

CONSTITUTION

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

January 17, 2010

MISSION STATEMENT

Through our service as members of the Church of Christ, this congregation shall respond to the call by the Holy Spirit and by faith prayerfully unite to carry out Christ's Great Commission.

PREAMBLE

As members of the priesthood of all believers, called by the Holy Spirit to confess the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in its purity and desiring to unite to preach the Word, administer the Sacraments, and carry out God's mission, we do hereby adopt this constitution and its provisions for governance in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE 1

Name and Incorporation

- 1.01 The name of this congregation shall be St. Paul's Lutheran Church.
- 1.02 For the purpose of this Constitution and the accompanying By-laws, the St. Paul's Lutheran Church congregation is hereinafter designated as "*this*" or "*the congregation*."
- 1.03 This congregation shall be *incorporated* under the laws of the **State of Idaho**.

ARTICLE 2

Confession of Faith

- 2.01** This congregation confesses the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- 2.02** We believe, teach, and accept the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the sole authoritative source and norm of our proclamation, faith, and life.
- 2.03** This congregation confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe in Him:
- a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate through whom everything was made, and through His life, death, and resurrection, God fashions a new creation.
 - b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both law and gospel is the word of God, revealing judgment and mercy in the person and work of Jesus Christ through whom God was pleased to reconcile all things to himself.
 - c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them, God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.
- 2.04** We believe, teach, and accept the *Unaltered Augsburg Confession* and the *Small Catechism* as true witnesses to the Word of God, normative for our teaching and practice. We acknowledge that we are one in faith and doctrine with all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the *Unaltered Augsburg Confession*.
- 2.05** We believe, teach, and accept the other confessional writings in the *Book of Concord*, namely the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, the *Smalcald Articles*, the *Treatise*, the *Large Catechism*, and the

Formula of Concord, as further valid expositions of the Holy Scriptures.

2.06 We accept the **Apostles'**, **Nicene**, and **Athanasian Creeds** as true declarations of the scriptural faith we believe, teach, and confess.

2.07 We believe, teach, and confess the *Gospel*, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the priesthood of all believers for God's mission in the world.

ARTICLE 3

Statement of Purpose

3.01 *The Church* is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.

3.02 To participate in God's mission, this congregation, as part of the Church, shall:

- a. *Worship* God in proclamation of the Word, administration of the Sacraments, and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
- b. *Proclaim* God's saving gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scriptures, preserving and transmitting the gospel faithfully to future generations.
- c. *Carry out* The Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
- d. *Serve* in response to God's love to meet human needs: caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and

justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among nations, standing with the poor and powerless, and committing ourselves to their needs.

- e. **Nurture** its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith, hope, and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of our Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for our life together and for our calling in the world.
- f. **Manifest** the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

3.03 To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:

- a. **Provide services of worship** at which the Word of God is preached and the Sacraments administered.
- b. **Provide pastoral care** and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
- c. **Challenge, equip and support** all members in carrying out their calling in daily living, and within the congregation.
- d. **Teach** the Word of God.
- e. **Witness** to the love of God in Jesus Christ by unselfishly reaching out to all people with acceptance and care.
- f. **Respond** to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
- g. **Motivate** its members to provide financial support for the congregation's ministry and other benevolences as directed by the Church Council.

ARTICLE 4

Powers of the congregation

- 4.01** We recognize and accept that the Word of God is the final authority in all matters which may come before this congregation.
- 4.02** The powers of this congregation are vested in the congregational Meeting, called and conducted as provided in this Constitution and By-laws.
- 4.03** Only the authority delegated to the Church Council or other organizational units in the congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by the congregation. The congregation is authorized to:
- a. *Call* a Pastor.
 - b. *Terminate* the call of a Pastor.
 - c. *Approve* the annual budget as prepared by the Church Council.
 - d. *Acquire* real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means.
 - e. *Hold title* to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose.
 - f. *Sell, mortgage, lease, transfer*, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means.
 - g. *Elect* its officers and committee chairpersons.

ARTICLE 5

Church Affiliation

- 5.01** This congregation is a charter member of **Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ ("LCMC")**, an association of Lutheran congregations whose **Articles of Incorporation** are filed under the **laws of the State of Minnesota**.

ARTICLE 6

Property Ownership

- 6.01** If this congregation ceases to exist, title to non-disposed property shall be decided by two-thirds majority of the voting membership of St. Paul's Lutheran Church.
- 6.02** If two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation, present at a regularly called and conducted special meeting of the congregation, vote to transfer to another Lutheran church body, become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

ARTICLE 7

Membership

- 7.01** Members shall be defined as worshipers who are either baptized and/or confirmed.
- 7.02** All confirmed members are *voting members*.
- 7.03** *Associate Members* are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation for the time they are here. They will have all privileges of membership except voting rights and election to church office.

7.04 Membership in this congregation shall be terminated for any of the following reasons:

- a. Death
- b. Resignation
- c. Transfer or release

ARTICLE 8

Authority to Call a Pastor

- 8.01** *Call Process.* Authority to call a pastor is vested in the congregation. A two-thirds affirmative vote for the candidate recommended by the *Call Committee* by those members present and voting at a meeting called for that purpose is required before a *Letter of Call* is issued.
- 8.02** *Duties Unique to the Pastor.* Consistent with the confessions of the Lutheran Church, every ordained minister shall preach the Word, administer the Sacraments, conduct public worship, and provide pastoral care. In addition, the pastor will offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, bury the dead, supervise all organizations of the congregation, install members of the Church Council, and with the Council, administer discipline.
- 8.03** Compensation and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a *Letter of Call*.
- 8.04** This congregation recognizes and supports the unique role of the pastor as defined in the By-laws.
- 8.05** The Interim or any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.
- 8.06** The pastor shall keep parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and burials, submitting an annual summery to the Church Council.

8.07 The pastor shall publish an annual report, available to the congregation at its Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE 9

Termination of a Pastor

9.01 A *Letter of Call*, when accepted by the pastor, shall constitute a continuing relationship which, except in the event of the pastor's death, may be terminated for the following reasons:

- a. Mutual agreement or completion of a term call.
- b. Resignation.
- c. Inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the person.
- d. Physical or mental incapacity of the pastor.
- e. Immediate termination of the pastor on the grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty.
- f. Dissolution of the congregation.

9.02 In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity, competent medical testimony shall be obtained. A designated committee of not less than two members and one ordained minister, retained by the congregation, will investigate and submit a report of its findings to the Church Council.

- a. A course of action will be recommended by the Church Council. The congregation may dismiss the pastor by a two-thirds vote of those members present and voting at a meeting called for that purpose.
- b. The foregoing procedure shall never be invoked when questions of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of

duty are involved. All these cases are grounds for immediate dismissal.

- 9.03** When the issues of doctrine, morality, or neglect of duty arise, the procedure is as follows: [1] The President is notified. [2] The Executive Committee examines the issues in executive session and invites the pastor to appear. [3] If there is sufficient cause for termination, the evidence is brought before the Church Council. [4] If the Council votes for termination, the case is remanded to a vote of the congregation.
- 9.04** During a pastoral vacancy, an Interim pastor may be appointed by the Church Council with the consent of a simple majority of voting members present at a meeting called for that purpose.
- 9.05** Satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor will be made prior to calling a successor. The pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all personal financial obligations to this congregation prior to leaving.
- 9.06** By a two-thirds vote of the congregation at a meeting for that purpose, a *term call* can be issued. Under a *term call*, a pastor is contracted to serve for a specific period of time. The contract can be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of **Article 9.01**.

ARTICLE 10

Congregation Meetings

- 10.01** The *Annual Meeting* of the congregation will be held at a time designated by the Church Council.
- 10.02** A *Special Congregational Meeting* may be called by the pastor, Church Council, President of the congregation, or at the written request of 15 voting members. No other business than the sole purpose specified for the meeting can be transacted.
- 10.03** Notice of all Congregational Meetings will be announced during

worship on the two Sundays prior to the meeting, and by mail to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the meeting's date.

- 10.04** Fifty percent (50%) of the average attendance for the previous five Sundays shall constitute a *quorum*.
- 10.05** *Voting by proxy* will not be permitted.
- 10.06** *Absentee voting* will be permitted by request, and under limited circumstances, as outlined in the By-laws.
- 10.07** All actions by the congregation shall be by *majority vote* unless otherwise provided for in the Constitution.

ARTICLE 11

Officers

- 11.01** The officer of this congregation shall be **President, Vice-President, Secretary, Financial Secretary, and Treasurer**.
- a. Duties of the Officers are specified in the By-laws.
 - b. Officers must be voting members of the congregation and are voting members of the Church Council.
- 11.02** Officers are elected by the congregation and shall serve for a *two year term*.
- 11.03** No officer shall hold more than one eligible office at a time. No elected officer shall be eligible to serve more than *two consecutive terms* in the same office.

ARTICLE 12

Church Council

- 12.01** Any voting member of the congregation may be elected to the Church Council.
- 12.02** The *voting membership of the Church Council* consists of the *pastor, officers*, and the *three Standing Committee chairpersons*. The three Standing Committees are:
- a. Education and Youth
 - b. Property and Management
 - c. Worship and Music
- 12.03** *Committee chairpersons* shall be elected by the congregation. A term of office is two years. Each chairperson can serve no more than two consecutive terms in any one position.
- 12.04** Should a member vacate their position, the Church Council shall elect by majority vote a successor who will serve until the next Annual Meeting.
- 12.05** The Church Council shall have *general oversight* regarding the life and activities of the congregation. Council members shall:
- a. Be examples of the Christian lifestyle both individually and corporately.
 - b. Assist the congregation in stating its mission, perform long-range planning, set goals and priorities, and evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
 - c. Seek to involve all members in the life of the church; such as *Prayer, Worship, Learning, Witness, Service, and Support*.
 - d. Be diligent in prayerfully creating and maintaining

supportive relationships with the pastor and staff toward the goal of cooperative ministry.

- e. Promote a climate of peace and goodwill and as differences arise, endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
- f. Arrange for pastoral coverage during times of sickness or other absences of the pastor.
- g. Foster cooperation with other Christian congregations in matters benefitting the faith and our community.

ARTICLE 13

Congregation Committees

- 13.01** The pastor and officers of the congregation shall constitute the *Executive Board*.
- 13.02** The *Nominating Committee* will consist of four (4) voting members *appointed* at the Annual Meeting for an initial term of one year. Members wishing to serve more than one year will make their desires known to the **President** or pastor two weeks prior to the next Annual Meeting.
- 13.03** When a pastoral vacancy occurs, the Church Council will appoint a *Call Committee* of eight (8) voting members equally divided between Council members and members at large. Their term of office will terminate upon the installation of the pastor.
- 13.04** Other committees may be formed as needs arise by action of the Church Council.
- 13.05** *Duties* of the *Standing Committees* are specified in the By-laws.

ARTICLE 14

Auxiliary Organizations

- 14.01** By definition, an auxiliary is a fully integrated entity of the organization to which it belongs and is subject to its governance.
- 14.02** In this congregation, the function of an auxiliary is to complement the overall mission of the congregation through volunteering their time and talents to serve the needs of the church.
- 14.03** An auxiliary serves at the pleasure of, and oversight by, the Church Council.
- 14.04** Auxiliaries will have voice, but no vote at Council meetings.

ARTICLE 15

Constitutional Amendments

- 15.01** The doctrinal basis of the confessional subscription contained in **Article 2** cannot be altered.
- 15.02** Proposed amendments to other Articles of the Constitution must be:
- a. Proposed in writing, signed by at least fifteen (15) voting members, and submitted to the President of the congregation.
 - b. Referred to the Church Council for consideration and formulation of a response.
 - c. Regardless of the position taken by the Church Council on the proposed amendment, such proposed amendment shall be announced and mailed to the congregation, including the date of a Special Congregational Meeting.
 - d. No Special Meeting for constitutional purposes will be scheduled until at least sixty (60) days from the date of

submittal to the President.

- e. The adoption of any amendment shall require a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting at such a Special Meeting.

15.03 The Church Council has the power to submit amendments to the Constitution for consideration by the congregation.

ARTICLE 16

By-laws

16.01 The congregation may adopt By-laws. No By-law can conflict with the Articles of this Constitution.

16.02 By-laws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present and with a *two-thirds* vote of those present and voting.

16.03 **Changes to the By-laws** must be proposed in writing, signed by at least five voting members, and submitted to the President of the congregation.

- a. No Special Meeting of the congregation to consider a proposal to change a By-law will be scheduled until at least thirty (30) days from the date of submittal to the President.
- b. Upon receipt of the proposal, the President will call the Executive Board into session for the purpose of determining the merit and constitutionality of the proposal.
- c. The findings of the Executive Board will be presented to the Church Council for consideration.
- d. Should the proposal fail to meet proper meritorious or constitutional standards, a written explanation of findings will be mailed to the author.

- e. Should the proposal meet all standards, the Church Council will schedule a date for the congregation to consider the additions or amendments proposed.

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