

ST. JAMES EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
BY-LAWS

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Bylaws

The following are the bylaws for St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church of Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin.

Article I: Meetings of the Congregation

Section 1: Regular Meetings

Quarterly meetings of the voting membership shall be held in January, April, July, and October, as needed, to execute its work. The July meeting shall be held as an election meeting and the October meeting for consideration and acceptance of the budget for the following calendar year, January 1 through December 31.

Section 2: Special Meetings

Special meetings of the congregation may be called by the Planning Council, or the Pastor or upon written request of three voting members, to the Planning Council or Pastor.

Section 3: Announcement of Meetings

1. All Regular meetings shall be publicly announced on at least two Sundays prior to the time of the meeting.
2. Special meetings shall be announced in either of the following ways.
 - a. In public services on at least two Sundays prior to the meeting, or
 - b. In one regular church service prior to the meeting and in either the church bulletin, written notice by mail, or electronic mail, provided such notice is sent to ALL communicant members at least three days prior to the meeting. The purpose of such meetings shall be stated in the announcement.

Section 4: Quorum

The voting members present at a publicly announced meeting of the congregation shall constitute a quorum. Only voting members present at the meeting may vote. These meetings shall be open to the congregation, but not to the general public, except by invitation.

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Section 5: Order of Business - Regular Meeting

All regular meetings of the congregation shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order, provided that they do not conflict with Christian practice or with any article of the Constitution or the bylaws. The order of business shall be as follows:

1. Devotion
2. Reading and approval of minutes of the previous regular and any other intervening special meetings.
3. Reception and dismissal of members.
4. Signing of the constitution by all male communicants, 18 years of age or older.
5. Reports of officers and committees.
6. Unfinished Business.
7. Recommendations of the Planning Council and new business.
8. Elections
9. Adjournment with Prayer.

Section 6: Voting Rights and Voting Eligibility

Only voting members present at the meeting, shall have the right to vote. Voting membership shall be restricted to male communicant members who have reached the age of 18 years.

Section 7: Acceptance of Constitution and Bylaws

Voting members shall sign, thereby indicating their acceptance, the official copy of the constitution and bylaws at the meeting of the congregation in which they were received or as soon as possible thereafter.

Section 8: Democratic Policy

The majority rules in all matters not already decided by the Word of God. In case of a tie, the chairman shall cast the deciding vote. If a secret ballot is held, the chairman shall cast a ballot and the secretary will hold it to use in case of a tie.

Section 9: Christian Conduct

No one shall bring before the congregation a complaint against any member or called worker, without first admonishing that person in a Christian manner according to Matthew 18:15 – 18.

Article II: Election of the Planning Council

Section 1: Planning Council Executive Officers and Team Chairman

The Planning Council shall be composed of eight members.

1. Executive Officers
 - a. Chairman
 - b. Secretary
 - c. Treasurer
2. Team Chairman

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- a. Education
- b. Member Ministry
- c. Evangelism
- d. Properties
- e. Worship

Section 2: Term of Office

The term of office for each Planning Council officer or team chairman, shall be three years. No Planning Council member shall serve more than two consecutive full terms (excludes partial terms). He shall again be eligible for election to the Planning Council one year after the expiration of his second full term of office.

Section 3: Election Pattern of Elected Offices

The term of two to three Planning Council members (one of which will be an executive officer) shall expire each year. Such expired terms shall be filled at the July meeting of the Voters' Assembly. The Planning Council positions shall be filled as follows:

1 st Year	2 nd Year	3 rd Year
Secretary	Chairman	Treasurer
Member Ministry	Evangelism	Education
Worship	Properties	

Section 4: Nominating Procedures

The nominating committee shall select from the voting membership a slate of willing candidates for the vacancies and shall publish the names on at least two consecutive Sundays prior to the meeting in which the elections are to be held.

Section 5: Election Procedures

The Voters' Assembly at the July meeting, shall hear the recommendations of the Nominating Committee, add to the list of candidates if it so desires, and proceed to elect by voice or written ballot. A majority of votes cast shall be necessary for election.

Section 6: Newly Elected Members in Planning Council Meetings

The newly elected Planning Council members shall have the privilege, and are encouraged to attend, as non-voting members, all Planning Council Meetings which take place between the time of their election and installation.

Section 7: Installation of Newly Elected Planning Council Members

Installation of the newly elected Planning Council members shall take place at a September church service following the July election. New Planning Council members shall assume their duties of office as of October 1st.

Article III: The Planning Council

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The Planning Council shall consist of the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and the five team leaders of the Administration teams. They will all hold membership on the Planning Council until their term of office expires.

Section 1: Responsibilities

The members of the Planning Council shall adorn their office with an honest way of life and be a good example to the congregation (1 Timothy 3:8-12). They shall aid the Pastor(s) in the spiritual affairs of the Church. They shall be accountable for good order in the services. They shall particularly care, in love, for their fellow members who have special needs (Galatians 6:9-10). The members of the Planning Council shall consult together concerning the total spiritual and physical well being of the congregation giving due attention also to the work of the Lord in the church-at-large. The Planning Council shall implement assignments as directed by the Voters' Assembly. It shall recommend to the Voters' Assembly the annual budget of the congregation.

The Planning Council, serving as the (corporate) trustees, shall control the corporate property of the congregation according to the direction given to it by the Voters' Assembly. The Planning Council is hereby empowered to borrow money, pledge the assets of the congregation, sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of real and personal property of the congregation, all at the direction of the Voters' Assembly. The Planning Council shall also have the right to acquire property by purchase, trade, gift, or bequeathed by will as directed by the Voters' Assembly. The Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer are authorized to sign all deeds, mortgages, notes, leases and/or all legal documents directed to be executed by the congregation. Two of the three men holding the office of Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer are necessary to sign any legal documents as described above.

Section 2: Expenditures

The Planning Council is authorized to make any unbudgeted expenditure up to \$500.00 in any one month. The congregation must first approve any unbudgeted expenditure over \$500.00. However if, in the opinion of the Planning Council, an emergency arises requiring prompt action, the Planning Council may authorize expenditure greater than \$500.00. In all such cases, the congregation shall be fully informed at the next Voters' Assembly.

Section 3: Meetings

The Planning Council shall meet regularly, once each month. The Chairman or the Pastor(s) may call special meetings. The Planning Council shall not convene to transact business without the knowledge of the Pastor(s). A majority of the members of the Planning Council shall constitute a quorum.

Article IV: Executive Officers/Duties

Section 1: Executive Officers

The Executive Officers of the congregation shall be the Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer and shall be subject to the following criteria:.

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1. Executive Officers may simultaneously be members of boards and committees.
2. Executive Officers are authorized to sign all deeds, mortgages, notes, leases, and/or all legal documents directed to be executed by the congregation.
3. The Executive Officers shall be bonded. The amount of the fidelity bond shall be fixed by Planning Council and premium paid by the congregation.
4. The Executive Officers are authorized to sign all church checks and conduct any or all financial transactions on behalf of the congregation.
5. The Executive Officers shall have access to the bank safety deposit box.

Section 2: Duties of Officers

CONGREGATIONAL CHAIRMAN

Purpose:

The congregation's Chairman is to provide administrative leadership and assist the congregation in carrying out its purpose and objectives.

Responsibilities:

1. Use available opportunities to grow in faith and knowledge in Christ through continual study of God's Word. Be diligent in keeping the congregation focused on its mission statement and vision.
2. Have general supervision of the affairs of the congregation, subject to regulations of the Planning Council
3. Conduct all affairs of the congregation according to established good order.
4. Preside as chairman of all Planning Council and business sessions of the congregation. Prepare, in consultation with the executive committee and Pastor, the written agenda for the Planning Council and the Voters' Assembly.
5. Be concerned with, and actively pursue, ways and means to promote and carryout good communication between the congregation and administration of the congregation.
6. Serve as ex-officio member of all boards and committees.
7. Make an annual report to the congregation.
8. Assume such other duties as the congregation may direct.
9. Appoint the Congregation's WELS Representative.
10. Appoint the Nominating Committee.
11. Appoint the Thrivent Representative.

SECRETARY

Purpose:

The Secretary shall accurately record the proceedings of all Planning Council and congregational meetings.

Responsibilities:

1. Use available opportunities to grow in faith and knowledge in Christ through continual study of God's Word.
2. Accurately record all transactions of the Voters' Assembly and Planning Council. Distribute the copies of said transactions to members of the Planning Council and Voters' for approval at next respective meeting.
3. Be responsible for legal records of the congregation.

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4. Prepare all documents and important church papers and minutes.
5. Arrange for new voting members to sign the constitution at a voter meeting.
6. Assist in the orderly conduct of all business affairs of the congregation according to established good order.
7. Assume such other duties as the congregation may direct.
8. Will conduct all church meetings in the absence of the Chairman.

TREASURER

Purpose:

The Treasurer is responsible for all financial disbursements and accurate accounting of all financial transactions and funds.

Responsibilities:

1. Use available opportunities to grow in faith and knowledge in Christ through continual study of God's Word.
2. Make disbursements by check on the authority of the Voters' Assembly.
 - a. No further authority is needed for items of approved budget.
 - b. No authority is needed for "in" and "out" accounts. (Monies received other than unified budget where the congregation acts as an intermediary agency only).
3. Provide monthly financial reports to the Planning Council and the congregation on the church's financial condition. These reports shall be in written form.
4. Assist in the preparation of the congregations' annual budget.
5. Furnish, when requested, all necessary records for the audit committee.
6. Prepare an annual report in writing for the Planning Council and congregation. This report is to be included in the printed annual report that is given to all communicant members of the congregation.
7. Assume such other duties as the congregation may direct.

ARTICLE V: Planning Council Positions and Duties

Section 1: Planning Council Expectations

Each gentleman holding a Planning Council position is encouraged to participate in the following:

1. Use available opportunities to grow in faith and knowledge in Christ through continual study of God's Word.
2. Create a team to carry out the duties of the position and meet regularly with the men and women comprising the team.

Each gentleman holding a Planning Council position is expected to complete the following yearly tasks:

1. Prepare an annual program of goals and budgets for adoption by the Planning Council and the voters.
2. Prepare an annual report, in writing, for the Planning Council and congregation which will be included in the printed annual report that is given to all communicant members.

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Section 2: Listing and Duties of the Planning Council Positions

The administrative Teams of the congregation shall be Education, Evangelism, Properties, Member Ministry, and Worship.

Education

The Education position, together with the Pastor, is responsible for and active in the development and promotion of spiritual education opportunities within the congregation. The Education position is responsible for the areas of Pre-school and Kindergarten, Sunday School, Adult Education, Vacation Bible School (VBS), Small Group and Lay-Lead Bible Study, Confirmation, teen and/or young adults activities, and the Library.

Responsibilities:

1. Promotes the cause of continuing youth and adult Bible study through the newsletter, Sunday bulletin, sermons, and any other congregational communication venue.
2. Arranges for adult Bible studies directed at the general congregational population.
3. Arranges for Bible studies directed at specific groups of people within the congregation.
4. Promotes personal Bible studies among members.
5. Provides for proper training of all Bible study lay-leaders and teachers.
6. Develops programs for spiritual growth opportunities of service for post confirmation youth to young adults.
7. Annually plans the Bible class curriculum with the Pastor.
8. Continues to oversee the development and maintenance of the church library.
9. Works with the property committee in providing adequate facilities and equipment for proper and effective Bible study instruction of God's Word.
10. Other duties as assigned by Planning Council and/or voters.

EVANGELISM

The Evangelism position, together with the Pastor, is responsible for the development and maintenance of the evangelism cause of the congregation. The Evangelism position is responsible for outreach children's holiday programs, Visitor Mailings, New Resident Searches, Lutheran Women's Mission Society (LWMS), and the Jesus Cares Program.

Responsibilities:

1. Maintains an active and up-to-date prospect list.
2. Reviews annually the congregation's publicity and advertising program for the various media available.
3. Obtains a continuing list of area newcomers who shall be contacted by mail or personally.
4. Develops, with the Pastor, a program of lay evangelism training for both assigned evangelism calls and friendship evangelism.
5. Is conscious of the atmosphere of friendliness in the congregation towards members and visitors and suggest ways and means of improvement.
6. Assures all visitors to the church receive a written note of welcome.
7. Plans for the reception, orientation, and integration of new members into the congregation.

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8. Assists the various organizations of the congregation on maintaining an evangelism emphasis.
9. Continues and/or revises the current community outreach for children and adults. Start new programs as community needs arise and resources become available.
10. Other duties as assigned by Planning Council and voters.

PROPERTIES

The Properties position, together with the Pastor, is responsible for all the physical assets of the congregation. The Properties position is responsible for janitors, property insurance review, exterior maintenance, and interior maintenance.

Responsibilities:

1. Keeps all church property insured against loss. Reviews annually the congregation's insurance program and makes needed recommendations to the Planning Council.
2. Inspects annually (or as required) the congregation's property and equipment, and makes recommendations as needed.
3. Arranges for congregational workdays as needed to care for the congregation's property and equipment.
4. Arranges for custodial care to clean the facilities weekly.
5. Arranges for the custodial care of the exterior grounds of the congregation's properties (lawn mowing, snow removal, etc...).
6. Hires custodial employees, when necessary, at compensation rates determined by the Planning Council and Voters' Assembly. Supervises the custodial work.
7. Establishes and maintains a visual inventory of the congregation's property and equipment and update the inventory annually.
8. Uses the annual budgeted amount for the maintenance of the congregation's facilities and equipment. Items which exceed this amount will need Planning Council and voter approval.
9. Other duties as assigned by Planning Council and/or voters.

MEMBER MINISTRY

The Member Ministry position, together with the Pastor, is responsible for the nurturing of the St. James family through the promotion of opportunities in the support and guidance of its family. The Member Ministry position is responsible for fellowship, Cradle Roll, new member assimilation, the prayer tree, sunshine cards, rides to church, and funeral meals.

Responsibilities:

1. Implements and oversees the support/guidance groups as determined by Planning Council as current needs indicate within the church in order to provide needed support and guidance to members of the congregation.
2. Assist Pastor, Elders, and/or Deacon/Deaconess, when needed, to help carry out church discipline according to Matthew 18 on those members who have erred.
3. Is mindful of the special needs of members of the congregation, satisfying these needs through such assistance as domestic services, shut-in visits, rides to church, meals on wheels, or any other activity that meets the demands of these needs.

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4. Initiates programs for the development of scripturally good stewardship attitudes in the members of the congregation in regard to Time, Talents, and Treasures.
5. Monitors the level of fellowship, member awareness, expectations, and communication within the congregation, and responds to the needs for strengthening these areas.
6. Coordinates, arranges, and/or provides other assistance for regular congregational fellowship opportunities such as refreshments, Easter Breakfast, Advent meals or any other event that brings the congregation together in a Christian atmosphere.
7. Gathers, monitors, and makes use of a membership time and talent file.
8. Serves as the male member of one of the Shepherding Groups, and serves in this capacity as the lead Elder/Deacon.
9. Encourages use of the any organization (i.e. Christian Women's Organization, Serving Circles, Altar Guild, and/or other formal group within the church) to assist in appropriate tasks.
10. Other duties as assigned by Planning Council and/or voters.

Responsibilities of the Support/Guidance Groups

1. A Support/Guidance Group will consist of at least one male and may have one or more female members. A male member will serve as Group Leader.
2. Members of any Support/Guidance Groups will be nominated by the nomination committee and approved by the Planning Council and Voters' Assembly.
3. The Support/Guidance Groups will offer support and guidance to members of the congregation by use of options outlined below when appropriate for the need
 - a. Performing every member visits every other year,
 - b. Acting as liaison to the Pastor, Member Ministry Team Leader, and/or the Planning Council.
 - c. Serving as active listeners to member concerns.
 - d. Other appropriate means.
4. Other duties as assigned by Member Ministry Team Leader under the direction of Planning Council and/or voters.

WORSHIP

The Worship position, together with the Pastor and the Alter Guild Coordinator, shall oversee and provide a comfortable and participatory worship environment for visitors and the entire St. James family. The Worship position is responsible for special music, altar care, ushers, choir, organists, flowers, and banners.

Responsibilities:

1. Consults with Pastor on scheduling of church services and is responsible for seeing that all worship services are conducted in good order and proper Christian dignity.
2. Arranges to have all worship materials available for each worship service relative to the type and season of the service.
3. Is responsible for engaging guest Pastors and/or guest organists when the called or appointed servants are unavailable.

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4. Reviews annually, the function of the Altar Guild Coordinator, making sure that altar care needs are met for communion supplies, flowers, banners and any other seasonally related items.
5. Is responsible for the church music program, which includes, musicians, choir and all related materials and supplies.
6. Prepares an ushers' schedule. Oversees current usher roster and trains new ushers. Furnishes and annually reviews the ushers' responsibilities
7. Recruits, trains, and schedules greeters to welcome visitors and members at each worship service.
8. Is mindful of the needs of the handicapped, shut-ins, and special physical needs of members.
9. Works with the property team in providing a comfortable, welcoming and participatory environment for visitors and members.
10. Other duties as assigned by Planning Council and/or Voters

ARTICLE VI: Committees and Delegates / Duties

Section 1: Nominating Committee

Purpose: The Nominating Committee will select and contact, for the voting membership, a slate of candidates for election to current Planning Council vacancies.

Structure and Responsibilities:

1. Annually, the Chairman of the congregation shall announce the appointment of the nominating committee members.
2. The committee shall consist of two voting members of the congregation.
3. The Pastor is an ex-officio member of this committee.
4. All appointments by the chairman are subject to the approval of the church Planning Council.
5. All appointments to this committee are for a one year term.
6. The nominating committee shall select, from the voting membership, a slate of willing candidates (if available) for the Planning Council vacancies and shall publish the names on at least two consecutive Sundays prior to the meeting in which the elections are to be held.

Section 2: Financial Review Committee

Purpose: The Financial Review Committee will review the church financial records for completeness and accuracy.

Structure and Responsibilities:

1. The committee shall consist of two members of the congregation.
2. All appointments by the chairman are subject to the approval of the church Planning Council and are for a one year term.
3. The committee shall review the treasurer's books at the end of the year and/or other times by request of the Planning Council.
4. All reviews shall include the checking account, money receipts, money deposits, disbursements, bank statements, all balances, investments, and securities.
5. The committee shall, at the request of the Voters' Assembly, or Planning Council, review the books of any organization within the congregation.

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Section 3: Other Committees

The Chairman, with Planning Council approval, may appoint other committees with appropriate powers and duties as deemed necessary.

Section 4: Vacancies

The Chairman, with the approval of the Planning Council, shall fill vacancies occurring in the Planning Council, or committee positions through appointment.

Section 5: Ex-Officio Membership

The Pastor and Chairman, by virtue of their offices, are advisory members of all boards, committees, and organizations, except in the case of the Chairman position on the Planning Council. They are to be informed of all meetings of the boards and committees so that they may attend if they desire. It shall be at the discretion of the Planning Council if any other workers are to serve as advisors of any board, committee, or organization.

ARTICLE VII: Mode of Admission to Church Membership

Section 1: Baptism

Persons become members immediately after receiving the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

Section 2: Confirmation

Members of an instruction class or a confirmation class become communicant members immediately after confessing their faith, through the rite of Confirmation or Adult Baptism, in the presence of the congregation, or at least two members of the Planning Council. Their names shall be presented for enrollment at the next meeting of the Planning Council.

Section 3: Other than Confirmation or Baptism

Persons who wish to be received into membership of this congregation, other than through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism or the Rite of confirmation, shall bring the request to the attention of the Pastor or the Planning Council. The Planning Council shall honor the request or other recommendations from a sister congregation. The Planning Council shall also honor the request for membership when qualifications for membership are met as specified in Article V of the Constitution. Public mention of their reception shall be given the congregation. The Voter's Assembly at the next meeting shall ratify all membership changes.

ARTICLE VIII: Transfer or Release from Membership

Section 1

Those deserving a transfer or a release from membership shall bring their request to the attention of the Pastor or a member of the Planning Council. Upon the recommendation of the Pastor, the Planning Council shall consider and act upon the application at its next

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meeting. The Voters' Assembly, at the next Voter's Meeting, shall ratify all transfers and releases.

Section 2

Transfer of membership shall apply only to those who desire membership in a congregation which is in scriptural agreement with this one. Release from membership shall apply when affiliation is sought with those denominations not in scriptural agreement with this congregation.

Section 3

Members released or transferred relinquish all rights in this congregation.

Section 4

If a member moves away without notifying the Pastor or without requesting a transfer, or his whereabouts are unknown, the congregation shall remove his name from the membership list, provided that at least one (1) year has elapsed after diligent efforts have been made by the Pastor and the Planning Council to locate such a member. Diligent efforts to locate members include the use of Shepherd Groups, Elders, Deacons/Deaconesses, the Planning Council, and the Pastor. Members released after all diligent efforts to locate them have been used relinquish all their rights in the congregation and its property.

ARTICLE IX: Service Planning

Section 1: Service Time Approval

The congregation shall approve the schedule for the time of services. In cases of emergency, the Planning Council may set the time.

ARTICLE X: Removal of the Pastor or Teacher from Office

Section 1: Removal Procedure

1. Removal of a pastor or teacher from their call will require a recommendation from the Planning Council.
2. Removal of a pastor or teacher from their call will require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the voters present at a duly called meeting of the Voters' Assembly.

Section 2: Grounds for Removal of a Pastor or Teacher

1. A Pastor or teacher shall be removed from office by the congregation if sufficient and urgent cause dictates such action. Such causes are persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, or willful neglect of official duties.
2. In case of evident and protracted incapacity to perform the functions of his sacred office, the Pastor may be requested to accept another call, or to tender his resignation.

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3. The grounds for removal is documented in the Church Constitution in Article IX, Section 2: "Sufficient and urgent causes for removing a pastor or teacher are persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of duty or established inability to perform the duties of his office (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9). In such a case the advice and good counsel of the appropriate district officer shall be sought."

Section 3: Removal Requirements

Removal of a pastor from office will require recommendations by the Planning Council and by two-thirds (2/3) majority of voters present at a duly called meeting of the Voters' Assembly.

ARTICLE XI: Calendar Year

The calendar year shall be the operating time frame for the church's business. The books of the treasurer shall be closed at midnight on December 31st of each year.

ARTICLE XII: Miscellaneous

Section 1: Organizations within the Congregation

1. Organizations within the congregation shall exist only by consent and approval of the Voters' Assembly.
2. Only communicant members of the congregation, or a sister congregation, shall be eligible for membership in the adult organizations.
3. Any decision, enactment, or performance of any organization is subject to the constitution and bylaws.
4. All organizations of the congregation shall give an annual report, in writing, for the Planning Council and the congregation which will be included in the printed annual report that is given to all communicant members.

Section 2...Rights of Non-Members

People released, transferred, excommunicated, or otherwise removed from membership, lose all rights as members of the congregation.

ARTICLE XIII: Repeals and Amendments of the Bylaws

Section 1

Any and all bylaws may be repealed by a majority vote of the voting membership present at any Voters' Assembly.

Section 2

The proposed changes shall be submitted in writing to the Planning Council for its study and recommendation.

Section 3

The Planning Council shall forward its recommendations to the Voters' Assembly.

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Section 4

Public notice of the proposed actions shall be given to the congregational members on at least two Sundays prior to the time of the meeting.

ARTICLE XIV: Church Policies

Section 1

Each Planning Council position shall maintain a policy booklet for its respective area of ministry.

Appendices:

Section 1: Usher Responsibilities

Section 2: Altar Guild