



**Constitution & Bylaws
St. Paul Lutheran Church
Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin**

Adopted January 19, 2021

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PREAMBLE

We, a congregation of Lutherans of Sheboygan Falls, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin, sensitive to our spiritual needs and mindful of our Christian duties, should preach the Gospel to the whole world (Mark 16:16, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8). That Christ's mission for His church might be carried out according to His will, He has commanded that Christians unite in worship (Hebrews 10:24-25), administer the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion (Matthew 26:26-29, Matthew 28:19-20), practice fellowship with one another (Acts 2:42), witness to all people (Acts 1:8), help each other grow in the Word (Ephesians 4:11-14), serve the needs of all people in Christian love (Ephesians 4:7-16, Mark 10:42-44, John 13:35, Galatians 6:10), administer the Office of the Keys as His Church (John 20:21-23, Matthew 18:15-20), and finally maintain decency and order (I Corinthians 14:40) in the Church. To that end we adopt the following Constitution and Bylaws in Jesus' name under which all spiritual and material affairs of our congregation shall be governed.

ARTICLE I

Name of the Congregation

The name of this congregation shall be "St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, Inc."

ARTICLE II

Articles of Faith or Confession

We, the members of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, Inc, believe and confess that the Bible, i.e., the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the revealed Word of God, inspired by the Holy Ghost, and the only infallible authority, source, rule and guide in all matters of faith and practice. To this word we humbly submit ourselves in all things.

We also accept the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, viz.: the three Ecumenical Creeds – Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the same, the Smalcald Articles, Luther's Small and Large Catechisms, and the Formula of Concord as the true interpretation of the faith set forth in the Holy Scriptures.

ARTICLE III

Membership

Only those can be and remain members, hold office, or enjoy the rights and privileges of membership in this congregation, who:

- are baptized;
- declare their adherence to all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the only source, rule and guide in matters of faith and practice;
- are familiar at least with Luther's Small Catechism, and declared their acceptance thereof;
- abstain from manifest works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21) and lead Christian lives;
- do not despise preaching and the Word of God and His Sacraments;
- are not members of any lodge or anti-Christian society; and

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- subject themselves to all regulations adopted by the congregation, as long as these are not in conflict with God's Word, and who, whenever they have failed, submit in brotherly love and meekness to the correction to be applied according to the Scriptural rule in Matthew 18:15-19.

ARTICLE IV **Powers of the Congregation**

The congregation, through its voting membership, has the supreme power in the administration of all internal and external church and congregation affairs.

Any arrangement or regulation made by the Church Council may be brought to the Congregation meeting as the highest court for a final decision when the arrangement or regulation is beyond the clear authority of the Church Council.

But the Congregation shall have no authority to teach or tolerate anything which is in any degree at variance with the inspired Word of God or the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The right of electing and calling pastors, teachers and other officers shall ever be vested in the Congregation and shall never be delegated to an individual or to a minor body or circle within the congregation.

The pastoral office shall be conferred only upon pastors or candidates who profess and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in this constitution, who are qualified for the work of the ministry, and who have been endorsed by and are members of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

In the public service of this congregation purely Christian hymns, and in all ministerial acts purely Christian forms shall be used.

In the educational institutions none other than Christian books shall be introduced and used for instruction in Christian doctrine.

ARTICLE V **Suffrage**

All confirmed members at age eighteen (18) shall automatically become voting members of this congregation.

Both men and women may serve as officers and members of ministry teams and committees including the Church Council. However, women may not serve in positions that are directly involved in the specific functions of the pastoral office including preaching, administering of the Sacraments, and Pastoral discipline. Likewise they shall not serve as pastor, or as an Elder.

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ARTICLE VI

Meetings of the Congregation

Normally, the voting members of the congregation shall hold regular meetings in Spring (elections), June (budget) and other meetings as deemed necessary by the Church Council.

At least two (2) Sundays before any congregation meeting, notice of such meeting shall be made for the purpose of giving individual voting congregation members the opportunity to place an item on the agenda. At least one (1) Sunday before the congregation meeting, the agenda shall be published. At the time of the meeting, additional items may be placed on the agenda and discussed, but no vote shall be taken on those items until the next meeting of the congregation.

The Order of Business will follow Roberts Rules of Order: Newly Revised, in addition to an Opening Prayer, Comments and Concerns from voting members and a Closing Prayer.

However, any voting Congregation member may bring up an item for discussion or recommendation or state an opinion at any regular meeting without having any vote taken or deferred.

Fifteen or more members present at any meeting properly announced constitute a quorum.

In all matters not already decided by the Word of God, the majority rules.

Absentees accept the rule of the majority.

ARTICLE VII

Privileges and Responsibilities of Members

In Christian love, it is the privilege and responsibility of members of this congregation to:

- Grow in faith as they search the Scriptures at home and in congregational fellowship; (Psalm 119:1-14; 2 Timothy 3:14-17)
- Partake in the Lord's Supper frequently; (Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 11:23-25)
- Pray for and support the staff, lay leaders and ministry of the Church; (Eph. 6:18-19)
- Live a morally decent life before God and our fellow men, abstaining from open works of the flesh (Gal. 5:18-21), and so conduct themselves at all times in such a way as to bring honor and glory to God;
- Provide for the Christian training of their children by instruction at home and through the ministries of the church; (Deut. 6:4-9; Eph. 6:4)
- Contribute proportionately and generously of the financial blessings that God has entrusted to them for the support of the mission and ministry of the church at home and abroad; (2 Cor. 8:12; 9:6-8, 11-13)
- Seek to discover and use their God-given spiritual gifts so that they may participate in fulfilling the mission of the congregation: and (1 Cor. 12:1-11)
- Attend the Congregation meetings.

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ARTICLE VIII

Election of Officers and Church Council

The congregation shall elect its church officers and Church Council by ballot at its Spring meeting. Those elected will assume their positions on July 1 of that year.

Any candidate for an elective office must be a confirmed member and at least 21 years of age.

All officers shall serve the congregation according to instructions given in the Bylaws and in accord with special resolutions of the congregation.

The term of office for the President, Vice President, Head Elder and Council members-at-large shall be for two years.

Officers and members-at-large may serve consecutive terms without limit.

ARTICLE IX

Removal from Office

Any officer, pastor, or teacher of the congregation can, according to Christian form and order, be removed from office. Sufficient and urgent causes for removal are persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, or willful neglect of duty. Two-thirds vote of those present at the Congregation meeting is required for dismissal. In the case of a pastor or teacher the district president will be called upon for counsel.

ARTICLE X

Termination of Membership

Members who ask for their release shall be peaceably dismissed by the congregation. For those desiring a transfer, a letter of transfer to a sister congregation will be issued when needed. Transfer and released members relinquish all their rights in the congregation and its property.

ARTICLE XI

Excommunication and Removal

Members excommunicated according to Matthew 18:15-20, and such as by removal or otherwise sever their connection with the congregation, give up all their rights in the congregation and its property.

ARTICLE XII

Schism

If at any time a schism should occur in this congregation on account of doctrine or for any other cause, the property of this congregation and all of its benefits shall remain with those members who adhere to Articles II, III and IV of this Constitution.

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The revised constitution shall, as a condition of continued membership in good standing in 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.

ARTICLE XIII **Repeals and Amendments**

Proposals to amend or repeal constitution shall be offered in writing to the council and announced at two consecutive regular services preceding any action thereon in a Congregation meeting. Two-thirds of all the members present shall be necessary to pass the alteration or repeal.

The vote shall be by ballot.

ARTICLE XIV **Synod Membership**

This congregation shall be a member of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as long as the confessions and constitution of said Synod are in accord with the confession and constitution of this congregation as laid down in Article II.

This congregation shall, to the best of its ability, work with said Synod and assist it in effecting all sound measures intended for the building up of the Kingdom of God.

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ARTICLE I Membership

All members are expected to lead a Christian life as outlined in Article III and VII of the Constitution.

Admission into Membership

By Baptism: All who are baptized in the name of the Triune God, including children who have not yet confirmed their Baptismal vows, are included in the Body of Christ and are eligible for membership in this congregation as Baptized Members.

By Confirmation: Baptized Christians who have been instructed in the teachings of the Christian faith as set forth in Martin Luther's "Small Catechism" and who have completed all the requirements of the membership process, are eligible to become confirmed members by the rite of Confirmation. The Senior Pastor or a Pastor designated by the Church Council shall receive them into membership and shall report such action at a subsequent meeting of the Elders Ministry Team.

By Transfer: Persons coming with a letter of transfer from a congregation in church fellowship with The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, provided they conform to all of the requirements of membership of this congregation, shall be received into membership by the Senior Pastor or a Pastor designated by the Church Council. He shall report such action at a subsequent meeting of the Elders Ministry Team.

By Profession of Faith: Other persons requesting membership, provided they have met all of the requirements of membership of this congregation, shall be received into membership by the Senior Pastor or a Pastor designated by the Church Council. He shall report this action at a subsequent meeting of the Elders Ministry Team.

Termination of Membership

By Transfer: A member desiring to transfer to another congregation in fellowship with The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, may request such transfer from the Senior Pastor or a Pastor designated by the Church Council.

By Release of Membership: A release of membership shall be granted to members who request it.

By Joining other Churches: In cases where members join congregations outside of our fellowship but have not contacted the Pastor, they shall, upon the discovery and corroboration of this, be considered to have terminated their membership in this congregation and their name(s) shall be removed from the membership list.

By Self-Exclusion: Any member who deliberately absents him/herself from the congregation, rejects admonition and refuses to meet with the Pastor(s) or any appropriate team designated by the Pastor(s) to discuss such conduct has thereby excluded him/herself. Upon the recommendation of the Senior Pastor or a Pastor designated by the Church Council and

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approval by the Elder Ministry Team, such a person shall be removed from the membership roll by reason of self-exclusion.

By Excommunication: Confirmed members who conduct themselves in an unchristian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20. If they remain impenitent after admonition, the Pastor(s) shall recommend excommunication to the Elder Ministry Team. Each case shall be presented individually for decision and a unanimous vote shall be required for such action.

A person whose confirmed membership has been terminated for any reason has forfeited all rights as a member of the congregation, all claims upon the property of the congregation, or upon any part thereof, so long as he/she is not reinstated into membership.

Reinstatement into Membership

Self-exclusion or excommunication terminates membership. However, should a person so excluded, repent and desire to be received into the fellowship of the congregation again, he/she shall have their membership reinstated upon approval of the Senior Pastor, or a Pastor designated by the Church Council, and the approval of the Elder Ministry Team.

ARTICLE II **Pastoral Office**

Integrity

Upon being installed into office, each Pastor is obligated to:

- Uphold the teachings of the Word of God in its full truth and purity as contained in the canonical writings of the Old and New Testaments and professed in the Book of Concord of 1580.
- Live their life, by the grace of God, according to the pattern given in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
- Seek to equip the members of St. Paul for the work of ministry as outlined in Ephesians 4:11-16.

The Pastoral Office

The Pastoral Office is the authority conferred upon pastors by God through a divine call of a congregation to exercise the Public Office of the Ministry through preaching and teaching the Word and through the administration of the sacraments. The Pastoral Office is the primary office in the congregation from which all other offices of the congregation issue.

1. To qualify as a candidate for the office of Pastor a candidate must meet the qualifications established by The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.
2. The right of calling Pastors of the Congregation shall be vested in the congregation and shall never be delegated to the Church Council, an individual or to a minor body within the congregation.
3. In the event of a pastoral vacancy, the Head Elder shall appoint a Call Committee of at least 5 and no more than 9 members.

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4. Opportunity shall be provided for members of the congregation to submit names of candidates to the Call Committee.
5. The Call Committee shall prepare a list of candidates for the office of Pastor with the assistance of and recommendations from the District President.
6. After due consideration of all candidates, the Call Committee shall prepare its recommendation of one or more of the nominees to present for the congregation to consider at the congregation meeting.
7. The voting process shall be conducted by written ballot.

ARTICLE III **The Church Council**

Personnel:

The council shall consist of President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer, Head Elder, five members at large, the Church Administrator and the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor and Church Administrator shall not have voting privileges on the Church Council.

A two thirds majority of members present at any meeting constitute a quorum.

Powers:

The Congregation has empowered the Church Council to make day to day decisions, although the Congregation has ultimate authority of all internal and external church affairs through a Congregation Meeting. In the event of an emergency when a Congregation Meeting cannot be held due to unforeseen circumstances, the Church Council, with a majority vote, has the authority to move forward with a decision if it is in the best interest of the Congregation.

For all performances of the council, when faithfully done in fulfillment of its prescribed duties or congregation resolutions, the congregation is liable for all acts and performances of the council or individual members of the council. In relation to property or finances of the congregation undertaken without authority from the congregation, the council or individual shall be held liable to the congregation.

ARTICLE IV **St. Paul Lutheran Church Endowment Fund**

The Congregation shall have an Endowment Fund. It must maintain Bylaws. Any changes must be approved by the Congregation.

ARTICLE V **Elders**

Personnel

The Elders shall be a regular, standing ministry team of the congregation. The chairman shall be the Head Elder who is elected to the Church Council. The Head Elder, in consultation with the Senior Pastor, shall appoint the number of elders deemed necessary to fulfill their mission in any given year. Elders shall be appointed in one year terms, beginning July 1.

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ARTICLE VI

Amendments to the Bylaws

The Bylaws may be repealed or amended by a 2/3 majority vote of all the members present at a meeting of the congregation. Proposals to repeal or amend an article shall have been offered in writing to the Church Council and announced at the regular weekly services to the congregation preceding action thereon.

The revised bylaws shall, as a condition of continued membership in good standing in 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.