following:

- Steps to Facility Use Scheduling
- Rules and Regulations
- Property Use Agreement Form, including Release

### **STEPS TO FACILITY USE SCHEDULING**

1. Obtain and complete a Property Use Agreement from the church office.
2. Attach any additional information you feel might be useful in helping the Congregation Council to determine if we can accommodate your request.
3. Return the Property Use Agreement to the Church Office. You will be notified of the Council's decision made at a regularly scheduled monthly Council meeting. (The Council usually meets the second Thursday of each month.)

### **FEES FOR FACILITY USAGE**

A deposit may be required for all non-church sponsored events. This deposit will be returned after satisfactory inspection to assure complete and proper clean-up. A Schedule of Charges is attached.

## **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

1. **POINT OF CONTACT.** A single individual must be identified as the point of contact for any event. If a church member is sponsoring an outside group, that church member must be present when the event occurs.
2. **CHURCH PROPERTY.** Church property will not be loaned, borrowed, or removed from church premises without prior permission from the Church Office. Church property such as chairs, tables, tablecloths, etc may be used when using the facility under the rules herein.
3. **FACILITY CARE.** The church area approved for use by your group must be left clean and orderly with church furniture and property returned to its designated place. See the attached Facilities Use Checklist for details.
4. **KEYS.** If keys are given out, they must be signed out from the Church Office by the contact person, who is responsible for their return, locking up and replacing lost keys.
5. **NO SMOKING and NO ALCOHOL.** All members of all groups using our facilities shall abide at all times by a “no smoking” and “no alcohol” rule in all parts of the building, including corridors, restrooms, and parking lot.
6. **BUILDING USE.** All groups agree that they will ensure that all event participants leave the building after the event. They will be responsible for turning off all lights and closing all windows, and returning all thermostats to the required temperature for the season. As applicable, if a key is provided, the group or member will be responsible for locking the room/building.
7. **NO GAMES OF CHANCE.** Gambling or bingo on the church premises is strictly prohibited.
8. **SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH.** The congregation seeks to provide a safe environment for children and youth. All users of the facility are expected to follow the guidelines of this policy including the following:
  - No fewer than two adults should be present at all times during any program or event involving children (i.e. younger than 18).
  - Adult supervision is required at all times both inside and outside of the church property, including playground and parking lot.
  - Children and/or siblings of the group members must stay with the group or under the care of additional adult supervisors.
9. **FOOD AND DRINK.** Food and drink should be limited to designated areas. No food or drink is allowed in the Sanctuary. Anyone using the church property is responsible for cleaning up after each use, both inside and outside. If a private catering service is used for the event, the caterer must furnish all equipment (e.g., dishes, silver, table cloths, etc.) and remove immediately after the event. Storing of catering equipment is not permitted.

## 10. SANCTUARY

- a. Any non-member use of the Sanctuary must be approved by the Church Council or the Executive Committee, and is subject to the general guidelines.
- b. Decorations which are unsuitable and which tend to destroy the sacredness and dignity of the sanctuary and detract from the spiritual nature of the Sanctuary will not be permitted. The appointments for worship are to be respected and not moved. This includes the baptismal font, candles, the cross, the altar, and the open Prayer Book on the altar. (Exceptions to moving any of these items may be made by the pastor.)
- c. Seasonal decorations placed in the Sanctuary by the Altar Guild may not be removed.
- d. No food or drink allowed in the Sanctuary.
- e. Clean-up must be accomplished according to the Facility Use Checklist.
- f. The Sanctuary sound system is available for use upon request. The system must be operated by individuals trained and pre-approved by the Church Office. No other equipment may be attached to the church sound system without prior approval.
- g. Permission to use the piano, organ and/or hand bells must be granted by the pastor or Director of Music. Piano and/or organ should not be moved except by permission from the Director of Music and may require the assistance of professional movers. If professional movers are required, the requesting group must pay for the moving and for the cost of tuning the piano after replacement.

## 11. NURSERY

- a. The nursery is available only for church functions and church sponsored events.
- b. All use of the nursery must be supervised by a responsible paid adult who has had training and/or experience in child care. Payment of the nursery supervisor is the responsibility of the using group.
- c. Use of the nursery is strictly limited to children no older than four years of age. Food or beverage is limited to those foods appropriate for this age group.
- d. Toys and equipment to be used in the nursery is limited to those provided by Messiah Lutheran Church.
- e. Cleanup must be accomplished according to the Facility Use Checklist.

## 12. FELLOWSHIP HALL

- a. The Fellowship Hall is available for use subject to the general guidelines.
- b. Use of the kitchen will require supervision by a member of Messiah Lutheran Church.
- c. Kitchen use is limited to serving.
- d. Church supplies are not to be used except by church-sponsored activities.
- e. Use of stove and microwave is limited to warming food. No cooking is allowed.
- f. Coffee makers may be used but cups, plates and eating utensils must be provided by the using group.
- g. Food and beverages will be limited to the Fellowship Hall.
- h. Clean-up must be accomplished according to the Facility Use Checklist.

### 13. **PARISH HALL**

- a. Use of the Parish Hall is subject to the general guidelines.
- b. Food and beverages will be limited to the Parish Hall and the associated kitchen.
- c. Cups, glasses, and eating utensils must be provided by the using group. Church supplies are not to be used except by church-sponsored activities.
- d. Use of the kitchen will require supervision by a member of Messiah Lutheran Church.
- e. Clean-up must be accomplished according to Facility Use Checklist. It is the responsibility of a designated church member, to assure completion of the clean-up and securing the facility after the event.

### 14. **CLASS ROOMS**

- a. Classrooms are available for use by small groups subject to the general guidelines.
- b. Materials in the room or on the walls are not to be disturbed.
- c. Additional chairs brought into the room must be returned.
- d. Cleanup must be accomplished according to the Facility Use Checklist.

15. **DECORATIONS.** Decorations may be attached to the walls or doors with removable tape that will not damage the surface. All such decorations must be removed immediately and completely following the event. No nails, tacks, or screws are to be inserted into any part of the building or woodwork. No carpentry work is allowed by anyone without approval of Council.

16. **SCHEDULING CONFLICTS.** The congregation reserves the right to pre-empt for its own needs any request for facility use that has been granted. Notice will be provided as early as possible.

17. **STORAGE.** Excess storage is limited for organizations other than church groups. All organizations using the facility will be responsible for storing accessories offsite unless prior arrangements have been made through the church office.

18. **BREAKAGE.** All persons and/or groups using our facilities are expected to exercise reasonable care and judgment in such use in order to prevent defacement, damage or breakage. The person(s) signing the application for use shall be responsible for paying costs incurred by the church in cleaning, repairing, etc., any part of the building and/or its furnishings and equipment that, in the judgment of the congregation, has been carelessly or irresponsibly subjected to more than normal wear and tear by the person(s) or group(s) involved.

19. **SECURITY.** The congregation works to maintain a safe and secure environment within the facility; however, no systems are foolproof. We ask that all users pay close attention to personal property and valuables, not leaving them unattended. The congregation is not responsible for theft or damage to personal property.

20. **FINAL DECISIONS.** In case of doubt or uncertainty by any outside person or group about the application or interpretation of these regulations, or in the customary practices not specifically mentioned here, the Congregation Council or its delegated representative shall decide the matter and all individuals and groups shall abide by the Congregation Council's directions or forfeit the use of any part of the facility.

## Schedule of Charges

**In all cases the use of facilities is subject to review and approval by the Church Council.**

**Members:**

- Use of facilities for church functions is without cost except for the use of the nursery.
- Use of facilities for member sponsored events that are not church functions must receive prior approval by the Church Council. A fee of \$200 will be charged for cleaning unless reduced or waived by the Church Council.

**Non-Members:**

**Fees for use of facilities is for non-members only. Fees are due at the time of the event.**

Sanctuary	\$500
Fellowship Hall	\$100
Parish Hall	\$200
Parish Hall and Kitchen (No use of MLC supplies)	\$300 \$50 -- Kitchen Supervisor
Classroom (each)	\$50

A security deposit of \$250 will be required for any use of the facility except classrooms. This deposit is due at the time the reservation is made. This deposit will be returned if proper cleaning has occurred and no damage has occurred.

The nursery is provided by Messiah during regularly scheduled church functions. For other member functions, the cost of nursery staff must be provided by the using group. A nursery is not provided for outside groups.

**Non-Member, Recurring Use:**

Non-Member users will provide payments as agreed by the approved Facilities Use Contract and Release Form. A payment of Ten percent (10%) of the gross receipts will be requested unless other payments are mutually agreed.

Required payments will be given to the Church Office monthly or as frequently as payment is received by the user.

## Facilities Use Checklist

At the conclusion of each event, the following items should be completed. These requirements apply to those portions of the facility that were used. This checklist applies to all uses of the facilities by members or non-members. The general requirements are that the facilities should be left in the same condition as it was when you started.

### The following checks apply to all parts of the facility.

- Any accumulated waste should be placed in plastic bag(s) and placed in trash container at the back of church parking lot.
- Floors should be free of debris and, if necessary, should be mopped (Kitchen - Bathrooms) or vacuumed. Any cup, glasses, or unfinished snacks should be removed.
- Furniture and equipment should be returned to its original location.
- Any furniture or equipment brought into the room should be returned to its proper location.
- All decorations should be removed unless prior arrangements have been made.
- All lights should be off.
- Thermostats reset to original settings or to seasonally appropriate settings.
- All doors should be closed and outside doors locked.

### The following checks apply to specific rooms in the facility. Complete those checks that apply.

#### Sanctuary

- All Hymnals should be returned to their original location.
- All papers and other debris should be removed from the pew and Hymnal racks.
- Check for debris under the pews and on the floor.
- Organ, Sound system, and lights should be off
- Sanctuary doors should be closed.

#### Narthex and Hallways

- Any additional items (tables, chairs, easels, posters, etc.) should be removed.
- Be sure outside door is locked when you leave.

#### Sunday School Rooms

- All tables, chairs, and counter tops should be wiped clean.
- Tables, chairs and other furnishing should be returned to original location.
- Lights should be turned off.

#### Multipurpose Rooms

- All tables and chairs should be wiped clean.
- Lights and sound equipment should be turned off.

#### Kitchen

- Any items used (utensils, pots, pans, dishes, silverware, etc.) should be cleaned and put away.
- All cooking appliances (microwave, stove, oven, etc.) should be free of spills and cleaned with disinfecting cleaner.
- Counter tops should be cleaned with disinfecting cleaner and wiped dry.
- All cooking appliances must be turned off.
- Coffee maker should be clean (grounds must be removed, pots washed and returned to maker)
- Refrigerator and Freezer should be free of spills and all food not belonging to Messiah should be removed unless prior arrangements have been made.
- All sinks are to be cleaned with disinfecting cleaner, rinsed and wiped dry.
- The garbage disposal should be run to ensure no food debris remains and left in the off position.
- The dishwasher must be free of all food debris and in the off position
- All floors are to be swept and mopped
- All trash receptacles are to be emptied and clean bags replaced
- Hood lights and fan should be in the off position
- All lights should be turned off.
- Cleaning supplies should be returned to the closet.

### Bathrooms

- Counter tops and sinks should be cleaned and wiped dry.
- Floors should be swept and mopped if needed.
- Lights should be turned off.

### Nursery

- All toys should be picked up, cleaned and sanitized if necessary, and put away
- Floor should be vacuumed if needed.
- Bathroom and sink should be clean
- All trash should be removed (no soiled diapers are to be left in the Nursery)
- All rocking chairs, large toy pieces, and cribs are to returned to original location
- Lights should be turned off and doors closed
- All books and puzzles should be returned to shelves and racks
- Floor should be vacuumed
- Disposition of dirty linen, etc., should be coordinated with the Messiah POC

### Fellowship Hall

- All tables and chairs should be wiped clean
- Coffee bar counter top and sink should be wiped clean
- Coffee maker should be clean (grounds must be removed, pots washed and returned to maker)
- Coffee maker and warming plate should be clean and in off position and unplugged
- All trash receptacles are to be emptied and new bags replaced

If any irregularity within the facility is found, please contact the Church Office as soon as possible. The telephone number for Messiah is 256-721-0041. Please call during normal business hours.

Thank you for your cooperation in maintaining our Church building. We hope you have enjoyed holding your event here. If the above criteria are met, any cleaning fee will be waived.

**MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH  
FACILITIES USAGE REQUEST FORM**

Purpose: For single or repeated use requests by members of MLC, and organizations sponsored by members.

REQUEST DESCRIPTION:

Date of Request \_\_\_\_\_

Name or Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Facilities requested? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Will you derive income through admission fees, sales, etc. from this use? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Expected number of users \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) required \_\_\_\_\_

Times of meeting :      Start \_\_\_\_\_      End \_\_\_\_\_

   Start \_\_\_\_\_      End \_\_\_\_\_

Advance set up :      Date \_\_\_\_\_      Time \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Member? Yes \_\_\_ No\* \_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

\*Church Sponsor (for non-members) \_\_\_\_\_

I/we have read and agree to the Facilities Policies and Procedures and will follow the Facilities Use Checklist

Requester Signature \_\_\_\_\_      Sponsor Signature \_\_\_\_\_

---

DISPOSITION:

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Referred to Council: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Council Response \_\_\_\_\_

## MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH FACILITIES USE CONTRACT and RELEASE FORM

**Purpose: For single or multiple use by non-members, organizations not sponsored by members, and organizations that are not part of the MLC mission. Please see Policy for details**

Name of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Responsible Person: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact Person's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Day Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Organization's Purpose: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date(s) Requested: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ End Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Frequency:  One Time Only  Weekly  Monthly  Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Which day of the week:  Mon  Tue  Wed  Thurs  Fri  Sat  Sun

**General Information**

Describe *IN DETAIL* the usage you are requesting and number of people attending. (Use additional pages if necessary.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Will a donation be requested, or will tickets be sold or admission charged for your event?

If yes, what will be the amount collected per person?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Price \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, how will the proceeds be used?

\_\_\_\_\_

Is your group a Nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, provide your Nonprofit Tax ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Does your group have insurance to cover the proposed usage?

General Liability: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_\_\_ Company \_\_\_\_\_

Medical: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_\_\_ Company \_\_\_\_\_

Misconduct: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_\_\_ Company \_\_\_\_\_

Other: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_\_\_ Company \_\_\_\_\_

**Certificate of Insurance Requirements** - Groups that are not part of MLC are required to provide certificates of insurance naming Messiah Lutheran Church, Inc. as additional insured. A certificate should be turned in to the Church Office at least a week before the first use. For continuing usage, the form should be renewed annually.

**Facilities/Rooms Requested:**

- Sanctuary
- Piano/organ or sound system
- Kitchen
- Children's Classroom
- Adult Classroom
- Narthex
- Fellowship Hall
- Parish Hall
- Playground
- Other (list: \_\_\_\_\_)

Anticipated Number of Participants: \_\_\_\_\_

Will food or drink be consumed?  Yes  No

Special Needs or Requests:

**Equipment Needs:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Large Screen                | <input type="checkbox"/> Round Tables: # _____        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overhead Projector          | <input type="checkbox"/> Chairs: # _____              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LCD Projector               | <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Foot Tables: # _____       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flip Chart and Markers      | <input type="checkbox"/> Food Serving Tables: # _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reception Table at Entrance | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Microphone and Lectern      |   |

**Fee Arrangement**

The fee for each use of the building will be \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ percent of gross income.

I/we have read and agree to the Facilities Policies and Procedures and will follow the Facilities Use Checklist.

**Signature/Date of Authorized Individual Representing Organization:**

**Messiah Lutheran Church**  
**7740 Highway 72 West**  
**Madison, AL 35758**  
**256.721.0041**  
**office@mlutheran.org**

**Release and Indemnity Agreement**

This Release and Indemnity Agreement is between \_\_\_\_\_  
(organization or individual) and Messiah Lutheran Church, Inc. (for use of the property described above for meetings and other activities.)

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of Messiah Lutheran Church, Inc. permitting the organization or individual(s) to use the property described herein, the organization or individual(s) agree(s) as follows:

1. Organization or individual(s) ("I") hereby  
RELEASE, DISCHARGE AND COVENANT NOT TO SUE the congregation of Messiah Lutheran Church, Inc., its corporate entity, \_\_\_\_\_, its affiliated corporate entities, its administrators, directors/council members, pastors, agents, officers, members, volunteers, and employees, the Southeastern Synod of the ELCA as well as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its affiliated organizations/corporations (each considered one of the "Releasees" herein) from, and covenant not to sue the Releasees for any liability, claims, demands, losses or damages on my account directly or indirectly caused or alleged to be caused in whole or in part by, or by the negligence or strict liability of, the "Releasees"

I agree that if, despite the General Waiver, Release and Covenant Not To Sue, I, or anyone on my behalf makes a claim against any of the Releasees, I will indemnify, save and hold harmless each of the Releasees from any litigation, expenses, attorney fees, loss, liability, damage or cost which may incur as the result of such claim. I intend and agree that this General Waiver, Release and Covenant Not to Sue are to be interpreted to the maximum extent of the law of Alabama allowing such a waiver of claims.

**2. ACCEPTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY**

I/We agree to be responsible for the conduct of those coming to or participating in the activity for which this application is being made, and for any damage beyond normal wear and tear which may occur as a result of this activity. I/We will remove all signs posted by my/our group after the meeting has ended. I/We further agree that the church property will be used in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the congregation (a copy of Facilities Use Policy and Procedures and Facilities Use Checklist has been received) and I/We hereby consent to the Release and Indemnity Agreement.

Name of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

By Authorized Individual (Signature): \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Congregation / Council**    \_\_\_\_\_ Request Approved    \_\_\_\_\_ Request Denied

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Fund Raising Events Policy**

**PURPOSE:** To define Messiah Lutheran Church policies and procedures for approval of fund raising events.

**BACKGROUND:** The Messiah Lutheran Church Council is charged with management of all church resources. In order to maintain appropriate control the MLC Council shall review and decide upon any requests for fund raising events based on the following guidelines.

**POLICY:**

Fund raising events to support church related, unbudgeted activities, missions, maintenance, or services shall be reviewed and decided upon by the Council. Requests coming to Council for fund raising events shall be in writing. Each fund raising activity shall be decided on a case-by-case basis. Normally, Council will allow only one fund raising activity at a time.

**PROCEDURES:**

1. All requests coming to Council for fund raising events must be provided to the appropriate committee, who will screen each request before bringing it to Council. All requests, must be accompanied by a recommendation from the appropriate committee.
2. Requests shall be in writing.
3. The MLC Executive Committee must receive requests no later than one week prior to the Council meeting immediately before the requested time for the event. This will allow the Executive Committee to put the item on the agenda for the next Council meeting. Council meetings occur on the second Thursday of each month. Council shall consider emergency requests on a case-by-case basis.

*(Awaiting Council approval as of December 1, 2012.)*

## Finance Policies and Procedures Summary

The Finance Team supports the mission of Messiah Lutheran Church as the focal point for fiscal tasks and duties that ensure the prudent, safe, efficient, and secure handling of all church financial activities.

### **Principal Team Members:**

- Treasurer – elected annually by the congregation for a maximum of two one-year terms
- Financial Secretary – elected annual by the Church Council for one-year term
- Finance Representative to Church Council elected by the congregation for two-year term
- Finance Committee Chair (May also be the Representative to Church Council)
- Finance Committee – selected from volunteers and other members of the congregation plus the Financial Chair, Financial Secretary and Treasurer
- Budget Committee (May be a subset of the Finance Committee)
- Internal Audit Committee appointed by Council for three-year terms

### **Governing Documents:**

- **Charter and Organizational Documents:**
  - MLC is Chartered as a 501.c.3 Organization governed by the laws of the State of Alabama.
  - Senior Pastor is the President of the Corporation
  - The Executive Committee members are the Officers and the Board of Directors
  - The Council makes “Corporation” decisions when a congregational vote is determined to be unnecessary.
  - The Finance Team informs the Council of all normal operations and reports.
  - The Finance Team requests Council approval for financial direction. The congregation votes on all major or significant proposals.
  - The Calendar Year is also the Fiscal and Budget Years
- **Congregational Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions**  
**Committee for Finance**
  - a. The Committee for Finance is responsible for all of the finances of the congregation. It develops and monitors a church budget and financial recording and reporting system, disbursement, investment planning, and auditing of records. The committee will meet quarterly or as often as necessary to fulfill its purpose.
  - b. The Committee for Finance shall:
    - 1) annually prepare the congregation’s budget;
    - 2) oversee the Treasurer’s receipt and disbursement of funds;
    - 3) record and report member giving;
    - 4) recruit, train, and schedule counters;
    - 5) provide, through the Financial Secretary, quarterly and annual giving statements to members;
    - 6) recruit members for the Audit Committee and ensure that the audit is completed in a timely manner.
    - 7) invest church funds, including certificates of deposit, checking and savings accounts, and other instruments;
    - 8) review and maintain insurance policies and be the liaison for insurance representatives;
    - 9) record non-solicited gifts;
    - 10) monitor the financial health of the congregation and prepare and distribute reports as needed;

- 11) evaluate annually the committee's work and its job description and submit necessary changes to the Congregation Council for approval;
- 12) provide for professional growth through conferences, conventions, and continuing education;
- 13) provide an annual report to the congregation at the May annual meeting.
- c. The Committee for Finance works in close cooperation with the Committee for Stewardship as well as with all standing committees for budget planning and input.

### **Treasurer**

- The duties of the treasurer:
  - 1) The treasurer shall be the fiscal officer of the congregation.
  - 2) The treasurer shall be responsible for accurate recording of congregational general fund receipts and disbursements in accordance with proper accounting procedures.
  - 3) The treasurer shall maintain permanent and appropriate records covering the receipt and disbursement of any special and/or savings funds, as authorized by the Congregation Council, in accordance with proper accounting procedures.
  - 4) The treasurer shall present to the Congregation Council, using a council-approved format, monthly written report(s) of all congregational receipts and disbursements.
  - 5) The treasurer shall submit an annual written financial report to the Congregation Council and the congregation at the close of the church fiscal year.
  - 6) The treasurer shall submit as called for all permanent records in his or her possession to the Audit Committee for audit. This requirement does not include individual offering records, weekly counter sheets, or individual pledges that are principally maintained by the Financial Secretary, unless directed by the Congregation Council.
  - 7) The treasurer shall attend scheduled meetings of the Congregation Council and the Executive Committee.
  - 8) The treasurer shall become properly and currently bonded, with any expense of bonding and premiums for this congregation's activities being paid by the congregation. Fidelity coverage provided by the ELCA shall be deemed a fulfillment of this requirement.
  - 9) The treasurer shall follow any specific procedural requirements stated in the Continuing Resolutions.

### **Financial Secretary**

- The duties of the Financial Secretary:
  - 1) Maintain records of all contributions and make regular reports to the Congregation Council and treasurer.
  - 2) Issue to individual voting members quarterly statements of contributions to the congregation.
  - 3) Issue an annual report in consultation with the Committee for Stewardship.

### **Budget Cycle Process**

- All Committees provide input to Budget Committee (September of each year)
  - Committee Chairs and other leaders review previous budget and current year spending prior to making request for following year.
  - Mortgage payments are developed by Financial Committee for input to budget.
- Budget Committee consolidates inputs and compares to current and past year budgets. (October)
- Stewardship Committee prepares and receives pledges from members for following year. (September – October)
- Finance Secretary reviews current and past individual contributions and offerings. Coordinates new pledges with previous records to develop an estimate of next year's receipts. (October)

- Budget Committee consolidates and prioritizes budget requests with estimated income. Recommended budget and estimated income are presented to Church Council for review and recommendation. (October)
- Church Council reviews Budget Committee input and develops a budget for recommendation to a congregational meeting. (October – November)
- Congregation approves budget for following year. (November)
- Council and Committee leaders execute budget during fiscal year.
- Changes above 3% of budget require additional congregational approval.
- Budget accounts are also known as Non-dedicated accounts. The contributions used to fund budget accounts are received from non-directed offerings and payments. These offerings include:
  - General Offerings
  - Loose Offerings
  - Offerings from members and visitors not specifically indicated for other purpose.
  - Rent and gratuities received from frequent or occasional users.
  - On-line contributions specified for General Offering.
- The Treasurer produces a monthly report that updates all budgeted expenses for the month and year to date.
- Budget end-of-year close out
  - At the end of the year the Council reviews the annual non-dedicated expenses vs. the annual budget.
  - Normally, there is no carry over of budgeted funds that were not spent during the calendar year. Any exceptions to this procedure require Council approval. (See Disbursements of Dedicated Funds below)
    - Funds for non-annual Conference or Youth Gathering are frequent exceptions to these guidelines.

### **Dedicated Accounts.**

- Receipts
  - Dedicated funding and accounts allow members and non-members to contribute to specific activities or items normally not fully covered by annual budget funding.
  - Dedicated offerings may be given through pew offerings, direct gifts, or on-line giving.
  - All dedicated contributions are recorded into CMS by the people who count the offerings or by the Financial Secretary when he/she reconciles the on-line giving.
  - When a Lenten, Advent, or other offering is designated for one or more purposes, the offering is recorded as Lent or Advent offering. The Treasurer can later divide the total into the appropriate funds.
  - The Treasurer produces a monthly CMS list of all Dedicated Funds with the current amount noted.
- Disbursements
  - The Treasurer periodically disburses the dedicated funds.
    - Specifically designated gifts are sent to recipients to meet schedules or as otherwise appropriate time.
    - Some gifts given for ELCA or synod purposes are forwarded to the Synod as a part of the monthly transfer. The memo to the Synod includes specific funds and amounts. (The Synod Treasurer then forwards these gifts in full to the ELCA or other agency without fee or “tax.”)
  - In January of each year, the Church Council reviews the amount that remains in each dedicated account at the end of December of the previous year.

- Most dedicated funds are maintained with the full amount for later use. (e.g., funds for comforters, an organ or other large purchase are simply carried over to the next year.)
- Some dedicated funds are zeroed out by transferring the remaining amount to the appropriate agency or activity.
- Other dedicated funds are zeroed out with a transfer to a similar or other appropriate designated fund for future use.
- Gifts designated for an individual memorial or honorarium fund require coordination with family members to determine the disposition of remaining funds.
- In addition, some remaining Budgeted funds are transferred to a parallel Designated fund for use in future years. (e.g., Three year Youth Convocations or Music Conferences.)

### **Counting, Recording, Depositing, Reporting and Disbursement of all funds.**

- After each Sunday service of worship and other times as required, a team of at least two independent members collects the offerings and records specific giving information into the CMS database. This information includes the amounts each individual/family/agency has given to both budgeted and dedicated accounts. The total receipts are then deposited into the bank's Night Deposit Box.
  - All offerings and receipts are counted and recorded in accordance with the current instructions and checklists.
    - A copy of the current instructions is available in the counters' briefcase or is available from the Finance Chair upon request.
    - The Finance Committee updates the instruction sheets as required to meet recommended changes.
    - Experienced counters train all new counters.
  - The Financial Secretary then transfers the data into a more secure CMS file that is only available to him/her. This process ensures that only the Financial Secretary has access to the cumulative or total amount each individual/family/agency has given.
    - Specific information on the duties of the Financial Secretary is listed in the appropriate section of MLC's Procedures Handbook.
  - The Treasurer has access to only the total amount received for each budgeted and dedicated fund. He/She uses this information to balance the checkbooks and to disburse funds as appropriate. The Treasurer prepares payments for both Budget and Dedicated purposes. All checks are then signed by at least two members of the Executive Committee.
    - Specific information on the duties of the Treasurer Secretary is listed in the appropriate section of MLC's Procedures Handbook.

### **Mortgage and Future Building Funds**

- All Building Proposals, Mortgages and Major Funding proposals, to include the annual budget, are presented by the Church Council and approved by a vote of the congregation as directed in the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions.
- Although a "New Facilities Fund" was previously designated for use in future building programs, that fund has been incorporated into the current mortgage structure and payment schedule. In 2014, the current NFF pledge period will be completed. At that time, the congregation may decide to again begin accumulating funds to apply to future building proposals.
- There are currently four major fund types: Budgeted, Dedicated, Primary Mortgage, and Secondary Mortgage. The first two were discussed above. The two mortgages will now be described:

- Primary or First Mortgage: This mortgage or building loan was opened in 2006 for approximately \$1.2 million at 5.75% fixed interest for 17 years. It is currently held by PNC Bank with monthly payments of \$9483.89. This loan has eight years to termination with approximately \$840,000 remaining at the end of 2012. There will be a balloon payment in 2020 of approximately \$230,000 that will require payoff or refinancing.
  - All offerings designated for the Mortgage are directed against this loan.
  - If there are insufficient offerings for this monthly payment, the remainder is paid from General Offerings.
- Second or “NFF” Loan: The loan was created at the beginning of 2012 at the completion of the sanctuary expansion.
  - The construction loan held by Redstone Federal Credit Union was converted to an interest only loan payable each quarter. At the end of 2012 the variable interest rate was approximately 3.5%. The December 2012 balance on this loan is approximately \$435,000
  - All offerings received for the NFF or in consideration of building pledges are paid to RFCU against this loan. The offerings and gifts designated NFF currently exceed the amount required for the “interest only” payment and are therefore, recorded against the principal amount of the loan. All principal payments reduce the amount of the loan and the interest payment required.
- At the end of the NFF pledge period in 2014, the Finance Committee will review the options for loans and refinancing. At that time a recommendation will be presented to the Council to consideration. Council may then request a congregation vote on changes to the current loan structure.

**Adjunct Documents:**

- The specific duties of the Finance Committee, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary are included in other portions of the Council Handbook.

## **Funeral Reception Policy**

**PURPOSE:** To define the Messiah Lutheran Church policies for funeral receptions

**BACKGROUND:** The Messiah Lutheran Church Council is responsible for management of all church resources. Funeral receptions are not budgeted for in the annual Messiah Fellowship budget.

**POLICY:** \$50 will be made available from the Funeral Reception Dedicated fund for each funeral reception as needed. Amounts accrued over \$50 will not be reimbursed without prior approval by the Pastor or the Vice President. The Fellowship Dedicated fund will maintain \$200 in the Funeral Reception Dedicated fund as required. The fund can be replenished by donations from families as they wish.

## **Appendices**

1. MLC Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions
2. Example of a Council Report
3. Example of Council Minutes

Example of a format that could be used for monthly reports to Council by members of Council

#### Messiah Lutheran Church

#### Property Committee report

September 12, 2012

#### A/C Unit Sanctuary

The carrier units cycling on and off every few seconds had sprung a leak. It was repaired by Joe East under warranty.

#### Benches in front of main entrance

The two benches that showed severe signs of dry rot were replaced two new benches donated by Joe Stuart.

#### AV Desk

No change since the last time, both David and I have been busy with other priorities. We did talk briefly to one of the new members, Greg, who expressed an interest in furniture making and has owned a business in that field. We will contact him in the coming weeks to explore the options.

#### Convection Oven Parish Hall Kitchen

The convection oven wiring has proven to be more of an issue than we originally anticipated. Although there is some conduit in the walls it does not run all the way from the breaker box to the outlets. We'll need new 3 phase 50 amp wiring. MrElectric quoted \$1437 and S&N Electric quoted \$1200 for the job. However that was based on the assumption that there were spare slots available in the breaker box. As it turns out all but one slot have been put in use but the as built situation is not documented on the cards in the breaker box. A 50 amp 3 phase fuse requires three slots

Debby Neely has listed the following planned equipment for the kitchen

- An 2<sup>nd</sup> convection oven which will be stacked on the one that needs to be wired. 50 amp = 3 slots
- A commercial grade dishwasher, I think this will require a 50 amp breaker as well, 3 slots
- A rinse station, (Garbage disposal for food), most likely this can be put on a 20amp breaker = 1slot

Based on these plans we would need a minimum of an extra 10 slots in a new breaker box in the electric room in the parish room kitchen. I've asked the S&N Electric electrician to come out and quote based on the new information we have. I will also ask to document the breakers that are marked spare but are actually in use. Bill Emerson has the construction drawings that document the situation when the parish hall extension was completed to help with this effort. The electrician was on a job in South Alabama but expects to be able to come out for the quote this week.

#### Bathroom Parish Hall

The clapper mechanism in the Men's room has worn out. I'll replace it in the coming week. Projected cost: \$25-30

#### Timer Parish hall lights

The timer mechanism on the lights in front of the Parish Hall needs to be replaced. Bob Gustafson has volunteered to do take care of this. The timer is connected to breaker 38 in breakerbox #2. I've shut this off to avoid problems with the malfunctioning timer.

#### Ice maker

The icemaker in the kitchen is not functioning at this time. We need to assess whether a repair or replacement is more cost effective. I've contacted Debby Neely for advice on the best way to proceed.  
Respectively Submitted

Gerard de Jong  
Property Committee Chairman  
September 2012

**Example of the recommended format for Council Meeting minutes.**

**Messiah Lutheran Council Minutes  
October 4, 2012**

John Shriver called the meeting to order at 7:04pm.

Present were John Shriver, Claire Strand, Pastor Scott Peterson, Lauren Gray, Lee Smith, Devonee Woods, Toni Daniel, Michael Boyer, Dick Azzam, Gerard de Jong, Janell Zesinger

Pastor Scott gave a devotion on Acts Chapter 2 and related it to the growth of our church and newcomers. The Council's help was requested to welcome newcomers and help them find groups to join at church.

Gerard de Jong gave a faith biography on growing up Lutheran in the Netherlands. He also spoke of the two schools built in Honduras and the future high school.

Devonee Woods will give her faith biography at the November Council meeting.

The September Council minutes were presented. Lee made a motion to accept the minutes. Pastor Scott seconded.

Claire Strand informed the council that Jackie Myers and Sue Doubleday are going to graduation in Honduras between November 28 and December 1, 2012.

**Old Business:**

Communications: The open forum on September 30, 2012 went well. A small group stayed to ask questions and find out more about the Congregation meeting on October 7<sup>th</sup>.

Temple Talks: Cheryl Byers will speak on October 7, Joe Stuart will speak on October 14 and a youth will speak about the National Youth Gathering on October 21.

Council Service Recognitions: none

Pipe Organ Task Force Update: There is a little over \$35,000 in the fund. Mark Moorehead is actively looking into organs within that amount.

Congregation Meeting: October 7, 2012 right after the 11:00 service. Congregation will vote to accept changes made to the Constitution. 82 members are needed to make a quorum. A Bar-be-que lunch will follow.

Policies for Facility Usage and Contracts: the council discussed the new forms and contracts for member and non-member usage (page 10 of packet), the schedule of charges for facilities (page 6), the checklist

(page 11) and necessary insurance coverage and requirements. Mike Boyer motioned to approve the new facility usage contract and Mary Ann seconded. It was unanimously passed.

Mike Boyer motioned that we set up a negotiating committee of Pastor Scott, John Shriver, Devonee Woods and Mary Ann Stasiak to represent MLC in negotiations with Holy Hill Church and then come back to the Council with recommendations. Lee Smith will negotiate with Weight Watchers and Janell Zesinger will negotiate with "Music Together". Dick seconded the motion and was passed unanimously.

Insurance Coverage for MLC: Council has expressed a concern with the level of sexual misconduct liability coverage provided under our current insurance policy with Zurich. Therefore, Lee Smith has investigated options to add additional coverage even though it may increase our current insurance coverage by approximately \$2,000. There are also questions about our liability for the Boy Scouts of America troop we sponsor and the other organizations and people who use our facility. Lee has reviewed a policy proposal from Mr. Randy Legg, the local Church Mutual representative. Dick Azzam motioned that a group of Council members and Financial Committee members meet with Randy Legg to further understand the insurance offerings and report back to Council. Gerard seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Audit and Personnel Committee Vacancies: The following members were recommended to fill the Audit Committee vacancy: Sue Bathgate, Jay Perry, Joe Stuart. John Shriver will call to see if one of them is interested.

The following members were recommended to fill the Personnel Committee vacancy: Beth Thompson, Mark Thompson, Joe Paxton. Devonee will call to see if one of them is interested.

Designation of Advent mid-week services offering (Dec. 5, 12, 19): Claire Strand said that MLC usually gives to one international ministry and one local ministry. Pastor Scott motioned that half of the offering go to salary support for Sandra Braasch who is currently serving with ILAG, and half of the offering go to MLC Ramp Build Ministry. M/S/P.

### **New Business:**

#### Fundraiser Requests:

1. Lauren Gray requested use of the Narthex and Parish Hall on October 14, 21 and 28 for the Youth to sell Christmas wreaths. Dick Azzam made a motion to approve the request and Janell Zesinger seconded. Unanimously approved.

2. Lisa D'Antonio requested permission to recruit sponsors in the church for her Relay For Life team in May 2013. Mike Boyer made a motion to approve the request and Dick Azzam seconded. Unanimously approved.

3. Rhonda Gaede requested use of the Narthex all day on November 18, 2012 for a bake sale to benefit the Kit Ministry. Pastor Scott motioned to approve the request and Mike Boyer seconded. Unanimously approved.

#### Facility Usage Requests:

1.Dorothy Seitz requested to hold a Home-school Christmas Party in Parish or Fellowship Hall on Dec. 14, 2012 from 12:30-4:30pm. Dick Azzam made a motion to approve the request and Mike Boyer seconded. Unanimously passed.

2.Terry Frakes requested to have a Surprise Bridal Shower / Pampered Chef party in the Fellowship Hall on October 20, 2012 at 1:00-3:30pm. This is the day of “Trunk or Treat” and the Chili Cook-off, but there is no conflict. Lee motioned to approve request and Devonee seconded. Unanimously passed.

3.Claire Strand requested to use the Parish Hall for a Stephen Ministry workshop on Saturday, March 2, 2013 from 7:00am to 2:00pm. Set up is Friday evening. Gerard de Jong made a motion to accept the request and Mike Boyer seconded. Unanimously approved.

Laruen Gray's report on Director of Youth Ministries: Lauren showed a PowerPoint presentation to show her growth, accomplishments, vision and mission in the past year. PowerPoint presentation is attached.

Council Budget Meeting: (to set the 2013 budget) will be Tuesday November 6, 2012. At this meeting Pastor Dennis Fakes or Pastor Keith Cook will speak to Council about the Benevolence funding to the ministries of the ELCA.

Regular November Council Meeting: Thursday, November 8, 2012

Congregation Meeting: Sunday, November 18, 2012

Action on Position Description for Council Committees and Representatives: Mary Ann motioned to accept all of the position descriptions in the handbook and Lee seconded. The new handbook was accepted by Council on October 4, 2012.

Pastor Scott away. Guest Pastors: Pastor Scott will be in Germany October 10-20. Bob Loshuertos will be preaching October 14 and Chaplain John Sutton, from Redstone Arsenal, will be preaching October 21.

### **Committee Reports:**

Worship & Music – Mike Boyer    See Report

Outreach – Janell Zesinger    See Report

Stewardship – Lois Graff    See Report

Youth – William Strand    See Report

Youth Ministries - Lauren Gray    See Report

Education & Youth – Dick Azzam    See Report

Fellowship - Mary Ann Stasiak    See Report

Mary Ann also reported that they will delay the “Bread and Cheese Making” until January and will have a “Movie Night” instead with “Avengers” and “Hunger Games” movies.

Greg and Meredith Kilby will be starting a Supper Club soon where members will meet in people's homes for one semester, then change to different groups. It was recommended that the dinners start with a devotion provided by Pastor Scott.

Property – Gerard de Jong See Report

Gerard added that the kitchen wiring will cost \$2,200. \$1,200 has been allotted. Pastor Scott motioned that \$900 come from the Columbarium account and Mike Moyer seconded. Unanimously passed. \$16 was spent on light bulbs, NOT \$216 as stated in report.

Finance – Lee Smith See Report

Pastor Scott's Report See Report

Rachel Alley, from the Southeast Synod office, will meet with Lauren Gray on December 6, 2012 to assist in developing and directing our Youth Ministry.

Treasurer - Devonee Woods See Report

Devonee said "September was a good month!" Income exceeded expenses. Mike Boyer motioned to approve the Treasurer's Report and Lee Smith seconded. Unanimously approved.

John Shriver Motioned to adjourn at 10:05pm and Devonee Woods seconded.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

The next Council Meeting is Thursday November 8, 2012. Budget Council Meeting is Tuesday, November 6, 2012.

Respectfully Submitted,

Toni Daniel  
Council Secretary

Summary of Pending Activities:

Public Notice of Congregation Meeting on Sunday, November 18, 2012.

John to call potential new members for Audit Committee. Devonee to call potential new members for Personnel Committee.

Responses from "Negotiating Committee" after talking with Holy Hill, Weight Watchers and Music Together.

More information from Randy Legg about BSA and MLC responsibilities.

