

**Christ Lutheran Church**  
**Forest Hills, PA**  
**Membership Policy**

1. Definitions:<sup>1</sup>
  - a. Members are adult members of this Christ Lutheran Church congregation who have been received based upon the requirements and processes described below and who thereby hold certain rights, privileges, and responsibilities, including participation in Holy Communion. They are also referred to as Communicant Members.
  - b. Baptized members are all persons who have been baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (per Matt. 28:19) and who are under the spiritual care of the Pastor of this congregation. This encompasses communicant members as well as children – usually through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade-- who have not yet confirmed their baptismal vow.
  - c. Voting members are those communicant members who choose to participate in the business and other decisions of the congregation as part of the Voters' Assembly and are approved as voting members by a vote of the Voters' Assembly.
2. Requirements: Members must accept the doctrinal standards of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, be familiar with the contents of Luther's Small Catechism, and not be members of organizations whose principles or conduct conflict with the Word of God.
3. Reception Processes: Members are received by approval of the Board of Elders and subsequently by the Voters' Assembly based on one of the following:
  - a. By transfer from a sister congregation with which this congregation has altar and pulpit fellowship.
  - b. Through the rite of confirmation as a youth (typically in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade). Youth confirmation is preceded by a period of formal instruction and examination by the Pastor -- or under his direction -- based on Luther's Small Catechism and the doctrines of the Lutheran church.
  - c. By Confirmation as an adult. Normally adult confirmation is preceded by a period of formal instruction and examination by the Pastor based on Luther's Small Catechism and the doctrines of the Lutheran church. If the person has not previously been baptized, then adult baptism is administered at the time of confirmation.
  - d. By profession of faith (POF) or reaffirmation of faith by adults who have previously been confirmed, either as Lutherans or in another church body. Reception by POF requires discussion with the Pastor to ensure that the person conforms to the requirements for membership in this congregation and may require a period of formal instruction and examination at the discretion of the Pastor and the Elders and depending on the person's church membership history.

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<sup>1</sup> All definitions and requirements are based on the Constitution and By-Laws of Christ Lutheran Church

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4. Termination of membership: Members may be removed from membership in this congregation in any of the following ways.

- a. By transfer to a sister Lutheran congregation the request of the member. This transfer is granted and is issued by the Pastor, subject to approval by the Voters' Assembly for approval at its next meeting.
- b. By Request: A Member may terminate his or her own membership upon request to the Pastor or an Elder who will report the termination to the Voters' Assembly for approval.
- c. By Self-Exclusion: Christ Lutheran Church expects that members will conform their lives to the rule of God's Word including: (1) Attending worship services regularly; (2) Partaking of the Lord's Supper frequently; (3) Faithfully and regularly contribute financially and by use of their time and talents; and (4) Bringing their children to baptism at an early date and to the religious instruction provided by the congregation. If a member joins another church or otherwise demonstrates on a continual basis that he or she is not meeting these expectations then he or she is considered to have "self-excluded" themselves from the fellowship of Christ Lutheran Church. The Elders and Pastor will encourage the member to again participate in the fellowship. Otherwise, recognizing self-exclusion the Voters' Assembly may vote to terminate that person's membership after providing due notice to the person.
- d. By Excommunication: Members who conduct themselves in an unchristian manner and remain impenitent after proper admonition according to Matthew 18:15-18 may be excommunicated by the Voters' assembly according to the due process defined in the Constitution.
- e. Baptized membership termination: When the membership of an adult member is terminated for any of the above reasons, normally the membership of baptized children in the family is also terminated, as the family is no longer under the care of the Pastor.
- f. Baptized children are expected to be confirmed by about the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. If they are not confirmed by then and are not meeting the expectations listed above for a communicant member, this is also considered self-exclusion and the Elders and Pastor will bring the person to the attention of the Voters' assembly for removal from membership.