

April 2020

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Dear Reporters,

This April is unlike any we have ever seen. There have been so many changes in our lives. I take comfort in the fact that we proclaim a changeless God; the same yesterday, today and always.

As we go ahead with our convention planning, it includes planning for the yearly business meeting. We are sending you the information you need to make a decision about a change in our bylaws. Enclosed with this letter are proposed amendments to the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society Bylaws that will be presented to the delegates at the business meeting during the 57th Annual LWMS Convention, God willing, in Athens, Georgia on Friday, June 26, 2020.

Each member congregation is entitled to one voting delegate and one alternate. Please seek to appoint someone from your church before May 15. Give them a copy of the LWMS Bylaws and this amendment with your congregation's decision (to support or not to support) regarding the proposals. A copy of the International Bylaws adopted June 2018 is on the LWMS website, www.lwms.org, under "Members".

Your delegate should have checked the delegate box on the convention registration form (due May 1) to be able to vote at the Friday morning business meeting. If a delegate is unable to attend the business meeting, the alternate must re-register with the Credentials Committee as the delegate prior to 9 a.m. Friday, June 26, 2020. The Central Office acts as the Credentials Committee. Women appointed to serve as delegates and alternates should read their duties which are listed in the Reporter Handbook and are included in this mailing for your convenience.

The proposed amendments to the Bylaws are shown with current wording and proposed new wording. The detailed proposals are enclosed in this mailing, but here is a summary of the proposal:

ARTICLE IX-MEMBER CONGREGATION has been rewritten to simply the wording and give reporters more freedom to carry out their duties in a way that works best in their congregations.

Please direct any questions about the bylaws changes to the Bylaws Committee, bylaws@lwms.org, and any other questions to Central Office, centraloffice@lwms.org, or (414) 321-6212.

We give thanks to God for his goodness and his guidance as we continue the urgent work of sharing his Word.

Together we remain *United to Serve Jesus!*

LWMS Board of Directors and LWMS Bylaws Committee

Enclosures

BE IT RESOLVED that ARTICLE IX - MEMBER CONGREGATION be AMENDED as follows:

Current Wording:

ARTICLE IX. - MEMBER CONGREGATION

Suggested guidelines for organization of member congregation's LWMS mission-directed activities:

A. Organization

1. The women of a congregation may divide into a group or groups or divide within an existing group.
2. A reporter shall be elected or selected for the group or groups, or the congregation. The reporter shall serve as the communicator within the group/groups and congregation. She may serve as chair. She shall serve as the local liaison to the circuit and to LWMS as requested. If a non-circuit congregation, the reporter is the communicator to LWMS.
3. The group, groups, or women of the congregation as a whole may meet monthly or as determined by the women. (It is recommended that they meet at least quarterly.)
4. If a group desires to have a set of bylaws for matters not covered by the LWMS or circuit bylaws, they are free to have one.
5. Each member congregation shall be entitled to one delegate and one alternate at the annual convention.

NOTE: Under any organizational basis, the interest and wishes of the member congregation and pastor must be respected.

B. Spiritual Growth

The pastor may present Bible studies/devotions or serve as discussion leader. The reporter (or other designated women) may act in this capacity with the guidance and approval of the pastor.

C. Mission Awareness

The pastor, reporter, chairman, or other designated women shall present mission information at the meeting. The reporter shall promote the Befriend A Mission program. The official publications and Web site of LWMS may be used as sources of current mission information. The pastor is also a resource for mission information.

D. Mission Offerings

1. Mission offerings through the use of mission boxes or other methods of collection shall be gathered as determined by the women. (It is recommended that they be collected at least semi-annually.)
2. Mission offerings shall be remitted to the LWMS circuit treasurer if a member of a circuit. If not, non-circuit and individual members shall remit mission offerings directly to the LWMS treasurer c/o the Central Office. (See Article X. - Mission Offerings.)

E. Duties of Reporters

1. The reporter(s) shall receive the official LWMS publications.
2. The reporter shall transmit information from the official LWMS publications, area circuit news, plus all other pertinent information to the congregation with the cooperation of the local pastor.
3. The reporter shall supervise the ordering and distribution of mission boxes and official publications of the LWMS.
4. The reporter shall promote the Befriend A Mission program on the congregational level.
5. The reporter shall see to it that the annual membership dues for her congregation are remitted by January 1 of each year to LWMS c/o the Central Office.
6. The reporter shall see to it that a delegate and alternate from her congregation are appointed or elected by May 1 for the annual convention held each June. The delegate will serve to ratify necessary business presented at the annual convention by the board.
7. The reporter(s) of a congregation shall receive the ballots. Only one ballot in each election is to be returned from each congregation; otherwise all ballots from the congregation are invalid.

Proposed Wording

ARTICLE IX. - MEMBER CONGREGATION

NOTE: The Reporter shall work in cooperation with the pastor when carrying out her duties.

A. Organization

1. Congregational membership extends to each confirmed female member of the congregation.
2. A woman shall be designated to serve as the reporter. She shall serve as the LWMS liaison to the congregation.
3. The reporter shall work with the women of the congregation to determine if a formal or informal structure is more effective for the congregation.
4. Each member congregation shall be entitled to one delegate and one alternate at the Annual LWMS Convention.
 - a. The delegate shall serve to ratify necessary business presented at the annual convention by the board.
 - b. Should the delegate be unable to fulfill her duties, the alternate shall serve in her place.
5. Each member congregation shall be entitled to one vote for LWMS International Board positions and mission projects.

B. Spiritual Growth and Mission Awareness

1. The reporter shall present mission-focused Bible studies or devotions as opportunities arise.
2. The reporter shall share prayer requests for missions and missionaries with the congregation.
3. The reporter shall share the Befriend A Mission assignments and kids c.a.r.e. information with the congregation.
4. The reporter shall present mission information to the congregation. This information can come from official LWMS publications, the LWMS and WELS websites, or the reporter's pastor.

C. Mission Offerings

1. Mission offerings shall be gathered through the use of mission boxes or other methods of collection. It is recommended that offerings be collected at least semi-annually.
2. Mission offerings shall be remitted to the LWMS circuit treasurer if the congregation is a member of a circuit. Non-circuit and individual members shall remit mission offerings to the LWMS treasurer, c/o Central Office. (See Article X. - Mission Offerings.)

D. Duties of Reporters

1. The reporter shall receive the official LWMS publications and share that information with the congregation. She shall also share circuit news and all other pertinent mission information.
2. The reporter shall supervise the ordering and distribution of mission boxes and/or mission envelopes and official LWMS publications.
3. The reporter shall share Befriend A Mission information with the congregation.
4. The reporter shall encourage use of kids c.a.r.e. materials as applicable within the congregation.
5. The reporter shall ensure that the annual membership dues for her congregation are remitted by January 1 of each year to LWMS, c/o Central Office.
6. The reporter shall inquire if there are women from the congregation attending the annual convention who are willing to serve as the delegate or alternate. The delegate and alternate shall register as such with Central Office by May 1.
7. The reporter shall receive the official ballot. This is the only ballot that should be returned to Central Office.

REASONING for changes

This section was revised to simplify the bylaws and give reporters more freedom to carry out their duties in the way that works best in their congregation. The revision officially adds the commonly held practice that membership is extended to all confirmed females of a congregation, which has not been previously stated in the bylaws.