



Evangelical Lutheran Church, School and Childcare  
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Dear members of Our Father's Lutheran Church:

As has been discussed at the last three Voters' Assembly meetings, the Church Council proposes that the church change to a "policy-based governance" model for Our Father's. I write this to provide some explanation of what is being proposed.

### Board Based Governance

Our Father's now uses a "board-based governance" model. This was both popular and relatively effective in most churches since at least the 1960s. Board-based governance relies on boards.

- Presently we have six boards (Elders, Christian Education, Fellowship, Finance, Trustees, and Communication).
- The Church Council comprises the President, Vice-President (now vacant), Secretary, Treasurer (now vacant), and the heads of the six boards.

Problems with board-based governance that many churches, including Our Father's, are due to fewer church members overall and fewer members having the time or inclination to serve on boards. For example, our convention is that board members serve for three years, which is perhaps a long commitment. For another example, some of the boards now have only one or two members.

As a result, church tasks (e.g., tracking payments; generating a budget) become more challenging to do. A related issue is that there is frequent confusion about which board is responsible for what. This creates problems not just in getting things done but in even knowing what needs to be done. (Very fortunately, Mr. Gerry Winkelman and Principal Nathan Wingfield have shouldered a huge amount of responsibility in keeping going the day-to-day operations of Our Father's. But, this is contrary to our present Constitution and Bylaws.)

### Policy-Based Governance

Many churches have recognized that board-based governance no longer works well. As a result, many have switched to "policy-based governance." Consistent with our current Constitution, in policy-based governance, the congregation via the Voters' Assembly is the ultimate authority of the church. Consistent with our current Constitution and Bylaws, all boards under policy-based governance exist to implement the will of the congregation, as expressed in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Voters' Assembly.

The biggest difference is that, under policy-based governance, there are fewer boards, and those boards are required to follow congregation-approved "policy manuals" that (1) determine their responsibilities and (2) both prescribe and constrain their behavior. Because of the specification of the policies the boards must follow, policy-based governance provides more clarity, predictability, and accountability.

### Proposal for Policy Based Governance

In the proposal from the Church Council (passed in meeting in March 2021), OF would have three boards.

- OF will retain the Board of Elders (BOE) and the Board of Christian Education (BCE).
- There would be a new Board of Directors (BOD) that would take responsibility of seeing that the needs of the church not overseen by the BOE and BCE are identified and addressed. These would include those now overseen by the trustees, fellowship, finance, and communication.
- As do the BOE and BCE, the BOD would utilize the expertise of the members of the congregation in

fulfilling its responsibilities.

### Moving to Policy Based Governance at Our Father's

Moving to policy-based governance requires creating and adopting a new Constitution and Bylaws. In addition, the three boards (BOE, BCE and BOD) would either revise or create policy manuals that would need to be approved by the Voters' Assembly.

A proposal for revising the Constitution and Bylaws has been developed by the Church Council.

- As directed by our current Constitution, any proposal to change the Constitution and Bylaws must be disseminated/presented to the congregation and discussed at a Voters' Assembly. It cannot be acted upon until a subsequent Voters' Assembly.
- Dissemination of proposed Constitution and Bylaws:
  - The proposed Constitution and Bylaws was presented to the June 2021 Voters' Assembly.
  - The proposed Constitution and Bylaws are available on Our Father's website. In addition, the current Constitution and Bylaws are on that site, as is a document comparing the current and the proposed Constitution and Bylaws.
  - The proposed Constitution and Bylaws will be made available in the narthex of the church.
  - The proposal will be further discussed a Voters' Assembly Special Meeting in fall of 2021.
- Thus, the Council asks that voting members review the proposed Constitution and Bylaws.
- Hopefully the proposal can be voted on in the January 2022 Voters' Assembly meeting.
- If it is approved, it will need to be reviewed and approved by the LCMS South Wisconsin District before it can be adopted.

### Proposed Changes to the Constitution

- Articles 1 – 5, 10 and 11 of the Constitution are essentially unchanged. They have been edited for clarity.
- Previously Article 6 and proposed Article 7, the qualifications of pastors, principals, and teachers to be eligible for a call to Our Father's is more detailed and specific.
- Article 8 (running voters' meetings) was moved to the proposed Bylaws.
- The biggest change in the proposed Constitution and Bylaws concerns the organization of the church. To be specific, Article 7 (Authority of the Congregation) and Article 9 (Officers and Boards) are contained in proposed Article 6 (Organization).

### Proposed Changes to the Bylaws

The Bylaws have undergone extensive revision in that they have been expanded greatly. They now much more carefully and specifically state: (1) how the call process for pastors, principals and teachers shall be conducted (Article 1); (2) how the Voters' Assembly shall be conducted (Article 2); and (3) the duties and expected behaviors of the three boards (Articles 3-5). The other parts of the Bylaws are essentially unchanged. Note that Article 6 (Auxiliary Organizations) specifies that the Church Council has authority over such organizations; it was moved to the Constitution Article 3.8, which proposes that the BOD will have authority over them.

I hope this explanation is helpful as you review the proposed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws of Our Father's. If you have any questions or concerns about any of this, I am happy to talk.

Yours in Christ,



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