

The Bylaws of
Geneva Evangelical Lutheran Church
Geneva, Illinois

January 1990

Section I.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

- Item 1. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held in the month of February on the date decided by the congregation council. The fiscal year shall be the calendar year.
- Item 2. At the annual meeting, the pastor or pastors, the secretary or secretaries, the treasurers, the financial secretary or financial secretaries of the congregation, and the officers of the various organizations and schools within the congregation shall submit reports in writing.
- Item 3. At congregational meetings, called for the purpose of selling, purchasing or encumbering real estate, or of making extensive repairs or construction of church buildings, only active confirmed members, at least eighteen years of age shall be permitted to vote.
- Item 4. When a meeting of the congregation is for the purchase, sale or mortgaging of real estate, twenty percent (20%) of the active confirmed members, at least eighteen years of age, shall be necessary for a quorum.

Section II.

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

- Item 1. A nominating committee shall prepare a slate of candidates for each vacancy sixty (60) days in advance of the annual meeting.
- Item 2. Every opportunity should be given for additional nominations to be made from the floor only with prior consent of the nominees.

Section III.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

Item 1. The congregation council shall meet regularly once each month throughout the year with said monthly meeting time and date to be set by vote of the council at the first council meeting of the congregational year.

Item 2. Duties of the Congregation Council officers:

- a. The president shall preside at meetings of the congregation and the congregation council. In the event of the president's inability to serve, the vice-president shall preside.
- b. The secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation and of the council in a volume provided by the congregation, which shall be preserved permanently in its archives.
- c. The financial secretary shall receive and keep record of all income from contributing members and other sources.
- d. The treasurer shall keep the books of account of the congregation; and shall receive from the financial secretary all funds and disburse them on proper orders, making remittance of benevolence receipts to the treasurer of the synod.
- e. The treasurer and the financial secretary shall make written report of all financial transactions to the congregation council monthly and to the congregation, together with a satisfactory audit, at its annual meetings. All financial officers shall give corporate surety, in amounts determined by the congregation council, for which the premium shall be paid by the congregation. Fidelity coverage provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be deemed a fulfillment of this requirement.

Item 3. The following shall constitute the business for congregation council meetings:

1. Roll Call
2. Action on excuses for absence
3. Adoption of agenda
4. Devotions and period for study of the life and work of the church.
5. Reading of minutes.
6. Reports of the pastor(s).
7. Report of treasurer.
8. Report of Financial Secretary.
9. Reports of standing committees.
10. Reports of special committees.
11. Other reports.

12. Unfinished business.
13. New business.
14. Adjournment with prayer.

Section IV.

DUTIES OF CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEES

- Item 1. *Executive Committee* The Executive Committee is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the congregation council in fulfilling its duties and responsibilities. It is further responsible for calling to the congregation council's attention any failures in the discharging of those duties.
- Item 2. *Nominating Committee* The Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate of candidates for each vacancy on the congregation council, the nominating committee and any other congregational committee which has its members elected by the congregation at the annual meeting. The Nominating Committee shall also prepare a slate of candidates for election as delegates to the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly.
- Item 3. *Audit Committee* The Audit Committee shall conduct a formal examination of the financial records of the congregation each year prior to the annual meeting. The purpose of the audit is to verify that all financial accounts of the congregation are accurate.
- Item 4. *Staff Support Committee* The Staff Support Committee serves as advocates for all paid staff members employed by the congregation. Committee members are to reflect the age, race, gender and economic composition of the congregation and community. They are to be committed to the vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the mission of the local congregation and the ministry of the staff.
- Accountable first to the congregation council, then to one another and finally to the congregation, the purpose of the Staff Support Committee is to affirm and strengthen the mission of the congregation and the ministry of the staff by careful listening, clarifying expectations, sharing, communicating, reviewing, reflecting, praying and caring.
- Item 5. *Call Committee* The Call Committee is responsible for interviewing and evaluating candidates when a pastoral vacancy occurs. They are to do so in such a manner that the pastoral needs of the congregation are well defined and understood. The Committee also accurately represents to the candidates the profile of the congregation. Upon reaching agreement on a candidate, it is the responsibility of the Call Committee to recommend the name to the congregation council.

Section V.

CONGREGATIONAL FUNCTION

Item 1. This congregation is a worshiping, learning, witnessing, and serving community of baptized persons among whom the Word is proclaimed and the Sacraments are celebrated according to the Gospel, and whose corporate existence is recognized by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It shall provide support to enable the fulfillment of its mission and ministry.

- a. *Worship* This congregation, remembering God's mighty acts in the past, celebrating His abiding presence, and moving toward His promised fulfillment, shall listen to the Word of God in Scripture and preaching, receive the sacraments, and respond with liturgical acts of confession, prayer, praise, thanksgiving, and with tithes and offerings. In order to assist members to acknowledge God's rule over their lives, their own unity as Christ's body on earth, and to express their relationship with God in public and in private, the congregation shall gather for worship regularly, and, in accordance with the traditions of the Lutheran Church, recruit, equip, and support members for leadership in worship, use appropriate worship materials, and make certain that worship has a place in other functions of the congregation.
- b. *Learning* This congregation shall develop an educational ministry to assist persons to perceive and respond to God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ, and, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to participate in God's continuing activity and revelation as they develop as individuals, related to other individuals, groups, institutions, culture, and the physical environment. To clarify its mission the congregation shall study itself in relation to its community and to the church around the world. It shall provide schools and other learning activities, recruit, equip, and support members for educational leadership, use appropriate educational materials, and make certain that adequate study undergirds the other functions of the congregation.
- c. *Witness* This congregation, relying on the Holy Spirit, shall proclaim the Gospel by example and by programs to invite all people to repent and share the Lord's kingdom. The congregation shall motivate its members to witness to their faith at every opportunity in daily life. It shall try to restore those who have lapsed from active membership, bring new members into the fellowship of the church, and recruit, equip, and support members of the congregation for these activities. It shall provide for the communication of the Gospel through fellowship in the wider Christian community. It shall make certain that other functions witness to the faith of the church.
- d. *Service* This congregation shall live by faith active in love. It shall motivate, equip, and support its members to visit the sick, the infirm, and the imprisoned, and to minister to the poor and the distressed; to serve as

Christians in all the institutions and structures of society of which they are a part; and individually and corporately to foster justice, overcome oppression, alleviate suffering and care for the earth. In these efforts the congregation shall cooperate with the synod and the churchwide agencies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, other Christian churches and other groups in society. It shall make certain that its other functions strengthen the motivation and ability for service.

- e. *Support* This congregation in faithfulness to God shall provide leadership, organizational structures, facilities, and funds to enable fulfillment of the functions to their maximum potential. The congregation shall maintain effective communication among its members and with its community, inculcate the motives and practices of stewardship in all members of the congregation, encourage generous giving to the work of the church at home and elsewhere, evaluate regularly the total life and ministry of the congregation, and recruit, equip, and support members of the congregation to provide for these activities.

Item 2. An organizational structure to fulfill these functions shall be developed by the congregation council. Appropriate committees or task groups shall be responsible to the congregation council. The pastors shall have voice and vote in each of these committees or task groups. The congregation council shall prepare descriptions, including appropriate relationships with synodical structures, of the responsibility of each committee or task group and shall review their actions.

Section VI.

AMENDMENTS

Item 1. No alterations or amendments to these bylaws shall be made unless they are presented, in writing, to the council and read at a public service prior to the meeting of the congregation at which they are to be considered. A two-thirds vote of the confirmed members present and voting at a meeting of the congregation shall be necessary for the adoption of amendments to these bylaws.

Section VII.

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

Item 1. *Mission Statement* In loving obedience to God, Geneva Evangelical Lutheran Church is a faithful community of God's people. As instruments of God's presence we gather to hear and study God's word, to worship, pray, baptize, commune and have fellowship with one another. In grateful response to the grace of God we endeavor to teach, witness, and serve all as our Lord commanded. All this we do to the glory of God.