

# Constitution and By-Laws of



Adopted: 1974  
Last Revision Approved: December 14, 2014

# CONSTITUTION OF PRINCE OF PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Adopted: 1974 Revised: 1981, 1994, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2014

## **PREAMBLE:**

***"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord of Hosts. (Zech 4:6). Recognizing our unity in the Christian faith and our common practice of it, desiring to express our fellowship in worship and work, knowing our spiritual needs, mindful of our Christian privileges and duties, and wishing to observe orderly cooperation, with the help of God we adopt and pledge ourselves to the following Constitution and By-Laws.***

## **ARTICLE 1: NAME**

The name of this congregation shall be Prince of Peace Lutheran Church of Palatine, Cook County, Illinois. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois.

## **ARTICLE 2: PURPOSE**

The purpose of this congregation shall be to build and enlarge the Kingdom of God and to foster Christian fellowship according to the confessional standard of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Article 3).

## **ARTICLE 3: CONFESSION**

This congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God, verbally inspired, and acknowledges and accepts all the Confessional Writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the Book of Concord of the Year 1580, as a true exposition of the doctrines of the Bible, and as the norm for the faith and life of our congregation. These Confessional Writings are the three Ecumenical Creeds (Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, Luther's Large and Small Catechisms and the Formula of Concord.

## **ARTICLE 4: MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of this congregation includes the following:

### **A. Baptized Membership**

Baptized members are all the members who have been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, including those on the membership roles who have not yet confirmed their baptismal vow.

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### B. Confirmed Membership

Confirmed membership in our congregation shall be extended to all those persons who:

1. Confess Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord;
2. Are baptized in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and who, after careful instruction, have been confirmed into the Lutheran faith;
3. Accept all canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the only divine rule and standard of faith and life;
4. Attend divine services faithfully and study the Word of God diligently;
5. Walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16) and do not live in manifest works of the flesh. (Gal. 5:19-21);
6. Partake of the Lord's Supper frequently;
7. Contribute regularly and faithfully, as God has prospered them toward the building of Christ's Kingdom in the congregation and throughout the world;
8. Give of their time and ability to the development and extension of the Kingdom of God;
9. Permit themselves to be fraternally admonished and corrected when they have erred (Matthew 18:15-20);
10. Are not members, affiliates, or supporters of any organization whose purposes, principles or practices conflict with the Word of God;
11. Accept the provisions of the Constitution and By-Laws of this congregation.

### C. Voting Membership

All confirmed members who have reached the age of 18 shall be entitled to vote.

## **ARTICLE 5: THE OFFICES OF CALLED SERVANTS**

The pastoral office of this congregation, as well as other called Ministers of Religion shall be conferred only on such candidates as profess and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in Article 3 of this Constitution, are well qualified for their work, have been endorsed by the Synod, and are members of the Synod. All candidates shall, in the call extended to and accepted by them, be pledged to this confessional standard.

## **ARTICLE 6: POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

### A. General

The congregation as a body, through the voting members, who are guided by the Holy Spirit, shall have supreme power to administer and manage all its external and internal affairs. The congregation, however, shall in all things be bound to the authority of the Word of God; any decision contrary to the Word of God shall be null and void.

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### B. Right of Calling

The right of calling pastors, other ministers or teachers shall be vested in the congregation as represented by the voting members in assembly and shall never be delegated to a smaller body or to an individual.

### C. Decisions

All matters of doctrine and of conscience shall be decided only by the Word of God; other matters shall be decided by the voting members by a majority vote unless otherwise specified by the Constitution and By-Laws.

### D. Powers of Officers

Congregational officers, the board(s) or any committees, whether elected or appointed, shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them, and whatever power may have been delegated to them may at any time be altered or revoked by the voting members.

### E. Removal From Office

Any elected member, pastor, other minister or teacher may be removed or dismissed from office, by ballot, by the congregation in a Christian and lawful manner (as prescribed in Matthew 18:15-20). Valid and urgent causes for removal or dismissal shall be: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, persistent neglect, or inability to perform his/her official duties.

## **ARTICLE 7: CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE**

Members of this congregation who willingly and repeatedly violate any of the principles of Article 4, Section B, shall be admonished according to Matt. 18:15-20.

A. If any member refuses to amend his/her sinful life after application of the several grades of admonition (Matt. 18:15-20), he/she shall be excluded from the congregation and shall thereby lose all rights and privileges of membership and all rights to the property of the congregation. The right of appeal to the congregation shall not be denied.

B. Those members who voluntarily withdraw from membership or permanently leave the community without due notice to the congregation shall also lose all rights and privileges of membership and all rights to the property of the congregation.

## **ARTICLE 8: OFFICERS**

The officers of this congregation shall be Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary, and, together with the directors, shall constitute the Board of Directors.

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### **ARTICLE 9: PROPERTY RIGHTS**

If at any time a separation should take place on account of doctrine, or for other reason, the property of the congregation and all benefits therewith connected shall remain with those voting members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Articles 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of this Constitution. In the event the congregation should totally disband, the property and all other rights connected therewith shall be transferred to the Northern Illinois District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

### **ARTICLE 10: DOCTRINAL LITERATURE**

Only such hymns, prayers and liturgies shall be used in the public services of the congregation and in all ministerial acts as conform to the confessional standard of Article 3. Likewise, in all classes for instruction, only such books shall be used as conform to this standard.

### **ARTICLE 11: EDUCATION**

It shall be the responsibility of the congregation to provide for the Christian education and training of all members of the congregation. Members shall be encouraged to enroll themselves and their children into the established agencies for growth in Christian faith and life.

### **ARTICLE 12: SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP**

A. This congregation shall hold membership in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, so long as the confessions and Constitution of said Synod are in accord with the confessional standard expressed in Article 3 as determined by a majority vote of the congregation at a meeting called for that purpose. The congregation shall send its pastor and a lay delegate to the District Convention of Synod.

B. It shall be the privilege of the congregation and its individual members to support the work of the Synod, since they thereby support their own Christian-appointed work.

### **ARTICLE 13: BY-LAWS**

This congregation may adopt such By-Laws as may be required for the accomplishment of its purpose, but which do not conflict with the Constitution.

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### **ARTICLE 14: AMENDMENTS**

- A. The Northern Illinois District Constitution Committee of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod shall be consulted before any amendment to this Constitution is presented to the Congregational Assembly for approval.
- B. Amendments to this Constitution may be adopted at a properly convened regular meeting of the Congregational Assembly provided that:
  - 1. They do not conflict with the provisions laid down in Article 3 or with any section of any article that pertains to Scriptural doctrine and practice.
  - 2. The proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at a previous meeting of the Congregational Assembly.
  - 3. The proposed amendment has been published in at least two parish-wide distributions in advance of the meeting.
  - 4. The meeting in which a proposed amendment will be voted on has been announced following each worship service held the two weekends immediately prior to the Congregational Assembly, and reference to the proposed amendment has been made in such announcements.
  - 5. At least two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting members present vote in favor of adopting the proposed amendment(s).
- C. In addition to the above requirements, proposals to amend Articles 3, 5, 10 and 14, shall not destroy the essential meaning of the same. Whether or not this has occurred shall be decided, if challenged, by a decision of the Board of Directors of the Northern Illinois District.
- D. After input from the District Constitution Committee, formulation of the amendment draft(s), and a vote to adopt the Constitution amendment(s) by the congregation, the Constitution will be submitted to the District Board of Directors for final approval.

