

This example of an **Employee Handbook** is meant to provide guidelines for congregations and other ministries in establishing working policies within their ministry. It is expected that this resource would be reworked and customized to fit each congregation's particular situation.

Items highlighted in yellow is information that needs to be updated to reflect your individual congregation and its policy requirements.

Items highlighted in blue is important information that your congregation needs to consider and apply accordingly.

Prior to releasing your organization's customized version to employees, the document should be reviewed to make sure it meets local, state, and federal legal requirements.

WELS Human Resources

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[CONGREGATION NAME]

Employee Handbook

"For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter . . ."

Ecclesiastes 8:6

Issued: **[DATE]**
Revised: **[DATE]**

FOREWORD

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy- -think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me--put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you." Philippians 4:8,9

TO: ALL EMPLOYEES

The following pages contain policies and procedures established for individuals employed by **[CONGREGATION NAME]**.

Please read this handbook carefully. Although this does not constitute a contractual agreement, we hope it will provide guidance and answer your questions. Any further questions may be directed to **[RESPONSIBLE PARTY]**.

May God bless you in all you do to the glory of our Lord.

Sincerely,

[NAME OF APPROPRIATE BOARD]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1.000: INTRODUCTION.....	7
1.100: WELCOME!	8
1.200: INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.....	8
1.300: MISSION STATEMENT	8
1.400: STATEMENT OF FAITH	8
1.500: CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY	8
SECTION 2.000: EMPLOYMENT	9
2.100: EMPLOYMENT AT WILL	10
2.200: EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY.....	10
2.300: DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS.....	10
2.400: IMMIGRATION REFORM AND CONTROL ACT OF 1986.....	11
2.450: NEW HIRE ACT	11
2.500: EMPLOYMENT OF MINORS.....	11
2.600: EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES	11
2.700: EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION	11
2.800: JOB DESCRIPTIONS	12
2.900: PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS	13
2.950: INITIAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW	13
SECTION 3.000: TIME OFF & LEAVES OF ABSENCE	14
3.100: VACATION	15
3.200: HOLIDAYS.....	16
3.300: SICK LEAVE	17
3.400: BEREAVEMENT PAY.....	17
3.500: OTHER LEAVES.....	18
3.510: PERSONAL LEAVE.....	18
3.520: JURY DUTY	18
3.530: STUDY LEAVE (OPTIONAL).....	18
3.540: SABBATICAL LEAVE (OPTIONAL).....	18
3.550: MILITARY LEAVE.....	18
3.560: TIME OFF FOR VOTING.....	19
3.570: GENERAL PROVISIONS.....	19
3.600: FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE.....	20
SECTION 4.000: BENEFITS & ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS	23
4.100: INTRODUCTION	24
4.200: GROUP EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLANS	24
4.300: WORKERS COMPENSATION INSURANCE	25
4.400: UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION (FEDERAL & STATE)	25
4.500: CONTINUING EDUCATION ASSISTANCE (OPTIONAL).....	25

SECTION 5.000: PERSONNEL STATUS.....	26
5.100: TARDINESS AND ABSENCE	27
5.150: ATTENDANCE	27
5.200: SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT.....	27
5.250: RESIGNATION.....	27
5.300: INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION	28
5.350: LAYOFF	28
5.400: EXIT INTERVIEW	28
5.450: TIME RECORDS.....	28
5.500: WORK SCHEDULE	28
5.550: MEAL AND REST BREAKS.....	29
5.600: PERSONNEL RECORDS.....	29
5.650: PROMOTION AND TRANSFER	29
SECTION 6.000: COMPENSATION	30
6.100: PAYDAY	31
6.150: ADVANCES.....	31
6.200: TERMINATION CHECKS.....	31
6.250: WAGE AND SALARY REVIEWS.....	31
6.300: PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS	32
6.350: GARNISHMENT	32
6.400: OTHER PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS	32
6.450: OVERTIME	32
SECTION 7.000: DISCIPLINE AND GRIEVANCE	33
7.100: DISCIPLINE AND TERMINATION PROCEDURES.....	34
7.200: DISCIPLINARY ACTION.....	34
7.300: EXCEPTIONS	34
7.400: NON-RENEWAL OF CONTRACT	34
7.500: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE	34
SECTION 8.000: WORKING TOGETHER.....	36
8.100: INTRODUCTION	37
8.200: MORALS POLICY.....	37
8.300: HARASSMENT	37
8.350: SEXUAL HARASSMENT.....	38
8.400: ALCOHOL, DRUGS, AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES	38
8.500: WORKPLACE SAFETY	39
8.550: PROHIBITION OF VIOLENCE.....	39
8.600: OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT/ACTIVITIES.....	39
8.700: CONFLICT OF INTEREST.....	40
8.800: ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY	40
8.900: SOCIAL MEDIA ACCEPTABLE USE.....	42

SECTION 9.000: MISCELLANEOUS.....	44
9.100: PERSONAL APPEARANCE	45
9.150: LOST AND FOUND	45
9.200: SMOKING	45
9.250: ACCESS TO CHURCH PROPERTY	45
9.300: BUSINESS EXPENSE REPORTING	45
9.350: USE OF CHURCH TELEPHONES.....	45
9.400: EMPLOYEE PARKING	46
9.450: EMERGENCY CLOSINGS.....	46
9.500: VISITORS	46
9.550: SOLICITATIONS	46
9.600: CHURCH BULLETIN BOARDS.....	47
9.650: BACKGROUND CHECKS	47
9.700: REFERENCES	47
8.750: HONORARIUM POLICY (OPTIONAL).....	47
SECTION 10.000: EMPLOYEE STATEMENT	48
OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	48
10.000: EMPLOYEE STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	49

[CONGREGATION NAME] EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

SECTION 1.000: INTRODUCTION

	<u>Paragraph</u>
WELCOME!	100
INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT	200
MISSION STATEMENT	300
STATEMENT OF FAITH.....	400
CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY	500

1.100: WELCOME!

Welcome to **[CONGREGATION NAME]**! We consider you to be a gift from God and look forward to working with you as a member of our ministry team. Your gifts and talents which you bring to your position are most appreciated. We are committed to working together with you in service to our Lord through this ministry.

As an employee of **[CONGREGATION NAME]**, you represent this ministry in both your work life and private life. Our hope is that you would always be sensitive to how others may see you as you live out your daily life. We encourage you to strive toward living a life that is an example to others of your relationship with God and your belief in the Church's Mission Statement.

1.200: INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The following pages contain a general overview of procedures and policies established by **[CONGREGATION NAME]** for its employees, as well as an explanation of certain benefits provided with this employment. We want you to feel that, although there are policies and procedures to follow, you also sense participation in the servant role to the members of **[CONGREGATION NAME]**. We hope you will find joy in your work and friendship among your co-workers.

It is important you read, understand, and become familiar with the handbook and comply with the standards, which have been established. Please talk with **[RESPONSIBLE PARTY]** if you have any questions or need additional information.

It is not possible to anticipate every situation that may arise in the workplace or to provide information that answers every possible question. As a result, the church reserves the right to modify, supplement, rescind, or revise any policy, benefit, or provision from time to time, with or without notice, as it deems necessary or appropriate. However, the congregation will always comply with all applicable laws.

If there is a conflict between the provisions, benefits, and policies in this employee handbook and those set forth in the terms of a staff member's call or hire, the terms of the call or conditions of hire shall prevail provided they do not conflict with the Bylaws or constitution of the church.

1.300: MISSION STATEMENT

INSERT CONGREGATION'S MISSION STATEMENT

1.400: STATEMENT OF FAITH

INSERT CONGREGATION'S STATEMENT OF FAITH

1.500: CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY

INSERT CONGREGATIONS HISTORY

[CONGREGATION NAME] EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

SECTION 2.000: EMPLOYMENT

	<u>Paragraph</u>
EMPLOYMENT AT WILL	100
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY.....	200
DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS	300
IMMIGRATION REFORM AND CONTROL ACT OF 1986.....	400
NEW HIRE ACT.....	450
EMPLOYMENT OF MINORS.....	500
EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES.....	600
EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION	700
JOB DESCRIPTIONS.....	800
PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS	900
INITIAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW.....	950

2.100: EMPLOYMENT AT WILL

Employment with **[CONGREGATION NAME]** is voluntarily entered into and the employee is free to resign at will at any time with or without cause. Similarly, subject to federal and state law, **[CONGREGATION NAME]** may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without notice or cause.

In fulfilling its mission to our Lord and church, **[CONGREGATION NAME]** retains the right to recruit, select, hire and to determine the necessary qualifications for employment. **[CONGREGATION NAME]** retains the right to promote, classify, and take corrective action, which may include termination of employment; to determine the design and size of the work force; to assign work; to transfer employee from job to job; to determine work schedules; to effect layoffs; and to make all other management decisions.

Policies set forth in this handbook are not intended to create or constitute contractual obligations of any kind or a contract of employment between **[CONGREGATION NAME]** and any of its employees. The provisions of the handbook have been developed at the discretion of **[CONGREGATION NAME]** and may be amended or canceled at any time, at the sole discretion of **[CONGREGATION NAME]**.

2.200: EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

[CONGREGATION NAME] is in full agreement with the intent of the Civil Rights Laws. It is our firm belief that the basis of employee selection for hiring, promotion, transfer, training, job assignment, hours of work, rate of pay, discipline, termination, working conditions and access to benefits and training should be based on merit and qualifications, not age, race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, mental or physical disability, military or veteran's status or any other illegal factors not considered pertinent to performance.

Because we are a church body, certain positions demand extensive understanding of and commitment to the doctrinal view of The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). For such positions, it is necessary for us to seek out individuals with specific religious training and/or synodical recognition. In addition to the extent allowed by State Law for all positions, the congregation may give preference in hiring on the basis of religion, including persons who are members in good standing of a WELS congregation.

The position of pastor, associate pastor and assistant pastor (if applicable) or positions identifying ordained clergy status as a requirement at **[CONGREGATION NAME]** are required to be held by ordained ministers of WELS. Based on religious belief, only males are ordained ministers in WELS.

2.300: DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

[CONGREGATION NAME] is committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to ensure equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with a disability. **[CONGREGATION NAME]** will make reasonable accommodations for the known disability of an otherwise qualified individual unless undue hardship on the operation of the business would result. Employees who may require a reasonable accommodation should contact **[RESPONSIBLE PARTY]**.

2.400: IMMIGRATION REFORM AND CONTROL ACT OF 1986

The church is committed to full compliance with the federal immigration laws and will not knowingly hire or continue to employ anyone who does not have the legal right to work in the United States.

As a condition of employment, new hires will be required to provide documentation verifying their identity and legal authority to work in the United States, which includes the completion of *Form 1-9, Employment Eligibility Verification*. Completion of the form and presentation of documents must take place within three working days from the date employment begins.

2.450: NEW HIRE ACT

Under federal law, all employers are required to report newly hired and rehired employees to the designated state agency in the state where the employees work within 20 days of the hire/rehire date. This requirement is the result of legislation designed to improve child support enforcement by locating parents who have neglected to pay support.

2.500: EMPLOYMENT OF MINORS

For employees less than 18 years of age, the hours of employment and working conditions strictly follow the regulations set forth by federal and state laws.

2.600: EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES

Relatives of current employees may not occupy a position in which they will be working directly for or supervising a member of their relation. A relative is defined as any person related to the employee by blood, marriage, or adoption. [CONGREGATION NAME] also reserves the right to make appropriate changes if an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest arises. Such changes may include termination of employment. Employees are not guaranteed employment should a conflict arise.

2.700: EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION

To determine eligibility for benefits and overtime status and to ensure compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, [CONGREGATION NAME] classifies its employees as shown below. [CONGREGATION NAME] may review or change employee classifications at any time.

Exempt: Certain job positions are exempt from coverage under the **Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)**. Exempt employees are paid on a salaried basis and are not eligible to receive overtime pay. Some of the types of positions that are exempt from the FLSA are those of a managerial, administrative or a professional nature, although job titles do not control classification as exempt or non-exempt from the FLSA.

Nonexempt: Nonexempt employees are paid on an hourly basis and are eligible to receive overtime pay for overtime hours worked.

In addition to the above classifications, each employee will also be classified in the other employment classifications detailed below:

[IMPORTANT: THE BELOW IS JUST A SAMPLE OF EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATIONS. IT IS UP TO THE CONGREGATION TO ESTABLISH THE VARIOUS CLASSIFICATIONS AND BENEFIT ELIGIBILITY ASSOCIATED WITH EACH CLASSIFICATION.]

Regular Full-Time: Employees who are regularly scheduled to work a minimum of 40 hours weekly and maintain continuous employment status. Generally, these employees are eligible for the full-time benefits package and are subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefits program. Employees should read the information for each specific benefit program for the details on eligibility requirements and limitations.

Regular Part-Time: Those who are regularly scheduled to work fewer than 40 hours weekly, but at least 20 hours weekly, and who maintain continuous employment status. Regular Part-Time employees are eligible for some of the benefits offered by the company and are subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefits program. Employees should read the information for each specific benefit program for the details on eligibility requirements and limitations.

Part-Time: Those who are regularly scheduled to work fewer than 20 hours weekly and who maintain continuous employment status. Part-time employees are generally not eligible to participate in benefit programs. Employees should read the information for each specific benefit program for the details on eligibility requirements and limitations.

Temporary: Those who are hired as interim replacements to temporarily supplement the workforce or to assist in the completion of a specific project and who are temporarily scheduled to work for a limited duration. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not in any way imply a change in employment status. Temporary employees generally are not eligible to participate in benefit programs.

Semi-Retired: Those called based on the ministry needs of the calling body. For benefit purposes, these employees are considered retired (65 or older and enrolled in Medicare), working less than 20 hours a week and subject to the terms of the respective benefit option.

Called: Those who have accepted a synodically-authorized call from a duly authorized synodical board or commission under the ecclesiastical provisions applicable to such calls. The job duties of such positions and the compensation to be paid are subject to synodical policies and resolutions.

Hired: Those employed by **[CONGREGATION NAME]** on behalf of boards, commissions and administrative units without a synodically authorized call.

2.800: JOB DESCRIPTIONS

To mutually understand what is expected of a new employee and for what the employee will be held accountable, a job description is utilized.

Employees will generally be given a job description before they start working. A job description summarizes your duties and responsibilities and gives you important information about your new job. Please read and study your job description carefully and discuss it with your supervisor if you have any questions.

[CONGREGATION NAME] reserves the right to revise and update your job description from time to time, as it deems necessary and appropriate.

2.900: PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Based on actual work performance, a review will be conducted with you by your supervisor on a predetermined date. This is a formal and documented review. Casual and undocumented discussions with your supervisor will also be a part of your performance evaluation.

PURPOSE: All employees participate in a performance review session, at least annually, with their supervisor. This review is intended to provide support for the individual; to improve the performance of the individual by providing meaningful, constructive feedback on the adequacy of performance; and to assist in the development and fulfillment of professional and personal growth goals, as well as the ministry plan of the congregation. Your signature on the review form will serve as notice that the review has taken place and not whether you agree or disagree with the contents.

2.950: INITIAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

In order for you to become acquainted with your new position and for your supervisor to be assured that you are suited to your new position, all new regular employees will have an initial performance review during the first three months after commencing work. Additional reviews may be conducted if performance warrants. Approximately one year after initial review(s) are conducted, annual reviews will be conducted.

(NOTE: YOU MAY INDICATE A SPECIFIC TIME OF THE YEAR WHEN ALL PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS WILL BE CONDUCTED (I.E. - THE MONTH PRIOR TO THE NEW FISCAL YEAR).)

The purpose of the performance evaluation is to let you know how you are doing. Written performance evaluations may include commendation for good work, as well as specific recommendations for improvement.

You will have the opportunity to discuss your performance evaluation with your supervisor. Although you should not wait for formal reviews to ask questions, this is a good time to ask questions and clarify important points. Performance evaluations help the church make important decisions about job placement, training and development, and pay increases. A satisfactory performance evaluation does not guarantee a pay increase, nor does it alter, modify, or amend the employment-at-will relationship between you and the church.

[CONGREGATION NAME] EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

SECTION 3.000: TIME OFF & LEAVES OF ABSENCE

	<u>Paragraph</u>
VACATION.....	100
HOLIDAYS	200
SICK LEAVE.....	300
BEREAVEMENT PAY	400
OTHER LEAVES	500
PERSONAL LEAVE	510
JURY DUTY.....	520
STUDY LEAVE (OPTIONAL).....	530
SABBATICALS (OPTIONAL).....	540
MILITARY LEAVE	550
TIME OFF FOR VOTING.....	560
GENERAL PROVISIONS	570
FAMILY CARE AND MEDICAL LEAVE.....	600

3.100: VACATION

[CONGREGATION NAME] recognized the importance of time off from work to relax, spend time with family and enjoy leisure activities. Regular Full-Time employees are eligible for vacation on their anniversary date based on their length of continuous service with the congregation. Regular Part-Time employees who are regularly scheduled to work 20 or more hours per week will be eligible for vacation on their anniversary date on a pro-rated schedule.

<u>Length of Continuous Service</u>	<u>Vacation</u>
After [INSERT NUMBER] years	10 Days
After [INSERT NUMBER] through [ENTER NUMBER] years	15 Days
After [INSERT NUMBER] years or more	20 Days

An employee's anniversary date corresponds to the month and day the employee was hired as a Regular Full-Time or Regular Part-Time employee.

[NOTE: CONGREGATION MAY CONSIDER IMPLEMENTING AN "ACCRUAL" POLICY WHEREAS THE EMPLOYEE ACCRUES VACATION ON A MONTHLY OR PER PAY PERIOD BASIS (I.E. – EARN 10 DAYS FOR 0-5 YEARS OF SERVICE ACCRUED AT .84 DAYS A MONTH). THE CONGREGATION WOULD DETERMINE IF THERE IS A WAITING PERIOD BEFORE VACATION CAN BE TAKEN (I.E. – 3 MONTHS, 6 MONTHS, ETC.) OR IF VACATION IS AVAILABLE ONCE EARNED.]

Requests for vacation time must be made in writing and should be submitted to the appropriate supervisor for approval at least one (1) month in advance for vacations of at least five (5) days. Shorter notice may be allowed for vacations of four (4) days or less provided it does not interfere with scheduled work. Seniority will apply when more than one person requests the same vacation day(s).

Vacation is a reward for faithful service and employees are encouraged to use all their vacation time as a means of rest and recuperation. Unused vacation **[WILL -OR- WILL NOT]** be carried over into the following year. In no case will pay be granted in lieu of vacation.

[NOTE: TO ENCOURAGE USE OF VACATION, A LIMIT MAY BE PLACED ON THE AMOUNT OF CARRY-OVER PERMITTED TO THE FOLLOWING YEAR OR A "CAP" ON THE AMOUNT AN EMPLOYEE MAY HAVE IN THE "BANK".]

Holidays that fall during a scheduled vacation will be paid as holidays and will not be charged against the employee's vacation.

Regular Full-Time and Regular Part-Time employees will receive pay for unused vacation time for the current year upon termination of employment.

[NOTE: IF THE EMPLOYEE IS ALLOWED TO CARRY OVER VACATION, A "CAP" MAY BE USED TO DETERMINE THE MAXIMUM AN EMPLOYEE IS ELIGIBLE FOR PAYOUT. LENGTH OF SERVICE MAY BE USED IN DETERMINING THE SCHEDULE OF VACATION BENEFITS PAYABLE UPON TERMINATION.]

[NOTE: SOME STATES AND MUNICIPALITIES HAVE LAWS OR RULES THAT PROHIBIT “USE-IT-OR-LOSE-IT” VACATION POLICIES AND SOME HAVE SPECIAL RULES ABOUT PAYMENT FOR ACCRUED VACATION UPON TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT. PLEASE REVIEW STATE AND LOCAL LAWS WHEN ADOPTING A VACATION POLICY.]

3.200: HOLIDAYS

[CONGREGATION NAME] provides paid time off to all Regular Full-Time and Regular Part-Time employees for the below listed Holidays:

[List Observed Holidays]

- New Year’s Day (January 1)
- Good Friday (Friday before Easter)
- Memorial Day (last Monday in May)
- Independence Day (July 4)
- Labor Day (first Monday in September)
- Thanksgiving (fourth Thursday in November)
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve (December 24th)
- Christmas Day (December 25th)

[NOTE: CONGREGATION MAY ALLOW UP TO TWO FLOATING HOLIDAYS IN ADDITION TO ALREADY DESIGNATED HOLIDAYS.]

The following general provisions apply to holiday pay:

1. Holiday pay will be at the employee’s regular straight-time rate times their regularly scheduled hours (not to exceed 8 hours).
2. Holidays will be observed on the calendar day designated by **[CONGREGATION NAME]** for observance.
3. Holidays falling on Saturday will be observed on Friday and holidays falling on Sunday will be observed on the following Monday.
4. A holiday that falls on a scheduled vacation day or on an employee's time off for sickness will be recorded as holiday time.
5. An unexcused absence the day before or the day after a holiday will result in loss of holiday pay.
6. An employee is eligible to receive Holiday pay **[AS OF THEIR HIRE DATE -OR- AFTER A WAITING PERIOD OF [ENTER NUMBER] MONTHS.]**
7. Time off granted in accordance with this policy shall not be credited as time worked for the purposes of computing overtime.

Holidays may be amended or canceled at any time at the sole discretion of **[CONGREGATION NAME]**.

3.300: SICK LEAVE

[NOTE: A NUMBER OF STATES AND MUNICIPALITIES HAVE ENACTED PAID SICK LEAVE LAWS AND NEW LAWS CONTINUE TO BE ENACTED. REVIEW STATE AND LOCAL LAWS BEFORE FINALIZING A SICK LEAVE POLICY.]

Sick leave credits are awarded to Regular Full-Time employees at the rate of **[INSERT NUMBER]** hours per month, for a total of **[INSERT NUMBER]** hours in each calendar year of employment. Sick leave credits are awarded to Regular Part-Time employees as stated above on a pro-rated basis. Months worked include the month of employment if the employment began on or before the 15th day. Sick leave must be used concurrently with any FMLA leave when the employee is on FMLA leave due to the employee's own serious health condition or as otherwise permitted under applicable law.

It is your responsibility to contact your supervisor as soon as possible when you are unable to report for work. A physician's certification is required for any illness beyond **[INSERT NUMBER]** working days.

Sick leave credits cannot accumulate beyond the calendar year and no pay for unused sick leave will be granted at year-end or upon termination of employment.

[NOTE: CONGREGATION MAY CONSIDER IMPLEMENTING A PERSONAL TIME OFF (PTO) POLICY RATHER THAN SEPARATE VACATION, SICK AND PERSONAL LEAVE POLICIES. THIS ALLOWS THE CONGREGATION TO CREATE ONE "BUCKET" OF TIME THAT CAN BE USED FOR THESE TIME OFF NEEDS.]

3.400: BEREAVEMENT PAY

Time off with pay for Regular Full-Time and Regular Part-Time employees may be approved in the event of a death in your family.

If death should occur in your immediate family (spouse, child, parent, parent-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law), up to **[INSERT NUMBER]** days will be approved.

If there is a death of a close relative (grandparent, brother, brother-in-law, sister, sister-in-law), up to **[INSERT NUMBER]** days will be approved.

If additional time off is needed and approved, the additional time taken will be charged to vacation, **[INSERT OTHER TYPES OF AVAILABLE LEAVE]**, and/or forfeit time.

Bereavement pay will be at the employee's regular straight-time rate times their regularly scheduled hours (not to exceed 8 hours). Time off granted in accordance with this policy shall not be credited as time worked for the purposes of computing overtime.

[NOTE: CHECK STATE AND LOCAL LAWS FOR ANY ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.]

3.500: OTHER LEAVES

The church makes leaves of absence without pay available to employees who have completed at least one year of continuous service, subject to state and federal laws, for any length of time up to a maximum number of days that is recommended by the appropriate board or committee and approved by Church Council. Written requests must state the reason for the leave, as well as the beginning and ending dates. Requests for leaves will be granted at the sole discretion of the church, based on the facts and circumstances surrounding each individual request. Leaves of absence are also granted where state and/or federal law mandates. In particular, the church complies with leaves for jury duty and in situations where the State Family Care and Medical Leave Act or the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act applies. In any situation regarding leaves of absence, the employee should notify the appropriate supervisor at the earliest possible date to discuss the leave.

3.510: PERSONAL LEAVE

Personal Leave - a leave of absence for personal reasons such as doctor, dentist, and other personal appointments. A total of **[INSERT NUMBER]** days leave is granted **[WITH/WITHOUT]** salary or pay status changed.

3.520: JURY DUTY

[CONGREGATION NAME] encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities by serving on jury duty when required.

Employees will be granted a leave of absence, **[WITH OR WITHOUT]** pay, to serve on jury duty, as required by law.

Upon completion of jury duty, a Verification of Attendance Form must be presented to the church. Employees who are excused from jury duty for the day, or are excused early, should report to work when it is practical to do so.

If an employee is called to serve on jury duty at a time that would unreasonably interfere with normal business operations, the church may request that the required service be rescheduled for a later date that would be more convenient for the church.

[NOTE: CHECK STATE AND LOCAL LAWS FOR ANY ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO JURY DUTY AND PAY WHILE AN EMPLOYEE SERVES ON A JURY.]

3.530: STUDY LEAVE **(OPTIONAL)**

3.540: SABBATICAL LEAVE **(OPTIONAL)**

3.550: MILITARY LEAVE

[CONGREGATION NAME] supports the military obligations of all employees and grants leaves for uniformed service in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

During time away from the job for military training, an employee will be compensated by the military and may supplement pay using banked vacation hours. Employees are not required to use banked vacation hours during training sessions and may be absent without pay. Absences should be cleared with the appropriate person well in advance of leaving for training or active duty.

3.560: TIME OFF FOR VOTING

[CONGREGATION NAME] recognizes that voting is a right and privilege of being a citizen of the United States and encourages employees to exercise their right to vote. In almost all cases, you will have sufficient time outside working hours to vote. If for any reason you think this won't be the case, contact your supervisor to discuss scheduling accommodations.

[NOTE: CHECK STATE AND LOCAL REQUIREMENTS SINCE SOME REQUIRE SPECIFIC TIME OFF FROM WORK AND EVEN PAY TO VOTE.]

3.570: GENERAL PROVISIONS

The following general provisions apply to all leaves of absence:

1. A request for an extension of a leave of absence, when possible, must be made in writing prior to the expiration date of the original leave, and when appropriate, must be accompanied by a physician's written statement that certifies the need for the extension.
2. Failure to return to work on the first workday following the expiration of an approved leave of absence may be considered a voluntary termination.
3. Coverage under the church's group employee benefit plans will be continued on the following basis:

[INSERT INFORMATION]

4. Employees on leave of absence will be subject to lay off on the same basis as employees who are actively at work.
5. Employees on leave of absence must communicate with the church on a regular basis, at least once each month, regarding their status and anticipated return to work date.
6. Employees who falsify the reason for their leave of absence may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including possible termination.
7. A leave of absence must be approved in advance, in writing, by the **[APPROPRIATE APPROVING BODY]** when possible, except in situations where mandatory approval is prohibited by law.

3.600: FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

[NOTE: CHECK STATE AND LOCAL LAWS FOR ANY ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS AS SOME STATES HAVE FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE LAWS AND PAID SICK LEAVE LAWS THAT MAY BE MORE GENEROUS FOR THE EMPLOYEES IN THAT STATE OR CITY.]

[CONGREGATION NAME] recognizes that leave of absence from active employment may be necessary for family or medical reasons. The following leave of absence policy complies with the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA).

Employees eligible for family and medical leave are those who **(based on your individual congregation):**

1. **[CONGREGATION NAME]** employs 50 or more employees within a 75-mile radius;
2. Have been employed by **[CONGREGATION NAME]** for at least 12 months; and
3. Have worked at least 1,250 hours during the previous 12-month period for **[CONGREGATION NAME]**

An eligible employee may take leave for the following reasons:

1. For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or birth of child;
2. To care for the employee's child after birth or placement for adoption or foster care;
3. To care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter or parent who has a serious health condition;
or
4. The serious health condition that makes the employee unable to work.

Length of Leave: An eligible employee may be entitled up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave, job protected leave within a 12-month period without loss of seniority or benefits. The amount of leave available to an employee at any given time will be calculated by looking backward at the amount of leave taken in the 12-month period immediately preceding the requested leave. An employee who fails to return to work immediately following expiration of the authorized leave period is subject to termination. All leave taken, which would qualify under FMLA (e.g. workers' compensation leave), will be counted against the employee's leave entitlement under FMLA.

Military Family Leave Entitlements: Eligible employees with a spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or called to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include addressing issues that arise from (1) short notice of deployment (limited to up to seven days of leave); (2) attending certain military events and related activity; (3) arranging childcare and school activities; (4) addressing certain financial and legal arrangements; (5) attending certain counseling sessions; (6) spending time with covered military family members on short-term temporary rest and recuperation leave (limited to up to five days of leave); (7) attending post-deployment reintegration briefings; (8) arranging care for or providing care to a parent who is incapable of self-care; and (9) any additional activities agreed upon by the employer and employee that arise out of the military member's active duty or call to active duty.

The FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered servicemember during a single 12-month period. A covered servicemember is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the servicemember medically unfit to perform his or her duties and for which the servicemember is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

Definition of Serious Health Condition: A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school, work, or other daily activities.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than three consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

Company Responsibilities: The employer will inform employees requesting leave whether they are eligible under the FMLA. If they are, the notice will specify any additional information required as well as the employees' rights and responsibilities. If employees are not eligible, the Company will provide a reason for the ineligibility.

The employer will inform employees if leave will be designated as FMLA-protected and the amount of leave counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. If the employer determines that the leave is not FMLA-protected, the employer will notify the employee.

Employee Notification and Certification: An employee who expects or anticipates taking family or medical leave is required to notify the [RESPONSIBLE PARTY] preferably in writing of the expected date of commencement and expected duration of the leave at least 30 days in advance of the leave, or if the need for the leave is not foreseeable, as soon as practicable. In cases where need for the leave is foreseeable, an employee's failure to provide 30 days' notice prior to taking leave may result in denial or delay of leave.

If an employee takes a leave of absence because of the serious health condition of the employee or employee's "family member," the employee must submit to the [RESPONSIBLE PARTY] written medical certification from a health care provider of the serious health condition. Failure to provide such certification may result in a denial or delay of leave. Your employer reserves the right to require that the employee receive a second (and possibly a third) opinion from a health care provider (at the employer's expense) certifying the serious health condition of the employee or the employee's "family member." The employer reserves the right to require the employee to provide re-certification of the medical condition for which leave is taken.

Before returning to work, an employee who is on a leave of absence as a result of his or her own serious health condition must submit a health care provider's written certification that the employee is able to return to work. Failure to provide such certification may result in the delay or denial of job restoration. During the employee's leave, the employer may also periodically inquire as to the employee's intent to

return to work.

Intermittent or Reduced Leave: Leave taken because of the employee's or "family member's" serious health condition may be taken on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis when medically necessary. If an employee seeks leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis, the medical certification submitted should state that the intermittent or reduced schedule leave is medically necessary. The employer may require an employee taking intermittent or reduced schedule leave to transfer temporarily to an alternative position for which the employee is qualified that better accommodates intermittent or reduced schedule leave or may modify the employee's current position to better accommodate the employee's recurring periods of leave.

Substitution of Paid Leave: During a family or medical leave provided under this policy, an employee shall first exhaust all available vacation and/or paid leave time before continuing such leave on an unpaid basis. To use paid leave for FMLA leave, employees must comply with the employer's normal paid leave policies.

Benefits and Protections: During FMLA leave, the employer must maintain the employee's health insurance coverage under any "group health plan" on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work.

Use of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee's leave.

Job Restoration: Upon return from family or medical leave in accordance with this policy, the employee will be returned to the same or an equivalent position with no loss in benefits accrued prior to the leave of absence. An employee who does not return to work at the end of an authorized leave is subject to termination.

Certain "key employees" may not be eligible to be restored to the same or an equivalent job at the conclusion of their leave. The employer will notify such employees of their "key employee" status and the conditions under which job restoration may be denied, if applicable.

Unlawful Acts by Employers: The FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer (1) to interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided under the FMLA; or (2) to discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by the FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to the FMLA.

Enforcement: An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer.

The FMLA does not affect any federal or state law prohibiting discrimination or supersede any state or local law or collective bargaining agreement which provides greater family or medical leave rights.

[CONGREGATION NAME] EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

SECTION 4.000: BENEFITS & ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

	<u>Paragraph</u>
INTRODUCTION.....	100
GROUP EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLANS	200
WORKERS COMPENSATION INSURANCE	300
UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION (FEDERAL & STATE).....	400
CONTINUING EDUCATION ASSISTANCE (OPTIONAL)	500

4.100: INTRODUCTION

The congregation maintains a benefit program to help meet the needs of its employees. The following information in this section outlines your benefits as an employee of **[CONGREGATION NAME]**.

4.200: GROUP EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLANS

[NOTE: REFER TO THE WELS BENEFIT PLANS WEBSITE AT <https://welsbpo.net/> FOR INFORMATION RELATED TO AVAILABLE BENEFITS AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR CALLED AND NON-CALLED WORKERS.]

Because of its Christian concern for its employees, **[CONGREGATION NAME]** provides benefits to help its employees with expenses related to illness, injury, or death, as well as to provide retirement income.

Benefits Provided:

- WELS Pension Plan (Retirement Benefits for Called Workers)
- WELS VEBA (Medical, Vision)
- Long-Term Disability
- Shepherd Plan (403b Retirement Plan)
- Group Term Life Insurance
- Dental Insurance
- **[List other Benefits Offered]**

Eligibility: Benefits eligibility is dependent upon a variety of factors including classification.

The provisions of the WELS Benefit Plans supersede any information provided below. For further details about the benefits of these Plans, refer to the WELS Benefit Plans website at <https://welsbpo.net>.

Enrollment: New worker enrollment can be completed online via the health enrollment form through the WELS Benefits Service Center website at www.wels.bswift.com or by contacting the WELS Benefits Service Center at 1-800-487-8322.

Cost: **[CONGREGATION NAME]** pays 100 percent of the cost for the WELS Pension Plan.

[THE CONGREGATION SHOULD DETAIL IF THE VEBA HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE IS PAID IN FULL BY THE CONGREGATION OR IF THE EMPLOYEE WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYING A PORTION OF THE PREMIUM. IF OFFERING OTHER INSURANCE COVERAGE (I.E. – DENTAL, GROUP TERM LIFE, ETC.), DETAIL IF COVERAGE IS PAID IN FULL BY THE CONGREGATION OR IF THE EMPLOYEE WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYING A PORTION OF THE PREMIUM. THE CONGREGATION WILL ALSO WANT TO DETAIL ANY PREMIUM COST-SHARING AMONG THE DIFFERENT EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATIONS.]

Termination of Benefits: Coverage for you and your dependents through WELS VEBA will discontinue effective at the end of the calendar month in which termination occurs. Information about extension of coverage on an individual basis will be mailed to you by the Plans' office.

4.300: WORKERS COMPENSATION INSURANCE

[CONGREGATION NAME] maintains Worker's Compensation coverage in compliance with applicable law at no cost to the employee. This insurance provides coverage for any injury or illness sustained in the course of employment that requires medical, surgical, hospital or rehabilitation treatment and provides a portion of lost wages.

[CONGREGATION NAME] complies with applicable state and federal law concerning leaves for work-related illness or injury. It is important that employees report any work-related injuries or illness to their supervisor within 48 hours of the incident or as soon as it happens. Employees on leave because of work-related illness or injury will be reviewed on an individual basis by **[RESPONSIBLE PARTY]**.

4.400: UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION (FEDERAL & STATE)

Churches and religious organizations are exempt from paying unemployment compensation taxes imposed under the Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA) under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRC.

[NOTE: CHECK WITH YOUR STATE UNEMPLOYMENT TAX LAWS TO DETERMINE IF YOUR CONGREGATION IS EXEMPT FROM UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AT THE STATE LEVEL.]

Should you decide to leave the employment of the church or you are involuntarily terminated, you **[ARE OR ARE NOT]** eligible for either state or federal unemployment claims. **THIS IS DUE TO THE CHURCH BEING EXEMPT FROM FEDERAL UNEMPLOYMENT TAX AND BEING EITHER EXEMPT OR OPTING NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STATE UNEMPLOYMENT TAX PROGRAM.**

4.500: CONTINUING EDUCATION ASSISTANCE (OPTIONAL)

Where it can be demonstrated that the congregation will benefit from an employee's participation in a job-related program or professional organization, the related expenses may at the congregation's sole discretion be **[REIMBURSED OR PARTIALLY REIMBURSED]** at **[INSERT PERCENT]** up to a maximum annual benefit of **[MAXIMUM AMOUNT]**. Requests for reimbursement of authorized expenses related to the educational program or professional organization must be approved in advance by the Church Council.

[CONGREGATION MAY WANT TO SET A SATISFACTORY COURSE GRAD OF C OR HIGHER TO RECEIVE REIMBURSEMENT. MAY WANT TO HAVE THE EXPECTATION THAT EMPLOYEE REMAINS WITH THE CONGREGATION FOR AT LEAST TWO YEARS FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF THE COURSE OR POSSIBLY FORFEIT THE REIMBURSED AMOUNT (NOT APPLICABLE FOR CALLED WORKERS WHO LEAVE TO TAKE A NEW CALL). TO MAINTAIN ELIGIBILITY, EMPLOYEES MUST REMAIN ACTIVELY ON PAYROLL AND PERFORMING THEIR JOB SATISFACTORY THROUGH THE COMPLETION OF EACH COURSE.]

[CONGREGATION NAME] EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

SECTION 5.000: PERSONNEL STATUS

	<u>Paragraph</u>
TARDINESS AND ABSENCE	100
ATTENDANCE	150
SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT.....	200
RESIGNATION	250
INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION.....	300
LAYOFF	350
EXIT INTERVIEW	400
TIME RECORDS	450
WORK SCHEDULE	500
BREAKS AND MEAL PERIODS	550
PERSONNEL RECORDS.....	600
PROMOTION AND TRANSFER	650

5.100: TARDINESS AND ABSENCE

It is important that employees are present at the start of their day to promptly begin work. Other staff and congregation members rely on workers being at their assigned tasks at scheduled times so that the work of ministry can be carried out smoothly.

5.150: ATTENDANCE

Employees should contact their supervisor as soon as it is determined that they will be unable to report to work as scheduled. In the case of an absence due to illness, calling the supervisor at home the night before or prior to the scheduled start of the workday allows adequate time to arrange a replacement.

Tardiness or absence is considered "excused" only when the employee calls ahead of time and the tardiness or absence is for a compelling reason. If contact or a call cannot be made ahead of time due to physical limitations, earliest contact is required. The church shall determine what constitutes a compelling reason for an absence or tardiness. Tardiness or absence for a non-compelling reason and failing to call the supervisor according to church policy will be considered "unexcused".

A consistent pattern of absence or tardiness, whether excused or unexcused, may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

An employee who fails to call in or report to work for **[INSERT NUMBER]** consecutive days, may be considered to have abandoned their job and may be terminated.

5.200: SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT

The employment relationship between the congregation and its employees is of an at-will nature. This means that the employee is hired for an indefinite period of time. Thus, the employee is free to leave at any time they believe is in their best interest. Similarly, the church may terminate the employment relationship whenever it deems appropriate.

The effect of employment termination on an employee's benefits depends on the particular benefit program. The employee will be notified by the WELS Benefit Plans office and/or congregation of the benefits that may be continued and the terms, conditions and limitations of such continuation.

Former employees who voluntarily resign, retire or who are laid off are not guaranteed re-employment. Employees terminated from employment for reasons other than voluntary resignation, retirement or layoff are ineligible for re-employment.

[NOTE: CHECK STATE LAW FOR ANY ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS REGARDING FINAL PAY, TERMINATION NOTICES AND BENEFITS CONTINUATION.]

5.250: RESIGNATION

When an employee voluntarily resigns, a two-week notice of an employee's intent to leave employment is generally desired, but not required. Written notice should include the reason for leaving, the last day of

work, an address where the employee can be reached in the future and be signed and dated by the employee.

5.300: INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION

An employee may be involuntarily terminated when the church determines that continued employment will not be to the benefit of the employee or church. Since the employment relationship of employees and the congregation is of an at-will nature, an employee can be dismissed without notice.

5.350: LAYOFF

When conditions dictate that the church must reduce staff through a layoff, the church at its sole discretion will determine which employees shall be laid off. Layoffs will be communicated to affected employee(s) at the earliest reasonable time to allow for productive transition.

5.400: EXIT INTERVIEW

An exit interview with the employee conducted by a member of the appropriate church board or committee may be held shortly after resignation or termination. This opportunity will be used to clarify, as necessary, the circumstances for leaving, review any accrued benefits to be paid, checkout procedures (return of any church owned property), and final pay details.

5.450: TIME RECORDS

All nonexempt employees are required to complete accurate weekly time reports showing all time worked. These records are required by governmental regulations and are used to calculate regular and overtime pay. At the end of each week, the employee and his or her supervisor must sign the time sheet attesting to its correctness before forwarding to **[RESPONSIBLE PARTY]** for payroll processing.

Employees should not mark or sign the time record of another employee or knowingly allow someone else to mark or sign their time record. Employees may not begin work early or work late unless the immediate supervisor has approved this extra time for purposes of pay. (See section on **Overtime Pay.**)

Any change or correction made in or on a time record should be initialed by both the employee and their supervisor.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including possible termination.

5.500: WORK SCHEDULE

The standard workweek will run from Sunday at 12:00 am until the following Saturday at 11:59 pm **[WORK WEEK TO BE UPDATED TO ACCOMMODATE INDIVIDUAL CONGREGATION]**. Supervisors will advise employees of the times their schedules will normally begin and end. Staffing needs and operational demands may require periodic variations in starting and ending times, as well as variations in the total hours that may be scheduled each day and week.

5.550: MEAL AND REST BREAKS

Non-exempt employees who work at least 5 hours a day will receive an unpaid meal period of **[INSERT THE AMOUNT OF TIME GIVEN]**. However, non-exempt employees who do not work more than 6 hours a day may voluntarily waive their right to a meal period.

Meal periods will be scheduled in consultation with the supervisor so that the normal operation of the organization is disrupted as little as possible.

Non-exempt employees are entitled to a 15-minute paid rest period for every four hours worked. The break should normally be taken as close to the middle of the work period as possible.

[NOTE: THERE MAY BE STATE OR LOCAL LAWS PERTAINING TO MEAL AND REST BREAKS WITH DIFFERENT REQUIREMENTS THAT MUST BE CONSIDERED.]

5.600: PERSONNEL RECORDS

The congregation needs to have complete and accurate information on each of its workers. This includes all non-exempt, exempt, called, contracted, full-time and part-time employees. Employees may review their records upon request. The contents of personnel records are confidential and access to them is limited to those directly involved in the supervision and/or retention of the individual employee.

It is important that the church always have current information about its employees. Employees should immediately notify the congregation of changes in name, address, phone number, or marital status, etc. If for some reason there is a need to change a name and/or Social Security number, original documentation authorizing the change should be reviewed.

5.650: PROMOTION AND TRANSFER

The church's intent is to give qualified employees preference over others when filling job openings within the church. Openings should be announced to existing staff and sufficient time allowed for existing staff to respond prior to advertising the opening to the church-at-large or the general public. However, because of the experience, skills, and educational requirements of many jobs, promotions from within the church are not always possible.

An employee's past performance, experience, qualifications, and potential are factors that will be considered in making promotion decisions. The individual's personnel records shall be the official source of information.

[CONGREGATION NAME] EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

SECTION 6.000: COMPENSATION

	<u>Paragraph</u>
PAYDAY	100
ADVANCES	150
TERMINATION CHECKS	200
WAGE AND SALARY REVIEWS	250
PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS	300
GARNISHMENT	350
OTHER PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS	400
OVERTIME	450

6.100: PAYDAY

[CONGREGATION NAME] has adopted the following pay schedule:

[INDICATE PAY SCHEDULE ADOPTED BY CONGREGATION]

- Weekly Pay Schedule **[DETAIL WEEKLY PAY DATES]**
- Bi-Weekly Pay Schedule **[DETAIL BI-WEEKLY PAY DATES]**
- Semi-Monthly Pay Schedule **[DETAIL SEMI-MONTHLY PAY DATES]**
- Monthly Pay Schedule **[DETAIL MONTHLY PAY DATES]**

In the event that a payday falls on a weekend or holiday, the payday will be the immediately preceding banking day.

Employees are responsible for completing their timecards and having their supervisors sign them. The supervisor will forward the timecard to the proper congregational officer so that it will be included in the payroll.

Checks may be distributed during the workday, mailed to the employee's home or direct deposited into the employee's bank account.

[NOTE: CHECK STATE LAW FOR ANY REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO FREQUENCY OF PAY AND WHETHER EMPLOYERS MAY REQUIRE EMPLOYEES TO BE PAID BY DIRECT DEPOSIT.]

6.150: ADVANCES

Salary advances **[ARE -OR- ARE NOT]** permitted.

6.200: TERMINATION CHECKS

Termination checks shall be released upon return of all building keys and other congregational property which may have been entrusted to the care of the employee.

[NOTE: CHECK STATE LAW FOR ANY ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS REGARDING FINAL PAY.]

6.250: WAGE AND SALARY REVIEWS

The wage and salary structure for employees of the congregation are reviewed and proposed by the appropriate board or committee and approved by the Church Council.

Individual wage and salary reviews may occur at least once each year for every employee. Salary increases may or may not result from such salary reviews. Employee salary reviews may be held in conjunction with performance reviews.

6.300: PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

The law requires that **[CONGREGATION NAME]** make certain deductions from every employee's compensation. Among these are applicable federal, state and local income taxes and court ordered garnishments.

6.350: GARNISHMENT

Garnishments are court ordered repayments of financial obligations by an individual. When so ordered, your employer must deduct the amount from your pay and remit it to the designated entity.

6.400: OTHER PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

Other payroll deductions are strictly voluntary and must be requested in writing by the employee. By offering these deductions, the congregation provides their workers with the opportunity to save dollars for their future and possibly to experience current tax savings not permitted through non-payroll deducted savings plans.

Voluntary deductions may include: Church Extension Fund Payroll Savings, WELS Shepherd Plan (403b) and Flexible Spending Arrangements.

6.450: OVERTIME

Overtime compensation will be paid to non-exempt employees for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a seven-day workweek. The overtime rate of pay is one and one-half times the regular hourly rate of pay. Overtime is to be worked only when specifically requested and approved by the supervisor.

Paid leave such as Holiday, Vacation, Sick, Personal, Bereavement and Jury Duty does not apply toward time worked.

Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime pay.

Overtime pay will not be routinely authorized.

[NOTE: THERE MAY BE STATE OR LOCAL LAWS WITH DIFFERENT REQUIREMENT THAT MUST BE CONSIDERED.]

[CONGREGATION NAME] EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

SECTION 7.000: DISCIPLINE AND GRIEVANCE

	<u>Paragraph</u>
DISCIPLINE AND TERMINATION PROCEDURES	100
DISCIPLINARY ACTION.....	200
EXCEPTIONS.....	300
NON-RENEWAL OF CONTRACT.....	400
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE.....	500

7.100: DISCIPLINE AND TERMINATION PROCEDURES

Employment is with the mutual consent of you and the church. Consequently, both the employee and the church have the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause or advance notice. (See Employment at Will, paragraph 2.105)

7.200: DISCIPLINARY ACTION

If you fail to follow the church's policies regarding job performance and conduct, you are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. For other than major infractions, which can result in immediate termination, you will normally first be verbally counseled about the problem with the intent of clearing up any misunderstanding and establishing behavior expected in the future. Disciplinary action will be documented noting the type of disciplinary action taken, the date, and the subject matter addressed. Violation of policies can result in ineligibility for merit increases, probation, suspension, or termination of employment.

7.300: EXCEPTIONS

It is important to note that the severity of the offense may warrant not following a sequence of reminder-warning-reprimand-penalty, and that the disciplinary action taken may begin at any level. A reprimand, for example, could be given for a serious first offense, and your immediate dismissal could result without prior warning or suspension in the case of significant acts of misconduct or serious dereliction of duty as determined by the church in its sole discretion.

7.400: NON-RENEWAL OF CONTRACT

If you are a contract employee, **[CONGREGATION NAME]** may choose not to renew your contract for any reason in its sole discretion including changes in fiscal or personnel circumstances.

7.500: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The Church recognizes that occasionally employees may become dissatisfied with its practices, policies, or other work situations. The Church encourages a quick and reasonable resolution of any such situations, difficulties, or complaints. The following steps are suggested guidelines for the employee to ensure that the situations, difficulty, or complaint is most effectively and efficiently handled.

1. Where possible, the employee is to first bring the matter orally to the supervisor's attention. (A full discussion and understanding of the matter by both the employee and supervisor are essential at this step.) The matter should be put in writing by the supervisor at this time.
2. If the grievance is not resolved between the employee and the immediate supervisor or if an employee wishes to bypass a discussion with the immediate supervisor, the employee should then discuss the matter with the appropriate **[COMMITTEE OR BOARD]** chairperson.
3. If the grievance is still not resolved, the employee will put the grievance in written form and send it to the president of the church who will convene a meeting with the employee and appropriate

[COMMITTEE OR BOARD] chairperson to discuss the grievance.

4. The next steps will be to review the complaint with the Church Council and finally the Voters' Assembly.

In all instances, employees are eligible to take full advantage of their rights in accordance with the church's Bylaws, and in the case of called workers, the Synodical Appeals Procedure.

[CONGREGATION NAME] EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

SECTION 8.000: WORKING TOGETHER

	<u>Paragraph</u>
INTRODUCTION.....	100
MORALS POLICY.....	200
HARASSMENT.....	300
SEXUAL HARASSMENT.....	350
ALCOHOL, DRUGS, AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES.....	400
WORKPLACE SAFETY.....	500
PROHIBITION OF VIOLENCE.....	550
OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT/ACTIVITIES.....	600
CONFLICT OF INTEREST.....	700
ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION.....	800
SOCIAL MEDIA ACCEPTABLE USE.....	900

8.100: INTRODUCTION

At **[CONGREGATION NAME]**, it is important that all employees work together as a team so that the rights and interests of both the congregation and employees are assured. Common sense, good judgment and acceptable personal behavior on the part of all employees will make **[CONGREGATION NAME]** a desirable place to work.

8.200: MORALS POLICY

The command of Christ is that His mission for the Church should be carried out according to His will, and that in doing so, we maintain decency and order in our personal and professional lives. No practice or behavior inconsistent with or in conflict with individual moral and ethical conduct required by Scripture shall be tolerated from employees. Any failure to maintain these ethical and moral standards may be grounds for counseling and/or immediate dismissal from employment.

Persons who hold positions of responsibility or positions that put them and **[CONGREGATION NAME]** in the public eye are often regarded as role models and exemplars of Christian leadership. These persons may be held to a stricter standard of behavior and practice than other employees in both their work and their personal lives. Counseling may be required and these employees may face dismissal for behavior and practices deemed by **[CONGREGATION NAME]** to be inappropriate to fulfilling their function as role model and leader in carrying out Christ's mission on earth.

8.300: HARASSMENT

The church will not tolerate any form of harassment including sexual harassment or hazing. Harassment by management, supervisors, coworkers or non-employees who are in the workplace is absolutely prohibited. A supervisor who harasses or solicits favors (including sexual favors) from an unwilling subordinate in return for promotions, increased wages, continuance of the job or any similar purpose will be disciplined which may include termination of employment.

Unlawful harassment includes, but is not limited to, epithets; slurs; jokes; pranks; innuendo; comments; written or graphic material; stereotyping; or other threatening, hostile, or intimidating acts based on race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, disability, veteran status or other characteristic protected by state or federal law.

Likewise, unwelcome sexual propositions between employees may also constitute sexual harassment and will not be tolerated.

If an employee feels he or she is being harassed and cannot for whatever reason discuss the problem with the appropriate supervisor or manager, a discussion should take place between the employee and **[RESPONSIBLE PARTY]**.

A report of sexual or other harassment will be treated seriously, and a thorough investigation will be conducted. An employee who files a complaint will always be treated fairly and courteously and will not be retaliated against for making such report. Confidentiality will be honored for all parties involved to the degree possible.

8.350: SEXUAL HARASSMENT

It is the policy of [CONGREGATION NAME] to provide an environment free of discrimination. It is important for you to understand that jokes, stories, cartoons, nicknames and comments about appearance may be offensive to others. It is our policy to strictly prohibit any conduct that may constitute sexual harassment and to discipline any employee guilty of such conduct.

Sexual harassment is often difficult to define. However, as a guide, the following behavior may constitute sexual harassment: unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision affecting the harassed employee; or the harassment has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Any employee who believes that he or she has been subject to sexual harassment or is aware of any sexual harassment shall immediately report the conduct in confidence to the pastor or the chairman of the Board of Elders without fear of retaliation. An investigation of the incident will be conducted looking at the totality of the circumstances. The employee(s) involved will be informed regarding the findings of the investigation and any disciplinary action to be taken. It is the responsibility of each member of the work team to create an atmosphere free of sexual harassment. In addition, it is the responsibility of each employee to respect the rights of other employees. This policy encourages any witness of an incident of sexual harassment to report such incident immediately. All reasonable efforts will be made to protect the confidentiality of the individual reporting the incident.

8.400: ALCOHOL, DRUGS, AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

The unlawful use, sale, purchase, possession, distribution or being "*under the influence*" of alcohol, illegal drugs, or illegal controlled substances when on duty, on church property, or in church vehicles is prohibited **(Exceptions include the sacrament of Holy Communion and/or use at church/district sponsored events.)** In addition, off duty conduct that may adversely affect the reputation or interests of the church is prohibited. "*Under the influence*" for the purpose of this policy, is defined as being unable to perform work in a safe or productive manner, and/or being in a physical or mental condition which creates a risk to the safety or well-being of the affected employee, other co-workers, the public, or church property.

[CONGREGATION NAME] reserves the right to conduct alcohol and drug tests for cause or periodic testing for employees in designated departments, classifications or workgroups. Violations of this stated policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, and/or required participation in a substance abuse rehabilitation or treatment program. Such violations may also have legal consequences.

[NOTE: CHECK STATE AND LOCAL LAWS FOR ANY ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS AS SOME STATES HAVE SPECIFIC LAWS REGULATING DRUG TESTING AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES DRUG TESTS MAY BE CONDUCTED, AS WELL AS LAWS REGULATING THE USE AND TESTING FOR MARIJUANA SPECIFICALLY.]

8.500: WORKPLACE SAFETY

[CONGREGATION NAME] is committed to providing a safe environment for employees and visitors. To provide a safe workplace, access to our work area may be limited to those with a legitimate business interest.

8.550: PROHIBITION OF VIOLENCE

It is the policy of **[CONGREGATION NAME]** that there will be zero tolerance for violence. This includes joking and talking of violence. If violence in the workplace is displayed or threatened, the person responsible for such conduct will be subject to immediate disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. In addition to the appropriate disciplinary action, the employee and/or other parties involved may be subject to criminal proceedings as appropriate.

For the purpose of this policy, violence includes any verbal or physical harassment or abuse, shoving, pushing, intimidation or coercion; however, **[CONGREGATION NAME]** reserves the right to review incidents and expand on what may be considered violence. No weapons are allowed on the premises and no threats or talk of violence will be tolerated. Weapons include, but not limited to, handguns, rifles, automatic weapons, knives that can be used as weapons, martial arts paraphernalia, stun guns and tear gas.

[NOTE: CHECK STATE AND LOCAL LAWS FOR ANY ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO FIREARMS.]

All employees are to assist in preventing violence in the workplace. You can help by reporting incidents that could indicate a coworker is in trouble. Any employee who experiences or witnesses actual violence or a threat of the same, either direct or indirect, should report the incident as soon as possible to their immediate supervisor or any other member of management. This includes threats by employees, as well as threats by visitors, vendors, solicitors, or other members of the public. When making such a report, the employee should be as specific and detailed as possible. All threats will be promptly investigated. No employee will be subject to retaliation, intimidation or discipline as a result of reporting a threat.

8.600: OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT/ACTIVITIES

Employees are prohibited from engaging in outside employment, private business, or other activity, which might have an adverse effect on or create a conflict of interest with the church. **[CHECK STATE LAW FOR APPLICABILITY.]**

Employees are permitted to work a second job as long as it does not interfere with their job performance with **[CONGREGATION NAME]**. Employees with a second job are expected to work their assigned schedules. A second job will not be considered an excuse for poor job performance, absenteeism, tardiness, leaving early, refusal to travel, or refusal to work overtime or different hours.

If outside work activity causes or contributes to job-related problems, it must be discontinued, or the employee may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

8.700: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

[CONGREGATION NAME] is fully committed to conducting its responsibilities in a manner reflecting the highest degree of integrity and honesty. The success of **[CONGREGATION NAME]** in conducting its affairs is the sum efforts of each individual—board, commission and committee member, officer and exempt employee—in executing his or her responsibilities with good judgment and in an ethical manner.

- Staff persons who receive honoraria or payments for sales or services rendered to the congregation, district or other entities or agencies of the WELS shall disclose such information. (Reference—Honorariums/Royalties).
- Activities shall not be entered into which may be knowingly detrimental to the interests of the **[CONGREGATION NAME]**.
- Information acquired in the course of carrying out church business shall not knowingly be used in any way that would be detrimental to the welfare of the Synod and its entities or agencies.
- No staff member or officer of the congregation shall vote on any transaction in which the individual shall receive a direct or indirect financial gain.
- Gifts, entertainment or favors in excess of \$100 per person per year from any individual or outside concern that does or seeks to do business with the church shall not be accepted.
- Any inappropriate activity shall cease or the position will be vacated.
- Each individual shall sign a statement, modified to the needs of the church, prior to accepting a position and thereafter, annually, in which the individual agrees to abide by this policy.
- Responsibilities shall be conducted in a manner reflecting the highest degree of integrity and honesty consistent with the Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, the Synodical Bylaws, church/district policies and civil laws. (For those employees not familiar with the Lutheran Confessions, Scripture should be used to interpret the expected conduct).

8.800: ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY

Ownership of Messages: The electronic communications systems, which include, but are not limited to, the telephone, electronic mail, voice mail, facsimiles, computers, the Internet and the World Wide Web, and all information stored on them are the property of **[CONGREGATION NAME]** and are provided at the congregation's expense. All information and messages that are created, sent, received, accessed, or stored on these systems constitute company records.

Business Use: The electronic communications systems are to be used primarily to conduct company business. **(OPTIONAL) REASONABLE PERSONAL USE OF SUCH SYSTEMS IS/IS NOT PERMITTED BUT MUST NOT INTERFERE WITH AN EMPLOYEE'S PRODUCTIVITY. PERSONAL USE SHOULD BE LIMITED TO BREAKS, LUNCH AND OTHER NON-WORKING HOURS.** Employees may not use the electronic communications systems for political causes; football pools or other sorts of gambling; illegal activities; seeking/inquiring about job opportunities outside of the organizations; list serves for non-work purposes; solicitations or advertisements for unrelated work purposes; or creating, possessing, uploading, downloading, accessing, transmitting, or distributing materials of a sexual nature. Employees may not use the congregation's electronic communications systems to post nonwork-related information, opinions, or comments to Internet discussion groups and other such forums. Employees are prohibited from passing off their views as representing those of their congregation.

No Presumption of Privacy: Although employees are expected to use passwords to access some of the electronic communications systems, such communications are not private and security cannot be guaranteed. In surfing the Internet and World Wide Web, employees should remember that all connections and sites visited may be monitored and recorded. Employees should assume that any communications – whether business-related or personal – that they create, send, receive, or store on their company’s electronic communications systems may be read or heard by someone other than the intended recipient. In particular, highly confidential or sensitive information should not be sent through e-mail, the Internet, or the World Wide Web. Your congregation reserves the right to keep an employee’s e-mail address active for a reasonable period of time following an employee’s departure to ensure that important business communications reach them; your congregation will review such communications.

Congregation’s Right to Monitor Messages: Your congregation reserves the right to monitor, access, retrieve, read, and disclose to law enforcement officials or other third parties all messages created, sent, received, or stored on the electronic communications systems without prior notice to the originators and recipients of such messages. Authorized personnel may monitor the electronic communications of employees to determine whether there have been any violations of law, breaches of confidentiality or security, communications harmful to the business interests of your congregation, or any violations of this policy and any other church policy.

Message Restrictions: Electronic communications may not contain content that a reasonable person would consider to be defamatory, offensive, harassing, disruptive, or derogatory, including but not limited to sexual comments or images, racial or ethnic slurs, or other comments or images that would offend someone on the basis of race, gender, national origin, political beliefs, or disability.

Prohibited Activities: Employees may not upload, download, or otherwise transmit copyrighted, trademarked, or patented material, trade secrets; or other confidential, private, or proprietary information or materials in violation of any legal constraints. Employees may not upload, download or otherwise transmit any illegal information or materials. Employees may not use their congregation’s electronic communications systems to gain unauthorized access to remote computers or other systems or to damage, alter, or disrupt such computers or systems in any way, nor may employees – without authorization – use someone else’s code or password or disclose someone else’s code or password, including their own. Employees may not enable unauthorized third parties to have access to or use the electronic communications systems, nor may employees otherwise jeopardize the security of their congregation’s electronic communications systems.

Message Creation: Employees must use the utmost care in creating electronic communications. Even when a message has been deleted, it may still exist on a back-up system, be recreated, be printed out, or may have been forwarded to someone else without its creator’s knowledge. As with paper records proper care should be taken in creating electronic records, which may someday have to be produced in connection with legal and/or business needs.

Record Retention: As with paper documents created and received by an employee, it is each employee’s responsibility to ensure that those electronic messages that should be retained are in fact saved. Those messages that need not be retained should be deleted.

Viruses and Tampering: Any files downloaded from the Internet and any computer disks received from non-congregation sources must be scanned with virus detection software before installation and execution. The intentional introduction of viruses attempts to breach system security, or other malicious tampering with any of your employer's electronic systems are expressly prohibited. Employees must immediately report any tampering, or other system breaches to their supervisor.

Selling and Purchasing: The standard purchase and sales policies apply to all purchase and sales related activities conducted via the electronic communications systems.

Violations: Violations of this policy, including breaches of confidentiality or security, may result in suspension of some or all electronic communication privileges and disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. [CONGREGATION NAME] reserves the right to hold the employee personally liable for any violations of this policy.

8.900: SOCIAL MEDIA ACCEPTABLE USE

[CONGREGATION NAME] encourages employees to share information with co-workers and with those outside the company for the purposes of gathering information, generating new ideas, and learning from the work of others. Social media provide inexpensive, informal, and timely ways to participate in an exchange of ideas and information. However, information posted on a website is available to the public and, therefore, the church has established the following guidelines for employee participation in social media.

NOTE: As used in this policy, "social media" refers to blogs, forums, and social networking sites, such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, and Snap Chat, among others.

The following principles apply to professional use of social media on behalf of [CONGREGATION NAME], as well as personal use of social media when referencing [CONGREGATION NAME].

- Employees need to know and adhere to the [CONGREGATION NAME] Code of Conduct, Employee Handbook, and other church policies when using social media in reference to [CONGREGATION NAME].
- Employees should be aware of the effect their actions may have on their images, as well as the image of the church. The information that employees post or publish may be public information for a long time.
- Employees should be aware that [CONGREGATION NAME] may observe content and information made available by church employees through social media. Employees should use their best judgment in posting material that is neither inappropriate nor harmful to [CONGREGATION NAME], its employees, students or members.
- Although not an exclusive list, some specific examples of prohibited social media conduct include posting commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or that can create a hostile work environment.

- Employees are not to publish, post or release any information that is considered confidential or not public. If there are questions about what is considered confidential, employees should check with **[RESPONSIBLE PARTY]**.
- Social media networks, blogs and other types of online content could potentially generate press and media attention or legal questions. Employees should refer these inquires to the **[RESPONSIBILITY PARTY]**.
- If employees encounter a situation while using social media that threatens to become antagonistic, employees should disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner and seek the advice of **[RESPONSIBLE PARTY]**.
- Employees should get appropriate permission before they refer to or post images of current or former employees. Additionally, employees should get appropriate permission to use a third party's copyrights, copyrighted material, trademarks, service marks or other intellectual property.
- Social media use shouldn't interfere with employee's work responsibilities. **[CONGREGATION NAME]** computer systems are to be used for church purposes only. When using **[CONGREGATION NAME]** computer systems, use of social media for business purposes is allowed (ex: Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn), but personal use of social media networks or personal blogging of online content is discouraged and could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- If employees publish content after-hours that involves work or subjects associated with the church, a disclaimer should be used, such as this: *The postings on this site are my own and may not represent **[CONGREGATION NAME]** positions, strategies or opinions.*
- It is highly recommended that staff keep **[CONGREGATION NAME]** related social media accounts separate from personal accounts.
- Violations of this policy may result in discipline up to and including immediate termination of employment.

[CONGREGATION NAME] EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

SECTION 9.000: MISCELLANEOUS

	<u>Paragraph</u>
PERSONAL APPEARANCE.....	100
LOST AND FOUND.....	150
SMOKING.....	200
ACCESS TO CHURCH PROPERTY.....	250
BUSINESS EXPENSE REPORT.....	300
USE OF CHURCH TELEPHONES.....	350
EMPLOYEE PARKING.....	400
EMERGENCY CLOSINGS.....	450
VISITORS.....	500
SOLICITATIONS.....	550
CHURCH BULLETIN BOARDS.....	600
BACKGROUND CHECKS.....	650
REFERENCES.....	700
HONORARIUM POLICY (OPTIONAL).....	750

9.100: PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Your appearance reflects not only on you as an individual, but on the church as well. We expect you to take pride in your appearance and strive to achieve a positive business-like image when representing the church.

9.150: LOST AND FOUND

Employees should not bring large sums of money, jewelry, or other valuables to work. The church will not be responsible for personal property that is lost, damaged, stolen, or destroyed.

If you happen to find personal belongings that have been lost by another person, please turn them in to **[RESPONSIBLE PARTY]**.

9.200: SMOKING

Smoking is prohibited in the building and the areas immediately around all entrances. This policy is established to provide a smoke-free environment for us and for all our visitors to the building.

9.250: ACCESS TO CHURCH PROPERTY

It is always important that the church have access to church property, as well as other records, documents, and files. As a result, certain management employees and officers of the church reserve the right but always respecting that information deemed to be of confidential nature (i.e., Pastor's confidential files, personnel files), to access employee offices, work stations, filing cabinets, desks, and any other church property at its discretion, with or without advance notice or consent.

9.300: BUSINESS EXPENSE REPORTING

(Reference WELS Tax Manual, Business Expenses)

Employees will be reimbursed in accordance with **[CONGREGATION NAME]** reimbursement policies for all approved business-related expenses. Employees are requested to submit these reports in a timely manner to ensure proper accounting and prompt reimbursement.

9.350: USE OF CHURCH TELEPHONES

From time to time it may be necessary for employees to make and receive personal calls on church phones. However, these calls should be limited to no more than **[INSERT NUMBER OF MINUTES]** minutes in length, and should be made, whenever possible, during scheduled break and meal periods. Employees are expected to use good judgment and common sense when it comes to personal phone calls. All costs for long distance calls must be reimbursed by you to the church after receipt of bills.

Employees who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

9.400: EMPLOYEE PARKING

Employees park at their own risk and the church will not be responsible for theft or damage to any vehicles parked on or near church property. Also, the church will not be responsible for personal property left in vehicles that is lost, damaged, stolen, or destroyed.

9.450: EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

At times, emergencies such as severe weather, fires, power failures or other disasters can disrupt operations. In extreme cases, these circumstances may require closing. In the event that such an emergency occurs during non-working hours, **[INDICATE HOW CLOSING WILL BE COMMUNICATED OR BROADCASTED]**.

When operations are officially closed due to emergency conditions, non-exempt employees **[WILL/WILL NOT]** be paid for their normally scheduled work hours. If an emergency closing occurs when an employee, exempt or non-exempt, has scheduled vacation, the employees vacation account will still be reduced should an emergency closing occur.

In cases where a non-exempt employee believes that weather or other conditions make travel to work or staying at work unsafe, the employee may request to use available Vacation or request leave without pay.

9.500: VISITORS

To maintain security and safety for our employees, **[CONGREGATION NAME]** has the following policy with respect to visitors:

- All visitors must check in with the receptionist, must wear a visitor's badge and must be escorted by an employee. When a visit is over, employees are expected to accompany the visitor(s) to the appropriate exit.

This policy applies to anyone who is not an active employee, including employees on leave, former employees, vendors, and suppliers.

9.550: SOLICITATIONS

To provide a productive and harmonious work environment, persons not employed by **[CONGREGATION NAME]** may not solicit or distribute literature in the workplace at any time for any purpose.

[CONGREGATION NAME] recognizes that employees may have interests in events and organizations outside the workplace. However, employees may not use work time to solicit or distribute literature concerning these activities or those of a family member or friend. (Work time does not include lunch periods or breaks.)

Pertinent information pertaining to the church will be posted to the church's web site. This information would include job descriptions, staff announcements, upcoming concerts and activities.

If an employee has a message of interest for the workplace, they may post it to the appropriate area on the church's bulletin boards or electronic medium with management consent.

9.600: CHURCH BULLETIN BOARDS

Posted information on employee bulletin boards is for the benefit of all employees. The church reserves the right to monitor and limit posted information on the bulletin boards and **[RESPONSIBLE PARTY]** is responsible for this monitoring. You will find posters that explain state and federal law, as well as updated information about church policy and procedures. You are responsible for checking church bulletin boards on a regular basis and for reading all posted materials.

9.650: BACKGROUND CHECKS

At its discretion, **[CONGREGATION NAME]** will perform background checks of all qualified candidates for positions and on all employees who are promoted, as deemed necessary.

9.700: REFERENCES

All information regarding current or former employees of WELS is confidential and is not to be released to outside sources in the form of reference checks, letters of recommendation, or in forms received from outside agencies and firms. **[RESPONSIBLE PARTY]** is to be notified if requests for such information are received by any employee.

An employee may provide a character reference for a current or former employee at the employee's request only. A character reference should not include performance information on the employee during a period of **[CONGREGATION NAME]** employment.

At the request of an employee and upon receipt of a properly completed and signed Release and Waiver Agreement, **[RESPONSIBLE PARTY]** will provide the required personnel information to outside sources.

Although a letter of recommendation will not generally be prepared for a former employee, **[RESPONSIBLE PARTY]** will provide job-related information to a prospective employer upon receiving a properly completed and signed Release and Waiver Agreement from the employee. Letters of recommendation must be approved in advance by the **[RESPONSIBLE PARTY]**.

8.750: HONORARIUM POLICY (OPTIONAL)

Any activity performed by an exempt employee that is related to the employee's position description or is requested as a result of the employee's position shall be without additional compensation to the employee. This includes services to congregations, districts, convocations, conventions and other gatherings. An employee must obtain from their supervisor approval on all requests from other Synodical agencies for the employee's services and determine whether any remuneration, including honoraria and royalties, offered for such services will be accepted on behalf of the employee's church. In the case of the pastor, the determination will be made by the appropriate board.

[CONGREGATION NAME] EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

SECTION 10.000: EMPLOYEE STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

10.000: EMPLOYEE STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the [CONGREGATION NAME] **Employee Handbook**. I further understand all matters set forth in the employee handbook and agree to abide by and adhere to [CONGREGATION NAME] policies during my employment with [CONGREGATION NAME], as they may be modified from time to time. I further understand and agree that any provision of the employee handbook may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by [CONGREGATION NAME].

I understand that my employment with [CONGREGATION NAME] is not for a specified length of time. I acknowledge that I have entered my employment or call relationship with [CONGREGATION NAME] voluntarily and that I am an employee at will. This means that, subject to applicable federal and state law, the employment relationship can be terminated at any time for any reason, with or without cause.

I understand [CONGREGATION NAME] exists to proclaim faithfully the Word of God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Therefore [CONGREGATION NAME] has a high responsibility to require all employees to conduct themselves in a way that is not inconsistent with our values, mission, teachings, and beliefs. In view of that, I am aware that I may forfeit my employment at [CONGREGATION NAME] if my words, actions, or lifestyle, whether on the job or away from it, are determined to be inconsistent with the church’s values, beliefs, and teachings, or in any way detrimental to its reputation or mission.

I understand and acknowledge that nothing in the [CONGREGATION NAME] **Employee Handbook** in any way creates an express or implied contract of employment or guarantees continued employment for any particular period of time. I understand that [CONGREGATION NAME] has the right and will exercise the right to take necessary action, including discharge, for conduct that requires such action, whether such conduct is referred to in this handbook.

I understand that it is my responsibility to maintain and keep my handbook updated as new policies are created and distributed and/or policies are deleted or changed.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the [CONGREGATION NAME] **Employee Handbook**.

Employee's Name *(Please Print)* _____

Employee's Signature _____

Date _____

ACCESS TO CHURCH PROPERTY -----	45	LAYOFF -----	28
ADVANCES -----	31	LOST AND FOUND -----	45
ALCOHOL, DRUGS, AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES -----	38	MEAL AND REST BREAKS -----	29
ATTENDANCE -----	27	MILITARY LEAVE -----	18
BACKGROUND CHECKS -----	47	MORALS POLICY -----	37
BEREAVEMENT PAY -----	17	NEW HIRE ACT -----	11
BUSINESS EXPENSE REPORTING -----	45	NON-RENEWAL OF CONTRACT -----	34
CHURCH BULLETIN BOARDS -----	47	OTHER LEAVES -----	17
CONFLICT OF INTEREST -----	40	OTHER PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS -----	32
CONTINUING EDUCATION ASSISTANCE (OPTIONAL) -----	25	OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT/ACTIVITIES -----	39
DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS -----	10	OVERTIME -----	32
DISCIPLINARY ACTION -----	34	PAYDAY -----	31
ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY -----	40	PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS -----	32
EMERGENCY CLOSINGS -----	46	PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS -----	13
EMPLOYEE PARKING -----	46	PERSONAL LEAVE -----	18
EMPLOYEE STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT -	50	PERSONNEL RECORDS -----	29
EMPLOYMENT AT WILL -----	10	PROHIBITION OF VIOLENCE -----	39
EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION -----	11	PROMOTION AND TRANSFER -----	29
EMPLOYMENT OF MINORS -----	11	REFERENCES -----	47
EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES -----	11	RESIGNATION -----	27
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY -----	10	SABBATICAL LEAVE (OPTIONAL) -----	18
EXCEPTIONS -----	34	SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT -----	27
EXIT INTERVIEW -----	28	SEXUAL HARASSMENT -----	38
FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE -----	19	SICK LEAVE -----	16
GARNISHMENT -----	32	SMOKING -----	45
GENERAL LEAVE PROVISIONS -----	19	SOCIAL MEDIA ACCEPTABLE USE -----	42
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE -----	34	SOLICITATIONS -----	46
GROUP EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLANS -----	24	STUDY LEAVE (OPTIONAL) -----	18
HARASSMENT -----	37	TARDINESS AND ABSENCE -----	27
HOLIDAYS -----	16	TERMINATION CHECKS -----	31
HONORARIUM POLICY (OPTIONAL) -----	47	TIME OFF FOR VOTING -----	18
IMMIGRATION REFORM AND CONTROL ACT OF 1986 -----	11	TIME RECORDS -----	28
INITIAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW -----	13	USE OF CHURCH TELEPHONES -----	45
INTRODUCTION -----	37	VACATION -----	15
INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION -----	28	VISITORS -----	46
JOB DESCRIPTIONS -----	12	WAGE AND SALARY REVIEWS -----	31
JURY DUTY -----	18	WORK SCHEDULE -----	28
		WORKERS COMPENSATION INSURANCE -----	25
		WORKPLACE SAFETY -----	39