

Approved 1-21-96

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

Constitution

PREAMBLE

Whereas, according to the Word of God, it is the duty of Christians to establish and maintain in their midst the ministerial offices of the Word and Sacraments (Acts 20:28, I Corinthians 4:1-5, I Corinthians 12:28), to build and extend the church of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:11-12, I Corinthians 9:19-22), to practice fellowship with those who profess the true faith (Acts 2:42-47, Hebrews 10:24-25, I John 2:19, I Corinthians 1:10-11), to endeavor to keep the unity of faith (Ephesians 4:3-6), to administer the Office of the Keys and exercise Christian discipline (Matthew 18:15-20, I Corinthians 5:9-13), to do all things decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:40), and to edify the members of the church (I Corinthians 14:26).

Therefore, we declare ourselves united as a congregational body under the name of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church and School of Bremerton, Kitsap County, Washington, and adopt this Constitution and By-laws according to which it is our intent to conduct the spiritual and administrative affairs of the congregation.

The objects and purpose of our congregation are, according to the confessional standard of the Lutheran Church (Article I), to establish and maintain the public ministry of the Gospel in our midst in order that the means of grace may be properly administered, to conduct regular public worship, to exercise evangelical pastoral care in all branches, to do mission work as enjoined by Christ (Matthew 28:18-20).

ARTICLE I - 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, to be the true and genuine exposition of the doctrines of the Bible. These Confessional Writings are:

The Ecumenical Creeds (Apostolic, Nicene and Athanasian)
The Unaltered Augsburg Confession
The Apology of the Augsburg Confession
The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope
The Smalcald Articles
Luther's Large and Small Catechisms
The Formula of Concord

ARTICLE II- SYNODICAL AFFILIATION AND MEMBERSHIP

This congregation shall be affiliated with and support the work of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and shall send its Pastor, a lay delegate, and other called workers as required by Synod to the District Convention and Synodical Convention.

The authority of the Synod over this congregation shall not be legislative or judicial, but merely advisory in nature.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this congregation includes the following:

A. Baptized Membership.

Baptized members are all who are baptized in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and are not yet confirmed.

B. Communicant Membership

Communicant members are those who:

1. Are baptized in the Name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
2. Accept all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments.
3. Understand the doctrines of Luther's Small Catechism and declare their acceptance through the Rite of Confirmation.
4. Serve the Lord by participating in all aspects of congregational affairs as the Lord has blessed them (Romans 12:6-8, Hebrews 10:23-25).
5. Lead Christian lives and do not live in manifest works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21).
6. Partake of the Lord's Supper with due frequency.
7. Permit themselves to be fraternally admonished and corrected when they have erred.
8. Are not members, affiliates, or supporters of secret societies or others conflicting with the Word of God.

C. Voting Membership

All communicant members who have reached the state voting age and have read and accept the Constitution and By-laws of the congregation shall be entitled to vote. All communicant members who are eligible are encouraged to assist in carrying out the work of the Lord and the stewardship of His gifts by becoming a voting member (Ephesians 2:10).

ARTICLE IV- ORGANIZATION

The officers, boards and committees and directors of this congregation shall be such as prescribed by the By-Laws of this constitution.

ARTICLE V- OFFICES OF CALLED WORKERS

A. Definition

Called workers shall be the Pastor, Director of Christian Education, Christian Day School Principal, Deaconess, Assistant or Associate Pastor and may be Lutheran Day School Teachers. These offices may be filled at the desire of the congregation.

B. Qualifications

All Called Workers in this congregation shall be such candidates only as profess and adhere to the Confessional standard set forth in Article I of this constitution and as certified by Synod.

ARTICLE VI- POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

A. General

The congregation, through its voting members, shall have supreme power in all external and internal administration and management of its own affairs. The establishment and conduct of all institutions and societies within the congregation, such as Christian Day School, Sunday School, choir, youth societies, ladies organizations, etc., shall at all times be subject to the approval and supervision of the congregation. The congregation, however, shall not be empowered to decide anything contrary to the Word of God and The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Article I) and any such decision shall be null and void.

B. Right of Calling

The right of calling pastors or other called workers shall be vested in the congregation and shall never be delegated to a smaller body or to an individual.

C. Decisions

Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided by the Word of God; other matters shall be decided by the voting membership by a majority vote unless otherwise specified by the Constitution or By-laws.

D. Powers of Officers,

Congregational officers or 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 Voters.

E. Removal from Office

Any church officer, board member, Pastor or other called worker may be removed from office by the congregation by ballot in Christian and lawful order for any one of the following causes: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, and inability to perform his official duties or willful neglect of them.

F. Control of Finances

The congregation, through the Voters Assembly, retains control of all expenditures and obligations of the congregation. No moneys may be spent or contracts or obligations made on behalf of the congregation without prior approval of the Voters Assembly except for those specific items outlined in the By-laws for each organizational office.

ARTICLE VII- PROPERTY RIGHTS

If, at any time, a separation should take place within this congregation, the advice of the officers of District and Synod shall be sought. If, despite all efforts to compose differences in peace and love, a division into factions of the congregation shall occur, the property of the congregation and all benefits and obligations therewith connected shall remain with those members, even though a minority, who continue to adhere in confession and practice, to Articles I and II of the Constitution. In the event the congregation should totally disband, the property and all rights connected therewith shall revert to the Northwest District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.

A. The congregation shall have the right to acquire, receive, hold title to, and manage such real or other property as it may need to accomplish its objective and may sell or dispose of such property or any part thereof. Everything in possession of the congregation, whether fixed or moveable is the estate of the congregation.

B. This congregation shall have all rights, powers and privileges that are granted by the laws of the State of Washington to religious corporations.

C. Members who voluntarily sever their connection with the congregation or whose connection with the congregation is severed in accordance with the By-laws shall forfeit the privileges of membership and all claims upon the property of this congregation so long as he/she has not been reinstated into membership.

D. If, at any time, a separation on account of doctrine should occur in this congregation, all property of the congregation shall remain with those members who adhere to and uphold Articles I and II of this Constitution. The privileges and right of appeal is granted to dissenters through the appropriate committee of the Synodical District of which the congregation is a

part, and if required, the appropriate Synodical Committee. The decision of the appeal committee shall be final.

E. If, at any time, the congregation decides to dissolve itself; all contractual and financial obligations of the congregation must be met. The congregation may dissolve itself only after the matter has been publicly announced verbally and notice placed in the worship bulletin for at least two (2) Sundays and a letter is sent to all communicant members announcing this intent and giving the date, time and place of the first Voters Meeting on the topic. Discussion of the intended dissolution shall be held in at least three (3) consecutive, properly convened Voters Meetings. The congregation may dissolve itself upon at-least 75 percent of the Voting members present at the third or final meeting casting their vote in favor of such dissolution.

ARTICLE VIII - DOCTRINAL LITERATURE

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

ARTICLE IX-CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION

A. Article I, Article V-B, and Article VII of this constitution shall be unalterable and not repealable.

B. Amendments to this constitution may be adopted at a Voters Assembly provided:

- 1.** That they do not conflict with the provisions laid down in Article I or with any section of any other article that pertains to scriptural doctrine and practice; and,
- 2.** That the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at a previous Voters Assembly.
- 3.** The affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the voting membership present at the Voters Meeting shall be required for the adoption of an amendment.

ARTICLE X-BY-LAWS

This congregation may adopt such By-laws as may be required for the accomplishment of its purpose and in accordance with this constitution.