

Proposed New Organizational Structure

from the Staff and Volunteer Development Workgroup

The Church Council and the Church's Constitution

The current Church Council (Congregational Church Council, as it's named in the current constitution) oversees all business activities of Bethany Lutheran. It's composed of twelve voting members plus the pastor. There is no executive committee currently functioning. There are boards within the church which are separate from the church council, some of whose members are on the council. Many of their decisions, however, are subject to Council approval. It's difficult to tell exactly which ones. Our current constitution and bylaws have long been outdated compared to the needs of the congregation, incomplete and very loose in their structure, and out of compliance with the ELCA's required model constitution. They have become irrelevant to the extent that our congregation no longer follows very much of them, to its peril. Iowa law permits us to establish our own constitution and bylaws, so long as they are consistent with our Articles of Incorporation, the laws of Iowa, and so long as we follow them. The federal government leaves us alone and lets people deduct their contributions to our church as long as we follow the laws of Iowa and the Internal Revenue Code for tax exempt organizations. Further, the ELCA requires us to adopt a constitution that is consistent with its other members. If we do not follow our own constitution, we allow whoever is on the Council or on our various committees at a given time to make their own rules. This not only invites dissension in our congregation but it can also make us vulnerable to lawsuits. Being out of compliance with the ELCA's model constitution may make them less able to stand behind us in the event of trouble. This is a set of circumstances we have no choice but to remedy.

As a result of the Church Solutions process, a new structure for the Council (to be called the Congregation Council) will be formulated and tested in a limited fashion. A new set of constitution and bylaws will be drafted for approval by the Church Council and the congregation. Under the new structure, if and when it's adopted, the currently functioning Church Solutions workgroups will evolve into five permanent committees within the church council. This new council structure will include an executive committee and two representatives from each of the five proposed committees. The executive committee consists of the church officers and the pastor. If ultimately adopted, the council would increase from 13 voting members to 15, including the pastor. Church council officers and titles would remain unchanged.

It is hoped that final adjustments and required bylaw changes will be developed and finalized in time to be voted on at the annual meeting in January 2008. This function will be the responsibility of the Staff and Volunteer Workgroup/Committee.

Workgroups/Committees

Based on the strategies for action that each dialogue group in the Church Solutions process presented, five work groups have been established to focus on developing and implementing the various projects that the dialogue groups developed through their work. It is anticipated that these workgroups would eventually, when a new constitution is adopted, become permanent committees of the Church Council with from five to twelve members each. Committee members could serve for as long as they wished, up to four years maximum. The committees would each elect two people to represent them on the Council. The five workgroup/committees include the following: Staff and Volunteer Development; Christian Education; Worship & Music; Facilities & Finance; and Service Corps & Outreach. Reasons for initiating this new structure are to:

- Allow the pastor and council to concentrate their efforts more completely on the mission of the congregation and less on the day-to-day details;
- Bring stronger "grass roots" participation on the council and strengthen communications with the congregation;
- Build in permanent recruitment and training of volunteers as the lifeblood of the congregation and its primary hope for success; and to
- Improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

Comparison of Present Constitution with Proposed

Item	Old Constitution	Proposed Constitution
Annual meeting of congregation	<i>Third Monday in January</i>	Fourth Sunday in January
Officers of Congregation	President, Secretary, Treasurer <i>(We elect a Vice President but the office is not in the current constitution.)</i>	President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer
Boards of Congregation	Deacons and Deaconesses (4); Trustees (3); Parish Board or Board of Education (6)	None
Committees of Congregation	Auditing Committee (2); Nominating Committee (4); Cemetery Committee (at least 5) and <i>Executive Committee -- mentioned but not defined</i>	Auditing Committee (3); Nominating Committee (3); Cemetery Committee (5) and Executive Committee (5)
Committees of Council	Stewardship Committee (5); <i>(not currently appointed)</i>	Staff & Volunteer Development; Christian Education; Worship and Music; Facilities and Finance; Service Corps and Outreach (5-12 members each)
Stand-alone Committees	Worship Committee (3+) <i>This committee is not currently functioning but, if it were, as described in the old constitution, it would be neither elected nor appointed but rather filled by position, with those people permitted to add other people as they see fit.</i>	Becomes a committee of the Council, but three members are filled by position. The others are recruited by the Staff and Volunteer Committee to serve up to four years maximum.
Number of people on Council	13 voting members, including 4 officers, pastor, 4 deacons and deaconesses, 3 trustees, 1 member of Parish Board, <i>plus 3 or more non-voting members to include 1 Luther League member, 1 ALCW member, 1 member of the Worship Committee, and whoever else the church council feels is necessary</i>	15 voting members, including 4 officers, pastor, and 2 from each Council committee (10)
Terms of church officers	one year	two years
Number of terms permitted for officers	<i>two consecutive terms, two years total</i>	two consecutive terms but four years total, except for treasurer whose number of terms is unlimited
Terms of board and committee members	three years for boards, one year for audit and nominating committees, <i>but terms for members of the cemetery committee, stewardship committee, and worship committee are not specified</i>	up to four years for council committees and three years for congregation committees, except one year for nominating committee
Number of terms permitted for board and committee members	two consecutive terms for members of boards but members of auditing, nominating, and cemetery committees aren't limited	up to four years total for council committees, one term only for nominating committee, and unlimited number of terms for audit and cemetery committees
Quorum required at annual meeting	35 voting members	10 percent of total voting members
Call committee	president, 2 trustees, 2 deacons, and 3 members of the congregation at large (8 people)	president, vice president, 1 each from the 5 permanent committees, and 2 members of the congregation at large (9 people)

Function Shifts

from old to new constitution

Old Functions

Board of Deacons: (reports to congregation as a whole)

1. Assists the pastor in spiritual care of the congregation.
2. Visits the "negligent and those with no church home."
3. Provides ushers for the Sunday service.

Board of Trustees: (reports to congregation as a whole, but decisions subject to Church Council approval)

1. Has operational oversight of church finances and property.
2. Establishes positions and salary scales of all employees, subject to Council approval.
3. Elect a financial secretary to record offerings.

Parish Board—or, as called in the Bylaws, the Board of Education: (reports to congregation as a whole but policies subject to church council approval)

1. Supervises the church's educational work
2. Appoints teachers and officers of the church's schools
3. Offers advice on youth ministry

Church Council: (reports to congregation as a whole)

1. Acts as a conference between officers and boards
2. Makes recommendations to the congregation

Present Committees:

Auditing Committee A committee of the congregation, not the Council, charged with auditing the church's books. This committee and function would remain unchanged.

Nominating Committee A committee of the congregation, not the Council, charged with finding qualified persons to serve as officers and members of boards and committees. Under the new organizational structure, the Nominating Committee would remain unchanged so far as finding qualified persons to serve as officers and members of congregation committees, but there would be no more boards independent of the Council. The Staff and Volunteer Committee would find members to fill *permanent committees of the Council*, two from each committee to be elected by their committee to serve on the Church Council, and any other positions, other than pastor, that the church may require for smooth operations.

Cemetery Committee A committee of the congregation, not the Council, charged with managing the congregation's cemetery property. Their policies are subject to a 2/3 vote of approval by the Council. This committee and its functions wouldn't change under the proposed new constitution.

Stewardship Committee A committee of the Church Council (not currently appointed), charged with bringing each member to a position of "liberal and regular" support of the congregation through proper use of time, talent, and

Function to be Handled in Future by:

(all previous boards become committees of the Council)

Christian Education Committee.
Service Corps and Outreach Committee.
Service Corps and Outreach Committee.

Facilities and Finance Committee.
Positions recommended by Staff and Volunteer Development Committee, salaries recommended by Facilities and Finance Committee.
Council may appoint two people to record.

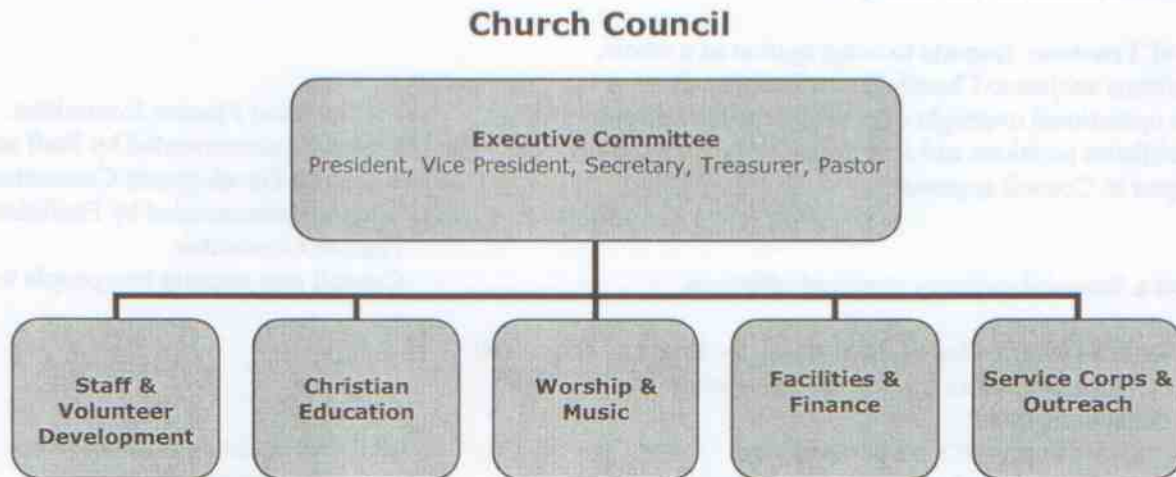
Christian Education Committee.
Christian Education Committee.
Christian Education Committee.

Rather than be a conference of officers and boards, the boards are eliminated as entities separate from the Council and are made committees of the Council.

(unchanged)

treasure. The financial part of this function would be performed by the Facilities and Finance Committee, the time and talent portion to be performed by the Staff and Volunteer Committee.

Worship Committee A stand-alone committee (not elected or appointed), charged with regular review of the church's music, guidance in selection of the music, and advising on "whatever steps would contribute to a more meaningful worship life for our church." These functions are not currently handled by a committee but rather by the Pastor, the Music Director, and the Organist/Pianist only. In the new structure, somewhere between two and nine additional members would be recruited to serve up to a maximum of four years each.



Job Descriptions for Workgroup/Committees. The new committees of the Church Council would have duties and areas for continuing improvement in addition to those formerly handled by the church's current boards and committees. The beginning tasks are described next.

- **Staff & Volunteer Development.** The purpose of this workgroup is to devise and maintain a congregational structure and a complement of staff and volunteers able to accomplish the congregation's vision and mission. It will prepare and maintain an organizational handbook for Bethany Lutheran, which spells out the organizational structure and process for getting things done. The handbook should include the vision and mission of the congregation and provide job descriptions for staff, officers, congregation council, committees, and other volunteer jobs. This team must integrate the work of each to make it easier for everyone to carry out the work and ministry of Bethany Lutheran, and to do it in a way that is effective, efficient, and without duplication. Projects include:
 - Research to determine the various jobs.
 - Interview, where necessary, those with specific jobs.
 - Develop job descriptions.
 - Modify or restructure the church's organization as necessary, including the updating of the congregation's Articles of Incorporation, Constitution, and Bylaws to reflect new structure, once it is finalized.
 - Prepare handbook and distribute.
 - Make the congregation's vision and mission well known to all, reporting to the congregation on progress toward them.

- **Christian Education.** The mission of this workgroup is to provide educational opportunities which broaden the understanding of the teachings of Jesus Christ and the works of Martin Luther among Bethany Lutheran parishioners. As with worship, educational opportunities must serve the needs of a variety of demographic groups including younger people, older worshippers, and families. Projects include:
 - Expand parish board to represent all age categories.
 - Strengthen Christian education programming for youth.

