

CONSTITUTION adopted 12.14.14

PREAMBLE

We, baptized members of the Church of Jesus Christ, responding in faith to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, desiring to unite together to preach the Word, administer the Sacraments, and carry out God's mission, do hereby adopt this Constitution and agree to be governed by its provisions. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 1. NAME AND INCORPORATION

C1.01 The name of this congregation shall be Martin Luther Lutheran Church, hereafter referred to as the Congregation.

C1.02 This Congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas.

CHAPTER 2. STATEMENT OF FAITH

C2.01. We believe, teach, and confess the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

C2.02. We believe, teach, and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe in him.

a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.

b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both law and gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy in the person and work of Jesus Christ through whom God was pleased to reconcile all things to himself.

c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

C2.03. We believe, teach, and accept the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the sole authoritative source and norm of our proclamation, faith, and life.

C2.04. We accept the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the scriptural faith we believe, teach, and confess.

C2.05. We believe, teach, and accept the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism as true witnesses to the Word of God, normative for our teaching and practice. We acknowledge that we are one in faith and doctrine with all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

C2.06. We believe, teach, and confess the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid expositions of the Holy Scriptures.

C2.07. We believe, teach, and confess the gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the priesthood of all believers for God's mission in the world.

CHAPTER 3. STRUCTURE

C3.01 This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws.

C3.02 Congregational membership is defined in the bylaws.

C3.03 Congregational council positions are defined in the bylaws.

C3.04 The powers of the congregation are defined in the bylaws.

CHAPTER 4. BYLAWS

C4.01 This congregation may adopt Bylaws. No Bylaw may conflict with this constitution.

C4.02 Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of the congregation by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting.

C4.03 Changes to the Bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the congregational council at least sixty (60) days before a regular or special meeting called for that purpose and that the congregational council notify the members of the proposal with its recommendations at least thirty (30) days in advance of the congregational meeting.

CHAPTER 5. AMENDMENTS

C5.01 Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by at least five (5) voting members or by the congregation council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the congregation council sixty (60) days before formal consideration by the congregation at a regular or special meeting called for that purpose. The congregational council shall notify the members of the proposal with their recommendations at least thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting.

C5.02 A proposed amendment to this constitution shall:

- a. Be approved at a properly called meeting by a majority vote of those present and voting;
- b. Be amended by a majority vote of those present and voting if a proposed amendment fails to be approved at the first meeting;
- c. Be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by two-thirds (2/3's) majority vote of those present and voting; and
- d. Have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the Constitution.

CHAPTER 6. PROPERTY

C6.01 The property of the congregation belongs to the members of the congregation.

C6.02 This congregation shall always retain title to its property and all assets regardless of any decision to affiliate or terminate its official relationship with any denomination, ministry association or organization.

C6.03 If this congregation ceases to exist, the property and assets shall be sold, all debts retired and if there are funds remaining, they shall be given away to honor the cause of Christ.

BYLAWS

CHAPTER 1. POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

B1.01. The powers of the congregation are vested in the congregation meeting called and conducted as provided in the Constitution and these Bylaws.

B1.02. Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregational Council is recognized.

B1.03. All remaining authority is retained by the congregation. The congregation is authorized to:

- a. Call a pastor
- b. Terminate the call of a pastor
- c. Approve the annual budget
- d. Hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose
- e. Sell, mortgage, lease, transfer or dispose of its property; and
- f. Elect and terminate its elected positions.

CHAPTER 2. CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

B2.01. There shall be an Annual Congregational meeting called by the Council.

B2.02. A special meeting of the congregation may be called by petition of at least ten percent (10%) voting members or by the Congregational Council or by the Senior Pastor. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held, and no other business shall be transacted.

B2.03. Notices of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and/or by mail to all voting members at least ten (10) days in advance of the date of the meeting.

B2.04. A quorum for any regular or special meeting of the congregation shall be those voting members present.

B2.05. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.

B2.06. All actions by the congregation shall be by majority vote.

B2.07. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all congregational meetings.

CHAPTER 3. CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

Rationale

[Jethro to Moses] "You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God, and you shall warn them about the statutes and the laws, and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do. Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. And let them judge the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. If you do this, God will direct you, you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace" (Exodus 18:19-23).

"Therefore, brothers and sisters, pick out from among you...people of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (Acts 6:3).

Role

While the pastor(s) are responsible for all things pertaining to Word and Sacraments, the council are people known for being filled with the Holy Spirit and Godly Wisdom, responsible for partnering with the staff in carrying out the ministry.

Responsibility

The Council shall provide strategic leadership for this congregation that contributes to fulfilling its vision, mission and ministry.

Carry out the business of the congregation as adopted in the form of motions or resolutions.

The Council shall transact the legal and financial business of this congregation unless otherwise specified in this Constitution and Bylaws or by vote of this congregation at its meeting.

Meet monthly.

Council Positions

Ministers: All Full-Time Ministers

Ministry: Worship, Growth (Christian Education), and Service (Evangelism)

Ministry Support: Leadership, Facilities, and Statistics (Stewardship)

Officers: Chairperson, Chairperson-Elect, Treasurer, and Secretary

Description

The Council shall consist of voting members of the congregation elected at the Annual Meeting. They shall serve one or two year terms as stated below:

- Ministry, 2 years
 - Worship - elected in odd years
 - Growth (Christian Education) - elected in even years
 - Service (Evangelism) - elected in odd years
- Ministry Support, 2 years
 - Leadership - elected in even years
 - Facilities - elected in odd years
 - Statistics (Stewardship) - elected in even years
- Executive Officers:
 - Chairperson, 1 year
 - Chairperson-Elect, 1 year
 - Treasurer, 2 years elected in odd years
 - Secretary, 2 years elected in even years

Guidelines

Full-time ministers are ex officio council members with all rights.

In the event that a council person cannot regularly attend meetings or complete their responsibilities, the council is empowered to refill the position.

All members of the congregation may attend congregational council meetings as non-voting guests while in open session.

There may not be more than one council person from the same immediate family.

The immediate family of a paid church staff member may not serve on council.

Worship

Rationale

Jesus says, "the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks" (John 4:23).

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy" (Exodus 20:8).

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles" (Acts 2:42-43).

Roles

Review past worship events with an eye towards future improvement.

Help prepare upcoming worship services as needed.

Consult with volunteers regarding needs to carry out or improve their worship participation.

Responsibilities

Meet with the senior pastor or designee to review past worship offerings and plan upcoming events.

Host periodic worship summits for ministry teams participating in worship (such as ushers, altar guild, greeters, choir, band, and audio-video).

Growth (Christian Education)

Rationale

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2).

"But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18).

"Jesus came to them and said, "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 the age" (Matthew 28:18-20).

Roles

Coordinate Christian growth offerings for all ages (such as adult Bible studies, Sunday School, etc.).

Responsibilities

Maintain communication with adult education leaders, and offer support and guidance as needed.

Maintain communication with youth ministry leaders, and offer support and guidance as needed.

Research and encourage the development of more-effective disciple growth models.

Coordinate with organizations and groups inside the church to further our common mission.

Service (Evangelism)

Rationale

Jesus says, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35).

Jesus says, "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all" (Mark 10:43-44).

"Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15).

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Roles

Coordinate with organizations and groups outside the church to further our common mission.

Liaise between the congregation and its denomination and any other organizations it is a member of.

Identify areas of need outside the congregation which could benefit from our benevolence or ministry.

Partner in carrying out and evaluating congregational outreach events and efforts.

Develop relationships between the congregation and those in the mission field.

Encourage new ministries targeting the lost.

Responsibilities

Research and recommend missionaries, church plants, and other ministries worthy of congregational support.

Coordinate and review outreach events, efforts, and needs.

Leadership

Rationale

"God has appointed in the church...forms of leadership" (1 Cor. 12:28).

"Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith" (Hebrews 13:7).

"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls and will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with sighing—for that would be harmful to you" (Hebrews 13:17).

God "gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:11-12).

Roles

Activate: Identify leadership potential within the congregation and place leaders in roles which make use of their gifts and talents.

Develop: Work with leaders who are in key roles to evaluate and enhance their effectiveness and find opportunities for leadership to gain deeper understanding of leadership principles.

Support: Encourage and finance leaders' training and ministry, whether volunteers or staff members.

Responsibilities

Offer spiritual gifts inventories.

Oversee member information (such as a photo directory).

Identify, encourage, and support leaders (whether volunteers or staff).

Chair call committee and/or staff search committee when needed.

Coordinate with other church / inter-church leadership as necessary (LCMC TX, etc.).

Facilities

Rationale

"The latter splendor of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts; and in this place I will give prosperity, says the Lord of hosts" (Haggai 2:9)

"Peace be within your walls, and security within your towers" (Psalm 122:7).

Role

Oversee facility maintenance and improvement.

Responsibilities

Coordinate with the facilities staff regarding maintenance and care to provide the best possible campus for ministry given resources available.

Statistics (Stewardship)

Rationale

"Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son" (Acts 20:28).

Jesus says, "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32).

Jesus says, "Which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost" (Luke 14:28).

Role

Collect meaningful data pertaining to all church activities.

Filter and report the data to the Council and/or Congregation as needed.

Responsibilities

Record worship service, growth group, and service team participation.

Work with the Treasurer on counting contributions.

Count and report financial contributions.

Share remarkable statistical trends.

Chairperson

Rationale

"Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40).

Role

Chair all Congregational meetings.

Chair all Council meetings.

Responsibilities

Publish the agenda for meetings.

Open and close meetings.

Enforce parliamentary procedure in accordance with Robert's Rules.

Sign requisite documents and official business of the assembly as required.

Chairperson-Elect

Rationale

"...let another take his office" Psalm 109:8

Role

Substitute for the chairperson as needed.

Work with staff and congregation on implementing the vision the following year.

Responsibilities

Carry out Council chairperson responsibilities when needed.

Serve on Council Nominating Committee.

Serve on Budget Proposal Committee.

Secretary

Rationale

Psalm 102:18 "Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord" (ESV).

Role

Keep meeting records.

Maintain and retain documents.

Oversee official communication among and between Council members and the Congregation.

Responsibilities

Record official minutes of all Council and Congregational Meetings as defined in Robert's Rules of Order.
Maintain an official document for future reference in a manner accessible to the Congregation. This document should include the constitution, by-laws, and standing rules in addition to official minutes and reports.
Present minutes from previous meetings at all called meetings.
Furnish all relevant reports and documents to meeting participants.
Notify members of all meetings and responsibilities.
Sign requisite documents and official business of the assembly as required.

Treasurer

Rationale

"Owe no one anything" (Romans 13:8).

"The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low, he also exalts" (1 Samuel 2:7).

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:34).

Role

Oversee the funds and financial receipts of the church.

Responsibilities

Work with the Statistics council person on counting contributions.

Present written financial statements (and in comparison to budget) at meetings of the Council and the Congregation and to auditors as needed.

Have available for all boards a current record of their accrued disbursements and budget allotment;

Sign requisite documents and official business of the assembly as required.

Serve as the financial officer of the Congregation.

Sign or review all checks for payment of bills, salaries, and all other financial commitments of the Congregation.

The Treasurer or designee shall:

- a. be responsible for accurate recording of the Congregation receipts and disbursements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles;
- b. accurately record to the donors' records all contributions received and send annual giving statements to the donors by January 31st or in accordance with IRS rules;
- c. be responsible for remittance of benevolence/mission support and other designated offerings;
- d. be responsible for the prompt payment of salaries and bills as requested by boards, officers, staff, or Pastors and within the approved budget and cash flow availability;
- e. coordinate expenditures in such a way that an adequate balance is retained for payment of salaries and regularly recurring expenses.
- f. provide a report of all monies received through worship services, special offerings, or any other source;
- g. provide the Congregation with any requested financial information;
- h. monitor the cash position of the Congregation and invest available funds as directed by the Council; and
- i. file all required State and Federal tax forms.

CHAPTER 4. CONGREGATION MEMBERSHIP

B4.01. Our goal is for all members of the congregation to worship faithfully, grow continually, and serve diligently.

B4.02. Voting members are baptized and confirmed, have received membership in this congregation, and have made a contribution of record during the current or preceding year. That contribution may be financial, or the sharing of time or talent.

B4.03. For the purposes of defining membership, baptized members of the congregation who have not been through a traditional confirmation process are considered confirmed by their affirmation of faith made during the new membership process.

B4.04. For the sake of evangelical outreach, the policy of the congregation will be to offer Christian weddings and funerals regardless of church membership, subject to pastoral discretion and in keeping with the values of the congregation.

CHAPTER 5. COMMITTEES

B5.01. Council Nominating Committee

- a. Responsible for proposing candidates to the Council at Congregational Meetings.

b. Chaired by the Chairperson-Elect and includes the senior pastor, Leadership representative, two Council representatives and two members at large from the Congregation.

c. Members of this committee are ineligible for Council nomination.

B5.02. Budget Preparation Committee

a. Proposes a budget for the following year to the Council for presentation to the Congregation.

b. Chaired by the Chairperson-Elect and includes the full-time Ministers, Treasurer, Statistics.

c. Collaborates with Worship, Growth & Service

B5.03. Call Committee

a. Proposes pastoral candidates to the Council, who propose their recommendation to a congregational meeting.

b. Chaired by Leadership,

c. includes non-interim full-time Ministers, Worship Growth & Service, 2 members at large and a LCMC TX District pastor or representative.

B5.04. Constitutional Review

a. Bi-annually reviews the constitution and by-laws of the Congregation and recommends changes.

b. Chaired by Leadership

c. includes full-time Ministers, two representatives from the Council and two members at large from the congregation.

B5.05. Other Committees

a. Other / Ad Hoc Committees may be formed by the Congregational Council for a specific purpose.

b. Such committees will be terminated at the end of their assigned purpose.

CHAPTER 6. AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

B6.01. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of the congregation by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting.

B6.02. Changes to the Bylaws may be proposed by any voting member and shall be submitted in writing to the Congregational Council at its regular monthly meeting at least forty (40) days prior to a regular annual meeting of the congregation. The Congregational Council shall notify the members of the proposal, with its recommendations, at least thirty (30) days in advance of the congregational meeting.

B6.03. Bylaws shall be reviewed bi-annually by the Constitutional Review Committee.