



Christ Our Savior

Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

Church Council Policies

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Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church

Church Council Policy Framework

Table of Contents

Preamble.....	3
Introduction	5
Purpose.....	5
Policy Maintenance	5
Current Policies	5
New/Revised Policies	5
Policy Categories and Responsibilities.....	5
1 Desired Outcomes	7
1.1 Worship.....	7
1.2 Outreach/Evangelism.....	7
1.3 Caregiving/Fellowship.....	7
1.4 Education	7
1.5 Stewardship.....	7
1.6 Focused Initiatives	8
2 Council Self-Governance Policies.....	9
2.1 Member Policies	9
2.2 Meeting Policies	10
2.3 Church Council Officers	12
2.4 Council Subcommittee Policies.....	13
2.5 Personnel Committee	13
2.6 Nominating Committee Policies	15
3 Council-Executive Policies	16
3.1 Scope of Council Policies	16
3.2 Delegation of Authority	16
3.3 Pastor Accountability to Council	16
3.4 Council Responsibilities.....	17
4 Executive Limitation Policies	19
4.1 Ethical Considerations	19
4.2 Financial Operations	19
4.3 Asset Protection and Security	20
4.4 Personnel Operations	21
4.5 Facility Operations.....	21
4.6 Communication Considerations	22
5 Church Officials.....	23
Appendix / Statement of Confidentiality.....	25

PREAMBLE

We, the duly elected Church Council Members of Christ our Savior Lutheran Church, empowered by our members and enabled by Christ to serve His church, do hereby establish the following policies to insure the proper and responsible governance of our congregation.

The following policies shall all be viewed in the light of two overriding principles:

1. That all council members shall strive to love the Lord their God with all their heart and with all their soul and with all their mind.
2. All council members shall strive to love their neighbor as themselves.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, let us constantly strive for these goals as we oversee our congregation. May we teach, admonish, and encourage one another with the wisdom that comes to us through His word and The Spirit, so that we may present to God the first fruits of our work, to His glory alone.

Introduction

Purpose

This document outlines responsibilities for administering current policies and provides the framework for implementing new or revised policies.

Policy Maintenance

Current Policies

Christ Our Savior (COS) policies will be maintained and administered by each of three bodies:

- Church Council -
- Executive Personnel (Pastors and Staff)
- Board of Elders

Each body will periodically review its policies and update them as necessary, but not less often than every three years.

Each policy book will be kept in the church office for COS members to access.

Note: Please see the COS Constitution and Bylaws for governance and guidance.

New/Revised Policies

- Any member of COS may suggest a policy or revision to a current policy.
- Suggestions may be submitted via the Suggestion Box or Office inbox.
- All suggestions received will be forward to the proper body for review and appropriate action

Policy Categories and Responsibilities

- Constitution/BylawsCouncil and Congregation
- Outcomes /Objectives, Roles/Responsibilities, BudgetaryCouncil
- Operational, Property/Assets, Contract Staff Executive
- Worship, Spiritual LifeElders

1 Desired Discipleship Outcomes

1.1 Worship

Members of Christ Our Savior regularly take part in worship that: is centered on embracing the gracious gifts we receive from God, incorporates the strengths of the whole congregation, invites responses with joy, gratitude and reverence, exercises hospitality to visitors, and develops a life of worship and devotion in our members' daily lives.

1.2 Outreach/Evangelism

Christ Our Savior is focused on serving the needs of the people outside of our congregation so that meaningful relationships can be formed that model Christ. As such, members are 1) equipped and encouraged to share their Christian faith with others 2) encouraged to invite guests for church services/events, and 3) become involved in local, national, and international programs and ministries.

1.3 Caregiving/Fellowship

The members of Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church strengthen relationships that support the spiritual, emotional, relationships and physical needs of our congregants and our guests.

1.4 Education

Members of Christ Our Savior are trained as disciples through the education ministry that is: teaching the whole Gospel of Christ, utilizing different methods and venues, and resulting in our members living thoughtfully and faithfully in their vocation. Members increasingly volunteer for COS ministries.

1.5 Stewardship

Members of Christ our Savior Lutheran Church are equipped to manage the gifts that God has given them in ways that are in keeping with scriptural values.

1.6 Focused Initiatives

There will, from time to time, be Desired Outcomes that are developed as a result of congregational strategic planning events. These Focused Initiatives can be thought of as medium to long term goals that supplement the on-going outcomes already identified in sections 1-5. The Focused Initiatives will be reviewed regularly by the Council per the processes already in place for the other Desired Outcomes. It is expected that various Focused Initiatives will be added and removed over time as they are identified and subsequently accomplished.

Revised 11/2024

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2 Council Self-Governance Policies

2.1 Member Policies

- 2.1.1. Church Council members shall actively participate in the worship, Christian growth, and educational activities of Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church.
- 2.1.2. Church Council members shall seek to develop their own personal spiritual life using devotions, prayer, Bible study, and the practice of Christian stewardship.
- 2.1.3. Church Council members shall seek to grow as Christian leaders by continually striving to increase their understanding of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod theology, mission, and ministry of Christ Our Savior.
- 2.1.4. Church Council members shall attend all scheduled Church Council meetings, striving not to miss more than two consecutive meetings without a valid excuse reported to the Chair. Missing three consecutive meetings without a valid excuse serves as an automatic resignation.
- 2.1.5. Church Council members shall be active participants at each Church Council meeting and shall be involved in the policy and decision-making process as it occurs during the meetings.
- 2.1.6. Church Council members shall relate to each other as members of the Body of Christ with openness, integrity, honesty, and Christian love.
- 2.1.7. Church Council members shall be open to opinions and concerns which may be expressed to them by members of the congregation. All such information shall remain confidential with the Church Council member, except as they may share this information with the Chair and the Church Council when deemed appropriate.
- 2.1.8. Church Council members shall read, understand, and follow the Confidentially Agreement (see agreement in appendix).
- 2.1.9. Any Church Council member who does not adhere to any of these stated policies shall be subject to review by the Church Council Executive Committee for resolution. (See Sec. 2.3.1 for definition of Church Council Executive Committee.) If any member of the Executive Committee does not adhere to the Policies, then the matter shall go before the remaining Executive Officers of the Council for review and resolution. If the matter is still unresolved, the entire Church Council shall review the matter and resolve it in an appropriate manner.

2.2 Meeting Policies

- 2.2.1 Church Council meetings shall be conducted under the guidelines of Robert' Rules of Order except where otherwise stipulated. The Council Chair shall be responsible for preparing the meeting agenda and final determination of its content.
- 2.2.2 Council meetings are open to all members of the Church.
- 2.2.3 The meetings may go into a closed session, where non-Council Members are asked to leave, when a confidential topic is addressed.
- 2.2.4 Voting members at the Council meeting will consist of the nine (9) members of Council, the Chairman of the Board of Elders, or his Elder designee, and the Senior Pastor.
- 2.2.5 The Council Chair shall only vote on resolutions when needed to break a tie vote.
- 2.2.6 If the Elder Chairman's spouse is a member of Council, the Elder Chairman will abstain from voting.
- 2.2.7 There shall be no voting by proxy, absentee ballots, or substitute representation. Voting remotely is permitted.
- 2.2.8 In all events, a simple majority vote will be required to approve the vote.
- 2.2.9 The agenda of the Church Council meetings shall include:
 - a. Opening prayer and devotion
 - b. Approval of Agenda
 - c. The Senior Pastor's report
 - d. Reports from the Board of Elders
 - e. Financial reports
 - f. Reports from any Church Council committees
 - g. Policy, vision and governance issues
 - h. Discussion of progress/achievement of desired outcomes
 - i. Discussion of any comments, questions or suggestions that have been brought forward from a Christ Our Savior member
 - j. Closing prayer
- 2.2.10 When possible, any reports or documents requiring analysis and discussion at a Council meeting shall be provided to council members prior to the council meeting.

- 2.2.11 The Church Council shall be responsible for the following:
- a. Desired outcome policies
 - b. Board self-governance policies
 - c. Board and executive relationship policies
 - d. Executive limitation policies
 - e. Constitution and By-Laws
- 2.2.12 Policies are to be active and dynamic and shall be reviewed and modified as necessary. Council will annually consider a full review of its policies and update them as necessary, but not less often than every three years. These reviews shall focus on policy and how this policy affects the ministries and mission of Christ Our Savior.
- 2.2.13 The Church Council shall annually review itself and its performance, utilizing a standard evaluation form/survey. This survey shall be confidentially completed by each member, and the Council Chair shall bring the compiled results to the next meeting. This form shall focus on faithfulness to the Constitution and By-laws, contribution to achieving the mission and ministries of the church, and adherence to its own member policies.
- 2.2.14 Using all means at our disposal, the Church Council shall keep the congregation informed of its activities and actively seek feedback from all members of the church. An informational meeting may be held from time to time for the purpose of sharing information and soliciting congregational input.
- 2.2.15 Meeting Minutes will be taken at each Council Meeting by the Council Secretary or designee.
- 2.2.16 From time to time, the Senior. Pastor, Council Chair or any three (3) members of Council may communicate to council members, urgent or pressing matters requiring a vote prior to the next scheduled Council meeting. These issues will be communicated and voted upon electronically within three (3) days. These issues will be added as an agenda item and recorded in the meeting minutes at the next scheduled Council meeting. If an email is sent to the council regarding an urgent or pressing matter, the council chairman will send a group text notifying the Council members to check their email.
- 2.2.17 A draft of the minutes will be e-mailed to each meeting attendee of the Council.
- 2.2.18 Any proposed changes to the draft will be e-mailed back to the Secretary or designee, and each Council attendee, within three (3) days of the draft being sent out.
- 2.2.19 After any changes are made, a FINAL DRAFT of the minutes will be e-mailed out to each of the Council attendees. Each will have three (3) days to respond with a vote of approval of the minutes. If approved by a majority of the attending members, the minutes are approved as written in the FINAL DRAFT.

- 2.2.20 Upon approval of the minutes, a copy will be posted on a bulletin board, and copies placed in the Narthex for review.

2.3 Church Council Officers

- 2.3.1 Immediately following the Church Congregational Meeting in May of each year, the Church Council will meet in private and elect from its membership the Executive Committee with the following officers:

- Chair
- Vice-Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer

These officers will serve for the next year, until new officers are elected after the Church Congregational Meeting the following May.

- 2.3.2 The Chair shall preside over meetings of the Council, Congregation, and Executive Committee.
- 2.3.3 The Chair shall produce council meeting agendas in accordance with Council policy 2.2 and in consultation with the Senior Pastor and Chairman of the Board of Elders.
- 2.3.4 The Chair shall produce congregation meeting agendas in accordance with the Constitution/By-Laws (By-Laws Article 1, Meetings).
- 2.3.5 The Council Chair shall be the representative of the congregation for all legal documents of Christ Our Savior.
- 2.3.6 The Council Chair and the Chairman of the Board of Elders, or their designee from that body, shall annually conduct a performance review of the Senior Pastor.
- 2.3.7 The Vice-Chair shall assume the duties of the Chair if the Chair is unable to perform said duties or fulfill his responsibilities.
- 2.3.8 The Secretary shall be responsible for recording the proceedings of Council and congregational meetings and providing minutes of these meetings in a timely manner.
- 2.3.9 The Treasurer shall be responsible for working with Church staff and others to provide financial information to the council as appropriate (such as monthly accounting reports, giving (i.e. offerings) reports, financial issues that may arise, etc.), and for recommendations relating to proposed capital programs.

- 2.3.10 The Treasurer shall, at least once annually, provide to Council, a summary of the amount and status of all indebtedness for borrowed money. This includes all mortgage liens, and other guarantees, and down-payment loans to called pastors and staff.
- 2.3.11 At least once annually, or whenever changes are proposed to be made, a list of the names of the Council Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and a staff member to be named by the Senior Pastor, will be designated as persons authorized to sign on checks or otherwise to initiate disbursements from Christ Our Savior depository or investment accounts.

2.4 Council Subcommittee Policies

- 2.4.1 The Chairperson of any Council subcommittee shall be accountable to the Church Council.
- 2.4.2 All recommendations by a Council subcommittee shall be submitted to the Church Council for approval.

2.5 Personnel Committee

- 2.5.1 Appointment of the Personnel Committee shall be made by the Chair of the Church Council.
- 2.5.2 The committee shall consist of three members. A Chair of the committee shall be chosen by the Chair of the Church Council.
- 2.5.3 The committee shall have no executive or deciding authority.
- 2.5.4 Members of the committee shall be composed of active voting members of Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church.
- 2.5.5 Members may not hold positions on the Board of Elders, Church Council, or be a member of the COS staff nor shall include spouses or extended family of paid COS staff while on the Personnel Committee.
- 2.5.6 A member shall serve for a term of three years on the committee. A member may serve an additional three-year term as appointed by the Chair of the Church Council.
- 2.5.7 Once a member of the Personnel Committee has completed their service on the committee, they cannot become a member on the Board of Elders or the Church Council until one (1) term (three years) has elapsed.

- 2.5.8 A member of the Personnel Committee can be removed by a simple majority vote of the Church Council.
- 2.5.9 Proceedings, conversations, items before the committee, and other committee business shall be held in strict confidence among the committee members and the Church Council. The Personnel Committee shall report to the Chair of the Church Council as needed, regarding the status/issues of the paid staff of the Church or more often as deemed necessary by the Church Council or the Personnel Committee.
- 2.5.10 The specific responsibilities of the Committee are to:
- a. Develop and recommend employee pay scale and benefits, to be reported to Council for annual budget discussions and preparation.
 - b. Create and maintain personnel policies in coordination with the Senior Pastor.
 - c. Create, maintain and use a goal and objective setting and evaluation system in the Evaluation Process for the Staff.
 - d. Review staff performance based on fulfillment of yearly goals and objectives through the Senior Pastor.
 - e. Advise and/or offer guidance to Senior Pastor regarding staff performance issues or concerns.
 - f. Work with the Senior Pastor regarding special recognition and/or awards for staff.
 - g. Provide for the support and well-being of the paid staff of the Church.
 - h. Provide a safe environment in which staff may air concerns, and offer advice and guidance as appropriate to staff members.
 - i. Develop and maintain staff job descriptions.

2.5.11 Qualifications

Where possible, the ideal candidate should have experience or formal education in Human Resources management, business management or non- profit business management, an understanding of and respect for the Lutheran heritage, especially The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, and the ability to apply Biblical values of reconciliation, mediation, and/or conflict resolution.

2.6 Nominating Committee Policies

- 2.6.1 The Nominating Committee shall be assembled as described in the Church Bylaws
- 2.6.2 The Nominating Committee shall follow the procedures described in the Church Bylaws.

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3 Council-Executive Policies

The Senior Pastor shall be empowered to take all actions and make all administrative decisions deemed necessary to achieve the desired outcomes set forth in Section 1, except: (a) those prohibited by secular law or commonly accepted business and professional ethics, (b) those which violate Synodical dictums, or (c) those which violate specific executive limitations set forth herein.

3.1 Scope of Council Policies

The Council shall develop and administer only governance/outcome policies, leaving operational policies to the Senior Pastor, whose authority begins where explicit directives of the Council end.

3.2 Delegation of Authority

Except for assignments to its own subcommittees, the Council shall delegate authority only to the Senior Pastor. Other Staff shall receive their authority from the Senior Pastor or person acting on his behalf.

3.3 Pastor Accountability to Council

The Senior Pastor shall be accountable to the Council for:

- 3.3.1 Submitting a proposed operating budget (i.e. Ministry Action Plan) each September for the following calendar year, including income projections from two or more sources, where possible.
- 3.3.2 Developing and implementing a one-year operating plan each November for the following calendar year, in accordance with the desired outcomes set forth herein and the Council-approved operating budget (i.e. Ministry Action Plan).
- 3.3.3 Annually reviewing and updating the long-term plan, as needed, to achieve longer-term outcomes.
- 3.3.4 Communicating the one-year plan and long-term plan to the congregation.
- 3.3.5 Conducting all ministries in accordance with the Constitution and By-laws of COS.
- 3.3.6 Ensuring compliance of all Staff with COS policies.

- 3.3.7 Providing the Council with adequate information to carry out its functions.
- 3.3.8 Relating with integrity, honesty, and straightforwardness to the Council.
- 3.3.9 Reporting to the Council any incident that may be deemed to significantly affect the congregational life of COS.

3.4 Council Responsibilities

The Council shall be responsible for:

- 3.4.1 Establishing desired outcomes in August to guide COS ministry efforts during the following calendar year.
- 3.4.2 Communicating those desired outcomes to the congregation.
- 3.4.3 Establishing and approving an operating budget prior to the start of the next fiscal (calendar) year.
- 3.4.4 Reviewing reports from the Senior Pastor at every Council meeting relative to the one-year plan (to include, but not limited to: reviewing monthly reports on worship attendance, Sunday School/Bible study attendance, members received through adult confirmation/reaffirmation of faith, and members caring for one another).
- 3.4.5 Monitoring monthly financial reports which show expenses, receipts, fund balances, and overall financial status.
- 3.4.6 Encouraging the Pastors to seek ongoing leadership and management training.
- 3.4.7 Ensuring compliance of all committees and task forces with Council policies.
- 3.4.8 Reviewing personnel policies and staff job descriptions.
- 3.4.9 Establishing protocols for the custodial care of official church records.
- 3.4.10 Approving bank accounts and other investment accounts identified as depositories for Christ Our Savior general and dedicated funds.

- 3.4.11 Acquiring, developing and maintaining the real and private property of Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church, including any building programs or major renovations requiring the borrowing of funds that have been duly authorized by a vote of the congregation at a Voters' Assembly.
- 3.4.12 With respect to any mortgage liens or similar guarantees to secure payment of housing-related loans made by Church Extension Fund for-called professional staff members in connection with a Voters' Assembly authorization to call a staff member:
- (a) approving any assignment of such liens or guarantees, including any extensions or refinancing of such liens or guarantees;
 - (b) establishing terms and conditions applicable to maintaining the liens or guarantees (or any extensions or refinancing) on behalf of a called staff member; and
 - (c) ensuring compliance with all such continuing obligations.

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4 Executive Limitation Policies

4.1 Ethical Considerations

- 4.1.1. The Senior Pastor shall not participate in, nor shall he allow Christ Our Savior to participate in any external activities, political or otherwise, that conflict with the church's mission or ministry; its articles of incorporation, constitution, bylaws or policies; or its best interests, without prior permission of the Church Council.
- 4.1.2. The Senior Pastor shall not develop any ministries, long-range plans, or policies and procedures that do not reflect and contribute to the theology or mission of the church, or to Council-approved "Desired Outcomes."
- 4.1.3. The Senior Pastor shall not allow staff led Christian care programming unless it meets the following criteria:
 - Prior approval by himself or the Church Council.
 - Conforms to the "Desired Outcomes" of the Church Council
 - Offered in the name of Christ, and strives to meet His Great Commission of Matthew 28, and His Great Commandment of John 15.

4.2 Financial Operations

- 4.2.1. The Senior Pastor shall not allow Christ Our Savior to operate in a financial manner which may jeopardize the mission of Christ Our Savior, or is counter to attaining the Desired Outcomes.
- 4.2.2. The Senior Pastor shall not allow financial management to operate outside the generally accepted principles of accounting procedures, or outside the recommendations of the annual audit.
- 4.2.3. The Senior Pastor shall not allow any expenditure that is not sufficiently funded; i.e. itemized in the Council approved Ministry Action Plan (MAP), or specifically approved by Church Council.
- 4.2.4. Unless otherwise approved in the annual budget, the Senior Pastor shall not initiate any expenditure that exceeds \$2,000 without Church Council approval.
- 4.2.5. The Senior Pastor shall create written procedures for the handling of cash.
- 4.2.6. The Senior Pastor shall not accept donations which would compromise the values of the Christian faith.
- 4.2.7. The Senior Pastor shall not invest in Financial instruments that may put Church funds at risk, including stocks and bonds.

- 4.2.8. The Senior Pastor shall not allow purchases of services, products, or programs with a cost exceeding \$5,000 without securing competitive bids or obtaining Council approval.
- 4.2.9. The Senior Pastor shall not borrow money on behalf of the congregation.
- 4.2.10. The Senior Pastor shall not allow staff or volunteers to function in the processing of both receipts and disbursements without appropriate oversight by Treasurer and/or other designee.
- 4.2.11. The senior Pastor shall not use designated funds (i.e. Dedicated Accounts) for any purpose other than that for which they were given, subject to Sec 4.2.14.
- 4.2.12. The Senior Pastor shall not accept Real Property as a donation, without the approval of the Church Council.
- 4.2.13. The Senior Pastor shall ensure that all stocks / bonds that are received as donations to the Church are liquidated as soon as possible, and that the cash is placed in the proper Church fund.
- 4.2.14. With regard to designated accounts, i.e. those with a specific financial goal: when the financial goal is achieved, the Senior Pastor shall ensure that the congregation is informed that the financial goal has been reached. Once the Congregation has been informed, any additional donations received for the account will be placed into the Church general account.

4.3 Asset Protection and Security

- 4.3.1 The Senior Pastor shall not allow the Church to operate without hazard insurance in an amount reasonably sufficient to cover potential facility and equipment losses.
- 4.3.2 The Senior Pastor shall not allow the Church to operate without adequate liability insurance.
- 4.3.3 The Senior Pastor shall not allow the Church to operate without adequate building security.
- 4.3.4 The Senior Pastor shall ensure that the staff maintains a written disaster plan for electronic data necessary for the operation of the Church, including the backup and storage of Church data.

- 4.3.5 The Senior Pastor shall ensure the strict enforcement of all limitations established in the Bylaws, the Church Council Policies, or in specific Church Council resolutions regarding the incurrence of borrowing, indebtedness or liens against the property of Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church.
- 4.3.6 If property of Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church becomes encumbered without the duly-authorized consent of the Voters' Assembly or the Church Council, as applicable, other than encumbrances by mechanics' and other liens in the ordinary course of business, the Senior Pastor shall promptly communicate such encumbrance to Church Council and shall propose appropriate corrective actions.

4.4 Personnel Operations

- 4.4.1 The Senior Pastor shall not allow positions to be undefined, nor shall he allow position descriptions to exist which may inaccurately describe the duties and responsibilities of a professional position at Christ Our Savior.
- 4.4.2. The Senior Pastor shall not allow any program or activity which solicits the involvement of members of Christ Our Savior or uses the name of "Christ Our Savior" without his direct supervision or without that task being assigned to a church staff member.
- 4.4.3 The Senior Pastor shall adhere to federal and state law, and shall obey local ordinances in employment practices at Christ Our Savior including, but not limited to, civil rights law prohibiting discrimination based upon age, race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or any other factor not considered directly pertinent to job performance insofar as the applicable Federal, State and Local laws are in accordance with the confessional standards of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

As a religious corporation and as a member congregation of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, in compliance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Christ Our Savior reserves the right to give preference in employment based on religion.

4.5 Facility Operations

- 4.5.1 The Senior Pastor shall not permit any individual or group to use Christ Our Savior's facilities whose activities might conflict with the mission or ministry of Christ Our Savior, or the policies of the Church Council and Board of Elders. Further, any approved individual or group using church equipment or property

must know in advance and conform to the established policies and procedures of Christ Our Savior.

- 4.5.2 All fundraising activities that are (a) conducted by, or associated with, Christ Our Savior, or (b) otherwise utilize the name, facilities or other resources of Christ Our Savior, must be presented to the Church Council for approval. If approved by the Church Council, staff shall review the proposed activity to confirm that no conflict exists with any other activities, or staff workloads. All recurring fundraising events shall review the activity with the Senior Pastor and staff to confirm that no conflict exists with any other activities. The Senior Pastor shall inform the Church Council of any scheduled recurring fundraising activities.
- 4.5.3 The Senior Pastor shall arrange for supervision by staff or volunteer church members of all individuals or groups using church facilities (For details, refer to the Building Use Policy located in the Church office).
- 4.5.4 The Senior Pastor shall not allow equipment of Christ Our Savior to leave church property without his foreknowledge and approval.
- 4.5.5 The Senior Pastor shall not initiate the purchase or sale of facilities or equipment with a value exceeding \$2,000 without the prior approval of the Church Council, unless indicated in the annual budget.
- 4.5.6 The Senior Pastor shall be responsible for safety and security of personnel on the premises.

4.6 Communication Considerations

The Senior Pastor shall ensure that any formal communication by or on behalf of Christ Our Savior, including but not limited to newsletters, bulletins, brochures, flyers, and letters, conforms to all of the following requirements:

- a. Approved in advance by the Senior Pastor or another professional staff member authorized by him.
- b. Is measurable for effectiveness.
- c. Reflects and contributes to the ministry and mission of Christ Our Savior.
- d. Is truthful, yet Christian in its content.
- e. Is easily assessable to all members of Christ Our Savior.

5 Church Officials

Church Officials are those Church members who hold positions on the Church Council or the Board of Elders. Church Officials must comply with the following requirements:

- a. Church Officials may not be a paid staff employee of the Church.
- b. Church Officials may not hold positions in more than one office simultaneously.
- c. Church Officials may not hold positions on the Church Council, or the Board of Elders, including a representative position, with their spouse, or others within their household. However, they may serve with family members not living within their household. Church Officials will strive to not hold positions on the Church Council or Board of Elders if their spouse is a paid staff member. COS will strive to not have one spouse serving on Church Council and one serving on the Board of Elders.

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APPENDIX

Statement of Confidentiality

Greetings in the name of our risen Savior Jesus Christ! What an awesome God we serve! Thank you for responding to the love that God has shared with you by agreeing to serve Him here in our church family. You will be blessed and those you serve will be too, as the Holy Spirit works through you. Remember that the mission of our congregation echoes Jesus' great commission to all His children found in Matthew 28 – that we should focus on *making disciples who share the love of Jesus Christ in this community and with people everywhere*.

Keeping this in mind, all of us need to take seriously the responsibility we have in letting the love of Christ shine through us. All that we do and say needs to be in line with our greatest teacher – Jesus Christ. Whether you are in a leadership position or are waiting to find that niche in which to serve, people are looking at you and examining the fruit you bear. They might be asking themselves questions, such as:

- Does what they say and do flow from the life of a child of God?
- Do their actions resemble the love of Christ?
- Can I see Christ living in and through them?
- Should I emulate what they say and do?

These are some weighty questions that underscore the importance of putting on Christ in all that we say and do.

All of us here at Christ Our Savior are members of God's team in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are members not because we are on a committee or occupy an office, but because we serve our Savior. What an awesome opportunity that is! As a member of that team, we need to follow God's word as given in the Eighth Commandment – do not tear each other down but rather build each other up.

One of the most important ways we can follow this commandment is to hold sensitive matters in the confidence in which they are entrusted to us. This is especially important for those of us who are (or may soon be) in a position of leadership, whether as a member of staff, Church Council, Board of Elders, or on a specific committee. People in these positions are looked upon as leading the way within our Church family, and as such should be examples of Christ living in and through them.

The best way to ensure that we are living by this standard in our daily lives is to follow a few simple guidelines:

- Assume any item told to you, or discussed at a meeting, is confidential unless specifically stated otherwise.
- Items understood to be confidential should not be discussed with anyone not directly involved in the matter.
- Communications regarding confidential information should be labeled "Confidential" or "Church Business", or other clear designation. This is especially important for shared email accounts.
- Confidentiality transcends any particular position, and as such you should continue to adhere to it even after you leave the office.

Confidentiality is the foundation of trust, and enables people to work together in harmony to achieve the good works we set out to do. Jesus urges us to "Love our neighbor as ourselves" – as we do we will succeed and bring glory to God. We are glad that you are a part of the team!