

Constitution & By-Laws

**We Preach
Christ
Crucified**



St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church & School

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✠ CONSTITUTION ✠

St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church

PREAMBLE

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Whereas, God's Word demands that a Christian congregation not only conform to the Word of God in doctrine and practice (Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 16:17) but also that all things be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40); therefore, we, the members of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, set forth by this present document, signed by ourselves, the Constitution and By-Laws in accordance with which our congregational affairs, spiritual and material, shall be conducted.

ARTICLE I — Name

The name of our congregation shall be: ST. PAUL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF FAIRMONT, Martin County, Minnesota.

ARTICLE II — Purpose

The purpose of this congregation shall be:

- A. to gather in corporate worship to use the Divinely appointed Means of Grace to receive from God His forgiveness, life, and salvation and to respond to His grace by thankful worship and praise, giving honor and glory to our Triune God for all His gifts of life and salvation;
- B. to nurture Christians in God's Word and sound Lutheran doctrine;
- C. to carry out Christ's command to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19);
- D. to manifest unity of faith and doctrine in Jesus Christ, to foster Christian fellowship and love, to extend a helping hand in human need;
- E. to achieve our objectives by the pure preaching of God's Word, by the proper administration of the sacraments, and by the careful instruction of all our members (employing all the various educational programs of our parish including the support and maintenance of Lutheran elementary and secondary schools) according to the Confessional Standard of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Article III).

ARTICLE III — CONFESSIONAL STANDARD

This congregation accepts without reservation:

- A. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired and written Word of God and the only infallible rule and norm of faith and practice.
- B. All the confessional statements of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as they are contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 as pure and true statements and expositions of the Word of God; these are: the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles (including the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope), the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord.

According to this above mentioned Confessional Standard, all controversies which may arise in this congregation shall be decided and settled.

- C. The Congregation holds that these writings are in harmony with the Word of God, and that, therefore, all doctrine taught within the congregation shall be in full agreement with these Books.

ARTICLE IV — Membership

- A. Members shall include all those who have received a valid Christian Baptism according to the Word of the Triune God and who are under the spiritual care of the Pastors of this congregation, including the children who have not yet been confirmed;
- B. Communicants shall include the following:
 - 1. Baptized members who have been received into the Lutheran Church and this congregation by the Rite of Confirmation as children or adults, who accept the Confessional Standard of Article III, and who are not members of any religious organization which maintains principles, doctrines, or conduct conflicting with God's Word and sound Lutheran doctrine;
 - 2. Confirmed Lutherans who transfer from congregations in fellowship with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (but see Article XI) and who accept without reservation the Confessional Standard of Article III;
 - 3. Lutherans from Synods or congregations not in fellowship with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (but see Article XI) who have given satisfactory evidence to the Pastors of knowledge of and agreement with the Confessional Standard of the Lutheran Church as expressed in Article III of the Constitution and who are received by a "profession of faith";

4. Former non-Lutherans who, having been properly baptized and instructed in Lutheran doctrine and having given satisfactory evidence to the Pastors of knowledge of and agreement with the Confessional Standard of the Lutheran Church as expressed in Article III of the Constitution, are received by adult confirmation;
 5. Those members who, having been excommunicated from Christian fellowship for a “manifest and impenitent sinful life,” give satisfactory evidence to the Pastors of repentance and are recommended to the Council of Deacons for readmittance into full Christian fellowship.
- C. Termination of congregational membership with subsequent forfeit of all rights and privileges pertaining thereto shall be by:
1. Transfer or release to another congregation;
 2. Death;
 3. Self-exclusion which shall happen by relocation to another community without request for transfer within a reasonable period of time (unless retained by special request or circumstances), by joining a congregation outside the doctrinal fellowship of this congregation, by persistent membership in any religious organization which maintains principles, doctrines, or conduct conflicting with God’s Word and sound Lutheran doctrine, by purposeful and willful neglect of God’s Word and Sacraments for an extended period of time, or whose whereabouts are unknown and whose address cannot be established, or by written request to be excluded;
 4. Excommunication. Members who purposefully and willfully conduct their lives in clear and manifest disobedience to God’s Word or indicate clear disregard for God’s Word and Sacrament shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20. If they refuse to repent and amend their sinful life after such proper admonition they shall be excommunicated by the Pastors (John 20:23; Small Catechism, Part V) with unanimous approval of the Council of Deacons and the Congregational Assembly.

Note: Self-exclusion and excommunication terminate membership until such time as the individual repents or reapplies for membership and is accepted back into full Christian fellowship by recommendation of the Pastors to the Council of Deacons (John 20:23); Small Catechism, Part V).

ARTICLE V — The Office of Pastor

- A. The Church, properly speaking, is the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its truth and purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Word of God (Augsburg Confession VII). Therefore, God Himself instituted the Office of the Ministry for the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments through which means He gives the Holy Spirit who creates faith in those who hear the Gospel (Augsburg Confession V; John 20:22-23; Romans 10:14ff.; et. al.). While a congregation pays the Pastor's salary and cares for his other material and physical needs (see Small Catechism, "What the Hearers Owe Their Pastors"), the Pastor is not an "employee" of the congregation in the secular sense. Rather God, working through the congregation, calls men to serve as Ministers in His Church (Acts 20:28). Ministers are accountable to God for their use of the "Power of the Keys" (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Corinthians 4:1-4).
- B. Only those men shall serve in the Office of the Ministry who are properly qualified (see 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), ordained, and rightly called (Augsburg Confession XIV).
- C. The Pastors shall be unequivocally pledged to the Confessional Standard of Article III before assuming the Office of Pastor in this congregation.
- D. A Pastor can be removed from his office only for those reasons given in the written Word of God who first placed him in the office by His own Divine Call; these are:
1. death (**NOTE:** If, due to prolonged incapacity, the Pastor is no longer able to serve as Pastor, the congregation may respectfully request his resignation);
 2. a Call from God to serve another congregation;
 3. unfaithfulness to God's Word by persistent adherence to false doctrine, a scandalous or immoral life, or a willful neglect of or refusal to exercise properly the "Power of the Keys" (Treatise, "The Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops"). If such charges are made, the Council of Deacons shall carefully investigate the matter on the basis of God's Word. Should the charges be substantiated by clear evidence, the Pastor shall be given opportunity to repent. If the Pastor refuses to repent, he shall be given opportunity to resign his Office. If the Pastor refuses to resign his Office when requested by the Council of Deacons, a special Congregational Assembly shall be called. All Assembly members shall be notified of this special meeting by public announcement in the regular Divine Worship services on the two (2) preceding Sundays or by mail at least ten (10) days in advance. Upon a two-thirds (2/3) majority consensus of the Members present at the Congregational Assembly, then the Council of Deacons shall be required to remove a Pastor from his office.

NOTE: The Council of Deacons, in considering any charges against the Pastor, shall secure the counsel of faithful pastors in the area in order that doctrinal matters may be considered in accordance with God's Word and that all proceedings may be carried out in a manner befitting the honor due the Office of the Holy Ministry.

ARTICLE VI — Commissioned Church Workers

Besides the Pastors, the positions of all Commissioned Church Workers in the parish and parochial school of this congregation shall be conferred only on such Synodically trained and qualified candidates who, without reservation, also profess and adhere to the Confessional Standard of Article III.

- A. Each new Commissioned Church Worker shall be unequivocally pledged to this Confessional Standard prior to assuming the position.
- B. The specific areas of service of all Commissioned Church Workers shall be as determined in their Diploma of Vocation or in the contract issued, or as may be determined by a responsible board in agreement with the individual involved if changes in duties are to be made at a later time.
- C. In the event that any Commissioned Church Worker position is to be dissolved, the responsible board should follow its current "Reduction of Work Force Policy." Dissolution of any Commissioned Church Worker position shall have been approved by the Congregational Assembly.
- D. A Commissioned Church Worker can be removed from office for inability to perform the duties of the office due to prolonged incapacity, willful neglect of duties, unfaithfulness to God's Word by persistent adherence to false doctrine, or a scandalous or immoral life. If such charges are made, the responsible board shall carefully investigate the matter on the basis of God's Word. Should the charges be substantiated by clear evidence and there is no other acceptable resolution, then the Council of Deacons will give the Commissioned Church Worker the opportunity to resign the Office. If the Commissioned Church Worker refuses to resign the Office when requested by the Council of Deacons, a special Congregational Assembly shall be called. All Assembly Members shall be notified of this special meeting by public announcement in the regular Divine Worship services on the two (2) preceding Sundays or by mail at least ten (10) days in advance. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Members present at the Congregational Assembly shall be required to remove the Commissioned Church worker from office.

ARTICLE VII — Support of the Church and the Ministry of the Word

- A. In response to God’s rich grace and love in Christ, members shall seek by the Spirit’s power to conform their entire lives to the rule of God’s Word and shall exercise faithful stewardship of God’s gifts of time, talent, and material blessings in the support of this congregation and of Jesus’ Commission to “make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).
- B. In accordance with God’s Word and out of respect for the Office of the Ministry, members shall support the Pastors God has given them as such support is described in God’s Word, especially in those passages included in the “Table of Duties” in Luther’s Small Catechism. Members shall also cheerfully support and encourage those Commissioned Church Workers in the congregation who assist the Pastors in the Ministry and who serve the congregation.

ARTICLE VIII — The Congregational Assembly

The Church of Christ is not a democracy. The Church is the Bride of Christ. He alone has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:19). He alone rules and governs His Church by His written Word, never by majority vote.

However, since the Holy Spirit speaking through the Apostle urges congregations to do everything in a “fitting and orderly way” (1 Corinthians 14:40), is it proper that some outward form of government be employed. Since no specific form of church government is commanded by God in His written Word nor prescribed by the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, each congregation is free to devise its own form of government as long as it does not hinder the free and pure preaching of God’s Word and the proper administration of the sacraments, does not undermine or dishonor the Office of the Public Ministry, does not discourage or interfere with agape-love for any member of the congregation, nor disregard the God-given roles of men and women in the Church (see 1 Corinthians 14:34-36; 1 Timothy 2:11-12).

With these principles in mind, St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church then establishes as its governing body a Congregational Assembly of communicants which shall normally function through a Council of Deacons (see Article IX).

- A. The Congregational Assembly shall consist of the collective body of “Assembly Members” as defined in the By-Laws.
- B. Under the authority of God’s Word and in accordance with the Confessional Standard of Article III, the Congregational Assembly shall have operative authority over the internal and external administration and management of all congregational business; however, to remain in agreement with Holy Scripture (1 Timothy 2:11-12), the Congregational Assembly’s operative authority shall usually be exercised through the Council of Deacons (Article IX). For the protection of the congregation, should the Council of Deacons set off in an errant direction or render decisions not in the best interest of the whole congregation, any congregational member may appeal to the Congregational Assembly in any matter relating to the government of the congregation (see By-Laws) and the decision of the Congregational Assembly shall be final and binding. The congregation, through its Assembly and Council of Deacons, shall never be empowered to decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Article III) and any such decisions shall be null and void.

ARTICLE IX — The Council of Deacons

The Council of Deacons shall consist of twelve (12) Deacons carefully selected according to the guidelines given in God’s Word in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and as specified in the By-Laws. The Congregational Assembly delegates its authority to this Council of Deacons to plan and implement the congregation’s mission with the Deacons assuming responsibility and held accountable for their actions as defined in the By-Laws. As such, the men serving as Deacons shall be empowered to represent the congregation in all legal matters. The Council of Deacons shall have the broad authority to act on behalf of the congregation in all matters except as restricted by the Constitution, the By-Laws, and/or the Congregational Assembly.

ARTICLE X — Doctrinal Conformity

Only such hymns, liturgies, and prayers shall be used in the public services of this congregation and in all ministerial acts as conform to the Confessional Standard expressed in Article III.

ARTICLE XI — Synodical Membership

This congregation shall hold membership in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as long as the Synod remains true to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. The relationship of Synod to the congregation is advisory only.

ARTICLE XII — Divisions

- A. If at any time a division should take place on account of doctrine, the property of the congregation and all benefits and liabilities connected therewith shall remain with those communicants, regardless of their number, who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Article III of this Constitution.
- B. If a disagreement for any reason other than doctrine threatens to divide the congregation, the congregation shall seek to resolve the controversy using all the resources God supplies including the aid of local pastors, district, and Synod. The disagreeing parties shall seek a compromise in the spirit of Christian love which is not “self-seeking” or “easily angered” (1 Corinthians 13:5) but which always seeks the interests of others over self even as Jesus did for us (Philippians 2:4ff.). If such a compromise cannot be reached, the position of the majority shall be accepted.
- C. In the event the congregation should totally disband, the property and all rights and liabilities connected therewith shall be transferred to that district of the Synod in which the congregation held membership at the time of dissolution.

ARTICLE XIII — Amendments to the Constitution

- A. The doctrinal substance of Articles II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, and XII-A shall be unalterable and irrevocable. Article XIII-A shall also be unalterable.
- B. Amendments to this Constitution may be adopted at a regular meeting of the Congregational Assembly provided:
 - 1. that they do not conflict with the Confessional Standard of the congregation as stated in Article III of this Constitution, or with any other article or section thereof which pertains to Scriptural or Confessional doctrine and practice;
 - 2. that the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing to the congregation in the regular Divine Worship services on two (2) Sundays prior to its presentation for adoption or by mail at least ten (10) days prior to the Assembly meeting; and
 - 3. that there is an affirmative vote of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Members present at the Assembly meeting.

ARTICLE XIV — By-Laws

This congregation through its Congregational Assembly may adopt such By-Laws as may be required for the accomplishment of its purposes.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE 1 — The Divine Call Extended to Pastors

A list of properly qualified candidates for the Office of Pastor, each of whom is fully committed without any reservation whatsoever to the Confessional Standard of Article III of this Constitution, shall be prepared by the Council of Deacons and publicly announced to the congregation gathered for worship on two (2) successive Sundays or by mail at least ten (10) days prior to the Congregational Assembly at which the Divine Call shall be extended. Additional nominations may be submitted to the Deacons by communicants of the congregation as long as such additional nominations are submitted at least two (2) weeks prior to the Congregational Assembly at which the Divine Call is to be extended. The counsel and assistance of a called and ordained Pastor (usually the Circuit Counselor) firmly and without reservation committed to the Confessional Standard of Article III, shall be included in the process of examining, nominating, and approving candidates for the office of Pastor (see Titus 1:5). Following open discussion of each nominee, the Members of the Congregational Assembly shall be asked to approve each candidate presented by the Council of Deacons. Objections to any candidate shall be reasonable and justifiable. Unanimous approval of each candidate for the Office of Pastor shall be required to include the man on the final slate of nominees prior to the selection of the candidate to whom the Divine Call shall be extended. Then, following the example of the Apostles in Acts 1:15-26 and recognizing that a faithful Pastor is a gift from the risen Christ (Ephesians 4:11), a prayer shall be offered that the Lord of the Harvest would bless the calling of a new Pastor, and the name of one of the approved candidates shall be selected “by lot.” The Divine Call shall be extended to the selected candidate with thanksgiving to God.

If a Call is issued (including the requesting of a candidate from a seminary), Synodical procedures shall be followed.

ARTICLE II — The Calling of Commissioned Church Workers

- A. The Council of Deacons shall appoint members from appropriate boards with other communicant members to serve as the nominating committee to fill vacancies of Commissioned Church Workers positions. A list of eligible and qualified candidates shall be requested from the District Office. Additional nominations of eligible and qualified candidates may be submitted to the nominating committee by communicant members of the congregation. If a call is issued (including the requesting of a candidate), Synodical procedures shall be followed. The Council of Deacons shall be given the authority to issue a call to fill the vacancy from the recommended list of candidates provided by the nominating committee as long as such list has been published to the congregation at least two (2) successive Sundays or by mail at least ten (10) days prior to issuing a call.
- B. The creation of any new or additional Commissioned Church Worker position shall be approved by the Congregational Assembly before any call is issued.

ARTICLE III — The Congregational Assembly

- A. Assembly Members. Any communicant member in good standing, who has reached the legal voting age of the State of Minnesota, and who desires to become a Member of the Congregational Assembly, shall petition the Congregational Assembly for recognition as a Member. At least one (1) week prior to the scheduled meeting of the Congregational Assembly at which the petition is presented, the petitioner shall sign a registry at the church office indicating that he/she has read the Constitution, including the By-Laws, and agrees with its contents. The petitioner shall then be received by resolution of the Assembly and be recognized as a Member at the same Assembly. Those confirmed members of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church under the legal voting age of the State of Minnesota are encouraged to attend the Congregational Assembly meetings and to participate in discussions.
- B. Termination of Congregational Assembly Membership. Members of the Assembly may resign from membership by notifying the Assembly Secretary in writing or by making the request in person at any Assembly meeting. After a continued absence of over one (1) year, an Assembly member shall be contacted and asked whether the member would like to continue in membership. If the member would like to continue in membership, the member shall attend at least one (1) meeting in the next year. If the member does not attend in that year, membership shall be terminated. Those removed from membership shall be noted in the attendance records. Names shall not be published in the Assembly meeting minutes. Those removed from membership may reapply by following the procedure in Paragraph A of this Article.

(**Note:** Those removed from Assembly membership continue to be communicant members in good standing.)

ARTICLE IV

- A. Congregational Assemblies shall be held as follows:
 - 1. Regular quarterly meetings to conduct the ongoing business of the congregation.
 - 2. Special Congregational Assemblies may be called by: a) the Pastor (s), b) the President of the Congregational Assembly, c) a majority of the Deacons, d) written petition of twenty percent (20%) of the Members of the Assembly to the President of the Assembly.
 - 3. Assembly Members shall be given prior notice of each Congregational Assembly in the regular Divine Worship services on at least the two (2) preceding Sundays or by mail at least ten (10) days prior to the Assembly meeting.
 - 4. No Congregational Assembly shall be scheduled without prior knowledge of the Pastor(s).
- B. Ordinarily, the Assembly Members present at a properly called meeting of the Assembly shall constitute a quorum to do business, with the following exceptions: a) Purchase of property, b) Erection of buildings, c) Removal of a Pastor, d) Removal of a Commissioned Church Worker, in which case a majority of all Assembly Members shall be required for a quorum. In the absence of such a majority, those Assembly Members present may fix a date for another meeting of the Congregational Assembly for which notice shall be given in the regular Divine Worship services on at least the two (2) preceding Sundays or by mail at least ten (10) days prior to the Assembly meeting. The Members present at this rescheduled meeting shall constitute a quorum.
- C. Any Assembly Member forfeits the opportunity to “vote” at any particular Congregational Assembly by failing to attend (i.e., no “proxy voting” permitted).
- D. All Congregational Assemblies shall be conducted according to Robert’s Rules of Order inasmuch as this applies and does not conflict with the law of Christian love or discourage free and open discussion.
- E. The Congregational Assembly shall be chaired by the President of the Assembly. The President of the Congregational Assembly has the same voting rights as any Assembly member, per Robert’s Rules of Order, and may cast a deciding vote in the case of a tie vote.
- F. Included at each of the regular quarterly Congregational Assemblies shall be the following:
 - 1. The Council of Deacons will communicate and share with the Assembly Members proposed plans and programs.
 - 2. Resolutions to be presented by the Deacons to the Congregational Assembly for official consideration shall be explained and discussed.

3. Opportunity will be given for communicants to present additional agenda items which concern the life and mission of the congregation. Such agenda items shall be communicated to the President of the Congregational Assembly at least one (1) day prior to the meeting.
 4. The majority opinion of the Assembly Members present at any given Congregational Assembly shall guide the Deacons in matters neither commanded nor forbidden by God (“adiaphora,” Formula of Concord X). The Congregational Assembly shall delegate its operative authority to the Council of Deacons (Constitution, Article VIII). The Deacons shall usually act according to the majority opinion of the Congregational Assembly and be held accountable by the Congregational Assembly for their actions and decisions. In all cases, their first allegiance shall be to the Confessional Standard of this congregation (Constitution, Article III).
- G. A proposed agenda shall be published the previous Sunday of any scheduled meeting.

ARTICLE V — Officers of the Congregational Assembly

- A. Election of Congregational Assembly officers shall be as follows:
1. The nominating committee is composed of the Pastors, a representative from the Council of Deacons, the President of the Congregational Assembly, and one (1) representative, not a Deacon, elected from the Congregational Assembly. The committee shall nominate qualified men from the Congregational Assembly to fill the office of President of the Congregational Assembly. The same nominating committee shall nominate qualified people to fill the following offices: a) Secretary of the Congregational Assembly; b) Treasurer of the Congregation. An attempt shall be made to offer at least two (2) candidates for each office.
(**Note:** No one may hold more than one office, including that of Deacon, at any given time.)
 2. The Council of Deacons shall first approve the nominations of the nominating committee and shall then present an initial slate of approved candidates for all vacant offices at a regularly scheduled Assembly meeting. Additional nominations for President of the Congregational Assembly, Secretary of the Congregational Assembly, and Treasurer of the Congregation may be made from the floor. No one shall be elected to any office without his/her prior consent.
 3. The Congregational Assembly shall then cast ballots to elect the officers by a simple majority.

- B. The newly-elected officers shall be properly installed at a worship service following their election, at which time they shall also assume their respective duties.
- C. A list of all elected officers shall be published in the newsletter or bulletin and made available to any member of the congregation by request.
- D. Any officer who willfully neglects the duties of office or who no longer fulfills the qualifications for office may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Members present at any Congregational Assembly.
- E. Terms and duties of Congregational Assembly Officers:
 - 1. The President of the Congregational Assembly shall serve a two (2) year term and shall preside at all Congregational Assemblies. If the elected President is unable to perform his duties, the Deacons shall appoint an acting President from out of the Members of the Congregational Assembly (not a Deacon) who shall serve in this capacity until such time as the elected President is able to resume his duties or a replacement is elected by the Congregational Assembly.
 - 2. The Secretary of the Congregational Assembly shall serve a two (2) year term and shall be responsible for the minutes of all Congregational Assemblies. The Secretary shall be the caretaker of the official Constitution and By-Laws of the congregation. The Secretary shall record attendance at all Congregational Assemblies and shall communicate to the members of the congregation a summary of the minutes following any Congregational Assembly.
 - 3. The Treasurer of the Congregation shall serve a two (2) year term and shall be authorized to sign checks and pay bills as directed by the Council of Deacons (the President of the Congregational Assembly and other individuals appointed by the Congregational Assembly shall also be authorized to sign checks in the absence of the Treasurer). The Treasurer shall also serve as a member of the Board of Budget and Finance.
 - 4. A standing Congregational Assembly officer may be nominated and re-elected to only a consecutive second term.

ARTICLE VI — The Council of Deacons

In the New Testament (NIV 1984) and early Church, men were often selected to aid the Pastor in caring for the spiritual and physical needs of the congregation (see Acts 6:2-6; 1 Timothy 3:8-13; Philippians 1:1). The word “deacon” means “servant”; as such, the deacon is not like a business executive or corporate head but is a servant to the congregation modeling himself after his Lord Jesus who came not to be served but to serve (see Matthew 20:25-28).

- A. The Council of Deacons shall consist of twelve (12) men selected from the Congregational Assembly who have been communicants in good standing for a period of at least one (1) year.
- B. The Deacons shall be carefully selected according to the following Biblical guidelines as set forth by the Apostle St. Paul in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and the example of the apostles in Acts 6:1-6; they shall be:
 - 1. “men” (v. 8, 12, Acts 6:3)
 - 2. “worthy of respect” (v. 8);
 - 3. “sincere” (v. 8);
 - 4. “not indulging in much wine” (v. 8);
 - 5. “not pursuing dishonest gain” (v. 8);
 - 6. men who “keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience” (v. 9);
 - 7. men who are “first tested and if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons” (v. 10);
 - 8. men whose “wives (if applicable) are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and faithful in all things” (v. 11);
 - 9. if married, the “husband of but one wife” (v. 12);
 - 10. faithful husbands and fathers (if applicable) who “manage their children and households well” (v. 12).
- C. The Pastors shall be ex officio members of the Council of Deacons. The Lutheran School Principal and all other Commissioned Church Workers shall serve the Deacons in an advisory capacity. In this capacity they are also afforded the right to request and be granted a meeting with the Council of Deacons to discuss special concerns, needs, requests or problems. Such a request shall be made to the Chairman of the Council of Deacons prior to the scheduled meeting.

- D. Four (4) new Deacons shall be drawn by lot annually by the Congregational Assembly and may serve a maximum of two (2) consecutive, three (3) year terms. The election of Deacons shall follow this procedure:
1. A nominating committee (composed of a Pastor, a member of the Council of Deacons appointed by the Deacons, a male or female member of the Congregational Assembly [not a Deacon] appointed by the Congregational Assembly, and the President of the Congregational Assembly) shall make every effort to draw up a list of at least six (6) qualified candidates from out of the Congregational Assembly of which four (4) should be non-incumbents.
 2. The nominating committee shall then submit the proposed list of candidates to the Council of Deacons for approval.
 3. Upon unanimous approval by the Deacons, all approved candidates shall be contacted for their willingness to be a candidate to serve on the Council of Deacons. The Council of Deacons shall then publish the list of approved candidates at least three (3) weeks prior to a regularly scheduled Congregational Assembly or by mail at least fifteen (15) days prior to the Assembly at which they will present the list of candidates. Any communicant who has reasonable and justifiable concerns regarding any candidate on the published list should contact the Pastors or Deacons, no less than seven (7) days prior to the Congregational Assembly meeting to explain the reason(s) why a particular candidate's name should be withdrawn. If an objection is raised to a name or names the Council of Deacons shall meet to reconsider. A name can only be removed if that person does not meet the guidelines set forth in Article VI, Paragraph B.
 4. The Deacons shall bring the slate of candidates before the Congregational Assembly for approval.
 5. From the slate of approved candidates, four names shall be selected "by lot" and shall be considered elected to the position of Deacon.
 6. Should any deacon resign or be removed from his position (see G below) before his term is completed, the Board of Deacons shall appoint a replacement for his position per sections A and B above to complete his term. The name(s) of the candidate(s) shall then be published publicly to the congregation for a period of two (2) weeks during which time any communicant member in good standing, who can provide reasonable and justifiable cause to the Pastor(s) or Deacons, may request that the proposed name(s) be withdrawn.

- E. The Council of Deacons shall appoint one (1) of its members to serve as Chairman of the Council of Deacons, one (1) member to serve as Secretary, and shall appoint one (1) Deacon to chair each of those boards deemed necessary by the Deacons to carry out the mission of the congregation. Such boards may include:
1. Lutheran School (the Principal shall be an ex officio member)
 2. Stewardship
 3. Parish Ministries
 4. Trustees
 5. Evangelism
 6. Budget and Finance (the Treasurer of the Congregation shall be a member)
 7. Worship Service Assistance and Altar Care

Each respective Deacon shall then, in conjunction with the Pastors and any ex officio member of his board, and pending approval of the entire Council of Deacons, appoint qualified men and women from the communicants of the congregation to serve with him on his board as needs arise (see Romans 16:1-15). These appointed board members shall be installed at a Divine Worship service following their appointment and all board members for any given year shall be recognized by the Congregational Assembly in a regularly scheduled meeting. Members of boards shall normally be appointed (reappointed) by the Deacons annually. Creation of boards and their members shall be published to the membership of the congregation. Individuals may not be appointed to serve on boards without their prior consent. The Deacons may reappoint willing individuals to serve on congregational boards when this is deemed advantageous to the board's work. Individuals usually serve no more than five (5) consecutive years on any one board.

- F. If the Pastors need or desire assistance in the Divine Worship services or in carrying out their pastoral work properly, the Pastors shall select and appoint suitable and qualified men from the Board of Deacons or from the communicant male membership of the congregation to serve in this capacity. These "worship assistants" shall then be approved by the Council of Deacons.
- G. Any Deacon who willfully neglects the duties of his office or who no longer fulfills the qualifications for his office (see By-Law V-B for the qualifications for Deacon) may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Members present at any Congregational Assembly.

ARTICLE VII — Meetings of the Council of Deacons

The Deacons and appointed boards shall meet monthly or as activities and programs dictate. Meetings of the Council of Deacons shall normally include the Pastor(s), all properly elected Deacons and other appropriate Commissioned Church Workers. The President of the Congregational Assembly may attend at his discretion. Other communicants may request to meet with the Council of Deacons to discuss special concerns, needs, requests, or problems. Such a request shall be made to the Chairman of the Council of Deacons prior to a scheduled meeting. The agenda shall be made available to the congregation prior to a scheduled meeting. The Council of Deacons shall submit a report (to include attendance at Council meetings) monthly to the congregation.

ARTICLE VIII — Manual

- A. The Council of Deacons and each board appointed by the Deacons shall prepare a manual of objectives and procedures to be submitted to the Congregational Assembly for approval. Such manuals shall include, but not be limited to:
 - 1. a statement of purpose
 - 2. the basic objectives
 - 3. operating procedures
 - 4. yearly calendar of duties and events
 - 5. specific areas of concern
- B. Manuals shall be reviewed annually by the respective board with any substantive revisions to be approved by the Congregational Assembly.
- C. A copy of any such manual shall be made available upon request to any member of the congregation. The Secretary of the Council of Deacons shall be responsible for keeping the manuals and providing such copies as needed.

ARTICLE IX — Endowment Funds

This congregation has endowment funds called ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH ENDOWMENT FUND and ST. PAUL LUTHERAN SCHOOL ENDOWMENT FUND. These funds are not a separate entity but part of the St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church corporate entity. The purpose of these funds is to receive gifts and bequests and use them for the mission and ministry of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church and School.

The governing boards of these funds, as established by the By-Laws of the funds, as approved by the Congregational Assembly, administer and manage the funds according to a written plan, approved by the Congregational Assembly and available to the members of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church.

ARTICLE X — Responsibilities and Duties

- A. In response to God’s marvelous love and rich grace in Christ and by the power of God’s Holy Spirit, all members shall daily recall the significance of their Baptism and daily, by contrition and repentance, drown the Old Adam with all sins and evil desires so that the New Man will daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever (Small Catechism).
- B. Communicants shall by the grace of God:
1. faithfully attend Divine Services and Bible classes and attend the Lord’s Supper regularly;
 2. willingly support the extension and promotion of Christ’s Kingdom in this congregation with their time, talents, and treasures as God so blesses them, most especially taking adequate care of the material and physical needs of the Pastors and other Commissioned Church Workers (1 Corinthians 9:14; Galatians 6:6-7; 1 Timothy 5:17-18) as well as all employees of the congregation;
 3. lead a sober Christian life (Galatians 5:19-21);
 4. not hold membership in any religious organizations which maintain principles, doctrines, or conduct conflicting with God’s Word and sound Lutheran doctrine (e. g., Secret Society, Lodge; see Romans 16:17; 2 John 9-10);
 5. readily submit to and support the Constitution and By-Laws of this congregation;
 6. regularly support and pray for the Pastors of the congregation, give them the honor and respect due their office, and insofar as they faithfully preach the Gospel and administer the holy Sacraments and teach God’s Word purely, obey them and submit to their authority (Small Catechism; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17);
 7. regularly support and pray for all Commissioned Church Workers in the congregation, for the Deacons, and for all other elected and appointed officers and workers in the congregation;
 8. support all the various educational programs of our parish including the support and maintenance of Lutheran elementary and secondary schools.

- C. Members of the Congregational Assembly shall by the grace of God:
1. conscientiously and prayerfully advance the work of Christ's Kingdom in this congregation;
 2. seek to encourage and support programs, which benefit the entire congregation;
 3. willingly serve in any office or capacity for which God has equipped them;
 4. assist joyfully and willingly in administering the temporal affairs of the congregation;
 5. support and encourage the Pastors and other Commissioned Church Workers and all congregational employees;
 6. make every effort to understand and to support the plans, resolutions, and programs of their elected Deacons unless such plans, resolutions, and programs clearly conflict with the Confessional Standard of this congregation (Constitution, Article III) or are clearly not in the best interests of the congregation, in which case the concerned Member of the Assembly shall first express his/her concern to the Deacons in the spirit of the Eighth Commandment which urges us not to "tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way" (Small Catechism).
- D. The Deacons shall:
1. faithfully and happily assist, support, and encourage the Pastors and care for their needs so that they might not have to neglect the Ministry of Word and Sacrament in order to "wait on tables" (Acts 6:2-4);
 2. also faithfully support and encourage other Commissioned Church Workers whom the congregation calls to assist the Pastor(s) in the Ministry of the Word, always seeing to it that they are given fair and equitable treatment and shown proper Christian love;
 3. see to it that the physical and material needs of the Pastors and other Commissioned Church Workers and all congregation employees are taken care of adequately;
 4. show themselves, by word and example, to be patterns of good works and Christian devotion;
 5. make every effort to implement plans, resolutions, and programs which facilitate the preaching of God's Word, the proper administration of the Sacraments, and the religious instruction of all members according to the Confessional Standard of the congregation (Constitution, Article III) and which concur where possible with the expressed majority opinions of the Congregational Assembly;
 6. faithfully carry out their duties by conforming themselves to God's Word and the faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church;

7. regularly and faithfully use the Means of Grace and study Lutheran doctrine in personal and family devotions, in public worship and regular attendance at Christ's Supper of His Body and Blood, in Bible Class, and in regular study together as a Council;
 8. regularly pray for the congregation and happily serve the congregation's spiritual and physical needs.
- E. The Pastors shall:
1. subscribe without any reservation to the Confession of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and adhere to the Constitution and By-Laws of this congregation;
 2. lead God's people here in this congregation as their faithful Shepherd or Overseer (see 1 Timothy 3:1ff; 1 Peter 5:1ff) by faithfully using the Means of Grace to minister to the spiritual needs of the congregation;
 3. be readily available for private Confession and Absolution or pastoral counseling whenever desired or requested;
 4. regularly and faithfully pray for the members of God's flock entrusted to his spiritual care;
 5. seek to improve and enhance his theological knowledge and pastoral skills by continued professional study both formally and informally;
 6. faithfully perform the duties as set forth in his Call document.
- F. The Commissioned Church Workers shall:
1. subscribe without any reservation to the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and adhere to the Constitution and By-Laws of this congregation;
 2. faithfully perform their duties as set forth in their call documents;
 3. seek to improve and enhance their skills by continued professional study both formally and informally;
 4. support the Pastors and happily assist them in whatever way possible in the Ministry of the Word to which they have been called;
 5. be examples of faith and good works for God's people in the congregation;
 6. be faithful in using the Means of Grace by having personal and family devotions, by attending public Divine Worship and the Lord's Supper regularly, and by devoting time to study God's Word and Lutheran doctrine with their peers.

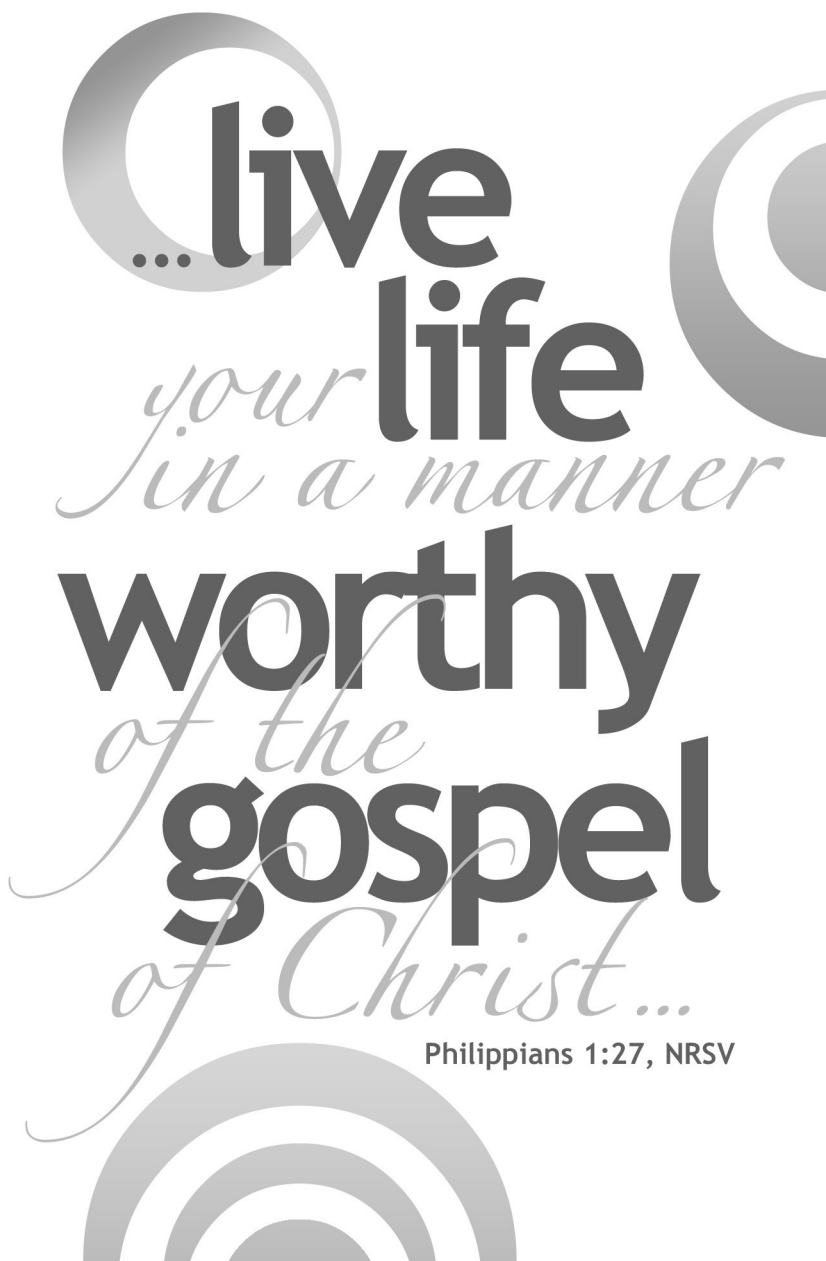
ARTICLE XI — Amendments

- A. These By-Laws may be amended in a properly convened Congregational Assembly by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of all Members present, provided that the Members of the Assembly have received prior notice of the proposed change in the regular Divine Worship services on at least two (2) preceding Sundays or by mail at least ten (10) days prior to the Assembly.
- B. The revised By-Laws shall, as a condition of continued membership in good standing of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, be submitted to the President of the district for review by the district’s constitution committee and favorable action by the district’s board of directors before being adopted by the congregation.
- C. All amendments to the By-Laws as well as to the Constitution shall be recorded in the official copy of the Constitution and By-Laws by the Secretary of the Congregational Assembly in conjunction with the President of the Congregational Assembly which shall then be in the possession of the Secretary of the Congregational Assembly and in the Church office.
- D. A copy of the current Church Constitution and Church By-Laws shall be made available to all members of the congregation and shall be given to all members joining the congregation by confirmation, transfer, or profession of faith. The Pastors shall be encouraged to discuss most especially Article III under the Constitution and Article X under the By-Laws with those joining the congregation.

✠ TO GOD ALONE BE ALL THANKS AND GLORY ✠

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Philippians 1:27, NRSV

Constitution Adopted: January 27, 1999
By-Laws Amended: (Adopted 1-28-15; Approved May 2015)

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