

CONSTITUTION ST. PAUL EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

PREAMBLE

Whereas, according to the Word of God it is the duty of Christians:

- A. To fellowship with those who confess the true faith. (Acts 2, 42-47; Hebrews 10:24-25; I John 2:19; I Corinthians 1:10-11);
- B. To endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:3-6)
- C. To administer the Office of the Keys as a body. (Matthew 18:17; John 20:22-23)
- D. To conduct all the internal and external affairs of such body “decently and in order”. (I Corinthians 14:40)

Therefore be it resolved that we, a number of Lutheran Christians declare ourselves united as a congregation, and herewith adopt the following Constitution and By-laws.

C O N S T I T U T I O N

ARTICLE 1.0 NAME

The name of this congregation shall be St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, Inc. of Town of Montpelier, Kewaunee County, Wisconsin, a religious society organized under Chapter 187 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

ARTICLE 2.0 MISSION

The purposes of a congregation are clearly defined in the Word of God, which is the establishment and maintenance of the public ministry; public and private administration of the means of grace; due application of church discipline (Matthew 18; John 20; Acts 20; I Corinthians 5; I Peter 5, etc.). To this end we obligate ourselves:

- A. To conduct regular public worship, or church services, in which hymns and church forms of Lutheran content shall be used;
- B. To provide pastoral care for all our members, including a thorough indoctrination of our children and of adults without sufficient knowledge of Lutheran teachings;
- C. To maintain a Christian Day School, if possible,
- D. To engage in mission work and to support to the best of our ability the work of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.
- E. The mission of St. Paul Lutheran is to strengthen and support our members in their Christian faith through God’s Word, the Sacraments, education, prayer and fellowship; thereby preparing them to be witnesses of the Gospel in our community and the world, so that all who believe shall receive the gift of eternal life.

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ARTICLE 3.0 CONFESSIONAL STANDARD

This congregation and each individual member thereof, declares unreserved adherence:

- A. To all canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the only rule of faith and life;
- B. To all the symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as found in the Book of Concord of the year 1580, as a true exposition of the Word of God; These symbols are: The Three Ecumenical Creeds (Apostle's, Nicene, and Athanasian); the Unaltered Augsburg Confession; the Apology of the Augsburg Confession; the Smalcald Articles; the Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther; the Large Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther; the Formula of Concord.
- C. Only such hymns, songs, prayers, and liturgies shall be used in the public services of this congregation and school and in all ministerial acts as conform to this confessional standard.
- D. Using for instruction in religion the Bible, Luther's Small Catechism, and such other textbooks as contain nothing at variance with the Word of God.

ARTICLE 4.0 SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

This congregation shall be a member of The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod as long as the Synod conforms to the congregation's confessional standard as set forth in this constitution.

ARTICLE 5.0 MEMBERSHIP

5.1 The membership of this congregation includes the following:

- 5.1.1 *Baptized* members are all who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and who are under the spiritual care of the pastor of this congregation, including the children who have not yet been confirmed into communicant membership.
- 5.1.2 *Communicant* members are those baptized members who have been instructed and are familiar with the contents of *Luther's Small Catechism*, have been confirmed in the Lutheran faith, and accept the confessional standard of Section 3.0 of this Constitution.
- 5.1.3. *Voting* members are communicant members who have reached the age of 18 years *and subscribe to this Constitution and By-laws*.

5.2 Members of this congregation are received in the following manner:

- 5.2.1 Baptized members are received through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism or through the consent of one or both parents in the case of children who have been baptized in another Christian congregation.
- 5.2.2 Adult members are received through the rite of confirmation and Sacrament of Holy Baptism as appropriate, through transfer from a sister congregation, or through profession of faith or reaffirmation of faith.
- 5.2.3 Eligible communicant members may be received as voting members after having read and signed the constitution and bylaws.

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- 5.3 Members of this congregation shall conform their entire lives to the authority of God's Word and to that end shall make diligent use of the means of grace, exercise faithful stewardship of God's many gifts and talents, impart and accept fraternal admonition as the need of such admonition becomes apparent, and be readily available for service in the kingdom of Christ within and beyond the congregation. Membership in organizations whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God is prohibited.
- 5.4 Membership in this congregation shall be terminated as follows:
- 5.4.1 Membership shall be terminated by transfer to a sister congregation, by joining a congregation outside the fellowship of this congregation, by excommunication or self-exclusion, or by death.
 - 5.4.2 Communicant members who conduct themselves in an un-Christian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20 and the congregation's stated and adopted guidelines. If they remain impenitent after proper admonition, they shall be excommunicated. Each case of excommunication shall be presented to the voters assembly for a decision. A two-thirds majority vote of the voters assembly shall be required.

ARTICLE 6.0 CALLED CHURCH WORKERS

The voters assembly of this congregation shall have the exclusive right to call ordained ministers. The right to call commissioned ministers also belongs to the congregation and ordinarily shall not be delegated to a smaller body and never to an individual.

- 6.1 The pastoral office shall be conferred only upon ordained ministers who are members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, candidates for the pastoral ministry who have satisfied the qualifications and requirements for assignment of first calls by Synod, or ordained ministers who are members in good standing of church bodies that have been formally recognized to be in altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod when agreements for such calls are in place.
- 6.2 Only those commissioned ministers shall receive a call who adhere to the confessional standard set forth in this constitution, who are qualified for the work of the ministry to which they are called, and who have been endorsed by and are members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, who are candidates of LCMS colleges and universities who have satisfied the qualifications and requirements for assignment of first calls, and who are commissioned ministers in good standing from church bodies that are in altar and pulpit fellowship with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
- 6.3 The right of calling ordained or commissioned ministers shall be vested in the voters assembly and shall not be delegated otherwise.
- 6.4 Called ordained or commissioned ministers may be removed from office in Christian and lawful order by a two-thirds majority ballot vote of the voters assembly for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of the duties of office, or the inability to perform those duties. Additionally, a commissioned minister may be released from the call

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in accordance with the Reduction in Force policy adopted by the Board of Christian Education.

6.5 Called ordained or commissioned ministers will adhere to mandatory retirement age of 68 years. Upon reaching 68 years, the retirement may be deferred on a yearly basis by a two-thirds majority voting membership approval.

6.6 When a vacancy occurs in an office of an ordained or commissioned minister, the congregation shall notify the president of the district to receive assistance in temporarily filling the vacancy and to receive his counsel in calling a new pastor, teacher, or other church worker (Bylaw 15.0).

ARTICLE 7.0 OFFICERS & BOARDS

This congregation shall have the following officers and boards in addition to any which the congregation shall establish from time to time. The officers and board members, and the pastor as an advisory member, shall constitute the membership of the church council. Those officers identified by state law shall serve as the legal representatives of the congregation. The pastor and the chairman are ex officio advisory members of all boards.

7.1 The officers of this congregation shall be:

7.1.1 A chairman, who shall conduct the meetings of the voters assembly.

7.1.2 A secretary, who shall keep the minutes of the voters' meetings.

7.1.3 A treasurer, who shall be responsible for the financial records of the congregation.

7.1.4 A financial secretary, who shall be responsible for the receipt of contributions and shall deposit the same in an account established in the name of the congregation.

7.2 The boards of this congregation shall be:

7.2.1 A board of elders, consisting of 3 or more, which shall assist the pastor in the spiritual life of the congregation.

7.2.2 A board of trustees, consisting of 3 or more, which shall be responsible for the physical properties of the congregation.

7.2.3 A board of Christian education, consisting of 3 or more, which shall be responsible for the nurture and Christian growth of the members of the congregation and which shall serve as the operating board for the Christian Day School.

7.2.4 A board of stewardship and evangelism, consisting of 3 or more, which shall be charged with the teaching and promoting proper stewardship of time, talents, and treasures and shall lead the members of the congregation in outreach into the community.

7.3 Any officer or board member who fails to carry out his or her duties of office or who fails to perform the responsibilities of confirmed membership (see paragraph 5.3 above) may be removed from office by the voters assembly by a two-thirds majority ballot vote, in Christian and lawful order. Matthew 18 should be followed under such circumstances.

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ARTICLE 8.0 AUTHORITY OF AND WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

The voters assembly shall be the governing body of this congregation and shall be empowered to administer and manage all its affairs.

8.1 The establishment and conduct of all organizations and societies within the congregation or related directly to the congregation shall be subject to the overall authority and general oversight of the voters assembly. All organizations shall provide a written report annually to the voters assembly.

8.2 All matters before the voters assembly shall be decided by a majority vote unless otherwise specified by this constitution or bylaws. Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided only on the basis of the Word of God.

ARTICLE 9.0 DIVISION

If at any time a division of the congregation should take place for any reason, the following principles will govern.

9.1 The property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those communicant members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to the confessional standards set forth in this constitution. (Article 3.0)

9.2 In the event that the congregation dissolves, all property shall be disposed of by the final voters assembly for the payment of debts and all just claims against the congregation, and any and all surplus and all rights connected therewith shall be conveyed to and become the property of the North Wisconsin District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

ARTICLE 10.0 AMENDMENTS

10.1 This constitution or any of its paragraphs may be revised, altered, or repealed at a regular or special voters meeting of this congregation. This meeting and its purpose shall be announced on two preceding Sundays. To effect such revision, alteration, or repeal, a two-thirds majority vote of the members present shall be necessary. No revision, alteration, or repeal shall be made which conflicts with the Word of God and the Symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church mentioned in Article 3.0

10.2 The revised constitution shall, as a condition of continued membership in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, be submitted to the president of the district for review by the district's constitution committee and favorable action by the district's board of directors before being implemented by the congregation.

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B Y – L A W S

ARTICLE 11.0 MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION

The voters assembly shall meet quarterly, with the election of officers and board members taking place at the January meeting.

11.1 All regular meetings shall be announced on two preceding Sundays. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor or Chairman with the consent of two other Church Council members. Such meetings and their purpose shall be announced in at least one public service.

11.2 Any guests who wish to attend must have prior approval from the Chairman, the Board of Elders, and the Board of Trustees. Submission for approval must occur no less than 48 hours before the scheduled meeting.

ARTICLE 12.0 NOMINATIONS, ELECTIONS, AND TERMS OF OFFICE

12.1 A nominating committee appointed by the church council shall present a slate of candidates for each elected office. The slate shall provide at least one name for each office. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. No person shall be nominated without his or her consent.

12.2 Voting members shall not be eligible for office until they have held voting membership for at least one year. Every voting member is expected to attend the meetings of the Voter's Assembly and accept nomination for Officer and Board positions. Because these positions involve the specific functions of the pastoral office (preaching, administering the sacraments, church discipline), only men may serve as Chairman and Elder.

12.3 A majority of the votes cast shall be required for all elections. Candidates receiving the lowest number of votes shall be eliminated in each succeeding ballot.

12.4 All officers shall be elected for a term of two years. Other members of the church council and of boards and committees shall be elected for a term of 3 years. There are no term limits.

12.5 The election by the congregation of any person to an office in the congregation shall be sufficient to confer upon that person the duties of that office. Installation of officers and board members will normally take place in the next Sunday worship service of the congregation.

12.6 In the event of a vacancy, the church council shall appoint a replacement to complete the unexpired term.

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ARTICLE 13.0 OFFICIAL DUTIES OF OFFICERS & BOARDS

Officers and members of boards and committees shall perform the duties as provided in the constitution. The congregation shall also have the right to detail and expand upon those responsibilities by the development of job descriptions prepared by the church council and approved by the voters assembly.

ARTICLE 14.0 CHURCH COUNCIL

The church council shall provide direction to the congregation on behalf of the voters assembly.

14.1 The church council shall consist of the congregation's president, secretary, treasurer, financial secretary, and all board members. The pastor shall be an advisory member.

14.2 The church council shall meet a minimum of four times a year. Special meetings may be called by the chairman, the pastor, or any three members of the council by providing notice at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. All voting members of the council present shall constitute a quorum.

14.3 The principal duty of the church council shall be to coordinate the mission and ministry activities of the congregation. It shall also have the power to act on behalf of the congregation between meetings of the voters assembly within limitations established by the voters assembly, which actions shall be reported to the next meeting of the voters assembly.

ARTICLE 15.0 PROCEDURES FOR CALLING MINISTERS OF RELIGION

When this congregation calls a minister of religion, ordained or commissioned, the following procedure shall be followed:

15.1 When a pastor is to be called, every member of the congregation shall be provided opportunity to suggest one or more names for consideration.

15.2 A call committee shall be assembled by the chairman to serve as a screening committee and shall submit all suggested names to the district president for information and evaluation. The committee shall then present to the congregation by public announcement its proposed list of candidates and their biographical sketches.

15.3 At a voters meeting called for the purpose of calling a new pastor, the proposed list may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the assembly. When possible, information regarding additional candidates shall be provided by the district president and/or his representative at the meeting.

15.4 Ballot voting shall continue until a majority vote determines the disposition of the call.

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15.5 When a commissioned minister is to be called, the Board of Christian Education shall serve as the call committee and will recommend candidate(s) to the voters assembly.

ARTICLE 16.0 RULES OF ORDER

So that the affairs of the congregation may be conducted decently and in order, in addition to principles laid down in Scripture and in the constitution and bylaws of this congregation, accepted parliamentary procedures such as Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed.

ARTICLE 17.0 AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the voter's assembly.

17.1 Amendments shall be adopted by a majority of all votes cast, provided the proposed change has been announced in a previous meeting or has been submitted in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting to all communicant members.

17.2 The revised bylaws shall, as a condition of continued membership in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, be submitted to the president of the district for review by the district's constitution committee and favorable action by the district's board of directors before being placed into practice by the congregation.