

Bylaws of the Congregation  
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Sinking Spring, PA

*Approved by the Congregation - May 8, 2016*

**Our Mission and Vision**

**Our Mission: Who we are, and what we do.**

*Marked with the Cross of Christ forever;  
We are claimed, gathered and sent for the sake of the world.*

**Values: Why we are who we are, and why we do what we do.**

- *We are a church that belongs to Christ. There is a place for you here.*
- *We are a church whose unity is in Jesus, who gathers us around word and sacrament.*
- *We are a church that believes Jesus is God's "Yes" to us. Our lives can be a "Yes" to others.*
- *We are a church that believes God is calling us into the world – together.*
- *We are a church that rolls up our sleeves and gets to work.*
- *We are a church that is a catalyst, convener, and bridge builder.*
- *We are a church that is energized by lively engagement in our faith and life.*
- *We are a church that is deeply rooted – and always being made new.*

**Our Vision: How we do things.**

*We, Saint John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, are disciples of Jesus Christ; a community of faithful people who, by God's gift of grace alone, are free to orient our lives around Jesus' commandment to love God with all our heart, all our soul, and all our mind; and to love our neighbors as ourselves.*

*Centered on God's love for all people we endeavor for our church to be a glimpse of the kingdom of heaven where imperfect people are perfectly loved, welcomed and where all people matter to God. In consort with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we are doing God's Work with Our Hands.*

**Summary Statement:**

We are disciples of Jesus Christ; a community of faithful people who orient our lives around Jesus' commandment to love God with all our heart, all our soul, and all our mind; and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

## BL 1.0 Regular Meetings

There will be four regularly scheduled meetings of the Congregation held in accordance with the following schedule:

1. A meeting to elect members of the Boards and the Congregational Council to be held the first Sunday in June. This meeting may be cancelled in years when there may be no vacant offices to be filled.
2. A meeting to discuss and approve plans for the carrying out of the mission of this congregation to be held during September. The agenda should include the dates for all regular meetings for the following calendar year.
3. A meeting prior to Thanksgiving to approve the congregation's budget for the following year.
4. A meeting in late January or February to present the annual report of the congregation's activities from the previous year.

## BL 2.0 Responsibilities of Voting Membership

- a. Any confirmed member of this congregation may apply for Voting Membership as provided for in Section C8.02c of the Constitution. Such application shall be made to the Congregation Council. Upon affirmation by the applicant of their intention to fulfill such duties as are required of a voting member to the best of their ability, they shall be accepted as a voting member with all the rights and privileges pertaining thereto.

- b. It shall be the privilege and duty of a Voting Member of this congregation to:

Conscientiously and prayerfully exercise their right of suffrage in all measures that will advance the work of Christ's Kingdom both locally and in the church-at-large.

Willingly serve in any office or capacity for which his or her talents and abilities equip him or her.

Faithfully attend all Congregational Meetings.

Assist with wholehearted diligence in administering the temporal and spiritual affairs of the congregation.

Encourage, by personal example, friendly interest, and judicious counsel, such eligible communicant members who are not yet Voting Members to consider seriously accepting the responsibilities and privileges of Voting Membership

## BL 2.1 Self Exclusion (Inactive Membership)

A non-voting member, not meeting the definition of voting member as per section C8.02c of the Constitution, may be removed from the membership rolls if a period of non-communication has extended over two years.

## BL 3.0 Nominations and Elections

### BL 3.1 Congregation Council Members

The Governance/Nominating Committee shall develop a list of possible nominees, interview possible nominees and present a slate of candidates to the Congregation Council for approval no later than the May Council meeting. Once the slate is approved by the Congregation Council, the slate of candidates should be made available to the Congregation by the Sunday closest to May 15 of the year. The Congregation may respond with additional nominations for two (2) weeks after announcement of the selections of the nominating committee.

After this period, nominations will be closed. Any additional potential candidates will be interviewed, and a final ballot if needed will be presented at the Congregation Meeting to take place during the first Sunday in June.

### BL 3.2 Ministry Team Leaders

In March of each year, the Ministry Team Leaders and Group Leaders of each Ministry Team shall participate in a nominating process to select a leader for their Ministry Team. The Council Representative shall facilitate this nominating process. The Team Leader and the Group Leaders shall privately, but not anonymously, nominate any voting member of the congregation to serve as the Team Leader. Absentee ballots shall be permitted. The Council Representative will forward the nominations to the Governance/Nominating Committee.

In the event that one person receives more than 2/3 of the possible nominations, the Governance/Nominating Committee, after consulting with the nominee about the person's readiness and willingness to serve, may decide to put forward to the Congregation Council only that candidate for an uncontested ballot. If there is no person with more than 2/3 of the possible nominations, the Governance/Nominating Committee will work with the Pastor to contact each nominee to determine if they are willing to accept the nomination. The Governance/Nominating Committee will then produce a ballot of nominees willing to serve.

Final ballots for each Ministry Team Leader shall be submitted to the Congregation Council for approval no later than the May Council meeting. Once approved, the ballots should be made available to the Congregation by the Sunday closest to May 15 of the year. An election of all Ministry Team Leaders, even if a ballot is uncontested, will be held during the Congregation Meeting on the first Sunday in June by simple majority vote.

## BL 4.0 Officers of the Congregation

### BL 4.1 President and Vice-President:

The president shall be chairman of the congregation and the Congregation Council. In the event of the president's inability to perform his functions, the vice-president shall serve in his stead. The president shall enforce the Constitution, its By-Laws and Standing Resolutions. He shall preside over all meetings of the Congregation Council and endeavor to coordinate functions, plans, and activities of the congregation and all its parts. All boards, committees, and auxiliary groups shall be responsible to the president and he may attend any and all meetings of such groups.

### BL 4.2 Secretary:

The secretary shall be responsible for the keeping of accurate records of the minutes of all meetings of the congregation and Congregation Council in a volume provided by the congregation which shall be preserved in its archives. The secretary shall conduct all correspondence of the Congregation Council and committees under the supervision of the President. (Comment: Each board will be responsible for its own correspondence.)

### BL 4.3 Treasurer:

The treasurer shall be responsible for the books of account of the congregation. He or she shall receive detailed reports from the financial officer of all receipts and disbursements. The treasurer shall provide written summary of all reports or transactions to the Congregation Council monthly and to the congregation together with satisfactory audit at the Congregation meeting requiring annual reports.

### BL 4.4 Executive Committee:

The four officers of the congregation shall constitute the executive committee, which may be called for meetings at the discretion of the President of the Congregation.

## BL 5.0 The Ministry Teams of the Congregation

In accordance with Section C 4.04 and allowed in Section C 13.06 of the Constitution, the Ministry Teams shall consist of but not be limited to the following:

1. Serve
2. Care
3. Worship
4. Learn

The Leaders of each Ministry Team shall be approved by the Congregation (see C 13.09 of the Constitution).

## BL 5.1 Responsibilities of the Ministry Teams of the Congregation

All Ministry Teams shall consist of no less than 3 members and the Team Leader whose duties will be to carry out the specific objectives of the Ministry Team. The Ministry Team Leaders will be approved in accordance with the appropriate procedures established in the Constitution and Bylaws

The purpose of the Ministry Teams is to carry out the vision of the Congregation in line with the mission and values of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. The Pastor and the Congregation Council shall oversee the Ministry Teams. The Pastor is an ex-officio member of all Ministry Teams.

Ministry Teams shall form Groups within their Teams to focus on specific areas of ministry. Groups may be formed or dissolved at will by the Ministry Teams. Groups shall be led by Group Leaders who are appointed jointly by the Ministry Team Leader and Council Representative. The Ministry Team Leaders shall oversee the Group Leaders of their respective teams to ensure that the objectives of their Ministry Team are being carried out appropriately and effectively.

### BL 5.1.1 Serve Ministry Team

With love for our neighbors **WE SERVE** compassionately by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, strengthening the weak, and defending the vulnerable in efforts of justice and peace.

Serving responsibilities may include, but are not limited to: organizing, informing and encouraging support of the local, national and world-wide ministries in which St. John's is involved.

### BL 5.1.2 Care Ministry Team

With our hearts **WE CARE** genuinely. Providing comfort and support to those who feel sick, lonely, broken, excluded, bullied, or ashamed.

Caring responsibilities may include, but are not limited to: emotional, physical, financial, mental, and spiritual caring for people new to St. John's, people affiliated with St. John's, and people who belong to St. John's. Caring for people in need, and for people with plenty.

### BL 5.1.3 Worship Ministry Team

With our soul **WE WORSHIP** joyfully. With roots in tradition, we are made new in our experience of God's presence among us in music, preaching, prayer, communion and baptism.

Worship responsibilities may include, but are not limited to: seeing that worship services are conducted regularly and in good order with sensitivity to the liturgical practices of the ELCA. Support, organize and assist with all areas of worship, including music & the arts, worship volunteers, audio/video, communion preparation and decorations.

#### BL 5.1.4 Learn Ministry Team

With our minds **WE LEARN** purposefully; finding direction for our lives and support for our moral values as we grow in discipleship of Jesus.

Learning responsibilities may include, but are not limited to: planning, organizing, promoting, and supervising all programs, activities and volunteers necessary to provide a comprehensive learning program for all ages.

#### BL 6.0 The Committees of the Congregation

In accordance with Section C 4.04 and allowed in Section C 13.06 of the Constitution, the Committees shall consist of but not be limited to the following:

1. Finance Committee
2. Governance/Nominating Committee
3. Marketing & Communications Committee
4. Personnel Committee
5. Property Committee

Committees may be formed at will by the Congregation Council. Each Committee shall consist of at least three voting members who are appointed by the Congregation Council. Term of office will be one year with eligibility for reelection each year.

Committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council, other than the following exceptions.

Finance Committee – Treasurer shall serve as an ex-officio member

Governance/Nominating Committee – President shall serve as an ex-officio member

Marketing & Communications Committee – Secretary shall serve as an ex-officio member

Personnel Committee – Vice President shall serve as an ex-officio member

Property Committee – Vice President shall serve as an ex-officio member

#### BL 7.0 Meetings of Ministry Teams and Committees

It is expected that Ministry Team Leaders will meet monthly with the Group Leaders within their Teams to plan and organize the work of their team.

Group Leaders within each team should communicate and meet with their Group Members as often as needed to carry out the ministry functions of their Group.

It is expected that the Pastor will meet at least quarterly with all Ministry Team Leaders collectively to plan and organize the overall Ministry of the Congregation collaboratively. These meetings should also include any staff members as deemed appropriate by the Pastor.