

**By-Laws of IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH Oxford, Connecticut**  
**January 2018**

**B1 Organizational Structure**

Immanuel Lutheran Church exists in the community of Oxford, Connecticut within the Lower Naugatuck Valley of New Haven County. Our members and friends worship within the building which we recognize as a gift of God. Within our membership are our committees, their leaders and our congregation council. Within the congregation council are one pastor and executive committee who act as our spiritual and organizational leadership. We acknowledge Jesus Christ as the ultimate leader and focus of our existence as Immanuel Lutheran Church, Oxford, CT.

**B2 Mission Statement**

Enjoying Christ's presence and love, our family friendly Church reaches out to make disciples of young and old.

**B3 Congregational Meetings**

B3.1 The annual congregational meeting shall be held on the last Sunday in January.

B3.2 Special meetings of the congregation shall be held at times designated by the Congregation Council in accord with provisions of the Constitution.

B3.3 The president shall conduct the business of the annual congregational meeting and special meetings of the congregation.

B3.4 At the annual congregational meeting, the Congregation Council President shall give a written comprehensive report, including the evaluation of goals and activities based on the mission statement. The pastor(s), treasurer and financial secretary shall each submit a written report. Each organization within the congregation shall also submit a written report of activities and finances.

B3.5 The Congregation Council shall assure that written reports are available to the Congregation not later than the Sunday preceding the regular annual congregational meeting.

B3.6 Voting members of the congregation may bring resolutions to the annual congregational meeting by submitting them to the Congregation Council by its January meeting. The Congregation Council may offer its recommendations to the Congregation meeting concerning resolutions from voting members.

B3.7 The Congregation's Annual Budget will be adopted or defeated without amendment at the annual congregational meeting. If the Budget is defeated, the Congregation Council will work with the Finance Committee to prepare a new budget and will call a Special Congregational Meeting to seek its adoption. Until a budget is adopted the congregation will spend in accord with the adopted budget of the previous year.

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B3.8 The Final number of voting members, to determine a Quorum at annual Congregational meetings, will be determined at the last Council meeting prior to the Annual Congregational meeting.

**B4 Membership**

B4.1 Any confirmed member who has made a contribution of record or received the Sacrament of Holy Communion during the last calendar year shall be considered to be on the active roll of this congregation.

B4.2 Those confirmed members who no longer qualify for the active roll because they have neither received the Sacrament of Holy Communion nor made a contribution of record to the congregation within the preceding year shall be classified as inactive. As such, they shall remain within the continuing concern of the congregation. Inactive members shall be restored by the Congregation Council to the active roll of confirmed members when they again receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion or make a contribution of record to the congregation.

B4.3 After a period of four (4) consecutive years, the Pastor or a member of the Congregation Council will contact, in person if possible, the inactive member and offer encouragement to return to active participation in the life of the church. If in the subsequent year the inactive member neither communes nor makes a contribution of record the Congregation Council may remove him or her from membership in the congregation.

B4.4 A review of the membership classifications will be made annually, prior to the Annual Meeting, to determine voting members, active members and inactive members.

**B5 Duties of Officers**

All officers shall be chosen from the active roll of confirmed members of the congregation. If any of them ceases to be such, his or her office shall be at once declared vacant by the Church Council, which in turn shall fill the vacancy for the unexpired time. Each office has a unique role to play and each should remain separate and be treated with respect.

**Duties of the President:**

The President of the congregation shall:

1. Conduct the annual meeting;
2. Conduct the monthly Congregation Council meetings;
3. Conduct Executive Committee meetings;
4. Call Special Congregational Meetings as deemed necessary;
5. Serve as an ex-officio member on all standing and special committees;
6. Review continuing resolutions yearly;
7. Submit an annual written report to the congregation;
8. Act as the agent of the Congregation in legal matters;
9. Be present at congregational functions as frequently as possible; and
10. Review with the Congregation Council the Constitution to ensure all provisions are being observed and bringing oversights to the attention of the Congregational Council.

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Duties of the Vice President:

In the event of the President's inability to serve, the Vice President shall fulfill the duties of the President.

Duties of the Secretary:

The Secretary of the congregation shall:

1. Keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation and of the Congregation Council meetings in a volume provided by the congregation, which shall be preserved permanently in the archives; 2. Act to sign certain legal documents as required; 3. Provide minutes of the previous meeting to the Congregation Council; 4. Post a written copy of the Congregation Council minutes on a designated bulletin board; 5. Post a copy of the Executive Committee's agenda of all Congregation Council and annual meetings on the designated bulletin board. These agendas will be posted on the weekend prior to the meetings in full time for all regularly scheduled church services; and 6. Read any correspondence at the Congregation Council meetings.

Duties of the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer:

In order to maintain financial integrity, the income function and the expenditure function of this congregation must remain separate.

Financial Secretary:

The Financial Secretary shall administer:

1. The receiving of all congregation's income; 2. The prompt counting and recording of such income; 3. The prompt depositing of all such income in the congregation's accounts; 4. Providing timely records of all transactions to the Treasurer for inclusion in the monthly financial records; 5. Providing the Congregation Council with a monthly report of all income; 6. Assist the Treasurer in preparing the Annual Financial Report; and 7. Take responsibility to see that all records of individual contributions are recorded for church records and tax purposes.

Treasurer:

The Treasurer shall:

1. Keep a record of all financial transactions, both as to the income and expenditures of the congregation. This record shall be available in the church office except as on such occasion when transactions must be posted; 2. Receive all bills incurred by the congregation and promptly make payment for all approved expenditures in order that the congregations' financial reputation will be maintained; 3. Make prompt

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payment of all recurring expenditures, such as approved staff salaries, benevolence, mortgage payments, etc.; 4. Balance the checking account statements monthly; 5. Provide a monthly financial report to the Congregation Council; 6. Provide an Annual Finance Statement to the congregation at the Annual Meeting; 7. Assist the Audit Committee in the annual audit of the financial records of the congregation; and 8. Provide tax reports as necessary for paid staff.

**C1. Duties of the Congregational Committees**

At its first meeting in each congregation year, the Congregation Council shall appoint as many standing committees from among those listed in the bylaws as the local and wider concerns of the congregation shall require. Each such committee shall be composed of one or more members of the Congregation Council, and, in addition, other persons on the active roll of confirmed members, and shall select other persons as leaders of Formation, Financial, Facilities and Service to help coordinate the meetings and activities of the committees. Although appointed by and responsible to the Congregation Council, these committees shall be recognized as representative of the interests of, and performing essential services for, the congregation as a whole. The pastor shall have voice in all committees. All actions of committees shall be subject to review by the Congregation Council.

**Duties of the Executive Committee:**

The Executive Committee shall consist of Congregation Council officers and shall meet at least once a year to plan the Council's work, and as often as seems necessary to the President.

**Duties of the Nominating Committee:**

1. At the December meeting of the Congregation Council, the Nominating Committee shall present a slate of confirmed, voting members of this Congregation who will accept nomination for the vacancies on the Congregation Council. These nominees will be presented for election at the Annual Congregational Meeting. 2. At the direction of the Congregation Council, this committee shall function to nominate congregation members to attend the assemblies and conference of the New England Synod, and such other meetings where the Congregation Council feels this congregation should be represented. 3. At the direction of the Congregation Council, this committee shall nominate members for special committees. 4. The Congregation Council shall choose three (3) persons to serve as the Nominating Committee at its March meeting.

**Duties of the Audit Committee:**

1. The financial records of the congregation shall be reviewed annually in cooperation with the financial secretary and the treasurer. 2. This audit should be concluded prior to the Annual Congregational Meeting, if possible, but shall be completed no later than March 15th. 3. Financial records of all organizations shall be submitted for annual audit. 4. All reports and recommendations of the Audit

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Committee are to be submitted to the Congregation Council and are to be recorded in the Annual Report to the congregation. 5. The Audit Committee shall supply a written statement with the findings of said Audit to the Council and will be published in next available Voices for the Congregation.

**Mutual Ministry Committee:**

The Mutual Ministry Committee is accountable to the Congregation Council and reports directly and regularly to the Council. At the time of reporting, the Mutual Ministry Committee shall forward any recommendations requiring Council or congregational action. Mutual Ministry Committee members are accountable to one another for maintaining strict confidentiality of all personal information shared during their work together. The committee will meet regularly, with a minimum of four (4) meetings per year. The whole people of God have a ministry with and to one another. The ministry of any pastor(s), lay professionals and the congregation is strengthened when there exists a small group who account out of mutual concern for each component. The primary function of this committee should be to keep the pastor(s) and staff advised about the conditions within the congregation, and to interpret to the congregation the ministry of the professional leaders.

**Duties of the Mutual Ministry Committee:**

1. Identify the professional leadership needs within the congregation; 2. Prepare written job descriptions spelling out the duties, responsibilities, lines of accountability and reporting for all paid staff positions. These descriptions shall be submitted to the Congregation Council for approval. 3. Serve as a forum for staff members to discuss personal needs and work relationships for the support staff of the congregation, such as secretary, organist, choir director, sexton, etc. 4. Serve as an exit interview group when a pastor or lay professional leaves the congregation. 5. Suggest continuing education possibilities in light of (a) concerns and ministries of the pastor(s) and lay professional(s); (b) concerns and missions of the congregation; and (c) concerns and missions of the Synod and ELCA. 6. Enable the pastor(s) and lay professional(s) to participate in continuing education by advocating commitment of time, money and shared evaluation and planning. 7. Share with the pastor(s) and lay professional(s) the expectations of the congregation. 8. Provide for an annual evaluation at least ninety (90) days prior to the Annual Meeting of the ministry of the pastor(s) and lay professional(s) and of the mission of the congregation. 9. Provide for an annual review of the call extended to the pastor(s) and the contracts of the lay professional(s) and paid staff. 10. Serve as personal and confidential support group to the pastor(s) and lay professional(s). 11. Serve as an open communication channel regarding conditions and attitudes within the congregation. 12. Serve as agents of reconciliation in case of conflict in the congregation. 13. Review annually the details of compensation, housing, pension and other benefits provided for the pastor(s), lay professional(s), and paid staff. (Recommendations shall be passed on to the Finance Committee as deemed necessary).

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**Duties of the Call Committee:**

The duties of the Call Committee shall be determined by the Congregation Council at the time the congregation determines a call for a pastor or lay professional shall be made. These duties will follow the guidelines of the New England Synod.

**Additional Congregational Committees and Duties**

There shall be a Committee on Christian Education. This committee, in association with the pastor, shall oversee the conduct and promotion of the schools and the activities of all educational and youth organizations within the congregation. It shall encourage the use of teaching and worship materials published by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The committee shall seek to introduce the church's periodicals and books of family devotion into the homes of the congregation. One of the primary aims of the Committee shall be to bring the call of the ministry of the Gospel and other full time vocations in the Church to the attention of qualified youth in the congregation.

There shall be a Committee on Church Property. This committee shall see to the proper maintenance and protection of all property of the congregation and shall take care that the same is kept in good repair.

There shall be a Committee on Membership and Outreach. This committee shall stimulate and lead all members of the congregation in continuous, and from time to time, concerted endeavors to re-awaken the spiritually indifferent and to reach others, who are as yet known, with the Gospel and attach them to Christ's church. To this end, the committee shall devote itself to deepening spiritual life and shall periodically study the congregation in the context of the surrounding community.

There shall be a Finance Committee, of which the Treasurer or treasurers shall be members ex officio. It shall prepare a draft budget for the succeeding year, including the congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in its behalf by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the New England Synod, and shall submit such draft budget to the Congregation Council for its action and later presentation to a congregational meeting. This committee shall exercise oversight of all the financial affairs of the congregation to make sure that they are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies to the synodical treasurer. It shall, subject to the approval of the Congregation Council, be responsible for the congregation's investments and its total insurance program. It shall also provide for annual audits of the accounts of the treasurers and the financial secretary as well as the accounts of the schools and organizations within the congregation.

There shall be a Committee on Social Ministry. The purpose of this committee shall be to extend Christian compassion and helpfulness to the ill, the aged, the orphaned, the underprivileged, the imprisoned and, in general, to persons of all ages in need of aid in body and soul. It shall strive to enlist in these efforts as many as it can of individual members and organizations of the congregation. This committee shall further

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have the duty to study social conditions primarily in the local community, in order to bring the cleansing and healing light of Christian truth to bear upon critical problems through thoughtful Christian discussion of facts and issues.

There shall be a Committee of Stewardship, of which the Treasurer, or treasurers, shall be members ex-officio. It shall be the function of this committee to evoke and promote the expression of Christian faith in daily living; to teach the Christian use of money, to diffuse knowledge of the congregation's local, national and worldwide ministries; and to lead all its members to higher levels of proportionate giving for the Lord's work.

There shall be a Committee of Worship and Music. It shall assist the Congregation Council in seeing that the services of God's House are conducted regularly and in accordance with the liturgy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, that competent ushers are recruited and trained, and that hymnals and other devotional materials are provided and properly cared for. This committee shall supervise, and strive to advance the welfare and effective service of the choirs of the congregation. It shall arrange for the care of paraments, vestments and musical instruments and in consultation with the pastor, the organist and choir director, it shall furnish music supplies appropriate for use in the worship of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.