

Constitution and By-Laws
Revised November 2015



*Bethel Women
Women of the E.L.C.A.
Bethel Lutheran Church
810 Third Ave. SE
Rochester, MN 59904
288-6430*

Purpose Statement

As a community of women

- ☐ created in the image of God,
- ☐ called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and
- ☐ empowered by the Holy Spirit,

We commit ourselves to

- ☐ grow in faith,
- ☐ affirm our gifts,
- ☐ support one another in our callings,
- ☐ engage in ministry and action, and
- ☐ promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.

CONSTITUTION and BY-LAWS

BETHEL WOMEN OF THE ELCA

ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP AND NAME

*SECTION 1. Membership. This congregational unit shall be a member of Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, hereinafter designated as "Women of the ELCA."

SECTION 2. Name. The name of this congregational unit shall officially be Bethel Women of the ELCA, and informally known as Bethel Women for internal use.

ARTICLE II. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

*SECTION 1. Purpose. As a community of women, created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.

*SECTION 2. Commitment. To accomplish the purpose of Women of the ELCA, women in this unit shall commit themselves to:

- a. Come together for study, support and action.
- b. Participate in the ministry of Women of the ELCA beyond the congregation.
- c. Support financially the total program of Women of the ELCA.
- d. Designate leadership that shall be in communication with the synodical and church wide women's organization.

ARTICLE III. PARTICIPATION

*SECTION 1. Composition. This unit shall be composed of those women who participate in activities which indicate a commitment to the purpose of Women of the ELCA.

- a. Circles shall be formed with Bible Study as the main purpose. The number of circles shall depend upon the size and needs of the membership. Each woman may attend the circle of her choice.

SECTION 2. Participation. Participation in this unit shall be open to all women in the congregation and other women who subscribe to the purpose.

SECTION 3. Congregational Membership. Women elected to the leadership in this unit and elected as delegates to a convention of the Synodical Women's Organization shall be a voting member of Bethel.

ARTICLE IV. RELATIONSHIPS

SECTION 1. Congregation. This unit shall participate in the life and work of Bethel and provide needed reports. The Congregational Growth and Outreach representative may report regularly to the congregation council.

*SECTION 2. Conference. This unit shall participate in activities of The Zumbro River cluster or

the conference to which it is assigned.

*SECTION 3. Synodical Women's Organization (SWO). In an interdependent partnership with the SE MN Synodical Women's Organization, this unit shall participate in the convention of the SE MN Synodical Women's Organization by:

- Item 1. Electing a delegate and an alternate to represent the unit.
- Item 2. Cooperating in the process for nomination of officers and board members of the synodical women's organization.

*SECTION 4. Church wide Women's Organization (CWO).

- Item 1. This unit shall participate in the process for nomination of delegates to the Triennial Convention.
- Item 2. This unit shall participate in the process for nomination of officers and board members. The Triennial Convention is when items are voted on to change for WELCA. The next one is in Minneapolis in 2017.

ARTICLE V. MEETINGS

SECTION 1. Program. Women of this unit shall come together regularly for study, support, and action.

SECTION 2. Business. There shall quarterly business meetings, and other designated times for purposes such as receiving reports, projecting plans, electing leadership, and adopting an annual budget.

ARTICLE VI. LEADERSHIP

SECTION 1. Officers. This unit shall have co-chairs (or a chair), vice chair (if chair), secretary, treasurer, Discipleship Secretary, Stewardship Secretary and, elected for a term of one year with no term limits.

SECTION 2. Duties of Officers.

Item 1 The chair/co-chairs shall:

- a. Guide the total work of the unit.
 - 1. Preside at meetings.
 - 2. Coordinate and counsel committees and help with their functioning.
- *b. Serve as primary contact person and communicator for Women of the ELCA (CWO, SWO, and conference).
 - 1. Relate the program and work of the unit with Women of the ELCA and vice versa.
 - 2. Keep up-to-date on CWO, SWO, and conference activities.
 - 3. Participate in Women of the ELCA training sessions and events.
 - 4. Handle correspondence

Item 2 The vice chair (in the event there is a chair and no co-chairs) shall:

- a. Assume duties of president when necessary.
- b. Carry out assignments from president.

- c. Accept other assignments from unit board.

Item 3 The Secretary shall:

- a. Keep record of proceedings of meetings.
- b. Provide minutes of board meetings to all board members and the church office.
- c. Handle correspondence.
- *d. Provide names and addresses to leaders of Women of the ELCA.

Item 4 The Treasurer shall:

- a. Be responsible for maintaining the Board's financial records within the framework of the unit's Constitution and Bylaws.
- b. Record offering receipts which include Coffee money, Thank-Offering, Card sales, etc.
- c. Disburse funds within the organization's budget and the policies of Women of the ELCA.
- d. Maintain an accurate record of all financial transactions.
- e. Provide financial reports at the board meetings and as otherwise may be required.
- f. Work on the development of the annual budget.
- g. Provide for an annual audit committee review of the organization's financial activity.
- h. Purchase postage stamps and note cards.
- i. Write and send thank you notes to the family of the deceased for funeral donations received from funeral homes.
- j. Correspond as needed to organizations for matching funds or mission donations.
- k. Attend the regular Bethel Women of the ELCA Board meetings.

Item 5. The Discipleship Secretary shall:

- a. Speak as requested at new member orientation promoting women's activities, missions, and circles at Bethel Lutheran Church
- b. Update New Member Brochure for New Member Orientation.
- c. Coordinate the yearly Women of the ELCA pin process.
- d. Place a copy of *The Gather* in the library

Item 6. The Stewardship Secretary shall:

Promote the program of Women of the ELCA by encouraging members to express their faith through the use of time, talents and treasures by contributing to Christian service and mission projects.

SECTION 3. The Unit Board shall be composed of the officers and the following representatives: The Congregational Growth and Outreach representative, Circle chairpersons, and Publicity, Christian Service, Rummage Sale Chairs, and Yearbook Editor.

General Policy

The Bethel Women have a number of annual fund raisers each year, such as the No Bake No Craft Sale letter, a Spring and Fall Rummage Sale and other such events. It is the policy of the

Bethel Women that these proceeds support local, state and national missions.

It is the policy of Bethel Women to support church-wide Women of the ELCA national and international projects through Thankoffering weekend. The monies collected are a pass through offering, i.e. the offering is collected and sent 100% to church-wide activities.

The duties of the board are to:

*Item 1 Provide for the general program for women of the congregation in fulfillment of the purpose of Women of the ELCA:

- a. Plan and support the various yearly activities of the Unit.
- b. Study purpose and program areas and aims of Women of the ELCA and relate to unit goals.
- c. Identify needs and interests of women in the congregation.
- d. Develop goals, integrating growth, community, and action program areas and aims.
- e. Assign goals to committees and/or task forces for implementation.
- f. Select appropriate resources; check Women of the ELCA resources.
- g. Provide for regular worship and offering opportunities, including circles.
- h. Evaluate the program regularly.

*Item 2 Provide for participation in Women of the ELCA beyond the congregation:

- a. Promote events and activities of conference, SWO, CWO and encourage women to participate.
- b. Provide for regular interpretation and financial support to Women of the ELCA.
- c. Circulate communications from Women of the (i.e. River Channels publication).
- d. Participate in leadership development opportunities.
- e. Provide for selection of delegate to SWO convention and nominations for conference, SWO, and CWO leadership positions.

*SECTION 4. Committees of this unit shall be established to fulfill the purpose of Women of the ELCA.

Item 1 Christian Service. This committee is composed two co-chairs. They are responsible coordinating the serving of Sunday morning coffee

Item 2. Nominating. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of the current circle chairpersons and one of the unit co-chairs

The chairperson of this committee shall be elected from within this group. All other interested board members are invited to be a part of this committee.

Item 3. Rummage Sale. The Rummage Sale Committee shall be responsible for organizing and running the sale and luncheon.

Item 4. Discipleship. Promote the program of women of the ELCA by speaking at new member orientation promoting activities of Bethel Women as requested. Head up the yearly pin recipients honored by Bethel Women.

Item 5 Publicity. Utilize all possibilities available through Bethel, digital media, publications, local media, etc. to advertise Bethel Women of the ELCA activities

Item 6 Yearbook (Please see description under General Policies)

Item 7 Funeral Coordinators

Item 8 Other committees and task forces shall be established as needed for purposes

such as: special events, or projects.

ARTICLE VII. PLANNING

*SECTION 1. Program Areas and Aims. This unit shall engage in planning, giving attention to the program areas and aims established by Women of the ELCA.

SECTION 2. Program Planning. The unit board shall be responsible for the total program planning for the unit.

ARTICLE VIII. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

SECTION 1. Nominating Committee.

Item 1. There shall be a nominating committee to present nominees for board officers for election by this unit.

Item 2. Job descriptions shall be given to each new nominee.

SECTION 2. Elections.

Item 1. There shall be an annual election each fall for officers of the board.

Item 2. All elections shall be for a term of one year with no limit on re-election.

a. The term of office shall begin January 1.

b. Exception to the above is the Congregational Growth and Outreach representative who, elected by the congregation, serves for a three-year term.

Item 3. The board shall fill any unexpired term of office by appointment.

ARTICLE IX. FINANCE

SECTION 1. Fiscal year. The fiscal year and the budget year for this unit shall be January 1 through December 31.

*SECTION 2. Administration. This unit shall develop and administer its own financial plan or budget which shall reflect support for the total program of the Women of the ELCA.

*SECTION 3. Transmittal. This unit shall transmit funds regularly in accordance with established procedures.

SECTION 4. Reports. This unit shall provide an annual financial report to Bethel Women and for the congregation's Annual Report.

SECTION 5. Audit. An audit will occur as needed to review and verify the financial records.

ARTICLE X. AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1. Constitution. This constitution may be amended at any regular business meeting or special meeting of this unit by a two-thirds vote of the women present and voting, provided the proposed amendment has been presented at a previous meeting and is consistent with the purpose of Women of the ELCA. Social media may be used to inform the Women of

Bethel of any constitutional amendments.

ARTICLE XI. AUTHORITY

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern in all cases not provided for in this constitution.

Adopted November 2015

NOTES:

This constitution has been patterned after UNIT MODELS FOR MISSION (developed for Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by American Lutheran Church Women, Lutheran Church Women, and Women in Action for Mission) and our own previous BLCW constitutions.

(*) indicates item which serve to fulfill "Criteria for Recognition" as a Unit of Women of the ELCA.

MEMBERSHIP

When you become a member of Bethel, you automatically become a part of Women of the ELCA. You may choose to belong to a circle. You may be called on sometime to help the Christian Service Group serve.

GENERAL POLICIES

1. As in our constitution, we will continue to recognize each woman of Bethel as a woman of ELCA and therefore eligible for participation in all areas of women's interests and missions.
2. Up to eight (8) people will be presented with the Women of the ELCA pin each year and they will be chosen from all areas of church work.
3. All board members and circle officers will be installed before the start of the Bethel Women's year in January, if possible.
4. The Christian Service Group will continue to be a part of the Bethel Women and workers for Sunday morning coffees, will be coordinated through them.
5. The Nominating Committee for officers will consist of circle chairpersons and one of the co-chairs.
6. Programs for the year will be decided by the board or committees assigned by them.
7. Changes in Bethel Women of ELCA policies will be made at ELCA events with proper notice given. These changes will be made by majority vote and following the rules of the constitution
8. Kitchen Policy:
 - A Kitchen Maintenance Fund has been established in the church budget. The Bethel Women will contribute \$500 to the fund around June 1st each year. This fund would be used for all repairs and replacements of appliances such as the stove/oven, refrigerator, freezer, dishwasher, fan, washer, dryer, garbage disposal, ice machine, microwave, coffee shuttles, etc. Any funds not used at year's end would be rolled over to the next year to accumulate and grow the

fund. This fund would be managed by Properties. The Bethel Women will not manage the repairs and/or replacement of the kitchen appliances indicated above.

- The Bethel Women will continue to pay for all disposable items that are used in the kitchen such as Styrofoam cups, napkins, sugar/artificial sweeteners, non-dairy creamers, coffee filters, etc., that are used by the many Bethel groups who use the kitchen. The kitchen will be checked monthly and any issues will be noted.
- The Bethel Women, with the help of volunteers from the congregation, will clean Bethel's main kitchen annually, including the washing of all dishes. We will hire an outside agency to clean the stoves and ovens. At the time of cleaning the kitchen, we will do an inventory of all the non-paper items.
- The Thankoffering will occur annually. All monies raised from this offering will celebrate the gratitude in a community of women together who joyfully give thanks and praise for what God has given to us. The collection will support the total outreach of the church-wide women of the ELCA ministries.
- No Bake No Craft Sale Letter – Rather than hold a bake and craft sale, we ask the women of Bethel to donate those funds that would typically be used for baking or crafting items to fund various missions as determined by the Board

9. Rummage Sales

- Meets 1-2 weeks before the sale to go over advertising details and to discuss updates or changes for the sale.
- The chair will reserve the room for this meeting and contact the team.
- The chair/co-chairs will make certain all areas have a coordinator(s) in place who line up their workers to accomplish prep and setup (kitchen, specialty rooms, cashiers, and publicity).
- The chairs reserve the next year's rummage sale dates and needed space on the church calendar one year in advance, submit ads to city publications and community calendars, purchase needed supplies for pricing, line up workers for security and furniture and generally oversee the set-up and sale making certain all monies are in the office safe for the Bethel Women treasurer to collect.

10. Volunteer Caller

- There are 2 monthly coordinators each month, and typically one person does all the calling for funeral workers, unless that person is gone and then the coordinators do it.
- The volunteer caller also calls between 100 and 200 people twice a year to get workers for the rummage sale. This includes cashiers, baggers, sorters, pricers, dock workers, floats, cleanup workers, and people to bring bars and pies. This person also puts the schedule together with all the workers, and contacts the boutique, the holiday house, Grandma's Attic, the kitchen coordinators and the chair of the Rummage Team to get their workers to put on the schedule.

11. Yearbook Editor

- The first part of October, contact all board members asking for any changes in the list of officers for the next year. Give them a deadline for all changes to be in. The yearbook

should be printed by the end of December if possible. One of the final items received will be the treasurer's report.

- Contact all chairs & co-chairs of the circles asking for updates and changes in their list of circle members (i.e. additions or deletions of names, changes in telephone numbers, e-mails or addresses, officers, etc.).
- Board members and/or chairs of circles also need to review the calendar of events, etc. in the back of the book for changes.
- One book is put in each of the clergy boxes and secretary boxes or just put on their desks.
- The bill for printing is given to the treasurer of the Bethel Women when all information is corrected, a copy is sent to all board members, circle chairs & co-chairs, asking if all the information is correct or if they see anything that needs to be changed. A deadline for this is also necessary.
- Once you have all the information corrected, and the formatting all done, then this is sent out again to all board members, circle chairs & co-chairs telling them this is the final copy and if any changes they need to be given to the person doing the yearbook immediately.
- Call the various printers in the city for the best price.
- The final copy, along with the number of copies needed, is then given to the printer for printing. Please ask the best method for the vendor to receive the final copy.
- Once the printing is done a copy goes to all board members, all circle members, all clergy, secretaries, and about ten extra copies for others in the office or new circle members throughout the year. The circle copies are put in their mail boxes in the office. ELCA.

12. Funeral Coordinators

CIRCLES

At present we have four circles and one Women's Bible Study Group meeting during the year, and they are listed in the Yearbook with location, times and dates. The church is free for Bible study, and committee meetings when cleared through the church office secretarial staff.

PROGRAMS

Special events and meetings for Bethel Women will be planned by the board and all details will be attended to by them or committees assigned by them. Circles will be asked to participate at times with serving and furnishing.

Women of the ELCA PINS

Pin symbol meaning - with the cross, water and a white Lily - identifies the women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as children of God; baptized, forgiven, adopted into God's family, full of grace and hope in eternal life. It is a reminder of the growth, beauty and vitality that rises out of that life-giving baptismal water. It is also a reminder of the mission of the church to "go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

Pin recipient guidelines:

- Devotion to the church will be the most important consideration.
- Any woman or man of Bethel who is actively involved in activities of church life of Bethel Lutheran Church, may be nominated to receive a Women of the ELCA pin.
- Men who are nominated to receive a Women of the ELCA pin need to help with any of the many women's activities of the church, i.e. rummage sale, coffee, Christmas Tea, etc
- The number of pins given can vary, with no more than eight (8) being presented in a given year.
- Publicity will be given through The Bethel Beacon, social media, and the church bulletin to all committees of the church so that anyone from all areas can be equally considered, whether active in Women of the ELCA or not.
- Although the pin is presented strictly for volunteer work in the church, more information from other areas of the recipients' interests and activities would be appropriate, if available.
- When suggesting a candidate, please supply as much information as possible and suggest a person to make the presentation to the recipient if you cannot. Also, please sign your form.
- Pin recipient information, as well as publicity, should start with the board meeting in November, to allow as much time as possible for selection.
- The list of pin recipients has been alphabetized and copies will be available on the women's bulletin board those wishing to check the list, along with nomination forms.
- The determination of who receives pins will be made by the Women of Bethel Board.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

MARIE SANDVIK MISSION

We provide many boxes of clothing, shoes, and household goods to this Minneapolis mission each year. These items are donated or from our rummage sales during the year. We also provide quilts. These are delivered yearly.

RUMMAGE SALES

We have 2 rummage sales each year. This money is our mission fund which is disbursed during the year to our local, state, and national missions through monetary donations and products.

CHANNEL ONE

We provide canned goods and paper products.

DOROTHY DAY HOUSE

We provide paper products or other items as requested one month each year as well as a monetary donation yearly.

WOMEN'S SHELTER

We provide paper products or other items as requested one month per year.

GIFT OF LIFE

We provide paper products or other items as requested for one month each year and a monetary donation yearly.

HOPE LODGE

We provide paper products or other items as requested for one month each year.

RONALD MCDONALD

We provide paper products or other items as requested for one month each year.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER – In March of each year; we participate

EYE GLASSES

Eye glasses are collected and given to the Lions Club for distribution to needy people in other parts of the world.

POSTAGE STAMPS

We collect used postage stamps which are sent to Bethel-St Elizabeth Foundation of America in Washington, DC to a project called "Stamps for a Living." The stamps are processed by physically, mentally and socially disabled people. The people working in this endeavor are mental health consumers who most likely would spend the rest of their lives being cared for by assistance programs. Yet, they are individuals who have a desire to help themselves. Through "Stamps for a Living," they will be able to work and earn a small salary to provide themselves with personal items, accessories, additional clothing, or gifts for family or loved ones.

CAMPBELL'S LABELS

Campbell's labels, Box Tops for Education, and Milk Moola Caps are given to Riverside School and Meadow Park Day Care.

QUILTS

A LWR quilt is special! It brings warmth on a cold night, shelter from the sun on a hot day. It becomes a bed, a room divider, a backpack to carry belongings, and at times even a home.

SCHOOL KITS

A school kit may provide the only supplies for children returning to school after the disruption of war. For example, after a 30-year war, Angolans have established schools and provided teachers but have little access to supplies. School kits may help parents continue their children's education, even while living in a refugee camp. A school kit may also be used in adult literacy classes.

PERSONAL CARE KITS

People who must flee their homes quickly often do not have time to pack essential items. A health kit can help children, men, and women who are refugees maintain personal hygiene while living in exile. Items may also contribute to a new start for those who can return home.

FABRIC KITS

Many of the thousands of Fabric Kits Lutheran World Relief distributes are used in vocational training programs to teach young men and women useful and marketable sewing skills.

BABY CARE KITS

In refugee camps, hospitals, and villages around the world, gifts of Baby Care Kits convey a warm welcome to newborns and their mothers.

SOAP

People in many parts of the world cannot buy soap because it is unavailable or too costly. Without soap, maintaining the level of cleanliness necessary to reduce disease and infection is very difficult, especially where people live in close quarters, like in refugee camps.

NURSING HOME SING-A-LONGS

A group of Bethel Women gather to sing hymns and old favorites with residents of several nursing homes. A light dessert is served.