

# Constitution

for

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

West Salem, WI

## 1.0 NAME

The name of this congregation shall be Prince of Peace Lutheran Church of West Salem, La Crosse County, Wisconsin.

## 2.0 MISSION

In Matthew 28:18-20, Christ gave his Church the Great Commission: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of age." In accordance with this Great Commission, Prince of Peace exists to be a disciple making community for the Lord Jesus Christ.

## 3.0 CONFSSIONAL STANDARD

3.1 This congregation believes, teaches, and confesses that:

3.1.1 The canonical books of the Old and the New Testament are the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice:

3.1.2 All the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church are true and unadulterated statements and expositions of the Word of God, to wit: the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise on the Authority and Primacy of the Pope, the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord.

3.2 The performance of the Office of the Holy Ministry, the affairs of the congregation, and all agendas, hymnals, liturgies, and catechetical materials shall be in conformity to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

## 4.0 MEMBERSHIP

### 4.1 Membership

The membership of this congregation includes the following:

4.1.1 *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.

4.1.2 *Communicant* members are those baptized members who have been confirmed in the Lutheran faith, accept the confessional standard of Section 3 of this constitution, are familiar at least with the contents of *Luther's Small Catechism*, and are not members of organizations whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God.

4.1.3 *Voting* members are communicant members who have reached the age of 18 years, and have been received by the Voters' Assembly.

#### **4.1 Reception**

Baptized and communicant members are received through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, through the consent of one or both parents in the case of children who have been baptized in another Christian congregation, through the rite of confirmation, through transfer from a sister congregation, through profession of faith or reaffirmation of faith. The reception shall be approved by the Voters' Assembly. Eligible communicant members may be received as voting members upon application for such privilege, and upon approval by the Voters' Assembly.

#### **4.2 Duties**

Members of the congregation shall conform their entire lives to the rule of God's Word, and to that end 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.

#### **4.3 Termination**

4.4.1 Membership shall be terminated by transfer to a sister congregation, by death, by joining a congregation outside the fellowship of this congregation, by excommunication, or by self-exclusion.

4.4.2 Communicant members who conduct themselves in an un-Christian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20; if they remain impenitent after proper admonition, they shall be excommunicated. Each case shall be presented individually to the Voters' Assembly for a decision.

### **5.0 THE OFFICE OF THE HOLY MINISTRY**

5.1 This congregation shall confer the Office of Holy Ministry only upon men who profess and adhere to, and who shall be pledged to teach and perform their duties according to, the confessional standard of this constitution, and who are qualified for this work.

5.2 An ordained minister may be removed from office in Christian and lawful order by a two-thirds majority vote of the Voters' Assembly, only for one or more of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect, or inability to perform the duties of the office.

### **6.0 AUXILIARY OFFICES**

6.1 The congregation may establish auxiliary offices (such as teacher, principal, deacon, deaconess, director of Christian education, director of Christian outreach) to support the ministry or assist Christians in their God-given vocations.

6.2 Auxiliary offices shall be subject to the doctrinal supervision of the ordained minister.

6.3 This congregation shall confer auxiliary offices only upon such persons who profess and adhere to, and who shall be pledged to teach and perform their duties according to, the confessional standard of this constitution, and who are qualified for this work.

6.4 The Voters' Assembly, upon its own initiative or upon the recommendation of the appropriate board, may eliminate an auxiliary office provided that six months notice is given to the incumbent of that office.

6.5 An auxiliary office holder may be removed from office in Christian and lawful order by a two-thirds majority vote of the Voters' Assembly, only for one or more of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect, or inability to perform the duties of the office.

### **7.0 AUTHORITY OF THE CONGREGATION**

7.1 The Voters' Assembly shall be the governing body of this congregation and shall be empowered to administer and manage all temporal affairs. The establishment and conduct

of all organizations and societies within the congregation or related directly to it shall be subject to the approval and supervision of the Voters' Assembly.

- 7.2 All matters shall be decided by a majority vote of the Voters' Assembly 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.
- 7.3 The right of calling shall be vested in the Voters' Assembly and shall not be delegated otherwise.

## **8.0 ELECTED OFFICE AND BOARDS OFFICERS AND BOARDS**

- 8.1 The elected offices shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.
- 8.2 The elected boards shall be Elders, Trustees, Education, Evangelism and Stewardship.
- 8.3 The congregation may establish other elected offices or boards as necessary.
- 8.4 Women may not serve as President, Vice-President or Elder.
- 8.5 All elected officers and board members shall be voting members.
- 8.6 An elected officer or board member may be removed from office in Christian and lawful order by a two-thirds majority vote of the Voters' Assembly, only for any of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect, or inability to perform the duties of the office.

## **9.0 INDEMNIFICATION AND BONDING**

- 9.1 All elected officers of the congregation, members of appointed committees, the Pastor, and all called and contracted personnel shall be held harmless and indemnified by the congregation from any financial loss or expense arising out of the good faith attempt to perform their duties and functions. They may, however, be held accountable for bad faith, dishonesty or deliberate misconduct. This indemnity does not extend to any claimed damage to feelings, reputation or standing, including future employability, but is intended only to assure that a well-intentioned person shall suffer to bear a liability or a monetary claim against him on account of his service. The Church Council, as a condition to any obligation to the congregation under this indemnity, shall be entitled to be promptly advised of any facts which may give rise to a claim and to direct and participate in any defense thereof.
- 9.2 All elected and appointed persons responsible for the receiving, counting or disbursement of the congregational funds shall be bonded by the congregation.

## **10.0 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 standards set forth in Section 3 as determined by a two-thirds majority vote of the Voters' Assembly.

## **11.0 DIVISION AND DISSOLUTION**

- 11.1 If at any time a division should take place as a result of a doctrinal dispute, the property of the congregation shall remain with those voting members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to the confessional standards of this constitution.
- 11.2 If division takes place for any other reason, the property shall remain with the majority of the voting members.
- 11.3 In the event the congregation should dissolve, the property shall be transferred to the district of the Synod in which the congregation held membership at the time of dissolution.

## **12.0 AMENDMENTS**

This constitution may be amended in the following manner.

- 12.1 Amendments to the provisions of this constitution not identified in the following paragraph shall be submitted in writing at a meeting of the Voters' Assembly and announced to the

- congregation by public posting and/or by mail to all communicant members prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the voters present shall be required for adoption.
- 12.2 Amendments to Articles 3, 4, 8 and 12 shall not destroy their essential meaning. In addition to the above requirements, proposals to amend Articles 3, 4, 8 and 12 shall require that previous notice of such amendments and discussion of the same shall be presented at two regular meeting of the Voters' Assembly before the meeting at which the proposed amendment is to receive action. Notice that action will be taken on proposed amendments shall be provided to all voting members prior to the meeting when a vote will be taken. The date of approval shall be referenced in any amendment adopted.
- 12.3 The revised constitution shall, as a condition of continued membership in good standing of 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 adopted by the congregation.

## **BYLAWS**

### **13.0 THE OFFICE OF THE HOLY MINISTRY**

#### **13.1 Conferring the Office**

In order to confer the Office of the Holy Ministry in this congregation, the following procedures must be observed:

- 13.1.1 The congregational President shall notify the District President when a vacancy is created in the Office of the Holy Ministry. The Board of Elders and congregational President shall serve as the screening committee for the call process. The screening committee may invite other members to be involved in the screening process.
- 13.1.2 All members shall be invited to submit nominations for the Office of the Holy Ministry. All nominations shall be forwarded to the District President. He shall secure biographical profiles of the men nominated by the congregation who are not restricted or suspended and may supply additional nominations. The slate consisting of all nominees shall be published in the congregational newsletter with brief biographical profiles.
- 13.1.3 The screening committee shall review the candidate profiles and develop a list of not less than three candidates to be presented to the congregation.
- 13.1.4 If the call to be issued is for an assistant or associate pastor, only those nominees who have been endorsed by the Pastor shall be on the slate.
- 13.1.5 After the screening committee has completed its work, the congregational President shall call a meeting of the Voters' Assembly.
- 13.1.6 The slate of nominees shall be placed on the ballot.
- 13.1.7 Election shall be a majority ballot vote and voting shall continue until a clear majority has been established after candidates receiving the lowest number of votes have been eliminated in each succeeding ballot.

#### **13.2 Removal from Office**

In order to remove a Pastor from the Office of the Holy Ministry in this congregation, the following procedures must be observed.

- 13.2.1 Signed, written charges must be presented by the offended party to the Board of Elders or to the President of the congregation before any action may be taken.
- 13.2.2 Upon receipt of the charges, the Board of Elders or the President of the congregation shall provide a copy to the ordained minister and then refer the charges to the District President.
- 13.2.3 The ordained minister must be given the opportunity to answer the charges and defend himself.

- 13.2.4 Upon completion of the investigation, the congregation may proceed with action on the charges. A two-thirds majority ballot vote of the Voters' Assembly shall be required for the removal from office at a meeting called for that purpose.
- 13.2.5 The congregation may request the resignation of any ordained minister from his position in the congregation in the case of prolonged incapacity or inability to perform the duties of his office.

## **14.0 AUXILIARY OFFICES**

### **14.1 Conferring the Office**

In order to confer the auxiliary offices of this congregation, the following procedures must be observed.

- 14.1.1 The congregational President or Pastor shall ask the District President for assistance in the process. The Pastor shall serve as chairman of the screening committee which shall be the board responsible for supervising the auxiliary office.
- 14.1.2 All members may submit nominations for the auxiliary office. All nominations shall be forwarded to the District President or his designee who shall secure biographical profiles of the persons nominated by the congregation who are not restricted or suspended and may supply additional nominations. The slate consisting of all nominees shall be published in the congregational newsletter with brief biographical profiles.
- 14.1.3 The screening committee shall review the candidate profiles and develop a list of candidates to be presented to the congregation. The screening committee shall recommend one person for the position.
- 14.1.4 After the screening committee has completed its work, the congregational President shall call a meeting of the Voters' Assembly.
- 14.1.5 Only one name shall be placed on the ballot. A two-thirds majority ballot vote of the Voters' Assembly shall be required for approval of the nominee. If the nominee is not approved, the screening committee may place another name before the congregation. When a person is approved, the President shall declare the person elected.

### **14.2 Removal from Office**

In order to remove a person from an auxiliary office in this congregation, the following procedures must be observed.

- 14.2.1 Signed, written charges must be presented by the offended party to the supervising board or to the Pastor before any action may be taken.
- 14.2.2 Upon receipt of the charges, the supervising board or the Pastor shall provide a copy to the auxiliary officer.
- 14.2.3 The auxiliary officer must be given the opportunity to answer the charges and defend himself or herself.
- 14.2.4 Upon completion of the investigation, , the congregation may proceed with action on the charges. A two-thirds majority ballot vote of the Voters' Assembly shall be required for the removal from office at a meeting called for that purpose.
- 14.2.5 The congregation may request the resignation of any auxiliary officer from his or her position in the congregation in the case of prolonged incapacity or inability to perform the duties of his office.

## **15.0 THE VOTERS' ASSEMBLY**

- 15.1 Regular meetings of the Voters' Assembly shall be held semi-annually, at a date and time set by the Church Council.
- 15.2 Special meetings of the Voters' Assembly may be called by the President, Pastor, or at the request of ten voting members.

- 15.3 Announcements of all meeting and meeting agendas shall be published at least two weeks prior to the meeting date.
- 15.4 All members present at a validly called meeting shall constitute a quorum.

## 16.0 CHURCH COUNCIL

- 16.1 The Church Council shall consist of the elected officers and the chairperson of each board. The Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the Church Council. The President and Secretary of the congregation shall serve as chairman and secretary of the Church Council.
- 16.2 The Church Council shall meet at least quarterly. Special meetings may be called by the President, Pastor, or three members of the Church Council.
- 16.3 A majority of the voting members of the Church Council shall constitute a quorum.
- 16.4 The principle duty of the Church Council is to coordinate the program and activities of the various boards, committees, and societies of the congregation. It shall have power to act in behalf of the congregation between meetings of the Voters' Assembly.

## 17.0 TERMS AND DUTIES OF OFFICE

- 17.1 The terms of office shall be two years for elected officers and for elected board members. All terms shall begin on January 1<sup>st</sup> following the election. Elections for President and Secretary shall be held in odd numbered years, elections for Vice President and Treasurer shall be held in even numbered years. New officers and board members shall be inducted on the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of January. Officers and board members shall serve until their successors are elected and qualified.

- 17.2 Officers and board members shall be eligible for re-election without limitation.

### 17.3 Duties of Officers

The congregation may assign duties to the offices of the congregation in addition to those listed in this section.

#### 17.3.1 The **President** shall:

- a. preside at all meetings of the Voters' Assembly and the Church Council;
- b. be an ex-official member of all boards, committees, and societies of the congregation.

#### 17.3.2 The **Vice-President** shall

- a. assist the President as requested;
- b. assume the office of the President if that office is vacated;
- c. perform the duties of the President in the absence of or at the request of the President.

#### 17.3.3 The **Secretary** shall:

- a. record the minutes of the Voters' Assembly and the Church Council;
- b. maintain a roster of all voting members;
- c. conduct the general correspondence of the Voters' Assembly and Church Council;
- d. maintain the record books, official copy of the constitution and bylaws; standing rules, and other official actions of the congregation.

#### 17.3.4 The **Treasurer** shall:

- a. be entrusted with the custody of the congregation's funds;
- b. pay all congregational bills when authorized and directed by the Voters' Assembly or Church Council;
- c. present a financial report at each meeting of the Voters' Assembly;
- d. prepare and distribute contribution reports to members;
- e. keep and report the record of congregational receipts;
- f. coordinate the preparation of an annual congregational budget.

#### **17.4 Duties of Boards**

The congregation may assign duties to the boards of the congregation in addition to those listed in this section. The number of members of each board will be decided by the Voters' Assembly.

##### **17.4.1 The Board of Elders shall:**

- a. provide counsel, advice, and assistance to the pastor;
- b. assist the pastor in the preparation of the services for the congregation;
- c. prepare an annual budget for its area of responsibility, including the setting of the pastor's salary and benefits.

##### **17.4.2 The Board of Trustees shall:**

- a. be responsible for maintaining and inspecting the building and property of the congregation;
- b. prepare annually a report indicating the condition of the congregation's building and property, including estimated cost for repair or replacement;
- c. determine and secure the proper insurance and bonding for the congregation and its officers;
- d. secure loans upon authorization of the Voters' Assembly or Church Council;
- e. prepare an annual budget for its area of responsibility.

##### **17.4.3 The Board of Education shall:**

- a. supervise the educational programs of the congregation;
- b. recruit and train teachers for the educational programs;
- c. approve the curricula for the educational programs;
- d. prepare an annual budget for its area of responsibility.

##### **17.4.4 The Board of Evangelism shall:**

- a. supervise the evangelism programs of the congregation;
- b. recruit and train workers for the evangelism programs;
- c. prepare an annual budget for its area of responsibility.

#### **18.0 NOMINATION AND ELECTIONS**

**18.1** A Nominating Committee, appointed by the Church Council, shall present a slate of candidates for all elected offices. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for each office. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. No person shall be nominated without his consent,

**18.2** All officers shall be elected by a majority ballot vote and voting shall continue until a clear majority has been established after candidates receiving the lowest number of votes have been eliminated in each succeeding ballot.

**18.3** Election for any uncontested office may be by a voice vote.

**18.4** In case of a vacancy in an elective office, the Church Council shall elect a successor to fill the unexpired term.

#### **19.0 RULES OF ORDER**

In addition to principles laid down in scripture, the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be followed.

#### **20.0 AMENDMENTS**

These bylaws may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the Voters' Assembly.

**20.1** 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.

- 20.2** The revised bylaws, as a condition of continued membership in good standing of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, must 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 adopted by the congregation.