

THE CONSTITUTION OF ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

PREAMBLE

The written Word of God, the Bible, requires that a Christian congregation conform to this divine word in doctrine and practice (Ps. 119:105; Matt. 28:18–20; Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:14—4:5) and that all things be done decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40). The documentation which here follows shall be the instrument by which all spiritual and material matters of this congregation shall be governed.

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this congregation shall be St. Paul Lutheran Church. This congregation is a legal corporation under the laws of the State of Connecticut. The Articles of Incorporation are filed with the State of Connecticut and dated April 21, 1961.

ARTICLE II: CONFESSION

This congregation holds all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God and the infallible rule of faith and practice according to which all doctrines and teachings are to be judged.

This congregation accepts all the confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (collected in the Book of Concord of 1580) as a correct and sound exposition of the Christian doctrine taken from and in full accord with the Holy Scriptures. These writings are: the three Ecumenical Creeds (Apostles, Nicene, and Athanasian), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, the Smalcald Articles, Luther's Small and Large Catechisms, and the Epitome and Formula of Concord.

Accordingly no doctrine which conflicts with or sets aside the foregoing doctrine shall be taught or tolerated in this congregation.

ARTICLE III: SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

This congregation shall be a member of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod so long as the confessions and constitution of this synod are in accord with Article II above. If the Missouri Synod should adopt a conflicting confession, this congregation shall seek membership in an Evangelical Lutheran synod with a confession that is in accord with Article II.

ARTICLE IV: POWERS VESTED IN THE CONGREGATION

All property of the congregation is owned by the congregation and is managed for it by its duly chosen officers, in conformity with its Constitution and Bylaws. These officers and their assistants are responsible to the congregation in performing these duties.

The Voters' Assembly is the governing body of this congregation and shall be the final decision making body for the congregation in all material affairs. All such matters shall be decided by a majority vote of the Voters' Assembly unless otherwise specified by this Constitution or Bylaws. The Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions shall be the standard for all decisions, and any decision made in conflict with these writings is automatically null and void.

ARTICLE V: CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this congregation includes the following groups:

1. Communicant membership: Only such persons shall be communicant members of the congregation who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God, signified their willingness to accept the

confession of this congregation, and been accepted into communicant membership in accordance with the Bylaws of this congregation.

2. Voting membership: Persons permitted to vote at a Voters' Assembly are communicant members of this congregation who have read and agree to abide by the its Constitution and Bylaws and are of sufficient age, as dictated in the Bylaws.

ARTICLE VI: PASTOR OFFICE

The pastoral office in this congregation shall be conferred only upon such ministers or candidates for the ministry who profess acceptance of, and pledge faithful adherence to the confession of this congregation as set forth in Article II. Such ministers or candidates shall be properly qualified for the pastoral office and shall be chosen and called in a manner which is in agreement with the Bylaws of this congregation and the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod.

ARTICLE VII: CHURCH COUNCIL

The congregation shall be represented by and administer all its material affairs through the Church Council. Only communicant members who have attained the age of eighteen (18) years shall be eligible for nomination and election to the Church Council. The members of the Church Council shall ordinarily number twelve (12) and shall be elected in accordance with the Bylaws of this congregation.

ARTICLE VIII: DISSOLUTION

If at any time a division should take place for any reason, the property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those communicant members who continue to adhere in confession and practice of Article II of this Constitution, as determined by the adjudication procedures of the Synod.

If at any time this congregation shall dissolve, the property and assets of the congregation and all rights connected therewith shall be transferred to 501(c3) organizations chosen by the remaining communicant members.

ARTICLE IX: BYLAWS

Bylaws may be adopted or amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at any Voters' Assembly. Proposed changes must be presented in written form at a preceding meeting of the Voters' Assembly.

ARTICLE X: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at any Voters' Assembly. Proposed changes must be presented in written form at a preceding meeting of the Voters' Assembly. Article II shall be unalterable and irrevocable.

THE BYLAWS OF ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

ARTICLE I: COMMUNICANT MEMBERSHIP

Section A: Eligibility

1. Communicant members shall have been baptized in the name of the Triune God;
2. Shall have been examined by the Pastor and found sufficiently prepared to receive Holy Communion, either through a course of study with the pastor (children and adult converts) or by a profession of faith (adult transfers from an Evangelical Lutheran congregation);
3. Shall hold all the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures to be the inspired Word of God and the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, drawn from them and confessed in the Small Catechism, to be faithful and true;
4. Shall not live in open and defiant sinfulness;
5. Shall not be members of a secular or non-Christian organization whose stated purposes or practices are in conflict with the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions.

Section B: Reception

1. After an applicant for membership has given satisfactory evidence of his eligibility to the pastor in accordance with the criteria above, his admission as a communicant member shall be reported by the pastor to the Voters' Assembly.

Section C: Duties

1. Communicant members shall lead Christian lives in accord with the Word of God;
2. Shall regularly hear the Word of God and receive the Lord's Supper with a glad and willing spirit;
3. Shall provide for the Christian training of their children by instruction at home and through agencies of the church;
4. Shall contribute regularly and faithfully to the work of the Lord in this congregation and elsewhere according as God has blessed them;
5. Shall permit themselves to be instructed and corrected in a spirit of Christian love.

Section D: Removal

1. The following shall be grounds for removal from membership as a matter of course:
 - a. Whereabouts unknown;
 - b. Habitual and willful absence from public worship and the Lord's Supper for a period of two (2) years (home-bound members excepted);
 - c. Residence at such a distance from the church that transfer to a nearer congregation is advisable;
 - d. Deliberate self-exclusion;
 - e. Excommunication.
2. Such removal shall be reported by the pastor to the Voters' Assembly.

ARTICLE II: VOTING MEMBERSHIP

Section A: Eligibility

1. Voting members shall be communicant members in good standing;
 2. Shall be at least eighteen (18) years of age;
 3. Shall have read and agree to abide by the Constitution and Bylaws of this congregation.
- To be eligible to vote at a meeting of the Voters' Assembly, a voter must be physically present.

Section B: Duties

1. Voting members shall attend regular congregational meetings;

2. Shall stand willing to serve on the Church Council and other boards and committees when requested to do so.

ARTICLE III: VOTERS' ASSEMBLY

Section A: Meetings

1. The Voters' Assembly shall ordinarily meet three times a year.
2. Special meetings of the Voters' Assembly may be called by the President at the request of three (3) or more members of the Church Council or seven (7) or more voting members.
3. A quorum of the Voters' Assembly shall consist of twelve (12) voting members. In the event that a quorum is not present, a special meeting may be called by the President.

Section B: Agenda

1. Minutes of the prior Church Council meeting shall be read at the regular meetings of the Voters' Assembly.
2. At every Voters' Assembly meeting, the members of the Church Council may each give a report of the work done in their respective areas of service.
3. Items to be placed on the agenda for a Voters' Assembly meeting should first be presented to the President at least one week prior to the Voters' Assembly meeting. Any items not so presented shall be admitted for discussion only at the discretion of the President.
4. A recommended annual schedule of the special topics of concern for the Voters' Assembly meetings is as follows:
 - a. January: Annual Meeting
 - b. May: Election of officers
 - c. November: Approval of annual budget

ARTICLE IV: CHURCH COUNCIL

Section A: Composition

1. The Church Council shall consist of twelve (12) members and shall be made up of the Pastor and five officers: President, Vice-president, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer; and six Chairmen of the following boards: Christian Education, Church Properties, Communication and Media, Elders, Evangelism and Missions, and Stewardship.

Section B: Authority

1. The Church Council shall exercise authority and act for the proper administration of the temporal affairs of this congregation.
2. The members of the Church Council are authorized to expend budgeted monies in their respective areas after consultation with the Treasurer to determine that funds are available within the budgeted amounts and the cash flow will permit such expenditures without jeopardizing the finances of the congregation.

Section C: Executive Committee

1. The President, Vice-president, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, and Treasurer shall constitute the Executive Committee. The Pastor shall be a member ex-officio of this and all other boards and committees.
2. If urgent matters upon which the Church Council would ordinarily act should arise between meetings of the council, such matters may be acted upon by the Executive Committee, and any action taken shall be valid and effective as if taken by the Church Council. The Executive Committee shall promptly report all actions to the Church Council.

Section D: Meetings

1. The Church Council shall hold regular meetings each month on a set day that is agreeable to its current members.
2. Special meetings may be called by the President or Pastor and/or at the written request of a simple majority of the members of the Church Council.

Section E: Quorum

1. A quorum at any meeting of the Church Council shall consist of at least seven (7) in number, and any action shall be decided by a majority of the voting members present at such a meeting.

Section F: Typical Order of Business

- Scripture reading and prayer
- Reading of minutes of previous meeting(s)
- Report of the Financial Secretary
- Report of the Treasurer
- Report of the Executive Committee
- Report of the Pastor
- Report of other Boards and Committees
- Report of church organizations
- Unfinished business
- New business
- Adjournment with prayer

Section G: Books of the Officers

1. The books of the Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, and Treasurer shall be and remain the property of the congregation.
2. The President shall, when necessary, appoint a Committee to audit the books of the Financial Secretary and of the Treasurer, which audit shall be presented at the next meeting of the Voters' Assembly.

ARTICLE V: ELECTIONS, NOMINATIONS, AND APPOINTMENTS

Section A: Elected Positions

1. These are the elected positions in this congregation: President, Vice-president, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, the entire Board of Elders, and the Chairmen of the Boards of Christian Education, Church Properties, Communication and Media, Evangelism and Missions, and Stewardship.
2. All voting members of this Congregation are eligible for elected office, with the exception that offices involving the functions of the pastoral office (preaching, the public administration of the sacraments, church discipline, and the public leadership of the congregation) are to be held by qualified men in accord with 1 Timothy 3:2–4. Accordingly, only male voting members may serve as Pastor, President, Vice-president and Elders.
3. Ordinarily, members of the Church Council and the Board of Elders should only hold one elected office at a time.
4. Council members shall regularly attend the worship services and Bible studies of this congregation.

Section B: Elections

1. The election for these positions shall be held at the appropriate Voters' Assembly. A simple majority vote is sufficient for election to any office. The term of office for elected officers and appointed committee members shall take effect immediately upon the vote until the next election. The newly elected officers shall be consecrated in prayer soon following in a public worship service.

2. The term of office for all elected positions shall be three (3) years. A person shall not serve more than two consecutive terms in one office unless the Nominating Committee is unable to fill that particular position with another qualified candidate. In such a case, that candidate may be deemed eligible for reelection by the Voters' Assembly.

Section C: Nominations

1. The Nominating Committee shall publish a slate of candidates with the notices of the meeting for the election of officers. No person shall be nominated without giving consent.
2. The Nominating Committee shall also assist in filling boards and committees with qualified members throughout the year as the need may arise. Should an office fall vacant between elections, the Nominating Committee shall submit a slate of candidates to the Voter's Assembly for the election of a temporary officer. This temporary term of office shall not be counted as a regular term of office (insofar as the regular elections are concerned).

Section D: Removal from Office

1. When necessary, officers may be removed or dismissed from office by the Voters' Assembly. Valid and urgent reason for such removal or dismissal shall be:
 - a. Failure to act in a Christian and God-pleasing manner;
 - b. Persistence in false doctrine;
 - c. Offensive conduct;
 - d. Willful neglect of or inability to perform official duties.

Section E: Appointments

1. Excepting the Board of Elders, which members are elected, appointments of board or committee members shall be made by the Chairman of each board or committee, in consultation with the Nominating Committee, and are subject to approval by the Church Council.
2. Each board and committee shall seek as many appointed members as the Chairman of that particular board or committee sees fit.
3. There is normally no limit to the number of appointed positions that a person may hold at one time.

ARTICLE VI: DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section A: The President

1. Shall preside over all meetings of the Church Council and the Voters' Assembly, as dictated by Robert's Rules of Order;
2. Shall, with the Pastor, prepare an agenda for each meeting of the Church Council and the Voters' Assembly;
3. Shall appoint temporary committees for special tasks;
4. Shall see to it that all elected and appointed officers and committees perform their duties faithfully. To achieve that end, the President may attend any board or committee meeting;
5. Shall serve as a member of the Board of Finance;
6. Shall vote in a Voters' Assembly or Church Council meeting when necessary to break a tie;
7. Shall appoint a Chairman of the Nominating Committee prior to the January Voters' Assembly meeting;
8. Shall, in consultation with the Pastor, have the responsibility of granting or denying permission for short-term use of congregational facilities and equipment.

Section B: The Vice-president

1. Shall assume the duties of the President in his absence;
2. Shall assist the President with his duties as called upon;

3. Shall serve as an ex officio member of all boards and committees for the purpose of encouraging communication between the groups and also between members of the groups, and to lend assistance whenever possible.

Section C: The Recording Secretary

1. Shall record and oversee the preservation of all minutes of all meetings of the Church Council and the Voters' Assembly, and see to their proper presentation to the congregation;
2. Shall record and preserve accurate records of the attendance at each Church Council and Voters' Assembly meeting;
3. Shall be present at all elections to establish the eligibility of voters and certify the results of the election;
4. Shall, with the Pastor and President, handle correspondence pertaining to the affairs of the Church Council and Voters' Assembly in the name of the congregation;
5. Shall oversee the preservation of official congregational records;
6. Shall keep detailed record of the elected officers and appointed board and committee members for each year, providing the Nominating Committee with accurate information regarding present and past officeholders and their terms of office.

Section D: The Financial Secretary

1. Shall supervise the handling, counting and depositing of all offerings;
2. Shall supervise and be responsible for records of all contributions, providing each member with a statement of contributions at least once a year;
3. Shall supervise the purchase and distribution of offering envelopes and shall turn over all envelopes not claimed by February 1 to the Board of Elders to aid their ministry among inactive members;
4. Shall keep in order all papers of financial nature relating to this position;
5. Shall be a member of the Budget Committee.

Section E: The Treasurer

1. Shall manage all books and financial records of the Church, prepare appropriate financial documents which reflect the financial position of the Church and, as necessary, make transfers of funds between accounts;
2. Shall supervise the investment of all Church funds;
3. Shall give financial reports at Church Council and Voters' Assembly meetings, including a year-end report at the annual meeting;
4. Shall supervise the choice of banks, the establishment of church bank accounts, and the oversight of the Church's safe deposit box;
5. Shall monitor all budgeted expenses and notify any board which may have nearly exhausted its budgeted allotment;
6. Shall supervise the duties of the church office administrator or bookkeeper, who shall pay all authorized expenditures, reconcile the checkbook, enter financial data into the church office computer;
7. Shall review all church invoices including insurance policies prior to any payment being made and church maintenance contracts prior to signing thereof;
8. Shall file necessary state and federal tax forms with the Internal Revenue Service and oversee workman's compensation requirements with the insurance carrier of the church;
9. Shall be a member of the Budget Committee.

ARTICLE VII: DUTIES OF BOARDS

Section A: The Board of Elders

1. Shall consist of up to ten scripturally qualified men, at least twenty-five (25) years of age, regularly elected by the Voters' Assembly;
2. Shall participate in a training program to be conducted by the Pastor soon after election to the office;
3. Shall, as their chief duty, assist the Pastor in the spiritual care of the members of the congregation, especially when the need for brotherly admonition or church discipline arises, in keeping with Matthew 18:15–17;
4. Shall ensure that the evangelical Lutheran doctrine and the church discipline demanded by the Word of God are practiced and preserved in the congregation;
5. Shall render any assistance necessary at communion services, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and other special services;
6. Shall together with the Pastor examine all applications for membership in the congregations and shall visit those persons who have applied for membership;
7. Shall elect from their number a Chairman. The Chairman shall, with the Pastor, prepare an agenda for each meeting and preside over the meetings. The Chairman shall also see that the various individuals and committees of the board are functioning properly;
8. Shall carry out most of its regular duties through two standing committees, Worship and Visitation, each of which shall choose an Elder to serve as Chairman and as many other members of the congregation, men or women, as needed to assist them in their duties, and will work closely with the Pastor.

Section B: The Board of Stewardship

1. Shall encourage Christian stewardship from all members of the congregation that they may use their God-given resources of time, talents, and treasure to His glory;
2. Shall aid members of this congregation in gaining a deeper understanding of our mission responsibilities through the District and Synod to which we belong;
3. Shall conduct, when necessary, a stewardship campaign to provide the funds for the congregation's functions.
4. The Chairman of this board shall be a member of the Budget Committee.

Section C: The Board of Christian Education

1. Shall together with the Pastor interest themselves in the development of programs and procurement of materials for the Christian education of all members of the congregation, especially the training of the youth;
2. Shall when necessary, recruit and appoint qualified members of the congregation as teaching assistants for the youth or to any other positions which fall under its jurisdiction;
3. Shall encourage adults in the congregation to attend Bible study and strive toward greater personal growth in God's Word.

Section D: The Board of Evangelism and Missions

1. Shall supervise this congregation's program of outreach into the surrounding community, primarily towards persons who are not members of this congregation;
2. Shall recommend to the Church Council prospective mission programs for support, whether domestic or worldwide;
3. Shall enlist the assistance of other members of the congregation in carryout out these objectives.

Section E: The Board of Communication and Media

1. Shall supervise the maintenance of this congregation's web site and social media accounts;
2. Shall supervise efforts to advertise the public functions and services of this congregation to the surrounding community;

3. Shall oversee the production and distribution of newsletters and other informative materials to the members of this congregation.

Section F: The Board of Church Properties

1. Shall secure the congregation's property against damage and keep the buildings, grounds and parsonages in good repair;
2. Shall see that all church property is accurately assessed and adequately insured;
3. Shall report on the condition of the property at each Voters' Assembly and receive suggestions for maintenance and repair;
4. Shall supervise the making and distribution of keys;
5. Shall supervise the work of the building superintendent employed by the congregation.

VIII. COMMITTEES

Section A: The Worship Committee

1. Shall consist of the Head Usher, President of the Altar Guild, a representative of the Choir (if applicable), and one of the Elders, who shall be chosen by the other members of this committee to serve as its Chairman;
2. Shall, under the direction of the Pastor, make all necessary arrangements for the public worship services of this congregation, including weddings and funerals;
3. Shall coordinate and supervise the work of the Altar Guild, Acolytes, Ushers, Greeters, and Worship Assistants (Elders).
4. The Chairman of this committee shall, in the absence of the Pastor, arrange for regular worship services and advise the congregation accordingly.

Section B: The Visitation Committee

1. Shall assist the Pastor in ministering to all members either hospitalized or home-bound, seeing that they receive every available spiritual and emotional support;
2. Shall develop programs to aid members and friends who have special disabilities and needs;
3. Shall choose one of the Elders to serve as its Chairman.
4. The Chairman of this committee shall, in the absence of the Pastor, arrange for pastoral care to be provided to all hospitalized or home-bound members.

Section C: The Budget Committee

1. Shall consist of the Chairman of the Board of Stewardship, the Financial Secretary, and the Treasurer;
2. Shall be responsible for preparing the annual congregational budget.

Section D: The Nominating Committee

1. Shall consist of a Chairman and such other members as appointed by the Chairman, which members shall be approved by the Church Council for announcement at the annual meeting.
2. The Pastor and President shall also serve as members of the Nominating Committee.
3. The Chairman of the committee shall be responsible for preparation of a slate of candidates to be published with the notices of the meeting for the election of officers.

Section E: The Executive Committee

(See Article IV, Section C above.)

Section F: Other Committees

1. When necessary, the President, with the concurrence of the Church Council, shall appoint an Audit Committee, a Memorial Committee, a Call Committee, or any other committees which are deemed necessary.

ARTICLE IX: EMPLOYEES

1. Job descriptions and statements of benefits shall be made available to any person wishing to apply for an open position within the church. All applications for paid staff positions shall be made in writing to the President.
2. The actual hiring of a staff person shall be done by at least three members of the Church Council, including the Pastor and the President, subject to the Voters' Assembly ratification. All jobs should be performed in a Christian and God-pleasing manner. An annual performance evaluation and salary review shall be done by at least three members of the Church Council.
3. Any grievances from employees or against employees shall be brought to the Pastor and President, who shall bring the matter before the Church Council for resolution.

ARTICLE X: FUNDS

1. All monies donated to the church shall be directed to the general fund with reasonable effort being made to ensure that donations earmarked for a specific purpose are used accordingly.

ARTICLE XI: THE PASTORAL OFFICE

Section A: Calling a Pastor

1. When the need arises for a Pastor to be called, a Call Committee shall be formed from any number of members of the Church Council and any other persons whom the President may appoint.
2. This committee shall, in consultation with the District President and Circuit Visitor, be responsible for presenting names to the Voter's Assembly to be prayerfully considered for the office of Pastor.
3. The Pastor shall be chosen by a two-thirds vote of the Voters' Assembly conducted by ballot. Regardless of the voting, the call extended to the Pastor-elect should then be considered unanimous.

Section B: Duties of the Pastor

1. Public and private preaching and teaching of the pure Word of God;
2. Administration of the Sacraments according to Christ's command and Lutheran doctrine and practice;
3. Supervision of the general affairs of this congregation, being its spiritual leader in the performance of his duties and in leading an exemplary Christian life;
4. Supervision of the admonition and correction of members in need of Christian discipline, making certain that all discipline is administered firmly with Christian love;
5. Making certain that accurate records are kept of all official acts performed in the congregation and that reports of these acts be made public at appropriate times;
6. Working closely with the President, and keeping him advised of important matters that come up in the administration of church affairs. To that end, the Pastor is welcome to attend any board or committee meetings.

Section C: Removing a Pastor

1. The reasons for removing a Pastor from office shall be:
 - a. Persistent adherence to false doctrine;
 - b. Living an offensive and/or openly sinful life;
 - c. Willful neglect of or inability to perform his official duties.
2. Apart from these three reasons, a Pastor may not be removed from office, nor may the congregation or Church Council intentionally reduce a Pastor's salary or benefits in order to achieve his resignation.
3. In the event that the Pastor should appear to require discipline, our Lord's command in Matthew 18:15-17 must be followed.
 - a. This reproof should first be done privately, then (if necessary) by the President and Elders.

- b. If such process does not lead to a satisfactory outcome, the President shall consult the Circuit Visitor and perhaps also the District President.
- c. Ultimately, it may be necessary to remove the Pastor from office. This is done by a two-thirds majority of the Voters' Assembly conducted by ballot.

Section D: Assistant Pastors and Vicars

1. Assistant Pastors may be chosen and called in accordance with paragraphs A and B of this Article.
2. The Voters' Assembly shall also be empowered to participate in a synodically approved Seminary vicarage program.
3. Any called Assistant Pastor or assigned Vicar shall bind himself to the Constitution and Bylaws of the congregation and willingly serve under the direction of the Pastor.

XII: CONGREGATIONAL DISCIPLINE

1. All discipline in this congregation shall be in accordance with the scriptural order of discipline as laid down in Matthew 18:15–17. The Board of Elders, under the guidance of the Pastor, shall serve as overseers in carrying out congregational discipline.
2. The following shall be grounds for counsel, discipline, and, when necessary, excommunication:
 - a. Living in a state of open and unrepentant sin;
 - b. Stubborn refusal to accept major teaching of Holy Scripture;
 - c. Repeated disruption of congregational functions.
3. When a member of this congregation, after ineffectual application of Matthew 18:15–17, be excommunicated or by evasion of discipline, excludes himself, such member forfeits all rights and prerogatives of church membership. Such forfeiture shall be noted in the minutes of the Church Council.