

**CONSTITUTION OF
PRINCE OF PEACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
SPRINGFIELD, ~~VA~~ VIRGINIA**

(Effective January 1, 1998; as amended March 1, 1998, ~~and~~ February 12, 2007, and [date of amendment])

PREAMBLE

Whereas, the Word of God requires that a Christian congregation shall conform to the Divine Word in doctrine and practice (Psalms 119: 105-108, Galatians 1:6-8, II Timothy 4:1-5) and all things be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40); it is therefore resolved that we, the members of Prince of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Springfield, Virginia, accept and subscribe to the following Constitution and Bylaws, in accordance with which all spiritual and material affairs of our congregation shall be governed.

**ARTICLE I
NAME AND LOCATION**

The name of this Congregation shall be Prince of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church located at 8304 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield, Virginia.

**ARTICLE II
MISSION**

Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20).

**ARTICLE III
CONFESSIONAL STANDARD**

The 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 Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of the year 1580 to be a true and genuine exposition of the doctrines of the Bible. These confessional writings, namely the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, Luther's Large and Small Catechisms, and the Formula of Concord, form the norm and standard for all doctrine and life in the ~~congregation~~ Congregation.

ARTICLE IV MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Congregation includes the following:

A. Baptized Members

Those who are baptized in the Name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and who are under the pastoral care of Prince of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church.

B. Confirmed Members

Baptized members who accept all canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the only divine rule and standard of faith and life and are familiar with and declare their acceptance of Luther's Small Catechism.

C. Voting Members

Confirmed members who are properly registered with Prince of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church.

ARTICLE V PASTORS

The Pastoral Office shall be conferred only upon such candidates who (1) are well qualified for their work, (2) profess and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in Article III of this Constitution, and (3) uphold this Constitution and its Bylaws. The Pastoral Office shall include:

A. Senior Pastor

1. Shall be certified by the Lutheran ~~Church, Missouri~~ Church—Missouri Synod.
2. Shall be called by a two-thirds majority vote of the Voting Members voting.
3. Shall serve in such capacity unless removed by death, resignation, or removal by a two-thirds majority vote of the Voting Members voting.
4. Shall be accountable to the Congregation and the Elected Officers.
5. Shall provide spiritual and programmatic leadership to the Congregation.

B. Associate Pastors

1. Shall be certified by the Lutheran ~~Church, Missouri~~ Church—Missouri Synod.
2. Shall be called by a two-thirds majority vote of the Voting Members voting.
3. May be called to serve in either a full-time or a part-time capacity.
4. Shall serve in such capacity, unless removed by death, resignation, or removal by a two-thirds majority vote of the Voting Members voting.
5. Shall be accountable to the Senior Pastor, Elected Officers, and the Congregation.
6. Shall assist the Senior Pastor in providing spiritual and programmatic leadership to the Congregation.

C. Contract Pastors

1. May be contracted by the Senior Pastor or the Board of Servant Leaders.
2. Shall be certified by the Lutheran ~~Church, Missouri~~ Church—Missouri Synod.
3. Shall be accountable to the Senior Pastor, Elected Officers, and the Congregation.
4. Shall assist the Senior Pastor in providing spiritual and programmatic leadership to the Congregation.

D. Other Called Workers

1. Shall be certified by the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
2. Shall be called by a two-thirds majority vote of the Voting Members voting.
3. May be called to serve in either a full-time or a part-time capacity.
4. Shall serve in such capacity, unless removed by death, resignation, or removal by a two-thirds majority vote of the Voting Members voting.
5. Shall be accountable to the Senior Pastor, Elected Officers, and the Congregation.
6. Shall assist the Senior Pastor in providing spiritual and programmatic leadership to the Congregation.

[Note: Other called workers are alluded to in the Constitution (see Article VI.B-Right of Calling), but not explicitly identified. We propose adding this section to explicitly recognize the ministry of our ministers of religion—commissioned and their support of the mission and ministry of the Congregation.]

ARTICLE VI POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

A. General

The Congregation as a body, through its voting members, shall have final authority to govern and direct all of its external and internal affairs and its activities in pursuit of the Congregation's mission given by God. To pursue that mission as responsibly, effectively and as efficiently as possible, the Congregation shall establish a board of directors. In this ~~congregation~~ Congregation, the board shall be named the Board of Servant Leaders; its members to follow the pattern of service and leadership set by our Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 10:35-45; Philippians 2:1-11). Neither the Congregation nor the Board of Servant Leaders shall be empowered to decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church (Article III) and any such decisions shall be null and void.

B. The Right of Calling

The right of calling pastors and other called workers shall solely be vested in the Congregation through the Voting Members~~[[,]]~~ and shall never be delegated to a smaller body or individual.

C. Removal from Office

The Voting Members of the ~~congregation~~ Congregation, acting in Christian and lawful order, may remove a called worker from office by a two-thirds majority vote of ~~those~~ the Voting Members voting, for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Persistent adherence to false doctrine.
2. Scandalous life.
3. Inability or unwillingness to perform official duties or neglect of them.
4. A significant or repeated recurrence of exceeding of authority granted under this Constitution, ~~it's~~ its Bylaws, or other limitations imposed in accordance with the Constitution and its Bylaws.

D. Decisions

Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided by the Word of God; other matters shall be decided by the ~~congregation~~ Congregation, acting through the Board of Servant Leaders, unless otherwise specified by the Constitution or its Bylaws.

ARTICLE ~~VIII~~ VII BOARD OF SERVANT LEADERS

[Note: For flow of the document, this article has been moved before the article on Officers.]

A. Membership

1. The Board of Servant Leaders shall be composed of (6) six members elected by the Congregation as specified in Article VII, Section B2 of this Constitution.
2. The Senior Pastor shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Board of Servant Leaders.

B. Powers and Duties

1. The Board of Servant Leaders, acting on the Congregation's behalf, is authorized, empowered and directed to establish policies of governance for the Congregation for the management and administration of all congregational affairs, and to oversee compliance with these policies. The Board of Servant Leaders has authority to exercise all the powers of the Congregation, except as limited by this Constitution, its Bylaws, or the Congregation.
2. The Board of Servant Leaders will oversee, support, encourage, and empower members of the Congregation in their involvement in mission and ministry.
3. The Board of Servant Leaders is not empowered to decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church (Article III). Any such decisions shall be null and void.
4. The Board of Servant Leaders, acting in Christian and lawful order and in consultation with the Senior Pastor, may remove any appointed official from office for one or more of the following causes: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, inability

- or unwillingness to perform official duties or neglect of them, or a significant or repeated recurrence of exceeding of his or her authority.
5. The Board of Servant Leader Chair and Vice Chair are authorized to sign all legal papers on behalf of the ~~congregation~~ Congregation.

C. Removal from Office

The Voting Members of the Congregation, acting in Christian and lawful order, may remove any member of the Board of Servant Leaders from office by a majority vote of the Voting Members voting, for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Persistent adherence to false doctrine.
2. Scandalous life.
3. Inability or unwillingness to perform official duties or neglect of them.
4. A significant or repeated recurrence of exceeding of authority granted under this Constitution, its Bylaws, or other limitations imposed in accordance with the Constitution and its Bylaws.

[Notes: The Constitution or Bylaws did not provide explicit provisions for removal. We recommend adding provisions to make the members of the Board of Servant Leaders removable by the Congregation.]

D. Vacancies

Vacancies in Offices shall be filled in the manner provided in the Bylaws of this Constitution.

[Notes: Moved section from below.]

ARTICLE ~~VH~~ VIII OFFICERS

A. Designation

The Officers of the ~~congregation~~ Congregation shall consist of a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary of the Board of Servant Leaders ~~and other Officers as the Board of Servant Leaders shall provide.~~

B. Election or Appointment

1. All Officers must be at least 18 years old and ~~shall be~~ able to exercise those duties of their office in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.
2. The Board of Servant Leaders of the Congregation shall be elected from among the voting membership at such time, in such manner and for such period of time as provided in the Bylaws of this Constitution.
3. The Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary of the Board of Servant Leaders of the Congregation shall be selected by the Board of Servant Leaders from its elected membership and affirmed by the voting members of the Congregation at such time, in

such manner, and for such period of time as determined by the Board of Servant Leaders.

- ~~4. The Congregation may call individuals to serve as Ministry Administrators, Core Ministry Leaders, and Support Ministry Leaders. The Senior Pastor shall appoint individuals to these positions when the positions are not filled by workers called by the Congregation.~~

[Notes:

- If the Congregation, or other applicable law, determines that additional Officers of the Congregation are needed, we propose that such Officer be added by amending the Constitution instead of allowing the BoSL to identify such officers.*
- These specific terms for Ministry Administrators, Core Ministry Leaders, and Support Ministry Leaders are not currently in use by the Congregation. The proposed addition of Section D of Article V covers other called workers. Additionally, such positions are not necessarily “Officers” of the Congregation. Accordingly, we propose adding a new section in the Bylaws to cover ministry staff.]*

C. Powers and Duties

1. Officers shall have the authority to carry out the responsibilities that have been conferred upon them by this Constitution, its Bylaws, the Congregation, and/or by the resolution of the Board of Servant Leaders.
2. The Board of Servant Leader Chair and Vice Chair are authorized to sign all legal papers on behalf of the Congregation.

~~D. Vacancies~~

~~Vacancies in Offices shall be filled in the manner provided in the Bylaws of this Constitution.~~

ARTICLE IX **SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP**

The Congregation recognizes that it is part of a larger body of believers and desires to join with other congregations that are committed to a common confession and mission to support one another and to work together in carrying out commonly adopted objectives in pursuit of the Congregation’s Mission (Article II). In furtherance of this objective, the Congregation shall hold membership in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, provided said Synod abides by the confessional standard (Article III) and does not interfere with the rights and privileges of this Congregation. In all doctrinal and religious disputes, the Congregation shall be and shall remain the highest tribunal.

[Notes: The Constitution references the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and we thus propose explicitly referencing our synodical membership in the constitution. This is a common practice in the sample constitutions referenced during the review process and would likely be requested by

the district to approve any amendments. The proposed language refers to the “Purpose of the Synod” as articulated in Section 1.1.1 of the Bylaws of Synod. The proposed language also acknowledges that “the Synod is not an ecclesiastical government exercising legislative or coercive powers, and with respect to the individual congregation’s right of self-government it is but an advisory body[, and] . . . no resolution of the Synod imposing anything upon the individual congregation is of binding force if it is not in accordance with the Word of God or if it appears to be inexpedient as far as the condition of a congregation is concerned” as set forth in Article VII of the Constitution of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.]

ARTICLE ~~IX~~ X **PROPERTY**

A. Trustees

The Board of Servant Leaders shall appoint at least two Trustees, who qualify under Commonwealth of Virginia statutes, in whom title of all ~~church~~ property of the Congregation shall be vested.

B. Property Rights

~~If at any time a separation should take place because of doctrine, despite all to resolve the differences in peace and love, the property of the congregation and all benefits therewith connected shall remain with those, who, in the opinion of the Southeastern District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, continue to adhere in confession and practice to Article III of this Constitution.~~

1. The disposition of real property shall be determined by majority vote of the Voting Members voting.
2. The property and all rights therewith shall remain with the Congregation in the event the Congregation should decide to no longer be a member of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
3. In the event the ~~congregation~~ Congregation should totally disband, the property and all rights therewith shall revert to the Southeastern District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

[Note: Over the course of review, individuals had questioned under what circumstances this provision would apply. The proposed changes are intended to clarify when such provisions would apply. The removal of the previous section and the new sections are based on sample constitutions referenced during the review process and consistent with the article on Synodical Membership. For perspective, Article VII of the Constitution of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod states that “Membership of a congregation in the Synod gives the Synod no equity in the property of the congregation.”]

ARTICLE XI **BYLAWS**

The Congregation may adopt such Bylaws as may be required for the accomplishment of its purpose, but which do not conflict with this Constitution.

[Note: Bylaws are implicitly referenced throughout the Constitution. An explicit provision for Bylaws is more common in the sample constitutions referenced during the review process.]

ARTICLE XII **AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution may be changed or amended by two-thirds majority vote of the Voting Members voting in the manner prescribed in the Bylaws of this Constitution.

[Note: Typically, Constitutions provide for the method of their amendment, and is common in the sample constitutions referenced during the review process. We propose adding it here.

As a condition to retain membership in the Synod, the District will review any changes to the constitution and Bylaws. It is envisioned that all changes, including those presented to the district and any subsequent changes at the recommendation of district, would be agreed upon by the Congregation as an amendment, and thus the conditions of Synod Membership are not explicitly referenced here.]