



Governance Guidelines for the Association of Confessing Evangelical Lutheran Congregations

Article I: Name and Confession

1. The name of the organization is Association of Confessing Evangelical Lutheran Congregations (ACELC).
2. **Confession and Subscription:**
 - A. The only rule and norm of the ACELC's faith, doctrine, and practice in its life together as an association of congregations of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is the Word of God, revealed in the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments.
 - B. The ACELC subscribes without reservation to all the symbolical books or confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, because they are a correct exposition of the teachings of Holy Scripture, namely:
 - 1) The three ecumenical creeds: the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed;
 - 2) The Unaltered Augsburg Confession;
 - 3) The Apology of the Augsburg Confession;
 - 4) The Smalcald Articles (inclusive of the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope);
 - 5) Luther's Small Catechism;
 - 6) Luther's Large Catechism;
 - 7) The Formula of Concord -- Epitome and Solid Declaration
 - C. No action taken by the ACELC shall conflict with the Word of God, the Lutheran Confessions, or the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) Constitution and Bylaws insofar as the LCMS Constitution and Bylaws are in agreement with the Scriptures and the Confessions. If such an action should occur, then that action is null and void.

Article II: Purpose

1. The ACELC shall exist to give a united voice against errors that are officially adopted in convention, tolerated, and/or promoted in the LCMS. Specifically, the ACELC will:
 - press upon the synod the importance, necessity, and urgency of directly addressing these errors;
 - make known the unity of concern over these errors;
 - produce documentation and resources on what the errors are, why they are errors, what consequences the errors cause, and how to correct the errors and institute biblical practices that hold the promise of God's blessing;
 - pool resources for distribution of this documentation and resources; and,
 - work toward unity of faith between congregations in ministry and missions to the end of faithful proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations, that the Holy Spirit may work "when and where he pleases, in those who hear the Gospel" (AC V).
2. The ACELC shall promote, preserve, and proclaim orthodox Lutheran doctrine and practice.

Article III: Membership

1. Membership in the ACELC shall be limited to LCMS congregations who have signed their agreement with the ACELC's "Letter of Fraternal Admonition," and the accompanying catalog of errors that was mailed to LCMS congregations and leaders of our Synod on July 15, 2010.
 - A. No congregation shall be admitted into the ACELC unless its pastor(s) is in agreement with the content of the documents listed in Article I, 2.,B. above.
 - B. Individuals may sign their personal support for the ACELC documents mentioned above, but shall not hold membership in the ACELC except through their congregation.
2. Each member congregation shall be entitled to one pastoral representative and one male lay representative to attend meetings of the association. This is the Representative Assembly of the ACELC. Each representative sent will have one vote in any vote in the Representative Assembly.

3. Individuals who are in full agreement with the *Governance Guidelines* of the ACELC and the theological documents officially adopted by the ACELC (supported by the *Evidence of Errors* documents of the ACELC) may join the ACELC as Associate Members. Although we require full agreement with the ACELC *Guidelines* and theological documents, we also welcome suggestions for corrections and amendments.

This category of Membership (Associate Membership) entitles individuals to speak at ACELC business meetings and participate in the ACELC discussion lists, but entails no voting privileges. Members of ACELC congregations are *de facto* Associate Members. Associate Membership is limited to the following:

- A. Members of non-ACELC LCMS congregations.
- B. Members of congregations in altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCMS.

Article IV: ACELC Relationship to Its Members

The ACELC shall serve its member congregations only in an advisory capacity. The ACELC will not legislate or coerce a member congregation into any action the congregation does not want to take and will respect each congregation's right to self-governance. Any member congregation of the ACELC may disaffiliate from the ACELC any time it wishes to do so.

Article V: Officers and Duties

1. The governing authority of the ACELC shall be vested in a board of five officers, who shall have jurisdiction over all secular business and temporal affairs of the association, but shall at all times be subject to the authority of the Representative Assembly (the member congregations) of the ACELC.
2. All ACELC elected officers must hold membership in a congregation that is a member of the ACELC. Appointed officers and committee members can be individuals who have signed the original Letter of Admonition (July 15, 2010), or who have subsequently signed the Admonition in support of the ACELC effort, even if their congregation is not a member of the ACELC.
3. The elected officers of the ACELC shall be:
 - A. Chairman – Pastor
 - 1) Facilitate board meetings.
 - 2) General oversight of the Secretary, Treasurer, and special committees.
 - 3) Serve as an *ex officio* voting member of all committees and *ad hoc* Committees.
 - B. Vice Chairman – Pastor
 - 1) Assist the Chairman.
 - 2) Organize conferences.
 - 3) Handle miscellaneous business of the Association.
 - C. Committee Chairman (Documents) – Pastor
 - 1) Oversee the production of official documents of the Association.
 - 2) Serve as editor of all ACELC documents.
 - D. Committee Chairman (Speaker's Bureau) – A Pastor or male Layman.
 - 1) Organize and oversees all public speaking of the Association to the Synod at large.
 - 2) Coordinate talking points and presentations, handouts and related media.
 - E. Committee Chairman (Technology / Media) – A Pastor or male Layman.
 - 1) Oversee media production, videos, webcasts, podcasts, final formatting of documentation.
 - 2) Oversee website and website maintenance.

The above officers shall be voting members of the board and shall hold their respective offices for two year terms. They are elected by a simple majority of the Representative Assembly. This can be done during Representative Assembly meetings or electronically. The Board of Director terms expire at the end of the first board meeting following the election at the annual business meeting.

The elected officers of the ACELC shall have the authority to expend Association funds, call meetings of the Representative Assembly, appoint ad hoc committees, and otherwise represent the association to the public.

4. The appointed officers of the ACELC shall be:
 - A. Secretary – a Pastor or a male or female Layman.
 - 1) Record minutes of ACELC board meetings and the Representative Assembly meetings. Distribute meeting minutes.
 - 2) Manage ACELC correspondence.
 - B. Treasurer – a Pastor or a male or female Layman.
 - 1) Oversee the Association finances and provide an annual accounting of all income and expenditures, plus a balance sheet.
 - 2) Receive all incoming funds to the ACELC and disburse all outgoing funds.
 - 3) Manage the Association membership list.

The Secretary and Treasurer are non-voting members of the board and shall hold their respective offices for two year terms. Appointments are made by nominations by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Committee Chairmen and are approved by vote of the board.

- C. Committee Members – people who assist the Committee Chairmen and the objectives of the Committee on which they serve. Committee appointments can be made on an as needed basis, generally from one to three persons as the Chairman determines is necessary for the task. Recommendations for nominations can be procured from the Association at large.

Article VI: Meetings

1. Meetings of the Representative Assembly shall be called no less than annually at a time and place as determined by the elected officers of the ACELC. A quorum is a majority of the registered representatives who are in attendance.
2. The elected board of officers will meet at least four times per year. These meetings can be face-to-face or electronic. Minutes of each meeting will be written and distributed to the ACELC membership. A quorum is a majority of the officers.

Article VII: Committees

The Chairman shall appoint ad hoc committees as necessary to carry on the work of the Association. The Chairman shall be an ex officio member of all ad hoc committees.

Article VIII: Parliamentary Authority

The parliamentary authority for ACELC meetings is *Robert's Rules of Orders*, latest edition.

Article IX: Amendments to Governance Guidelines

These Governance Guidelines can be amended by a two-third vote of the Representative Assembly. This can be done during Representative Assembly meetings or electronically.

Article X: Dissolving the Corporation

In the event the organization is dissolved, all monies and assets shall be given to a 501(c)(3) organization(s) approved by the ACELC Board of Directors. This (These) organization(s) must hold beliefs consistent with the beliefs of the ACELC.