

# BYLAWS

## Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church Garrett County, Maryland

### Article 1

#### Purpose and Guiding Principles

This congregation confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This congregation confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe. All actions and decisions made by the congregation of Shepherd of the Hills and its council, groups, teams, boards, committees, etc. will be in accord with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

#### Mission Statement

God's purpose for Shepherd of the Hills is to live in witness to Jesus Christ, helping one another to experience God's life-changing love, proclaiming the Gospel, and welcoming the diverse community at Deep Creek Lake.

#### Vision Statement

Shepherd of the Hills is a welcoming community of faith, nurturing spiritual growth through prayer, study and listening to God's Word; proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a diverse community, including residents, visitors, students and veterans; inviting others to worship, telling what Jesus Christ has done in our lives, and making a difference in the world around us by discovering and responding to the needs of others.

Following are the guiding principles of Shepherd of the Hills:

- This is God's church
- Everyone is welcome
- Everyone is valued
- Everyone has God-given gifts
- We serve God by serving other people
- We are led by the Scriptures
- We discern God's will through prayer
- Worship is central to our community of faith
- God calls us through Word, Baptism, and Holy Communion to be a community of faith

All decisions to be made and actions contemplated will be tested against the purpose statement and guiding principles. On-going activities will regularly be tested against the purpose statement and guiding principles.

- We believe that every member is a minister who has been given gifts by God to be discovered, developed and deployed.
- We know that every believer is created, gifted, and authorized for ministry.
- We are a church where the priesthood of believers finds its expression in creative and powerful ways.
- We encourage people to minister in ways consistent with the gifts God has given them.
- We are an equipping church where:
  - a. Pastors and leaders enable church members to share in ministry and leadership
  - b. People's gifts, talents, and life callings are matched with areas of service
  - c. Ministry opportunities are recognized and developed
  - d. The church community encourages the growth of a broad array of ministries
- Members are classified as voting members, associate members and seasonal members, as detailed in our Constitution, amended and approved 6-25-2017.
- Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following: death; resignation; transfer or release; disciplinary action in accordance with ELCA constitutional provision 2041; or removal from the roll due to inactivity. Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the Church has a continuing pastoral concern.

We also recognize that certain functions are essential for carrying out our mission and ministry in an effective and orderly fashion, and we recognize the need to be sure that those functions are addressed in an effective and efficient manner.

We recognize the need to evaluate our bylaws and ways of functioning on a regular basis and to make such changes as may be necessary to carry out our mission and ministry more efficiently and effectively.

## Article 2. Congregational Meetings

Section 1. The annual meeting of the congregation (congregational assembly) shall be held annually in November or December at a time and place to be determined by the Congregation Council.

- A. The congregation will hold at least two additional regular meetings each year at times and places as determined by the Congregation Council
- B. Special meetings may be called by:
  1. Voting members of the congregation in regular meeting
  2. The Pastor;
  3. A majority of the Congregation Council
  4. Request of at least 10% of voting members.

Special meetings and their purpose shall be announced according to the general rule set forth in section B of this article except for situations as may be defined in the By-Laws. No other business than that announced as the purpose of the meeting shall be conducted as special meetings.

Section 2. A quorum will consist of those voting members in attendance at the meeting.

Section 3. Congregational meetings will be conducted in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the congregation. In matters not covered by the Constitution and Bylaws, meetings will be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition.

Section 4. All confirmed members may vote at Congregational Meetings; except those under the age of 18 where the purchase or sale of property, or stocks etc are considered (state law).

Section 5. Notices of all meetings of the congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two weeks and by mail or email to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.

Section 6. Voting by proxy or absentee ballot shall not be permitted.

### Article 3 Church Council

Section 1. The Congregation Council consists of the Pastor and at least three, *as required by the State of Maryland*, and no more than seven voting members of the congregation.

No more than one member of a household may be on the Council at the same time. The bylaw will be amended to state that council must have three members minimum – as required by the state of Maryland – and seven members maximum.

Section 2. Council members are elected at the annual congregation meeting. Terms are for three years with a maximum of two consecutive terms. In 2013 three of the seven members will be elected for the usual three year terms, two will be elected for two-year terms, and two will be elected for a one year term. Those elected for a one year term in 2013 are eligible to be re-elected for two additional terms.

Section 3. The Congregation Council will generally meet monthly. All Council meetings are open meetings except for closed sessions which are necessary to consider confidential matters, such as personnel issues.

Section 4. All vacancies will be filled by recommendation of the Nominating Committee with election by congregational vote at the next regular meeting of the congregational assembly.

Section 5. The Congregation Council, as the chief governing Council of the congregation, shall act in all matters pertaining to the legal and general welfare of the congregation, except those reserved by the Constitution and Bylaws for the congregational assembly.

The Congregation Council shall see to it that all activities of the church reflect the mission and purpose of the congregation. . The Congregation Council is charged with the implementation of the policies, missions, budget, and plans adopted by the congregational assembly. The Congregation Council may appoint any entity that in its judgment are needed to carry out the mission and ministry of the congregation.

#### Article 4 Officers and Committees

Section 1. The Congregation Council will elect from among its members a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer who will also serve as officers of the congregation. Terms of office are for one year and may be re-elected.

Section 2. The Congregation Council shall appoint a financial secretary from among the voting members of the congregation for a term of one year. There is no limit on the number of years the financial secretary may be re-appointed.

Section 3. The Congregation Council shall annually appoint a nominating committee. The vice-president of the congregation shall serve as the chairperson of the nominating committee. Using the Spiritual Gifts Inventory as well as expressed and observed interests and abilities of congregation members, the Committee's goal is to challenge and encourage each member of the congregation to participate in at least one of the Ministry Teams or Committees. This Committee is also charged with the responsibility of presenting to the congregation at its annual meeting a slate of candidates for Congregation Council.

Section 4. The Congregation Council, in consultation with the Pastor shall appoint a Mutual Ministry Committee. The Committee shall act as a personnel interface between/among the congregation and the pastor, employees, council officers, and the Committees and ministry teams of the congregation. This interface will afford members of the congregation a direct avenue to discuss their concerns and suggestions to improve conduct of service, congregation activities, responses to members, and pastoral support. By listening, interpreting, advising, conferring, evaluating, and, if necessary, recommending Congregation Council action, the Committee will facilitate collaboration in areas of membership, service, and pastoral support. In the area of conflict resolution, the Committee shall provide a forum where members and employees of the congregation may voice their concerns and reach a mutually acceptable settlement of these concerns. The Committee shall provide the pastor and other paid staff with the opportunity to apprise the Committee of their activities.

#### Section 4 Duties of officers

##### A. President

The President shall preside at all meetings of the Congregational Assembly, shall be responsible to see that all resolutions are carried out and shall be privileged to vote. The President shall be the President of the Congregation Council and may be an advisory member, without vote, of all ministry teams and committees of the congregation.

##### B. Vice President

The Vice President shall assume the duties of the President whenever the President is unable to perform them. The Vice-President shall serve as Chairperson of the Nominating Committee.

#### C. Secretary

The Secretary shall keep a permanent record of all transactions of the Congregational Assembly and the Congregation Council; all records shall be and remain the property of the congregation and kept at the church office. The Secretary shall submit to the church office the minutes of all such meetings within one week from the date of the meeting. The Secretary shall publish a list of all members elected or appointed to office within one week from the date of such action. He/she shall keep an up-to-date copy of the Constitution and By-Laws of the congregation on file in the church office. In the absence of the Secretary, the President shall appoint a temporary Secretary.

#### D. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall keep the books of account of the congregation and shall receive from the Financial Secretary all funds and disburse them in proper order. The Treasurer shall keep exact records of all financial disbursements of the congregation; such records to be and remain, the property of the congregation. The Treasurer shall submit reports regularly to the Congregation Council and to the congregation and at all times be ready to submit his/her books when requested by the Congregation Council or congregation.

#### E. Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall be responsible for receiving all monies, such as offerings, special gifts, and monies and depositing them in a local bank or account. He/She shall keep an accurate and permanent record of all receipts. He/She shall keep a week by week record of the offerings of the members; this shall be an individual record kept in permanent form, as required by law, and supply each giving unit statements of contributions, following the second, third and fourth quarters. All collections must be counted by two persons each of which will sign a form that records the amounts collected.

### Article 5 Ministry Teams

Every youth and adult member of the congregation is encouraged to serve on a minimum of one Ministry Team or Committee, using his/her God-given gifts. There is no limit to the term of service. Each Ministry Team will annually select a Chairperson. The Chairperson is chosen by the team and may serve for a maximum of three consecutive terms (3 years), then a mandatory one year off as team Chair. The pastor is an ex-officio member of all Teams and Committees.

#### Section 1. Christian Education Team

The Christian Education Team, in association with the pastor, shall oversee the conduct and promotion of all educational and youth related activities within the congregation. It

shall encourage the use of appropriate teaching materials in educational programs for all ages and seek to introduce the church's periodicals and books of family devotion into the homes of the congregation.

#### Section 2. Evangelism/Hospitality Team

The Evangelism/Hospitality Team shall stimulate and lead all members of the congregation in efforts to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the community and the world at large. It shall promote social functions within the congregation to enhance Christian Fellowship and extend hospitality to the community. It shall seek to make the members of the congregation as well as the public aware of the mission and ministry of the congregation. The Evangelism/Hospitality Team, together with the Pastor, is responsible for keeping membership records.

#### Section 3. Worship/Music Team

The Worship/Music Team is responsible for the worship life of the congregation, including forms of worship used on Sundays and special occasions, overseeing and maintenance of all worship materials, enlisting and training of lay worship participants, including lay assistants, ushers and readers. In consultation with the pastor, this team shall be responsible for preparation of the altar for each service, the care and placement of banners, the ordering of all supplies needed for worship and music and for the preparation of worship bulletins..

#### Section 4. Stewardship/Finance Team

The Stewardship/Finance Team is responsible for evoking and promoting the expression of Christian faith in daily living; teaching the Christian use of money, educating the membership about the congregation's local, national and world-wide ministries; and leading all its members to higher levels of proportionate giving for the Lord's work. This committee shall also be responsible for congregational efforts which lead to informed and grateful giving. This team is also responsible, with input from the other teams, for developing and recommending a budget to the congregation, for the acquisition and maintenance of congregational property other than that for which the Worship/Music Team is responsible and for auditing the congregation's financial records.

#### Section 6. Social Ministry Team

The Social Ministry Team will work to extend Christian compassion and helpfulness to the ill, the aged, the orphaned, the under-privileged, the imprisoned and, in general, to persons of all ages in need of aid in body or soul. It shall strive to enlist in these efforts as many possible of the individual members and organizations of the congregation. This committee shall further 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.

#### Section 5. Other Teams and Committees

With the approval of the Church Council, other gift-based groups may be formed at anytime as individuals or groups feel led to minister. Each group will, within three

months of formation, put its purposes and plan of operation in writing and ask for the congregation's blessing and support at the next regular congregational meeting.

Article 6  
Amendments

These By-Laws may be amended, repealed or altered in a properly convened meeting of the congregation by a majority of all voting members present, provided the proposed change has mailed or emailed to all voting members at least two weeks prior to the meeting and has been announced at the two worship services prior to the meeting.

April 4, 2013  
Amended June 25, 2017