

CONSTITUTION
PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
Columbus, Nebraska

“May the Peace of Christ Reign in Your Heart.” Colossians 3:15

Revised: 4/27/2010

Article I.

The name of this congregation shall be: PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH of COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA.

Article II

PURPOSE

The purpose of this congregation shall be to serve its members and to extend the kingdom of God, by the preaching of the Word of God, by administration of the Sacraments, and by the instruction of youth and adults according to the confessional standards of the Lutheran Church (Article III) and to foster Christian fellowship and charity.

Article III

DECLARATION OF DOCTRINE

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 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 three Ecumenical Creeds (Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, and Smalcald Articles, Luther's Large and Small Catechisms, and the Formula of Concord.

Article IV

MEMBERSHIP

Anyone may become and remain a member of this congregation and enjoy the rights and privileges of such membership who:

- a. Is baptized,
- b. Accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testament as the only divine rule and standard of faith and life,
- c. Is acquainted with, and accepts the doctrines of Luther's Small Catechism,
- d. Leads a Christian Life and abstains from manifest works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21),
- e. Attends divine 'services faithfully and partakes of the Lord's Supper frequently,
- f. Submits, for the sake of love and peace, to the regulations already made or still to be made, by this body, provided they do not conflict with the Word of God, and welcomes brotherly admonition when having erred,
- g. Who is not a member of any secret society or other organizations which conflict with the Word of God,
- h. Supports the Kingdom of God at home and abroad with his time, talents, and money in proportion to God's blessing.

Article V

RIGHT OF SUFFRAGE

All communicant members of legal age, having been accepted by the Voters' Assembly, and having read and signed the Constitution and By-Laws of the Congregation shall be entitled to vote and hold office. The offices of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Elder, the Pastoral Office and functions distinctive of these officers, shall be limited to male members only.

Article VI

DUTIES OF VOTING MEMBERS

It shall be the duty of all voting members to attend the meetings of the congregation and to make themselves available to hold church offices. Failing to attend a meeting waives the right of voting during such a meeting.

The congregation through the voting members shall decide all matters relating to the church or church affairs and its decision shall be final and binding. But, such decision shall always be in accord with the Word of God and the Confessional Writings of the Lutheran Church, and, unless it is so, shall be null and void. The right of calling pastors, teachers/Director of Christian Education, any other synodically certified Workers, and electing officers shall never be delegated to a smaller body or individual.

Article VII

VALIDITY OF RESOLUTIONS

- A. A meeting of the congregation shall be capable transacting business and passing valid resolution pursuant to the By-Laws and to the laws of the State Nebraska and provided a required quorum be present.
- B. For a valid resolution of the congregation a majority vote those present at the meeting shall be required.
- C. Matters of doctrine or conscience shall be decided by the Word of God.

Article VIII

OFFICERS

The officers of this congregation shall be such offices, boards, or committees, as the By-Laws of this congregation may prescribe.

Article IX

PASTORS, TEACHERS/DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OTHER
SYNODICALLY CERTIFIED WORKERS AND OFFICERS.

Only such pastors and teachers/Director of Christian Education and other synodically certified workers shall be called by this congregation who are in accord with the confessional standard of this congregation, have been prepared for their Work, and are well qualified for it. Reasons for dismissing a pastor, teacher/Director of Christian Education, other synodically certified workers, or an officer shall be persistent adherence to false doctrine, a scandalous life, the inability to perform his official duties, or willful neglect of them.

Article X

SUPREME AUTHORITY OF THE CONGREGATION

The congregation shall have the supreme authority in the external and internal administration and management of its ecclesiastical and congregational affairs.

Article XI

DISCIPLINE

A member who advocates doctrines which are contrary to Holy Scripture and the Confessions of the Church, or who is guilty of conduct that is grossly unbecoming a member of the Body of Christ, shall be subject to discipline. Discipline in the congregation shall be exercised in accordance with Matthew 18:15-18. Procedures for the exercise of discipline shall be those provided in the By-Laws.

Article XII

PROPERTY RIGHTS OF CONGREGATION

The congregation may receive, acquire, hold title to, and manage such .real estate and other property as it may need to accomplish its purpose and may sell or dispose of such real estate and other property or any part thereof.

All property of the congregation shall be regarded as undivided corporate property. Should controversy and separation occur on account of doctrine, then all the property of the congregation and its benefits shall remain that part of the Congregation which adheres to the doctrines as set forth in Article III.

Article XIII

BY-LAWS

By-Laws may be adopted which are not in conflict with this Constitution.

Article XIV

AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this Constitution must be made writing and may be made at any regular meeting, providing that the amendment has already been submitted in a previous meeting and that 2/3rds of the voting members present cast their vote in favor of such amendment. Articles III, IV, VI, VII, and XIV shall be unalterable and irrevocable.

BY-LAWS

Section I

VOTERS' ASSEMBLY

- A. A regular meeting of the Voters' Assembly shall be held in May of each year. Such meeting shall be considered the Annual Meeting. The election of officers shall take place at the Annual Meeting by written ballot and simple majority of those present. Newly elected officers shall be installed in June and shall assume duties of office as of July 1st. The Church Council shall also present a proposed budget for the ensuing fiscal year to the Voters' Assembly for their adoption at the 'Annual Meeting.
- B. Special meetings of the Voter's assembly may be called by the Pastor, Chairman of the congregation, or the Church Council by publicly announcing the date and place of such meeting on two successive Sundays prior to the date of such meeting or by giving written notice to all voting members prior to such meeting. The congregation shall have the right to take up only such items of business which have been stated in said notice.
- C. The voters present at a properly called meeting shall constitute a quorum to do business.
- D. The meetings of the Voters' Assembly shall be conducted in accordance with the Constitution' and By-Laws and shall include an opening devotion, approval of the minutes of the previous meeting, roll call or registration, reception of new members, reports of officers, boards, and committees and action thereon, unfinished business recommendations of the Church Council, other business, and adjournment with devotional close. In questions of parliamentary procedure not covered by this Constitution and By-Laws, ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER shall prevail.

Section II

MEMBERSHIP

A. Reception of New Members

Any person desiring to become a member of this congregation shall make application for admission with the Pastor. An applicant, not having a Letter of Transfer, or not having been affiliated with a related congregation, must give the Pastor satisfactory proof of his qualifications of membership. The Pastor, in consultation with the Board of Elders, shall pass upon the qualifications of such applicants. The Board of Elders shall make appropriate recommendation to the Church Council.

B. Moving from Community

Baptized members who have moved away, and have not requested a Letter of Transfer shall after a period of one year, be canceled from the membership list, provided that all efforts to unite them with a sister congregation have failed. Such members shall be duly notified by the Pastor their cancellation.

C. Classification of Members

Members shall be classified as:

1. Baptized Members
2. Communicant Members
3. Voting Members

1. Baptized members shall be those, who have been baptized in the Name of the Triune God.

2. Communicant members shall be those Baptized members who have been admitted to confirmed membership and have met requirements stated in Article IV.

3. Voting members shall be Communicant members in good standing, of legal voting age, who have read and signed the Constitution.

D. Discipline

Communicant members who join a congregation outside of our fellowship, thereby terminate their membership. Their name shall be removed from the membership list by resolution of the Church Council or Voters' Assembly.

When a member of this congregation, after fruitless admonition in the various stages provided by God's Word (Matt. 18:15-20) shall have been excommunicated by unanimous vote from the congregation, such a person shall have forfeited all rights of a member of this congregation and all claims upon the property of the congregation as such, or upon any part thereof, as long as he is not again received into membership by the congregation. The same shall apply to such members as refuse to submit to church

Discipline and thus exclude themselves, as also to those that sever their connection with the congregation. Self-exclusion shall occur after one year non-attendance plus three months notice.

An excommunicated person who desires to be reinstated in the congregation, who has repented and asked for forgiveness, shall be reinstated by the congregation at the recommendation of the Pastor and the Board of Elders.

Section III

OFFICERS

The officers of this congregation shall be: Chairman- Elect, Chairman, Immediate Past Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Board of Elders, Board of Christian Education, Immanuel School Board Representatives, Board of Day Care, Board of Evangelism, Board of Stewardship, Board of Trustees and Four-At-Large Church Council Members.

The Chairman-Elect shall be elected annually and move through the steps and move through the steps of chairman and Immediate Past Chairman with each step consisting of one year. The Secretary shall be elected for a term of one year. The Treasurer and Financial

Secretary shall be elected for alternate two year terms. The Board of Trustees, Board of Stewardship, Board of Elders, Board of Christian Education, and the Board of Evangelism, shall each consist of six or more members. 1/3 of each board shall be elected each year and serve for a three year term.

Two of the At-Large Council members and Immanuel School Board Representatives shall be elected each year and serve for a term of two years.

Officers shall be limited to two consecutive terms in the same office. Newly elected officers shall be installed before they take office in July.

VACANCY

In the event that the Chairman would resign the Immediate Past Chairman would move back to the Chairman position if there are more than six months remaining in the term. If there are less than six months remaining in the term, the Chairman-Elect would fill the term and remain as Chairman for 1 ½ terms. The Chairman-Elect and Immediate Past Chairman would not be replaced until the next election. If the Chairman-Elect resigns, a Special Voters' Meeting would be called by the Chairman to elect a Chairman-Elect.

Section IV

CHURCH COUNCIL

A. Membership

The Church Council shall consist of the Chairman-Elect, Chairman, and Immediate Past Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, the Four At-Large members, the chairman of the respective Boards of: Elders, Christian Education, Immanuel School Board Representative, Trustees, Stewardship and Evangelism. The Pastors and Synodically certified workers, and Day Care Director shall be ex-officio members of the Council.

B. Meetings

The Church Council shall meet regularly once a month. The Pastor or Chairman may call special meetings by personally informing each member of the Council of the time and place of each meeting at least 24 hours in advance. A majority of the members of the Council shall constitute a quorum.

C. Duties

It shall be the duty of the Church Council to consider and discuss all matters pertaining to the general welfare of the congregation, to review all reports, and to present recommendations to the congregation. The Church Council shall carry on the business of

the congregation except for those matters which the congregation reserves for the Voters' Assembly.

Section V

CHANGE OF TERM OF OFFICE FOR CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

Therefore be it resolved that Article V of the By-Laws be changed as follows:

RIGHT OF SUFFRAGE

All communicant members of the legal age, having been accepted by the Voter's Assembly, and having read and signed the Constitution and By-Laws of the Congregation shall be entitled to vote and hold office. The offices of Chairman-Elect, Chairman, Immediate Past Chairman, and Elder, the Pastoral Office, and functions distinctive of these offices, shall be limited to male members only.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

A. Chairman

The Chairman shall preside at all meetings of the Voters Assembly, serve as Church Council-Chairman, appoint committee members other than those specified for election, and shall conduct meetings according to the order of business as outlined in these by-Laws. He shall see that the rules and regulations of the Constitution are observed.

B. Chairman-Elect

The Chairman-Elect shall perform and/or assist with the duties of the Chairman in his absence, his disability, or at his request. He shall observe and prepare himself for the duties of the Chairmanship.

C. Immediate Past Chairman

The Immediate Past Chairman shall perform and/or assist with the duties of the Chairman in the absence of the Chairman and Chairman-Elect.

D. Secretary

The Secretary shall keep a list of all voting members and record their presence at all meetings. The Secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings for the permanent record of the congregation and shall perform other duties keeping with his/her office.

E. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be custodian of all funds of the congregation, including those of auxiliary organizations unless otherwise, directed by the Church Council. The Treasurer

shall make disbursements as directed by the Council, or auxiliary organizations, and shall render regular accounting at the Church Council and Voters' Assembly.

F. Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall keep a careful record of all monies coming in through the envelope system and distribute quarterly statements covering all envelope accounts.

G. Board of Elders

The Board of Elders shall assist the Pastors in all spiritual matters, assist the Pastors in the preparation of the sacraments, see that all church services and Voters Meetings are conducted decently and in order, admonish the delinquents, visit the sick, care for the needy, be responsible for the usher schedule, as well as the Church's music ministry.

H. Board of Christian Education

The Board of Christian Education shall administer and supervise the Christian education program of the congregation and shall work with either the Pastor or Director of Christian Education, or both, in giving guidance and direction to these organizations and agencies:

- 1) Sunday School
- 2) Confirmation/Midweek Classes
- 3) Bible Classes
- 4) Vacation Bible School
- 5) Youth Organizations
- 6) Other Educational Agencies

I. Daycare Board

The Daycare Board would consist of three elected members. The elected members will serve two-year terms with at least one seat open each year. The Director of the Daycare and the Senior Pastor would be ex-officio members of the board. A member of the Daycare Board would attend a church council meeting when requested, The Board will meet as necessary to review fees, pay and performance of the Daycare.

J. Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees shall act as custodians of all property of the congregation. They shall be empowered to execute all contracts in regard to said property, sign all legal documents in the name of the congregation, represent the congregation in court and carry out all transactions required of the congregation, as property owners with this provision, that in all transactions, they are not to act independently of the congregation, but carry out the wishes and resolutions of the congregation. In case of an emergency the trustees shall take such action as they deem proper and thereafter as soon as possible arrange for a

meeting of the Council for further instructions. The trustees shall oversee church administration items.

K. Board of Evangelism

The Board of Evangelism shall have as its board objectives the communication of the Gospel to the un-churched, the enlistment of God's people in the work of communicating that Gospel, the deepening of faith and Witness activity of the new and existing members of the congregation.

L. Board of Stewardship

The Board of Stewardship shall have as its board objectives the development of good stewardship attitudes in the members of the congregation in regard to time, talents, and finances; the discovery and utilization of the spiritual gifts and talents of the membership, and the promotion of programs to ensure the financial stability of the congregation through dedicated percentage, "first-fruit" giving.

M. Immanuel Lutheran School Board – Peace Representatives

With the approval of the working agreement between Peace & Immanuel Lutheran Church, four members of Peace serve on the Immanuel Lutheran School Board. One of the Peace representatives will also be a member of Peace Church Council, serving as a liaison between the congregation & the school. The responsibilities of the school board include: Interviewing & hiring new teachers, setting school calendar, setting tuition, marketing the school, monitoring the budget and expenditures, addressing issues that could not be resolved between the principal and the parents, students, or teachers, and allocating the monies raised through the annual Extravaganza fundraiser.

Section VI

COMMITTEES

The committee of the congregation shall include:

1. An Auditing Committee, consisting of three members (none of whom shall be an elected officer), shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Congregation and ratified by the Church Council. The Auditing Committee shall make an audit of the books and records of the treasurer, of the financial secretary and of such other financial records the audit of which the congregation may assign to it. It shall make its report to the Church Council no later than 90 days after the end of the fiscal year.
2. A Nominating Committee of six persons shall be appointed by the Chairman of the congregation and ratified by the Church Council. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a

list of candidates drawn from the communicant membership of voting age. Communicant members may submit to the congregation suggestions for consideration. This list shall be made available to the congregation at least three weeks prior to the Annual Voters' Assembly meeting.

Following publication of the committee's list, any communicant member may submit additional names for inclusion on the list provided that:

- a. The names are submitted no later than 10 days before the Annual Voter's Assembly meeting; and
- b. The Nominating Committee, in consultation with the Pastor, find them spiritually eligible and willing to serve.

One week prior to the Annual Voters' Assembly meeting the committee shall post, in a conspicuous place in church, the final list of candidates for office.

3. A Budget Committee, consisting of the Treasurer and two or more members, shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Congregation and ratified by the Church Council. It shall present to the Church Council a proposed budget no later than 60 days prior to the beginning of the fiscal year.

Such other committees as may be authorized or created by the congregation, the members of which shall be appointed by the chairman, unless a different method of selection is stated by the Voters' Assembly.

Section VII

DISTRIBUTION OF CONSTITUTION

All communicant members shall be provided a copy of this Constitution and By-Laws.

Section VIII

CHANGE AND AMENDMENTS

These By-Laws may be altered or amended only by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a meeting of the Voters' Assembly.