

BY-LAWS: FRIENDS OF LATVIA

INTRODUCTION

The Friends of Latvia (FOL) is a voluntary association made up of persons who have an interest in the United Methodist Church in the country of Latvia (LAMB). Such persons are typically, but not exclusively members of United Methodist churches in the United States of America who have either participated in volunteer mission work (VIM) in Latvia or are members of connecting or partnering churches who are supportive of the ministry and mission of LAMB. FOL membership is indicative of a desire to support LAMB with ones prayers, finances, and when possible VIM activity and to promote the interest of LAMB in their individual churches. The ultimate goal of the association is to develop relationships with LAMB churches and individual Latvians and together to fulfill the great commission as given by Jesus and recorded in Matthew 28:19-20.

MISSION

To advance to all residents of Latvia the joyful witness of Jesus Christ as risen Savior.

AFFILIATION

FOL is an independent association. It is however, affiliated with the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) and the World Methodist Evangelism Council (WMEC). Its principal activity relating to these affiliations is to encourage and support the partnership and connecting churches programs of these organizations.

MEMBERSHIP

One becomes a member of FOL by interest and either attending a meeting or participating in a VIM trip to Latvia, participating in a mission trip, or participating in a local or regional FOL group (ie The North Texas Friends of Latvia (NTFOL)). Formal membership rolls are not kept. Contact lists for announcements, organizational business and communication are for utility purposes only.

OFFICERS

The officers of the association shall be: Chair, Co-chair, Treasurer, Secretary and any other officers which shall be deemed necessary for the pursuit of the purposes of the association as indicated by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any regular annual meeting of the association. These officers shall constitute the Executive committee of the Association.

TERMS OF OFFICE

Officers shall be elected for a two year term and shall be eligible to serve no more than two consecutive terms in an office but shall not be prevented from moving from one office to another. Officers shall not automatically “move up.”

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Officers shall be elected in odd numbered years at the annual meeting of the association and shall take office immediately upon election. There may be appointed a nominating committee by the sitting president but in all cases candidates for any office may be nominated from the floor. Officers shall be chosen by a majority of those present and voting. Persons nominated but not present for vote must have previously agreed to serve in positions nominated. If an election is not held in an odd-numbered year, officer terms shall be extended until the next possible election.

REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

Any officer of the association shall be removed upon their request or may be removed upon their failure to perform the duties of the office without explanation or reasonable efforts to do so. Any officer so removed shall be replaced until the end of their term of office by the Executive committee.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

CHAIR: The Chair of the association shall work with the DS of LAMB and representatives of the GBGM and the WMEC in planning the annual meetings. The chair shall preside at all meetings of the association and shall use his/her best efforts to promote and guide the association in pursuit of its purposes.

VICE-CHAIR: The Vice-Chair of the association shall assist the Chair in the performance of his/her duties and shall perform the duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair or upon his/her request. If the Chair is unable or unwilling to call a meeting, the Vice-Chair will do so.

SECRETARY: The Secretary of the organization shall be responsible for keeping minutes of all official business meetings of the organization; maintaining correspondence and other lists of members and interested parties; dispensing information as appropriate to the various lists kept.

TREASURER/PROJECTS: The Treasurer shall be responsible for the collection of any funds which are to be used only for the operation of the organization. Funds which are collected for use by churches or agencies (Wesley Camp & the Hope Center) in Latvia shall be channeled through GBGM, WMEC, or sent directly to LAMB. The treasurer shall make an effort to secure from the above the amounts provided in this way and make an annual report to the organization of the amounts given. The Treasurer shall also serve as project manager, tracking needs, progress and costs. In addition, the Treasurer shall facilitate rapid responses to needs as they arise.

COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEES

The organization shall have the following standing committees:

Pastors Salary

Discipleship/Resources (The chair shall serve as VIM facilitator.)

Communications

Wesley Camp

The Hope Center

Membership in standing committees shall be self selected by interest.

Those choosing to be a part of each committee shall select their own chair who shall serve for a period of two years and be subject to re-election.

AD HOC COMMITTEES

Ad Hoc committees shall be appointed from time to time as needed by the Chair of the organization.

REGIONAL, STATE AND LOCAL GROUPS

The FOL organization strongly encourages the development of regional, state and local groups to promote the mission of FOL. Each group shall be self governing.

AMENDMENTS

These by-laws may be amended by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting in any regular meeting of the organization provided that a thirty day notice has been given to the membership that such a vote will be taken and a draft copy of such amendment(s) is attached to the notice.