

# Constitution of St. Peter Lutheran Church Schaumburg, Illinois



## Preamble

According to the Word of God, the Apostle Paul sets forth in 1 Corinthians 14:40 that all things in the church should be done decently and in order. Therefore, we, the members of **St. Peter Lutheran Church** in Schaumburg, Illinois, in the name of the Triune God, adopt the following constitution and bylaws.

## Article I

### **Name**

The name of this congregation shall be **St. Peter Lutheran Church**, Schaumburg, Illinois.

## Article II

### **Purposes**

The purposes of this congregation are to:

- A. Give honor and glory to the Triune God;
- B. Carry out His will;
- C. Share the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world;
- D. Live the unity of our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior;
- E. Foster Christian fellowship and love; and
- F. Reach out to broken and hurting people with a healing Jesus.

## Article III

### **Confession of Faith**

This congregation accepts all the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testaments as the verbally inspired Word of God. It also accepts all Confessional Writings of the evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, including:

- A. The three (3) Ecumenical Creeds: The Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed;
- B. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession;
- C. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession;
- D. The Smalcald Articles;
- E. The Large Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther;
- F. The Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther; and
- G. The Formula of Concord.

## Article IV

### **Synodical Membership**

This congregation shall be affiliated with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as long as the confessions and constitution of the Synod are in accord with the confessions and constitution of this congregation as laid down in Article III.

## Article V

### **Membership**

The membership of this congregation includes the Baptized Members, Confirmed Members, and Voting Members as defined in the bylaws.

**Article VI**  
**Organization**

A. Voters' Assembly

The Voters' Assembly shall consist of all Voting Members present at a regular or special meeting of the congregation. The congregation, through the Voters' Assembly, shall have final authority in managing its internal and external affairs.

B. Mission and Ministry Council

The Mission and Ministry Council (Council) shall be the governing body of the congregation and is responsible to administer all the congregation's affairs except the following matters for action only by the Voters' Assembly:

1. Call or remove a called pastor; and
2. Purchase or sell church property or buildings.

C. Officers and Boards

The officers of this congregation shall be such officers as the bylaws of this constitution prescribe. The officers and boards prescribed in the bylaws shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them in the constitution or bylaws.

**Article VII**  
**Property Rights**

A. Division within the congregation

If, at any time, a separation shall take place within this congregation, the advice of the officers of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod shall be sought. If, despite all efforts to resolve differences in peace and love, a division into factions of the congregation shall occur, the property of the congregation and all benefits connected shall remain with the faction selected by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

B. Dissolution of the congregation

If the congregation is dissolved, after settling all debts, the remaining assets shall be transferred to the district of the LCMS in which the congregation holds membership at the time of dissolution.

**Article VIII**  
**Decisions**

All congregational matters decided by the Voters' Assembly shall be decided by a simple majority of the Voting Members present at a properly convened meeting of the Voters' Assembly, except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws. Procedural questions will be decided by following *Robert's Rules of Order*.

**Article IX**  
**Amendments**

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in a meeting of the Voters' Assembly. The wording of the amended constitution shall be distributed to all members in a mailing as far in advance as possible, but no fewer than two (2) Sundays in advance. In addition, the revisions will be distributed to the congregation assembled for worship on two (2) different Sundays prior to the date upon which the amendment is presented for action.

# **Bylaws of St. Peter Lutheran Church Schaumburg, Illinois**

## **Article 1 Baptized Membership**

Baptized Members are all persons within the congregation who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and come under the pastoral care of this congregation. It is expected that all baptized members will:

- A. Attend worship services faithfully and regularly;
- B. Lead a Christian life as taught in Galatians 5:19–26;
- C. Out of Christian love, submit to brotherly admonition, according to Matthew 18, when having erred or offended;
- D. Contribute, as God has blessed them, of their time, talents and treasure toward the maintenance of the congregation and the extension of the church at large; and
- E. In due time, take a course of instruction in preparation for confirmed membership in this congregation.

## **Article 2 Confirmed Membership**

Confirmed Members are all baptized persons within the congregation who have completed a course of instruction in Christian doctrine that meets with the approval of the Senior Pastor and the Mission and Ministry Council.

Persons seeking to attain confirmed membership shall make that fact known to the Senior Pastor or other delegated pastor. The pastor shall ascertain the understanding and commitment to the purpose and theological commitment contained in Article III. The pastor is authorized to extend confirmed membership to the person and shall announce that in a public service.

In addition to the duties of Baptized Members, it is expected that all Confirmed Members:

- A. Accept the confessions of faith listed in Article III of the constitution;
- B. Familiarize themselves with the doctrines of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod;
- C. Partake of the Lord's Supper;
- D. Participate in continuing Christian education; and
- E. Provide for the Christian training of their children by making use of the educational agencies of the congregation.

## **Article 3 Voting Membership**

All Confirmed Members of this congregation shall be Voting Members.

#### **Article 4**

##### **Termination of Membership**

###### A. Transfers

A member desiring transfer to another congregation shall make that fact known to the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor shall cause the creating and mailing of a letter of transfer to the receiving congregation.

###### B. Whereabouts unknown or moved

The names of members whose whereabouts are unknown or who have moved from the area may be removed from membership after a period of two (2) years.

###### C. Discipline

All discipline in this congregation shall be administered in accordance with Matthew 18:15–20. The purpose of any disciplinary action is to renew a member's relationship with the Lord and with the church. A member shall be considered self-excluded when unresponsive to the witness and ministry of the church.

###### D. Censure

If a member remains impenitent, after proper admonition and upon recommendation of the Senior Pastor, the Elders may remove such person from membership.

#### **Article 5**

##### **Voters' Assembly**

A. The Voters' Assembly shall meet at least twice a year, the Budget Meeting and the Election Meeting. The day and hour of the meetings shall be set by the Mission and Ministry Council and publicized at least two (2) weeks in advance. The notification shall contain an agenda of items to be considered.

B. The Voters' Assembly may meet at other times of the year subject to a call by the Mission and Ministry Council, the Elders, the Senior Pastor, or at the written request of any twenty (20) Voting Members. Notice of any such special meeting shall be publicized as far in advance as possible but no less than two (2) weeks in advance. The notice shall contain an agenda of items to be considered. No agenda items may be added less than two (2) weeks prior to the meeting and notification to the members of the revised agenda. The President, Vice President, or their designated Council member shall preside at all Voters' Assembly meetings.

C. A quorum of fifty (50) Voting Members must be present to conduct the business of the Voters' Assembly. In the absence of a quorum, those present may fix the date for an adjourned meeting for which at least seven (7) days notice shall be given. The Voting Members who are present at such an adjourned meeting shall constitute a quorum.

**Article 6**  
**Called Workers**

- A. Candidate consideration
  - 1. Calls will only be issued to such candidates who are approved by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.
  - 2. The Council shall appoint a Call Committee. No more than one-third of the members of the Call Committee shall be members of the Council.
  - 3. The Call Committee shall consult with those in the affected ministry area, solicit nominations from the congregation, and consult with the Northern Illinois District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as part of their efforts to secure the names of candidates.
  
- B. Call issuance
  - 1. For called pastors, the Call Committee will present a final list of candidates to the Council, which forwards the list to the Voters' Assembly for issuance of the call.
  - 2. For all other calls, the Call Committee will present a final list of candidates to the Council for issuance of the call.
  
- C. Removal from office
  - 1. A called pastor may be removed from office by the Voters' Assembly by a two-thirds majority secret ballot vote for the persistent adherence to false doctrine, a scandalous lifestyle, neglect of duties, inability to perform the duties of the office, or other significant reason as determined by the Voters' Assembly.
  - 2. Upon recommendation of the Senior Pastor, all other called workers may be removed by a two-thirds majority secret ballot vote of all the members of the Council. The reason for removal may be for those listed in Article 6.C.1 or in administrative policies.

**Article 7**  
**Officers of the Congregation**

There shall be three (3) officers of the congregation who shall also be the officers of the Council and the Executive Committee (the officers). These officers shall be elected by the Voter's Assembly. To be qualified to serve as an Officer under this Article 7, a candidate must be a Voting Member who has completed at least one full two year term as an At Large Member (as hereinafter defined) of the Mission and Ministry Council.

- A. The President shall:
  - 1. Preside at all meetings of the Voters' Assembly and the Council;
  - 2. Enforce the constitution, bylaws and other policies as approved; and
  - 3. Perform the general duties as are common for the office, including such additional duties as may be directed by the Council or Voters' Assembly.
  
- B. The Vice President shall:
  - 1. Perform all of the duties of the President in the President's absence; and
  - 2. Perform other additional duties that may be directed by the Council or by the President.
  
- C. The Secretary shall:
  - 1. Perform duties commonly required of the office, especially keeping and preserving accurate records of all Voters' Assembly and Council meetings and handling such correspondence as the congregation may require; and
  - 2. Preserve and make available minutes of all Voters' Assembly and Council meetings.

D. Term of Office for Officers:

1. Each of the Officers under this Article 7 shall serve a two (2) year term and shall serve no more than two (2) full successive terms, exclusive of any Interim Term (as later defined), without a break of at least one (1) year during which period such person is not eligible for any Officer position. In the event that any Officer should resign or be removed from an office prior to the expiration of a term, an interim officer promptly shall be elected by the Voter's Assembly to complete that term (the "Interim Term"). Until such time as the Voter's Assembly shall elect an interim officer, the remaining Officers shall fulfill the duties of the Officer who resigned or was removed from office.

**Article 8**

**Mission and Ministry Council**

A. Membership

1. The Mission and Ministry Council shall consist of three (3) officers of the congregation as provided in Article 7, plus no fewer than four (4) and no more than eight (8) additional Voting Members elected at large by the Voter's Assembly (the "At Large Members"). The Officers and the At Large Members shall constitute the voting members of the Mission and Ministry Council (collectively, the "Council Members").
2. The Senior Pastor is a non-voting member.

B. Term of Office

1. Each of the At-Large Members under this Article 8 shall serve a two (2) year term and shall serve no more than two (2) full successive terms, exclusive of any Interim Term (as later defined), without a break of at least one (1) year during which period such person is not eligible to be an At-Large Member or an Officer. In the event that any At-Large Member should resign or be removed from the council prior to the expiration of a term and, as a consequence thereof, the number of members drops below the minimum established under this Article 8, an additional Voting Member shall be elected by the Voter's Assembly to complete that term (the "Interim Term")
2. At Large Members shall serve no more than two (2) full successive terms in that position without a break of at least one (1) year.
3. At each Election Meeting, nominations will be accepted for all of the then-vacant At Large Member positions, based on the maximum number of At Large Members permitted under this Article 8.

C. Meetings

1. The Council shall meet a minimum of ten (10) times annually and may be called more frequently at the request of the President.
2. An elected officer shall preside at all such meetings.
3. A majority of voting members of the Council shall constitute a quorum.
4. Notice of each meeting shall be posted on the official website of St. Peter Lutheran Church and School.
5. The minutes shall fully disclose all actions taken and be signed by the Secretary.
6. Minutes of the meetings shall be available to Voting Members upon request.

**Article 9**

**Powers and Duties of the Mission and Ministry Council**

- A. The Mission and Ministry Council shall have the power to develop policies as prescribed through the Policy-Based Governance Model to monitor the goals of St. Peter Lutheran Church. Written policies shall be available upon request. The Council shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon it by the constitution, bylaws, and the Voters' Assembly.

B. The Council, as the chief governing board of the congregation, shall act in all matters pertaining to the legal and general welfare of the congregation, except those reserved for the Voters' Assembly in Article VIB of the constitution.

C. The Council shall see to it that all activities of the church reflect the purpose and faith of the congregation.

D. The Council shall be responsible for establishing policies governing the accomplishments of the congregation through the Policy-Based Governance Model and monitoring the results of the mission, vision, budget, and plans of St. Peter Lutheran Church.

## **Article 10**

### **Elders: A Ministry of Spiritual Care**

#### A. Membership

The Elders shall consist of men elected at-large by the Voters' Assembly.

#### B. Term of office

1. The term of office shall be two (2) years with no limit to successive terms.
2. Elders will be elected annually to keep the board at full capacity.

#### C. The duties of the Elders shall be concerned with the spiritual health of the congregation and its members. Elders shall:

1. Function in cooperation with the Mission and Ministry Council;
2. Nurture and encourage the spiritual growth of members;
3. Serve as assistants to the pastor(s) in matters of worship and preaching, administration of the sacraments, and church discipline; and
4. Serve as congregational representatives monitoring and being advocates for the spiritual and emotional well being of the congregation.

## **Article 11**

### **Election, Removal from Office and Vacancies**

#### A. Nomination

1. The Elders shall be the Nominating Committee whose responsibility will be to develop a slate of candidates for Council Members, and Elders to be elected each year. The committee shall report the nominations to the Council, which will then present such nominations at the Election Meeting of the Voters' Assembly. The Senior Pastor shall be a non-voting member of the Nominating Committee.

2. All nominees shall be Voting Members who are at least twenty-one (21) years of age, have completed required courses, and are noted for their Christian knowledge, zeal, and experience in the spiritual work in the Kingdom. Specific criteria for elected officials shall be outlined by the Nominating Committee prior to accepting any nominations. In addition to the Nominating Committee's slate of candidates, any Voting Member may nominate candidates. A call for nominations will be distributed to the congregation no less than two (2) months prior to the Election Meeting. The list of nominations will be closed at the time that the meeting agenda and slate of candidates is distributed. No elected member shall receive compensation from the congregation.

#### B. Election

Nominees who receive a majority of the ballots cast at the Voters' Assembly shall be elected.

### C. Taking office

All elected officials will begin their term of office immediately after the election results have been declared.

### D. Removal from office

1. Any Council Member or Elder who persistently adheres to false doctrine, a scandalous lifestyle, neglect of duties, or inability to perform the duties of the office may be removed from office by two-thirds secret ballot vote of the Voters' Assembly. The Mission and Ministry Council shall initiate such action.

2. The Council and the Elders shall each monitor and discipline its own members according to Article 11.D.1 above.

### E. Vacancies

The Council shall be authorized to appoint a qualified individual to fill an unexpired term of an officer. The Council and Elders shall have the authority to appoint a qualified individual to fill an unexpired term of any other member on its respective board.

## **Article 12** **Amendments**

The bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in a meeting of the Voters' Assembly. The wording of the amended bylaws shall be distributed to all members in a mailing via internet based communications as far in advance as possible, but no fewer than two (2) Sundays in advance. Print copies will be available in the church office no fewer than two (2) Sundays in advance. A post service announcement will invite all attendance to collect a copy as desired. In addition, the revisions will be distributed to the congregation assembled for worship on two (2) different Sundays prior to the date upon which the amendment is presented for action.