

Constitution of Grace Lutheran Church

Knoxville, TN

December 6, 2022

# THE CONSTITUTION OF GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

## Preamble

Whereas God Himself has promised to dwell in the midst of His people gathered together in His name (Matthew 18:20), of whom He demands in His Word that such a Christian congregation not only to conform to the Word in doctrine and practice (Psalm 119:105; Galatians 1:6-8; I Timothy 4:1-5), but also that all things be done decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:40), we, the members of Grace Lutheran Church set forth by this document the Constitution and Bylaws in accordance with which our congregation affairs, spiritual and material, shall be conducted.

## Article I – Name

The name of this congregation shall be: Grace Lutheran Church of Knox County, Tennessee.

## Article II – Purpose

The purpose of this congregation shall be:

- (a) To establish and maintain the office of the ministry in order to provide pastoral care for its members, to teach the Word of God and to administer the Sacraments;
- (b) To preserve purity of doctrine, to exercise Christian love and fellowship, to provide for the Christian education and training of the children and adults of the congregation, and to extend the Kingdom of God.

## Article III – Confessional Standard

This congregation accepts all the sixty-six canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as God's revealed, verbally inspired Word, and acknowledges all the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran church contained in the Book of Concord (1580), as the true and sound exhibition of the doctrines of the Bible. In accordance with these canonical and symbolical books, all doctrines of this congregation shall be taught and proved, and according to this norm of doctrine, all doctrinal controversies which may arise in this congregation shall be settled. These symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church are: The Three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles', the Nicene, the Athanasian); the Unaltered Augsburg Confession; the Apology of the same, the Smalcald Articles; Luther's Small and Large Catechisms; the Formula of Concord.

#### Article IV – Requirements for Membership

Any person shall be eligible to become and remain a member of the congregation who:

- (a) Is baptized;
- (b) Has declared his adherence to all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the only divine rule of faith and life, and;
- (c) While he may perhaps be deficient in the knowledge of all the Lutheran symbols, is familiar at least with Luther's Small Catechism and declares his acceptance thereof;
- (d) Faithfully attends divine services, and frequently partakes of the Lord's Supper when able to examine himself (Hebrews 10:25; John 8:47; I Corinthians 11:28, II Corinthians 13:5);
- (e) Does not live in manifest works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21);
- (f) Submits himself, for the sake of love and peace, to the regulations that have been or may yet be established by the congregation (Romans 12:10), provided they are not contrary to Word of God (Acts 5:29);
- (g) Submits himself to church discipline as outlined in the Word of God (Matthew 18:15-20);
- (h) Contributes, according to his ability, his time, talents, and monies toward the program of the congregation;
- (i) Is not a member of any organization the doctrine and/or practices of which are in conflict with the Word of God (II Corinthians 6:14-18).

#### Article V – Right of Suffrage

Such members of this congregation as have reached the age of eighteen years shall be eligible for membership in the Voters Assembly.

#### Article VI – Supreme Authority of the Congregation

The congregation, exercising its authority through the Voters Assembly, shall have the supreme authority in the external and internal administration and management of its ecclesiastical and congregational affairs. Whatever enactment may have been ordered or decided by individuals, boards, or committees within the congregation shall always be subject to revision and final decisions by the congregation. However, not even the congregation shall be empowered to enact or decide anything contrary to Word of God and the symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and any such enactment or decision shall be null and void.

#### Article VII – Officers

The corporate officers shall be a president, a vice president, a secretary, a treasurer, and a financial secretary.

### Article VIII – Pastors and Teachers

Only such pastors and parochial school teachers shall be called by this congregation as are in accord with the confessions standards of this congregation (Article III) and as have been prepared for their work and are qualified. The right of calling pastors and teachers shall ever be vested in the congregation and shall never be delegated to a smaller body or individual.

A pastor or teacher may be dismissed for any one of the following reasons:

- (a) Persistent adherence to false teaching;
- (b) An ungodly life;
- (c) Unfaithfulness in office;
- (d) Inability to perform the required duties.

### Article IX – Forfeiture of Rights

If a member of this congregation, after fruitless admonition in the various grades prescribed by the Word of God (Matthew 18:15-20), shall have been expelled from the congregation, such excommunicated person shall then have forfeited all rights of a member, and all claims upon the property of this congregation as long as he has not been restored to membership. The same shall apply to members who have refused to submit to church discipline or otherwise have severed their connections.

### Article X – Right to Hold Property in Case of Division

Should a separation take place in this congregation on account of doctrine – which God may graciously prevent – the property of the congregation and all the benefits therewith connected shall remain with those members who shall continue to adhere to Article III of this contribution.

### Article XI – Amendments

This Constitution may be amended in the following way:

- (a) Notice of a proposed amendment must be given by mail prior to a regular Voters Assembly, at which Assembly the proposed amendment shall be presented in writing;
- (b) It must be ratified in two subsequent regular Voters Assemblies by a two-thirds majority of those present.

### Article XII – Unalterable Articles

Articles III, IV, VI, VII, X, and XII of this Constitution shall be unalterable.