



# **New Creation Lutheran Church**

## **Church Council Introduction**

## **And Handbook**

February 2012 Edition



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## Duties of the Council

- General oversight of the life and activities of this congregation.
- Participate in strategic planning, including defining long-term visions, developing roadmaps, setting goals and priorities, and evaluating all related activities.
- Seek the involvement of all members of this congregation and encourage the use of their spiritual gifts.
- Oversee the administration of church activities.
- Maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.
- Be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
- Promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill, and, as differences and conflicts arise, endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
- Arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
- Emphasize partnership with the synod and ELCA as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran.
- Recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the ELCA.
- Seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.
- Be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.
- See that the provisions of the constitution, its bylaws and the continuing resolutions are carried out.
- Provide for an annual review of the membership roster.
- Have final approval for the issuing of contractual employee openings, and the final approval of all employee hiring and terminations
- Submit a comprehensive report to the congregation at the annual meeting.

## **Council Member Expectations**

- Required attendance at regular and any special meetings of the council and Strategy Team meetings.
- Service on at least one council committee, or team/task force.
- Participation in an annual Congregation Council retreat and any other strategic planning events.
- Participation in at least one functional training event or seminar annually.
- Familiarization with the NCLC constitution, by-laws, and continuing resolutions
- Understanding and accepting the responsibilities of the assigned committee.
- Active and responsible participation on issues before the council.

## **Officer Responsibilities**

### **Executive Committee**

- The officers of this congregation and the pastor shall constitute the Executive Committee.

(At this time, the Executive Committee has no specific responsibilities assigned.)

### **President**

- Presides over all council, Executive Committee, and congregation meetings.
- Works with Pastor to prepare agenda for council, Executive Committee, and congregation meetings.
- Ensures, with the pastor, that all decisions of the council and congregation are carried out.
- Coordinates the work of all committees and other council organizations.
- Is an advisor to all committees, except Mutual Ministry, and has ex-officio status as a non-voting member.

### **Vice President**

- Fulfils the duties of the president, when the president is not available.
- Stays up-to-date on conference, synod, and other appropriate church leadership events. Keeps council aware and stimulates interest, support, and attendance.
- Maintains a thorough understanding of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions and ensures they are followed.
- Traditionally serves as liaison to SCVLP (Santa Clara Valley Lutheran Parish).

### **Secretary**

- Takes minutes, records attendance, and verifies quorums at congregation and council meetings
- Ensures the timely preparation and distribution of minutes.
- Documents decisions and resolutions of the council and the congregation.
- Initiates and signs all official correspondence as directed by the Congregational Council or Executive Committee.
- Ensures all requirements of the constitution are met, in regards to meeting announcements.
- Serves as custodian of the historic archives of the congregation, maintaining a system of recording and keeping of historic records, pictures, etc, and provide encouragement for pictures to be taken at congregational events.

### **Treasurer**

- Pay bills in accordance with established policies.
- Coordinates other expenditures and confirms availability of funds.
- Maintains and reconciles the checking accounts of the congregation
- Reports monthly to the church council, and quarterly to the congregation

- Advises the pastor or the president of any immediate or anticipated financial problem or concern affecting the congregation.
- Is a member of the Endowment Committee

## **Organizational Authority**

### **Council**

- Overall responsibility for the life and activities of the church.
- Accountable to the Congregation.

### **Committees**

- Established by the Council, within Constitutional guidelines, and must have at least three members.
- Given specific responsibilities and objectives by the Council.
- Accountable to the Council.
- Normally created for long-term efforts, greater than one year.
- Granted the authority necessary to fulfill responsibilities and complete objectives, in alignment with overall mission and vision and within pre-approved budget. This includes the creation of programs and policies.
- Given authority to reallocate funds, within their own budgets, up to \$1000 without prior approval.
- Given the authority to make budgeted purchases of up to \$1000, after checking with church treasurer for available funds.
- Purchases within budget but over \$1000 require additional approval from Pastor and/or Council President.
- All non-budgeted purchases require Council approval.
- Provide written status reports to the Council, monthly.

## **Employed Supervisors**

- Given specific responsibilities and objectives by the Senior Pastor.
- Granted the authority necessary to fulfill responsibilities and complete objectives, in alignment with overall mission and vision and within pre-approved budget. This includes the creation of programs and policies.
- Accountable to the Senior Pastor.
- Given authority to reallocate funds, within their own budgets, up to \$1000 without prior approval.
- Given the authority to make budgeted purchases of up to \$1000, after checking with church treasurer for available funds.
- Purchases within budget but over \$1000 require additional approval from Pastor and/or Council President.
- All non-budgeted purchases require Council approval.
- Provide written status reports to the Council, monthly.

## **Teams/Task Forces**

- Created by Council, Committee, and/or Employed Supervisor.
- Given specific responsibilities and objectives by the creator.
- Normally created for short-term efforts (shorter than one year) or as an advisory organization.
- Does not have the authority to implement programs, policies, or purchases, without specific approval from creator.

## **Titled Volunteer Positions (e.g. Property Manager)**

- Appointed by Council.
- Generally fills a role when a committee is not available.
- Given specific responsibilities and objectives by the Council, detailed in a written job description.
- Granted the authority necessary to fulfill responsibilities and complete objectives, in alignment with overall mission and vision and within pre-approved budget. This does not

- include the creation of programs and policies, which would require Council approval.
- Generally accountable to the Council, but could be accountable to an appropriate Committee instead.
- Given the authority to make budgeted purchases of up to \$200, after checking with church treasurer for available funds.
- Purchases within budget but over \$200 require additional approval from Pastor and/or Council President or appropriate Committee chairperson.
- All non-budgeted purchases require Council approval.
- Provide written status reports to the Council, monthly.

### **Spending Approval Authority**

- Congregation: Non-budgeted purchases over \$5000.
- Council: Non-Budgeted purchases up to \$5000, all budgeted purchases.
- Committees/Supervisors: Budgeted purchases up to \$1000.
- Titled Volunteer Positions: Budgeted purchases up to \$200.

***Note: All purchases require the treasurer's confirmation of available funds.***

## Church Committees

### Common Overview, Roles, and Responsibilities

1. Established by the Council, within Constitutional guidelines, and must have at least three members.
2. Given specific responsibilities and objectives by the Council.
3. Accountable to the Council.
4. Normally created for longer-term efforts, greater than one year.
5. Granted the authority necessary to fulfill responsibilities and complete objectives, in alignment with overall mission and vision and within pre-approved, budget. This includes the creation of programs and policies.
6. Given authority to reallocate funds, within their own budgets, up to \$1000 without prior approval.
7. Given the authority to make budgeted purchases of up to \$1000, after checking with church treasurer for available funds.
8. Purchases within budget but over \$1000 require additional approval from Pastor and/or Council President.
9. All non-budgeted purchases require Council approval.
10. Provide written status reports to the Council, at least one week in advance of the monthly council meeting.

### Nominating Committee (Required)

A Nominating Committee of a minimum of two voting members of this congregation, two of whom, if possible, shall be outgoing members of the Congregation Council, shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year.

Members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible for consecutive reelection.

### Audit Committee (Required)

An Audit Committee of a minimum of two voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council or the Treasurer.

1. Audit all financial activities of the congregation each calendar/fiscal year by no later than one month following the close of the preceding calendar/fiscal year.
2. Report the results of the audit to the Stewardship/Finance committee by the end of the first fiscal quarter. The Stewardship/Finance Committee, in turn, will provide the audit report, along with any appropriate recommendations of the committee, to the council at the council's March meeting.
3. Upon acceptance of the audit report by the council, prepare and submit any required certification to the synod.

### **Mutual Ministry Committee (Required)**

A Mutual Ministry Committee (in the absence of a mutual ministry committee, the duties shall be fulfilled by the executive committee) shall be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor. Term of office shall be two years, with three members to be appointed each successive year.

The Mutual Ministry is a team of congregation members who meet to affirm and facilitate the mission of New Creation Lutheran Church through observing, listening, reflecting, and communicating upon issues facing the congregation. The Committee is advisory only. The Committee shall:

1. Gather and evaluate information to determine the expectations of the congregation, pastor and staff in fulfilling the ministries of NCLC. Mutual Ministry members will be a "listening post" for members of the congregation, pastor and staff.
2. Provide a safe, open environment for pastor, staff and members to explore and test new ideas.
3. Review the programs of NCLC and recommend additions or changes necessary to meet the expectations of the congregation, pastor and staff consistent with the approved goals of the congregation.
4. Advocate programs to train and maintain the proficiency of lay leadership and the professional staff

5. Serve as a personal and confidential support group to the pastor and staff, as needed or requested, and suggest proper channel for resolving conflicts/issues.

### **New Creation Lutheran Church School Board (Required)**

New Creation Lutheran Church School Board is established. It shall be a standing committee. The school board shall oversee the management of the on-site school to ensure its actions are consistent with the philosophy and mission of New Creation Lutheran Church. Details include:

1. Its regular membership shall consist of at least four (4) and no more than five (5) voting members of this congregation at the discretion of the Executive Committee. The regular board members shall be appointed jointly by the Lead Pastor, the director of the school, and the current school board members. The school board may appoint additional members to serve with voice but no vote. The director is counted as one of the voting members and need not be a member of New Creation Lutheran Church.
2. The chairperson shall be elected by the school board members at its January meeting and serve a term of two years. The first set of regular board members appointed subsequent to the adoption of these bylaws shall serve for staggered terms of one to two years. Subsequently, members as needed shall be appointed each year for terms of two years. Any members appointed by the board itself shall serve only for the fiscal year in which appointed
3. Members shall not be eligible to serve more than two successive terms.

### **Endowment Committee (Required)**

The endowment committee shall consist of five voting members including the church Treasurer, whose term on this committee shall be coterminous with the term of the Treasurer. One member shall be elected by the Church Council from its own membership, and three more shall be elected from the congregation on a staggered basis for three-year terms by the congregation at the annual budget meeting.

Actions of the committee must be agreed to by at least three of the voting members. The committee shall meet at least two times per year. The Church Council shall have the authority to appoint members to the committee to fill vacancies which occur on the committee, including the authority upon establishment of the committee to appoint the initial four elected members to the committee with staggered terms. The term of the appointment shall be until the next annual budget meeting of the congregation. Details include:

1. To establish and articulate the purpose of the endowment reflecting the overall vision, mission, and values of New Creation Lutheran Church.
2. To report at least annually to the congregation new gifts received, the size of the endowment, and details of specific expenditures from the endowment.
3. To educate the congregation about the endowment and solicit donations in an appropriate manner.
4. To assist donors in the process of making gifts to the endowment.
5. To establish policies and procedures for accepting or rejecting proposed gifts by donors.
6. To act as the designated adviser to New Creation Lutheran Church with respect to all endowment operational matters, including requests for distributions from the endowment.

### **Christian Education Committee (Optional)**

1. Oversee the operation of the congregations, Sunday Church School, Vacation Bible School, Confirmation program.
2. Provide for various adult education programs such as; Bible study classes, leadership training classes, inquiry classes, and other adult study programs of interest to the Christian community.
3. Oversee the ordering of all curriculum materials, equipment, and supplies that will be needed in the Christian Education programs and provide for their care

and upkeep in the consultation with the pastor and the council.

4. Oversee the operation of the Church library, appointing a person to serve as librarian.
5. Assist in the recruitment of teachers and other leaders for the various Christian Education programs.

### **Church Property Committee (Optional)**

1. See to proper maintenance and repair of all church property and equipment
2. Oversee the custodian/caretaker in the cleaning and care of the church building, furnishings, equipment, and grounds.
3. Initiate efforts toward the improvement or expansion of the church property, as approved by the congregation and the Congregation council
4. Communicate with members and non-members who have been given permission to use the church buildings, facilities and equipment on building security after usage.
5. Maintain an inventory of the church's property. This list is to be included in the annual report to the congregation. Report all acquisitions and losses of property to the Congregational Council.
6. Maintain an inventory of the church's property and equipment and awareness of insurance protection.
7. To establish and articulate the purpose of the building reflecting the overall vision, mission, and values of New Creation Lutheran Church.
8. To report at least annually to the congregation new gifts received, the size of the building fund, and details of specific expenditures from the endowment.
9. To educate the congregation about the building fund and solicit donations in an appropriate manner.
10. To assist donors in the process of making gifts to the building fund.
11. To establish policies and procedures for accepting or rejecting proposed gifts by donors.

### **Evangelism Committee (Optional)**

1. Contact by phone and by letter visitors to NCLC worship services and other prospective members. Request a visit with these individuals after initial contact.
2. Arrange an on-going or periodical visitation of inactive members.
3. Introduce means and methods to involve or assimilate "new members" into the life, programs, and activities of the congregation.
4. Provide an assistant to the pastor at the narthex or chapel door at the end of each worship service to assure that visitors' names and addresses are noted and to assign each visitor to a NCLC member so that the visitor can be escorted to coffee or any post service activities.
5. Handle whatever publicity is needed to inform both the members and the congregation, and when deemed appropriate, the general public about special events and activities of the congregation. This would involve all news media, the church bulletin boards, outside announcement signs etc.
6. Devise means, methods, programs, etc., by which people in the community may become aware of and interested in NCLC.

### **Social Ministry Committee (Optional)**

1. Initiate programs of church and community involvement or advocacy in social needs and concerns.
2. Introduce or sponsor means of education and information so that members have the latest information on church and social concerns.
3. Provide direction and leadership toward three basic dimensions of social ministry; STUDY, SERVICE, and ACTION. This would involve providing the means to STUDY the biblical basis for social ministry; to provide immediate, direct SERVICE to support people in need; and lead the congregation to take ACTION to change a situation from worse to better.

## **Stewardship/Finance Committee (Optional)**

1. To oversee the investment and distribution of the monies, consistent with the original intentions of the merger agreement.
2. To act as investment advisors to the Council, responsible for the management of the New Creation Lutheran Church investment portfolio.
3. Responsible for the annual Stewardship Response program.
4. Responsible for the on-going education and encouragement of members to keep their pledges and giving up to date.
5. Provide offering envelopes and see that they are distributed to the membership.
6. Provide systematic record-keeping of congregational giving and members' offerings and assure that members periodically receive reports on their individual giving.
7. Establish a method of promoting and handling any "special" funding efforts that may be authorized by the congregation or congregational council.
8. Oversee the payment of the congregation's obligations in a prompt and efficient manner and ensure that the financial records of funds received and expended are in order. Keep a watchful eye on how spending affects the operating budget and current treasury balances.
9. Prepare and present to the Congregation Council a preliminary program proposal for the coming year prior to the annual Stewardship Response Campaign. Following that effort, prepare and present a proposed budget to the Congregation Council. After approved by the council, the committee will present the final proposed budget at a congregational meeting.
10. Receive and review at its March meeting each year the report of the audit committee for forwarding with any appropriate recommendations to the Congregational council.

11. Responsible for identifying, utilizing, and affirming the talents, experiences, and abilities of congregational members in the service of God
12. Responsible for review of insurance policies, annually or as necessary, to assure adequate insurance coverage. Provide for the processing of all insurance claims.
13. Determine the amount for suggested donations for the use of the church facilities. These suggested amounts shall be reviewed annually as part of the budget process.
14. The Executive board members are the only authorized signatures to appear upon banking and investment accounts and authorized expenditures.

### **Worship & Music Committee (Optional)**

1. Assist the pastor in providing proper worship at all regular and special services.
2. See that the ushering and all facility needs are arranged for worship services. The ushers will also serve as greeters.
3. Encourage the altar guild to provide all necessary items in the church chancel and the chapel for worship services and sacraments. The altar guild shall be responsible for the care and cleaning and storage of all vessels and equipment.
4. See that the acolytes and worship service assistants are provided at worship services.
5. Recruit choir director(s), organist(s), and other musical assistants needed for worship services and, as appropriate, assist these musicians in the performance of their duties.
6. Oversee the purchasing of music, hymnals, music equipment, worship supplies, etc., needed for the worship program of the congregation. Arrange for the repair and maintenance of all church owned musical instruments, equipment and ecclesiastical art.
7. Coordinates all services of worship that are held away from the church facilities.

### **Celebration Committee (Optional)**

1. Coordinates all social gatherings of the congregation including receptions, coffee hours, and special occasion celebrations such as birthdays, anniversaries, funeral receptions.
2. Coordinates the annual congregational Labor Day picnic.

### **Volunteer Ministry Committee (Optional)**

The purpose of the Volunteer Ministry Program is to provide opportunities for members and friends of the congregation to enrich the church's mission through their service as volunteers. It is the responsibility of the volunteer ministry Committee to coordinate the congregation's system of recruiting, training, supporting, and affirming all its volunteers. It may, if it chooses, delegate these responsibilities in whole or in part to a Volunteer Ministry Coordinator who will be responsible to the committee and, through it, to the Congregational Council.

### **Memorial Committee (Optional)**

The purpose of this committee is to review the receipt of memorial gifts for the congregation making recommendations to the council for acceptance or declining these items.

## Communication

### Distribution Lists

There are several email distribution lists that have been created to simplify communication among the church leadership and various committees. These include:

#### Leadership

- Council, Committee Chairs, and Staff:  
*leaders@newcreationchurch-sj.org*
- Church Council:  
*council@newcreationchurch-sj.org*
- Committee Chairs:  
*chairpeople@newcreationchurch-sj.org*
- Staff:  
*staff@newcreationchurch-sj.org*

#### Committees

- School Board:  
*schoolboard@newcreationchurch-sj.org*
- Endowment Committee:  
*endowment@newcreationchurch-sj.org*
- Finance Committee:  
*finance@newcreationchurch-sj.org*
- Property Committee:  
*property@newcreationchurch-sj.org*
- Social Action Committee:  
*social-action@newcreationchurch-sj.org*
- Mutual Ministry:  
*mutualministry@newcreationchurch-sj.org*
- Worship & Music:  
*worship@newcreationchurch-sj.org*

## Methods of Communication

Communication with Congregation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Newsletter</li><li>• Email</li><li>• Announcements</li><li>• Postal Mail</li><li>• Annual Report</li></ul>
High Level Communication Across Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Written Monthly Reports</li><li>• Email Distribution Lists</li></ul>
Delegation of Authority (decision making)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Documented Roles and Responsibilities (partially reviewed annually)</li><li>• Documented Policies (reviewed annually)</li><li>• Committee Meetings</li></ul>
Delegation of Authority (purchasing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Documented Policies (reviewed annually)</li></ul>
Tactical Decision Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff Meetings</li><li>• Committee Meetings</li><li>• Email</li></ul>

## **Congregation Council FAQ**

### **Q: How many people can serve on the Congregation Council?**

**A:** There could be as many as 14 people on the council. This includes:

- Pastor
- Officers of the Congregation (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer).
- Youth Member (High School Student)
- Up to 8 additional members of the congregation.

### **Q: What is the term length for council members?**

**A:** A typical term is two years. There are three exceptions to this:

1. The Pastor is always a member of the council.
2. The Treasurer is a member of the council for as long as he/she remains in the position of treasurer.
3. The youth member's term is for one year, not two.

### **Q: How many terms can a council member serve?**

**A:** No more than two consecutive terms (four years for regular members and two years for youth members).

### **Q: Who are the Officers of the Congregation?**

**A:** The Officers of the Congregation are also the officers of the council. There are four positions that make up the Officers of the Congregation. These are:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary/Archivist
- Treasurer

### **Q: What is the term length for a congregational officer?**

**A:** The term length for officers of the congregation is one year.

### **Q: How many terms can an officer serve?**

**A:** No more than two consecutive terms (2 years).

