

REFORMATION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

15750 Magnolia Street
Westminster, California 92683

BY-LAWS

Amended March 25, 2012

ARTICLE 1 – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 - General Procedure

All actions regarding membership, either of admission or dismissal, shall be by vote of the Church upon recommendation of the Council of Elders. At any of the regular meetings for worship, the Church may, without special notice, act upon the reception of members, or upon transfer of members to other churches. Reception of members may, without special notice, be acted on by groups, within the Church, more limited than the full membership of the Church, using procedures specifically authorized by vote of the Church at a regular business meeting upon recommendation of the Council of Elders.

Section 2 - Admission by Baptism

We believe that God grants faith when and where He wills. If it pleases the Creator of this World to create faith in a child - He will do it. (Necessary since we have a category for Baptized Member in Constitution).

Section 3 - Admission by Letter

Members from other churches holding like faith (Lutheran or other "Reformation" believing churches) may be received as members with us upon presentation of letters of transfer from such churches, and upon acceptance of the faith, aims and ideals of this Church as expressed in the Affirmation of Faith and the Church Covenant. If such credentials be of older date than six months prior to their presentation, the applicant may be required to furnish additional information.

Section 4 - Admission by Confession or Conversion Experience or Restoration

All applicants for membership other than by baptism or by letter of transfer, that is by Christian Confession, or by conversion, shall be received into the Church in the same way as those by baptism, except the sacrament shall not be administered if the applicant has already been baptized in the name of the Triune God.

Section 5 - Instruction to New Members

All persons uniting with this Church in any of the ways set forth in Section 2 through 4 above shall previously, by the Council of Elders, be made acquainted with the Church Covenant and the Affirmation of Faith. New members shall pledge themselves to fulfill their stewardship obligations as to worship, service, and giving, when they make public profession of faith and join the Church.

Section 6 - Dismissal of Members

a. Members in good standing who have fulfilled their obligation to the Church, or satisfactorily arranged the same with the Elders, shall upon request be granted a letter or transfer to unite with such (Lutheran) Church as they may designate. Such letter of transfer shall be sent to the Pastor or the Clerk of the Church the member intends to join and shall be valid only for six months, but may be renewed after that time by vote of the Church upon recommendation of the Council of Elders if satisfactory reasons be given for the non-use. These limitations of time shall be included in the letter of transfer. Members who shall unite with another church without such letter shall be dropped from the Church roll.

Members in good standing who have fulfilled their obligations to the Church, or satisfactorily arranged the same with the Elders, and who desire to unite with a church of another denomination, shall receive a certificate of character and be dismissed.

b. Members who move from this community shall supply the Church with their new address and apply for a letter of dismissing within one year provided there be a church of the same faith and order in the place to which they move. If necessary, it shall be the duty of the Council of Elders to remind such member of their duties in this respect. In case there is no such church in the place, or there are circumstances which render it inadvisable to change membership, the member shall report to the Church as often as once a year at least, in person or by letter and by contribution. All nonresident members who do not so report shall be subject to dismissal by the Church after appropriate efforts have been made to contact the member and remind them of their duties.

ARTICLE II - CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Section 1 - General Statement

a. Officers. The Officers of the Church shall be a Council of Elders and the Deacons. Officers shall be called to office by vote of the membership of the Church as provided for in Article II, Section 2 and Section 3 of these Bylaws. All officers of the Church shall be members of the Church in good and regular standing. Except as provided in paragraphs (b) and (c) below, the Council of Elders and the Deacons are the only bodies and positions created by these Bylaws.

b. Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary. The Church, upon nomination by the Council of Elders, shall elect at the Annual Meeting members to the positions of Church Clerk, Treasurer and Financial Secretary. The functions of Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall not be performed by one member. The Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be bonded by the Church in a suitable amount. The Elders shall provide a written description of duties to the Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary.

c. Committees and Appointees. The Council of Elders has the authority to create committees and positions to which it may delegate any specified aspect of its responsibility. The Council of Elders has the authority to dissolve any committee or position which it created. The Council of Elders also has the authority to appoint Elders, Deacons or other members of the Church to serve as members of such committees and to act as its agents in such positions. The Deacons may nominate candidates for any committee or position with appointment by the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders may delegate to the Deacons the authority to appoint Deacons or other members of the Church to serve as members of such committees and as agents of the Council of Elders in such positions. Every committee shall have a chairperson, responsible for the overall operation of the committee, who shall be appointed by the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders may delegate the responsibility for selecting the chairperson to the Deacons or to the committee. (For example, such committees and position may include a Missions Committee and a Christian Education Committee, among others.)

Section 2 - Vocational Pastors and Ministers

a. Definition. Vocational Pastors are the ordained Elders of the Church, who in response to God's call, have devoted their vocational lives to the ministry of Word and Sacraments in the service of the church of Christ. Vocational Ministers are the non-ordained ministers of the Church who, in response to God's call, serve the church of Christ as their primary vocation. Both Vocational Pastors and Vocational Ministers are supported financially by the Church in return for their vocational labors.

b. Duties. In addition to the duties of their office as described in Sections 4 and 5 below, Vocational Pastors and Ministers shall perform the duties determined by the Council of Elders and approved by the Congregation. The duties shall be in writing at the time of the call to service, and substantial changes shall be approved by the Church. The Church's call of a Vocational Pastor is a call to the Eldership of the Church. Therefore, Vocational Pastors shall be members of the Council of Elders and have all the Biblical qualifications of an Elder. Vocational Ministers are not necessarily called to the Eldership, but as assisting partners in the ministry. Therefore, Vocational Ministers shall be Deacons. Vocational Ministers may, when appropriate, be called by the Church to the Council of Elders from the Deacons.

c. Vocational Call by the Church. The members shall call Vocational Pastors and Ministers (1) by ballot upon recommendation of the Council of Elders and (2) by at least a two-thirds majority of those members voting at the meeting with at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the Church present. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on the next two successive Sundays preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail to the resident membership at least one week before the meeting. Vocational Pastors and Ministers shall stand for reaffirmation not later than the third Annual Meeting following their call or previous reaffirmation. Reaffirmation of a Vocational

Pastor or Minister shall be by two-thirds vote of those members present and voting at the meeting.

d. Termination of Vocational Call by the Church.

1. By Resignation. The question of terminating the vocational call of a Vocational Pastor or Minister shall be considered at any time by the Church upon the presentation of the Pastor's or Minister's resignation.

2. Grievance. Where a grievance exists against a Pastor or Minister, either due to his preaching or teaching contrary to the beliefs of the Church as set forth in Article II of its Constitution or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an Elder or Deacon, such grievance may be brought before the Council of Elders by any two members in good standing, following the procedure prescribed in Article V of these Bylaws. If the Council, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the vocational call of the Pastor or Minister may be terminated at any business meeting upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders when supported by closed ballot of a majority of those members of the Church present and voting with at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the Church present at such meeting. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on two successive Sundays next preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail to the resident membership at least one week before the meeting.

3. Lack of Reaffirmation. If a Vocational Pastor or Minister fails to be reaffirmed to the office of Elder or Deacon as provided in paragraph (c) above, a special business meeting shall be called to consider the question of terminating the vocational call with that Pastor or Minister. The vocational call shall be terminated only if supported by closed ballot of a majority of those members of the Church present and voting with at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the Church present. Public notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given on two successive Sundays next preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail to the membership at least one week before the meeting. Removal from office and termination of the vocational call by this means shall not be considered disciplinary action.

e. Installation and Ordination. In the matter of installing and ordaining any person to the Gospel Ministry, the Church shall follow, as far as possible, the procedure recommended by the tradition of the Lutheran Church. Reformation Evangelical Lutheran Church disallows any ordination to occur whereby a bishop or any other agent of the church has received the "Historic Episcopate" from another bishop of agent of the church.

Section 3 - Lay Officers

a. Definition. Lay officers are the non-Vocational Elders and Deacons of the Church.

b. Duties. Lay Elders and Deacons shall have the duties of their offices as described in Sections 4 and 5 below.

c. Calling. The Council of Elders shall recognize, interview, and investigate candidates for Lay Elder and Deacon. The Council shall provide for individual members of the Church either to nominate candidates or to present themselves to the Council as candidates for office and for the Council's further investigation. In no instances shall any individual be considered a nominee for the office without the nominee's consent. In those cases where the Council of Elders concludes that a nominee is not qualified for office they shall so inform the nominee stating the reasons for this conclusion.

The Council of Elders shall present a ballot of candidates for calling or reaffirmation as Elders or Deacons to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting. The Council of Elders may also nominate candidates for election to office at any quarterly or special meeting, provided that the written ballot of nominees is available for review in the church office at least ten days in advance of the meeting and is announced publicly to the Church by mail to its members or in the Sunday morning worship at least ten days in advance of the meeting.

Lay Elders and Deacons shall be called by the Church for a normal term of three years. They shall stand for reaffirmation not later than the third annual meeting of the Church following their call or previous reaffirmation. Calling or reaffirmation of a lay Elder or Deacon shall be by two-thirds vote of those members present and voting at the meeting. Lay Elders and Deacons shall serve no more than two consecutive terms. Following two consecutive terms the Elder or Deacon will not serve actively in office for a period of one year. Following this period they are again eligible for nomination as Elder or Deacon. For purposes of this provision a term during which an Elder or Deacon serves not more than one year shall not be considered a term in office.

d. Removal. An officer may be removed from office through the following procedures.

1. Resignation. An officer may resign his office at any time if he finds he is no longer able to discharge the duties of the office.

2. Grievance. Where a grievance exists against an officer of the Church either due to the adherence to and propagation of beliefs contrary to the beliefs of the Church as set forth in Article II, Sections 1 and 2 of its Constitution or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an Elder or Deacon, such grievance may be brought before the Council of Elders by any two members in good standing, following the procedures prescribed in Article V of the Bylaws of this Church. If the Council, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the

officer may be removed from office upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders when supported by closed ballot of a majority of those members of the Church present and voting at any annual, quarterly, or special meeting with at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the Church present at such meeting. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on two successive Sundays next preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail to the resident membership at least one week before the meeting.

3. Lack of Reaffirmation. If a Lay Elder or Deacon stands for reaffirmation and fails to be reaffirmed, the Elder or Deacon shall be removed from office. Removal from office by this means shall not be considered disciplinary action.

Section 4 - Council of Elders

a. Composition, Term, and Calling. The Council of Elders shall be composed of both Lay Elders and Vocational Elders. The Council of Elders shall be composed of at least seven members, with the number of Elders at any time determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men in the Church. There shall be at least twice as many Lay Elders as Vocational Elders. Each Elder shall be called by the membership of the Church to a term of three years. That call and any reaffirmation(s) shall be conducted as provided in Article II, Sections 2 and 3 of these Bylaws.

b. Qualifications. Elders and nominees for Elder shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible. Relevant texts include I Timothy 3: 1-7, Titus 1:6-9 and I Peter 5:1-4. Elders are also required to be in agreement with the Reformation Church Elder Affirmation of Faith. The Reformation Church Elder Affirmation of Faith shall only be amended by a recommendation of the Council of Elders to the Church, following the same procedure to amend the Bylaws.

c. Responsibilities. The fundamental responsibility of the Elders is to devote themselves to prayer and the Word. The Elders are responsible for governing the Church, teaching the Word and tending the flock of God in this Church.

The responsibilities of the Elders shall include: examining prospective members and acquainting them with the Affirmation of Faith and Church Covenant, overseeing the process of Church discipline, examining prospective candidates for office, scheduling and providing a moderator for business meetings, providing for reporting and recording of official Church business, overseeing the work of the Deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conducting worship services, administering the Sacraments of the Gospel, equipping the membership of the Church for the work of the ministry, teaching the whole counsel of God both formally and informally, correcting error, overseeing, coordinating and promoting the ministries of the Church, and mobilizing the Church for evangelism and world mission.

d. Organization. The Council of Elders shall organize itself however it

determines to be best to achieve the mission of the Church. The Elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. The Elders must meet at least once per month. Meeting of the Elders may be held at any location and may be conducted by means of electronic communication through which the Elders may simultaneously hear each other. Unless the Council provides otherwise, meetings of the Council may be held immediately upon notice. A quorum for meetings of the Elders is defined as at least one-half of the Lay Elders plus at least one-half of the Vocational Elders, except for matters on which only Lay Elders are entitled to vote in which case a majority of the Lay Elders shall constitute a quorum. The Council shall annually select its Chairman and Vice-Chairman from among its Lay Elders.

Section 5 - Deacons

a. Composition, Term, and Calling. The Deacons shall be both Vocational Ministers and Lay Deacons. The number of Deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men and women in the Church. Each Deacon shall be called by the membership of the Church to a normal term of three years. The call and any reaffirmation shall be conducted as provided in Article II, Sections 2 and 3 of these Bylaws.

b. Qualifications. Deacons and nominees for Deacon shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible. Relevant texts include I Timothy 3:8-12.

c. Responsibilities. The Deacons shall advise and be ready to assist the Elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the Church, and the care for the members of the Congregation. Their responsibilities may include:

1. Administering a fund to assist the poor and needy and otherwise providing aid in times of crises or distress;
2. The greeting and welcoming ministries of the Church;
3. Assisting in administering the Sacraments of the Gospel;
4. Assisting at fellowship gatherings of the Church;
5. Caring for and maintaining the Church properties;
6. Administering the business affairs of the Church that pertain to its material assets.

d. Organization. The Deacons shall organize themselves however they determine to be best to achieve the mission of the Church. The Elders or the Deacons may designate any specific Deacon or group of Deacons to specialize in some particular Deaconal function. Meeting of the Deacons, or subcommittees thereof, shall be held as needed to best fulfill the responsibilities

of the Deacons.

ARTICLE III - CHURCH EMPLOYEES

In addition to Vocational Pastors and Ministers, the Church may employ additional personnel. The moneys for such personnel must be approved by the Congregation at a properly called business meeting. The Council of Elders shall be responsible for determining the duties of and hiring such personnel.

ARTICLE IV - CHURCH FINANCES

Section 1 - In General

No method of raising funds shall be entertained which is in conflict with the Scriptural ideals of the Church.

With regard to gifts the principle rule will be the good of the donor will exceed the good of the Church and that all gifts with a specified intent will be honored. Furthermore, all gifts that are designated to a specified institution other than that of the Church will be passed through to the designated institution.

Section 2 - Contributions

It is understood that membership in this Church involves financial obligations to support the Church and its causes with regular and joyful giving. Each member will be encouraged to give back to God what he has, out of His absolute grace, given to us.

Special offerings may be sought by the Church, or by any of its organizations, with the approval of the Council of Elders. This shall not preclude individuals from making special offerings or designated gifts at any time as the Spirit of God may move them.

In addition, the Church will only pass donations through to a Christian organization, or one that upholds the same beliefs as do our Constitution and Affirmation of Faith. The Council of Elders will have discretion if gifts are passed through this Congregation. If donations/gifts are not passed through this Congregation they will be returned with a letter of explanation.

Section 3 - Financial Planning

The financial planning of the Church shall be carried out through the medium of annual budgets for carrying out of the various programs of its work. Annual budgets shall be adopted by the Church upon recommendation of the Council of Elders, or, if authorized by the Council, the Deacons or other committee. Matters involving staff compensation shall be the responsibility of the lay members of the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders may delegate this responsibility provided such delegation is to lay Deacons or other lay members of the Church.

Section 4 - Accounts

Financial receipts from all sources shall be accounted for by the Financial Secretary

according to the purposes for which contributions are designated. The Treasurer of the Church shall disburse these funds promptly according to the financial program of the Church as detailed in the budgets or other authorized designations. All moneys for missions shall be remitted in accordance with the Mission Budget of the Church or otherwise designated, preferably each month and no less than each quarter.

Section 5 - Indebtedness

No note or contract exceeding five percent (5%) of the total annual budget whereby the credit of the Church is pledged shall be made except by recommendation of the Council of Elders and approved by the Church.

Section 6 - Authority to Bind the Church

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council of Elders are the only officers who have authority, in accordance with these Bylaws, the Church Constitution, and any applicable laws, to execute legal documents relating to real estate, church property, and church finances.

ARTICLE V - MEETINGS

Section 1 - For Worship

Public services shall be held on the Lord's Day. The Lord's Supper shall be administered on the first and third Sunday of each month or at such other times as the Council of Elders may determine. Other services may be appointed as the advancement of the work of the Church may require.

Section 2 - For Business

a. The Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting shall be held some time during the last month of the fiscal year of the Church for the purpose of calling and reaffirming the officers, reviewing proposed budgets and other business. Officers called at the Annual Meeting shall assume their duties at the beginning of the new fiscal year.

b. Special Meetings. The Council of Elders, or any ten members in good standing, may call for a special meeting. Notice of the meeting shall be given from the pulpit or by other notification, the particular object of such meeting being clearly stated in the notice. In the calling of special meetings for purposes where an interval after advance notice is required by provision in these Bylaws, or according to law, such provisions shall be observed. Notice shall be given at least one week in advance for meetings on specially important matters not otherwise provided for.

c. Quorum. Any number of members shall constitute a quorum at any ordinary meeting of the Church. At meetings dealing with particular matters stipulated in the Bylaws, the quorums prescribed shall apply.

d. Rules Governing Business Meetings. Robert's Rules of Order shall be recognized as the general pattern for the conduct of the business meetings of the Church. Seeking the Lord's wisdom and blessing through thankful prayer shall be a part of every meeting.

e. Notice Provisions. Unless specifically defined in other sections of these Bylaws or the Constitution, "resident membership" means those members who reside within seventy-five (75) miles driving distance from the Church building, "notice ... in writing" means a written announcement sent by regular U.S. Mail, and "notice ... from the pulpit" means an oral announcement at each of the Sunday morning services.

ARTICLE VI - ORGANIZATION OF MEMBERS FOR MINISTRY

Members of this Church shall have the liberty to participate in and organize themselves for ministry, provided that such participation and organization does not conflict with Article II of the Constitution. Any such organization may seek Church sanction from the Council of Elders as any official ministry of Reformation Evangelical Lutheran Church. Such sanction shall be granted provided that (1) the object, purpose, belief and conduct of the organization and its members is consistent with Article II of the Constitution, and (2) the primary officers of the organization are members of the Church, or other regular attendees of the Church who have been approved under guidelines established by the Council of Elders. Sanction by the Council of Elders does not necessarily imply support of the organization by the Church with personnel, finances, or facilities. Such support may be requested as provided by the leadership of the Church.

ARTICLE VII - DISCIPLINE

The discipline of members shall be a responsibility of the Council of Elders under such rules and procedures as the Elders may from time to time establish on the basis of Scripture. All such proceedings shall be guided by a spirit of prayer mingling Christian kindness, forbearance, and holy firmness under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE VIII - CHURCH COOPERATION

We believe that local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a regional or district, synod or conference, exists and functions by the will of the churches. Cooperation in a synod or conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. [Acts 15:36, 41; 16:5; I Corinthians 16:1; Galatians 1:1-3; Revelation 1:4,10, 11]

This Church is affiliated with the Pacifica Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and may likewise cooperate with interdenominational fellowships on a voluntary independent basis.

ARTICLE IX - AMENDMENTS

General. Amendments to these Bylaws may be introduced through written motion at any quarterly meeting, but shall not be acted on until the following quarterly or Annual Meeting, at which time an affirmative vote of the majority of the membership of the Church, or a two-thirds majority of those members present at the meeting and voting shall be required for acceptance; provided, however, that at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the Church be present at such meeting, and that notice of the proposed change or amendment be given from the pulpit on at least two Sundays and in writing to the resident membership in the interim period between the meetings.