

St. Peter Lutheran Church – Constitution

Preamble

The Word of God demands that a Christian congregation not only conform to the Word of God in doctrine and practice (Psalm 119:105; Galatians 1:6-8; 2 Timothy 4:1-5), but also that all things be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40). Therefore, we the voting members of St. Peter Lutheran Church, Arlington Heights, Illinois, accept and subscribe to this Constitution, in accordance with which all spiritual and material affairs of our Congregation shall be conducted.

Article 1: Name and Synodical Membership

The name of this Congregation shall be: St. Peter Lutheran Church, Arlington Heights, Illinois. It shall be a member of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as long as that Synod remains steadfast in the theological commitment to which this Congregation is dedicated as set forth in Article 3 of this Constitution.

Article 2: Purpose and Rights

The purpose of this organization shall be that of a religious organization; more specifically, that of a Christian congregation, established and maintained for the express purpose of disseminating the Gospel truth according to the confessional standard of the Lutheran Church, as contained in the Book of Concord of the year 1580. This organization may receive, acquire, hold title to, and manage such real estate and other property as it may need to accomplish said purpose, and may sell or dispose of such real estate and other property or any part thereof. This organization shall have all rights and powers as granted by the laws of the State of Illinois to religious corporations.

Article 3: Confessional Standard

This Congregation acknowledges and accepts all the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testaments of the Bible as the verbally inspired inerrant written Word of God and the only rule of faith and life; and all the symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, as contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, to be a true and genuine exposition of the doctrines of the Bible. These confessions are: the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, Luther's Large and Small Catechisms, and the Formula of Concord.

Article 4: Membership

The Congregation of St. Peter Lutheran Church, Arlington Heights, Illinois, includes Baptized, Communicant and Voting members as set forth below. The admission of new members and termination of membership shall be governed by provisions set forth in the By-Laws.

A. Types of Membership

St. Peter Lutheran Church, Arlington Heights, Illinois, includes the following three types of members:

1. Baptized members are those who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and who are under the spiritual care of the pastor of this Congregation.
2. Communicant members are those Baptized members who have been confirmed in a congregation of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, accept the confessional standard of Article 3 of this Constitution, and are familiar with the contents of Luther's Small Catechism.
3. Voting members are Communicant members who meet the Expectations of Membership (Article 4, B), who are 18 years of age or older, and who, at the time of becoming a Communicant member, have accepted this Constitution and agreed to actively participate in the activities of the Church.

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B. Expectations of Membership

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, make a diligent effort to continue Christian education, 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.

All Members shall be expected to:

1. Worship Him at church weekly. (Matthew 4:10; Exodus 20:8; 1 John 1:3; 1 John 1:7)
2. Partake of Holy Communion regularly. (Acts 2:42)
3. Devote time daily to personal and family Bible reading, devotions and prayer. (John 5:39; Acts 17:11)
4. Learn about the Lord in regular group Bible study. (Acts 2:42; Colossians 3:16)
5. Give time and talents to serve the Lord in congregational ministry. (Psalm 100:2; Galatians 5:13).
6. Support the Lord's work with regular, proportionate and sacrificial offerings to the Lord through the congregation. (Matthew 10:8; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7)
7. Strive in faith to follow the Lord's will in all aspects of life. (Philippians 2:12-13; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7)
8. Submit to Christian admonition when it is given. (Matthew 18:15-17; Hebrews 13:17)
9. Be a witness to others, sharing the message of God's grace with others in word and deed. (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)

Article 5: Governing Board and Officers

The congregation shall be governed by a Governing Board comprised of seven (7) voting members elected by the congregation (or appointed to fill vacancies as provided in the *Governing Board Policy Manual*) and the Lead Pastor. One member of the Governing Board will be selected by the Governing Board to serve as Chair, one as Vice-Chair and one as Secretary. The Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary shall serve as the Officers of the Congregation.

Article 6: Called Pastors, Staff, and Teachers

Only such workers who are members of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and who are in accord with the confessional standards of this Congregation (Article 3 of this Constitution), and have been prepared for and are well qualified for their work shall be eligible to receive a Call to serve this Congregation.

There are two types of Calls that may be extended: Tenured and Non-Tenured. A Tenured Call has no time limit attached to it. A Non-Tenured Call has a predetermined time limit attached to it.

The right to extend or remove a Call for a Pastor (Tenured or Non-Tenured) or any other Tenured Call shall be vested in the Voters Assembly of the Congregation and shall never be delegated to a smaller body or individual.

The Governing Board may extend or remove a Non-Tenured Call to all other workers on behalf of the Congregation.

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Valid reasons for dismissing a Tenured or Non-Tenured Call shall be:

1. Persistent adherence to false teaching.
2. An ungodly life.
3. Unfaithfulness or inability in performance of duties.
4. The number of personnel exceeds that which is required for the ministries (Reduction in Force).

Article 7: Societies and Organizations

The sovereignty of this Congregation as a divinely instituted polity shall be respected by all other societies or organizations within the church. Therefore, such auxiliary societies or organizations which desire to organize and operate within this Congregation shall be permitted to do so only with the consent of the Governing Board, to which they shall be responsible and accountable at all times and shall conform to this Constitution, By-Laws and policies as established by the Governing Board.

Article 8: Powers Vested in the Congregation

The voting members of the Congregation, at any regular or special Voters Assembly, shall have the supreme power in all ecclesiastical, legal, secular, and corporate matters relating to the Church or Church affairs in accordance with its Constitution and By-Laws; and every member may appeal to it in regard to matters relating to the affairs and government of said Church. Its decisions shall be final and binding, and such decisions shall always be in accord with the Word of God and the confessional standards as set out in Article 3; otherwise, they are null and void.

Article 9: By-Laws

This Congregation may adopt appropriate By-Laws, as required to facilitate the implementation of its purposes and objectives.

Article 10: Amendments to Constitution & By-Laws

Amendments to this Constitution and its By-Laws may be made providing they do not conflict with provisions in Article 3 which article is inviolate and cannot be changed.

Amendments to this Constitution and its By-Laws must be made in writing and presented at any regular or special meeting of the Voters Assembly. No vote shall be taken at such initial presentation. Adoption of a proposed amendment at the next regular meeting, is contingent upon a two-thirds majority of votes cast at such meeting.

Amendments to this Constitution and its By-Laws must be submitted to the Constitution Committee of the District for review and approved by the District Board of Directors of the Northern Illinois District, LCMS before they can become operative in the Congregation.

Article 11: Division and Dissolution

A. Division

If at any time formal schism should occur within this organization, the property of this Congregation together with all of its assets and benefits shall remain with those adhering to Article 2 and Article 3 of this Constitution.

In the event that both factions profess adherence to Article 2 and Article 3, a simple majority shall determine who retains title to all individual properties as determined by the adjudication procedures of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

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B. Dissolution

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 Northern Illinois District of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.