

Prince of Peace Lutheran (AFLC) Constitution and By-Laws

PREAMBLE

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
We, the members of the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (AFLC) of Beulah, North Dakota do solemnly adopt the following Constitution and By-Laws:

ARTICLE I Name of Congregation

The name of this congregation shall be Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (AFLC) of Beulah, Mercer County, State of North Dakota.

ARTICLE II Confession and Denominational Affiliation

1. This congregation believes and confesses that the Holy Scriptures, the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, are the Word of God, without error and infallible, revealed for the salvation of men. Therefore in union with Baptism and the Lord's Supper, this Word of God is the only source and rule of faith, doctrine, and life in the congregation.

2. This congregation accepts and adheres to the Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds, and in addition thereto, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism. All preaching and teaching in the congregation shall conform herewith.

3. The public worship of this congregation, as well as the ministerial acts performed, shall be conducted in conformity with the Ministerial Acts book and rituals recommended by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations when the same have been endorsed by this congregation.

4. This congregation affiliates with the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, endorses its Fundamental Principles and Rules for Work, and supports its benevolences, that is, missions at home and abroad, Christian education and charities.

5. *This congregation accepts and adheres to the Biblical principles set forth in our statement of core beliefs.*

ARTICLE III Membership and Voting

1. Members of this congregation shall be those who have been legally received into the congregation and whose membership have not later been withdrawn or transferred, or who have not been expelled.

2. All children become members of this congregation by the act of baptism or confirmation.

3. Adults who are to be received into the congregation must:

a. Be baptized with Christian Baptism;

b. Be confirmed or have a knowledge of Christian doctrine equivalent to that required for confirmation;

c. By confession and life show that they seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness;

d. Subscribe to this Constitution and partake according to their spiritual gifts and abilities in the work and expenses of the congregation.

4. Admission may be granted forthwith when an applicant presents a letter of transfer duly issued from some other Lutheran congregation.

5. All active members who are of legal age 18 years and not under church censure have the right to vote.

ARTICLE IV Meetings of the Congregation

1. The power and authority of this congregation are exercised at the congregational meetings which shall consist of voting members, whose decisions shall be valid when the meeting has been called in a legal manner.
2. The duties of the voting members at congregational meetings are:
 - a. To elect all officers of the congregation.
 - b. To adopt such rules and make such decisions which are considered to be of benefit and edification, and which do not conflict with this Constitution.
 - c. To decide regarding hymn books and books of instruction.
 - d. To determine the budget of the congregation and decide how it shall be raised.
3. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held some time in the month of November at a date to be chosen each year by the Pastor and the Church Council.
4. The President of the congregation shall preside at the meetings and will be elected each year at the annual meeting.
5. Special meetings may be called by the President of the congregation, or pastor. Special meetings may likewise be called when five voting members request the same in writing.
6. All congregational meetings are legally called when they have been announced at the public services of the congregation on two consecutive Sundays previously.
7. Ten voting members or 25% of the voting membership, whichever is greater, shall constitute a quorum.
8. If anyone feels that the discussion at a meeting is contentious or in need of spiritual guidance, they may call for a period of prayer before continuing.

ARTICLE V Congregation Officers and Committees

1. The terms of elected officers shall coincide with the Prince of Peace fiscal year, beginning January 1. The following positions must be filled by members of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. The officers and standing committees of this congregation are:
 - a. Pastor;
 - b. President of the congregation;
 - c. Secretary;
 - d. A Board of Deacons consisting of 3 (or more) male members;
 - e. A Board of Trustees consisting of 3 (or more) members;
 - f. Financial Secretary (optional);
 - g. Treasurer;
 - h. Board of Christian Education consisting of 3 (or more) members;
 - i. A Nominating Committee consisting of 3 members;
 - J. An auditing Committee consisting of 2 members;
 - k. *A Personnel Committee consisting of 5 members.*
 - l. Congregational Reporter(s) to the AFLC Annual Conference
2.
 - a. The Pastor is the spiritual leader of the congregation, President of the Board of Deacons, and advisor to all other boards, committees, and officers of the congregation as well as of all subsidiary societies in the congregation. He shall faithfully keep all the ministerial records of the congregation and function as co-archivist.
 - b. The election or discharge of a Pastor must take place at a legally called meeting of the congregation and requires a two-thirds majority of voting members voting.
 - c. If the Pastor wishes to resign, or in the event of his discharge, said resignation or discharge shall not be effective until three months shall have elapsed, or otherwise by mutual agreement by Pastor and congregation.

d. The Pastor shall be duly trained, examined and ordained for the ministry of the Word of God in Lutheran congregations and so long as he is the Pastor of this congregation he is required to encourage and work for the support of the institutions of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations.

3. The President of the congregation shall preside at all the meetings, and will be elected each year at the annual meeting for a term of one year.

4. The Secretary shall carefully record the minutes of all the meetings of the congregation, and being a co-archivist, preserve the records, and perform all other duties usually incumbent upon his/her office. He/she shall be elected by the annual meeting for a term of one year.

5. The Treasurer shall keep all financial accounts of the congregation, receive all contributions for current expenses or benevolences and disburse the same according to the decision of the congregation or the Board of Trustees. He/she shall be elected at the annual meeting (or by the Board of Trustees from their own number) for a term of one year. All financial accounts shall be audited by the Auditing Committee, which shall report to the congregation at each annual meeting.

6. The Board of Christian Education shall supervise the education work in the congregation, including the Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Weekday and/or Saturday School. They shall also be responsible to select a chairman and secure teachers for the Sunday School. One (or more) shall be elected each year at the annual meeting for a term of three years.

7. The Deacons shall be men known for their Christian life and character, being patterns of the flock and setting a good example in their manner of life (1 Timothy 3:8-13). They shall assist the Pastor in the spiritual care of the congregation. One (or more) Deacon(s) shall be elected each year at the annual meeting for a term of three years.

8. The Board of Trustees shall have charge of the financial and material affairs of the congregation. One (or more) shall be elected each year at the annual meeting for a term of three years.

9. The Board of Deacons and Trustees, President of the congregation, Pastor, Secretary, Treasurer, and chairman of Christian Education shall constitute the Church Council.

10. All the officers of the congregation are accountable to the congregation for their official acts.

11. *The Personnel Committee shall consist of 5 members being represented by 1) the President of the congregation, 2) one member of the Board of Deacons (the pastor shall not be considered for this task), 3) one member of the Board of Trustees, 4) one member of the Board of Christian Education, and 5) one member of the congregation who is not serving in the capacity of any congregational office and is to be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year.*

12. The Counting Committee is appointed by and under the supervision of the Board of Trustees with a minimum of 3 members present at each counting.

ARTICLE VI

Assets and Property of the Congregation

1. Division of the Congregation. The property of the congregation cannot be acquired, disposed of or encumbered, except by decision made by a two-thirds majority of the voting members voting at a legal meeting of the congregation. In case of a division of the congregation, the property shall remain the possession of that part of the congregation which remains faithful to the Constitution, specifically sections 1 and 2 of Article II

2. Dissolution of the Congregation. The distribution of the assets of the congregation upon its dissolution will be given to and distributed evenly among the corporations of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, unless the votes cast by those in attendance at a legally called congregational meeting at which a quorum of eligible voting members shall be present and shall be passed by two-thirds majority of the votes cast by eligible voting members to go elsewhere.

ARTICLE VII

Change of Constitution and Amendments

1. Sections 1 and 2 of Article II shall not be changed.

2. This Constitution, except Sections 1 and 2 of Article II, which cannot be changed, may be amended through the following procedure: A resolution to amend this Constitution must be made in writing at an annual meeting of the congregation. If the resolution is passed, it will not be enacted until said amendment has been considered again at the next annual meeting, at which a quorum of eligible voting members shall be present and shall be passed by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast by eligible voting members.

BY-LAWS

SECTION I Duties of Members

- 1.** It is the duty of every member of voting age to attend all legally called meetings of the congregation, unless good and valid reasons should hinder.
- 2.** The congregation desires that all members should faithfully attend the worship services of the church. That everyone should work according to his/her measure of God given faith and grace for the edification of the brethren. All should support the congregation in its struggle against the world and the devil, as well as in its efforts to spread and establish the Kingdom of God among all men on earth.
- 3.** As a free and living congregation Prince of Peace desires that each member should recognize and employ their spiritual gift(s).
- 4.** Recognizing that all good gifts come from above, all members shall, according as God has prospered them, contribute toward the current expenses of the congregation, as well as to the Christian's schools, missions and charitable institutions of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations.
- 5.** All members, and especially parents, should exercise due concern for the instruction of the young in the Christian faith in the Sunday School, Vacation Bible School and the Confirmation Class.

SECTION II Procedure at Congregational Meetings

- 1.** All meetings of the congregation shall open with Scripture reading and prayer, and shall close with prayer.
- 2.** The order of business for the annual meeting is:
 - a.** The reading of the minutes of the previous meeting of the congregation.
 - b.** The report of the Pastor concerning the spiritual conditions of the congregation, ministerial acts performed, and recommendations by the Board of Deacons.
 - c.** The report of the Board of Trustees concerning the business affairs of the congregation by the chairman of the Board and Treasurer.
 - d.** The report of the Board of Christian Education.
 - e.** Report from Church Organizations.
 - f.** Old business.
 - g.** Acceptance of new members into the congregation.
 - h.** New business, to include adoption of the budget and the election of new officers.

3. The officers of the congregation to be elected at the annual meeting (terms effective January 1, the next year) are:
- a. President of the congregation for one year;
 - b. One Deacon (or more);
 - c. One Trustee (or more);
 - d. One member of the Board of Christian Education (or more);
 - e. A Secretary;
 - f. A Treasurer;
 - g. Sunday School Superintendent for one year (if necessary);
 - h. An Auditing Committee for one year;
 - i. A Nominating Committee for one year (optional);
 - j. *One member of the Personnel Committee (non-congregational office position).*

SECTION III Method of Electing Officers

1. When calling a Pastor, the congregation shall proceed as follows:
- a. At a legally called meeting a nominating committee of three members shall be elected by ballot to select candidates and report at the next meeting of the congregation. For this purpose it is desirable that the President of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations be consulted.
 - b. The Nominating Committee shall recommend only one candidate to the congregation for consideration at a time.
 - c. Election of a pastor shall be by ballot at a legally called meeting, and a two-third majority of all voting members voting.
 - d. A letter of call shall be executed by the Board of Deacons and the Secretary of the congregation according to the form appended to these By-Laws, signed as indicated, and sent to the candidate, together with a copy of this Constitution and By-Laws.
 - e. if the call is accepted, the pastor shall be duly installed by a church official of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations who shall have been agreed upon by the pastor and the Board of Deacons.
2. Deacons and Trustees of the congregation shall be elected by ballots. All other elections take place by acclamation, unless otherwise decided.
3. Nominations for all offices to be filled at the annual meeting shall be submitted by the nominating committee. A list of candidates for each office to be filled by election shall be submitted, but nominations shall not be closed for any office except by decision of the congregation at the meeting.
4. No person shall serve for more than two consecutive terms as Trustee.
5. The same person shall not hold office both as Deacon and Trustee in the congregation at the same time.
6. No person shall be elected to the congregational council who has not been a member of the congregation for at least one year.
7. Vacancies shall be filled by elections at congregational meetings, those so elected holding office for the remainder of the unexpired term.
8. The election of *congregational reporter(s)* to the Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations shall also take place at the annual meeting of the congregation. The congregation shall have the option of deferring this task to the congregational council.

SECTION IV Duties of the Deacons

1. The Board of Deacons shall elect from its midst a secretary who shall carefully record all decisions.
2. They shall, during the absence of the Pastor, or during a vacancy, either personally or through some other qualified person, lead the congregation in divine worship.
3. They shall be mindful of the spiritual condition of the congregation, of the attendance at services, of the sick and needy, and shall consider plans which will further the spiritual growth of the congregation.
4. The Board of Deacons shall also function as a "Board of Stewardship" to disseminate information about the principles, practices and blessings of Christian stewardship; promote interest in the cause of our common endeavors of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations; supervise the regular and systematic in-gathering of offerings for the same and provide for the regular and prompt payment of such funds to the Church Treasurer, and through him to the proper treasurers for our common endeavors, such as World Missions, Home Missions, Seminary, Bible School, etc.
5. The Board of Deacons shall be responsible to review and act upon the applications for membership (in accordance to the guidelines in Section IX of the By-Laws - Admission of New Members).
6. The Board of Deacons shall be responsible to review and act upon request(s) for the use of church facilities to insure that the group(s) using them are in accordance with this Constitution and its core beliefs.

SECTION V

Duties of the Trustees

1. The Trustees shall hold the property of the congregation in trust for the use and benefit of the congregation and shall preserve the deeds and other valuable papers and documents.
2. The Trustees shall not buy, sell, rent, or mortgage the property of the congregation without the consent of the congregation. (See Article VI of Constitution.)
3. The Trustees have under no circumstances the right to hinder the Pastor or the congregation from using the church as directed by the congregation.
4. The Trustees shall maintain the church and property in good and proper condition for the use of the congregation and furnish heat and light for the church as needed.
5. The Trustees may expend *up to 0.25% of the approved current annual budget* in one year for non-budgeted upkeep, improvements, or alterations without decision by the Congregation Council. Expenses greater than 1% of the previous conditions need Congregational approval.
6. The Board of Trustees together with the Treasurer shall be individually and collectively responsible for the funds of the church. The board may require a report or personal meeting of the Treasurer at any time.
7. The congregation may elect separate treasurers for special collections of funds, but their accounts, when finished, shall be turned over to the Board of Trustees which reports concerning the same to the annual meeting.
8. The Board of Trustees shall elect from its midst a chairman, and a secretary who shall carefully record all the proceedings of the Board, and be responsible for all records of said Board.
9. The chairman of the Board of Trustees shall report to the annual meeting concerning the business affairs of the congregation.
10.
 - a. The Board of Trustees shall supervise the collection of funds for the expenses of the congregation. It shall also submit to the annual meeting a budget for current and other necessary expenses for the ensuing year.
 - b. A Financial Secretary may be elected by the Board of Trustees to assist the Board in keeping a record of all moneys received for current expenses or benevolence, or for other purposes. His/her term shall be for one year. He/she may or may not be a member of the Board of Trustees (optional).

c. All checks need to have two approved signatures as determined by the Congregational Council.

11. The janitor, organist and choir director shall be hired by the Board of Trustees annually, the Congregational Council concurring.

SECTION VI

Duties of the Board of Christian Education

1. The Board of Christian Education shall supervise the educational work in the Congregation, including the Sunday School, the Vacation Bible School, Weekday and/or Saturday School, and remind parents and children of their duties in respect to religious instruction where neglect occurs.

2. The Board of Christian Education shall elect from its midst a chairman. This board is responsible for selecting or nominating a Sunday School Superintendent. They may select someone from within their midst. If they select from outside the Board of Christian Education, they must nominate someone to be elected at the Annual Meeting for a term of one year.

3. Appoint Assistant Superintendent and teachers for Sunday School as necessary.

4. Act in an advisory capacity to the youth organization of the congregations.

5. Report to the Annual Meeting of the congregation.

SECTION VII

Duties of the Personnel Committee

1. *Submit to the Congregation via the Congregational Council all financial recommendations of staff salaries and benefits for budget preparations.*

2. *Assist in recommending and defining the Ministry Focus of each staff member.*

3. *Act as the mediator between the staff and the Congregational Council.*

4. *Review and recommend staff requirements as needed to the Congregation via the Congregational Council.*

SECTION VIII

Duties of the Congregational Council

1. The President of the Congregation shall be Chairman of the council, and a vice-chairman shall be chairman of the Board of Trustees. The Secretary of the Congregation shall serve as such also for the Council and shall give a report in summary of its activities to the Annual Meeting.

2. The Council shall meet monthly. Special meetings may be held upon the call of the Pastor, or upon the written request of five members.

3. The Council shall seek to co-ordinate the policies of the Boards of Deacons and Trustees, as well as the activities of the congregations between its annual meetings.

4. The Council may fill all vacancies in the congregation, except that of Pastor, until the next annual meeting.

5. The Council shall perform such other duties, duly authorized by the congregation, as do not specifically belong to the Board of Deacons or Trustees.

6. The Council shall have the authority to require reports of any officer or board of the congregation.

SECTION IX Membership

1. When anyone who is eligible desires to become a member of the congregation, he/she shall apply to the Pastor who shall, partly by conversation and partly by conferring with the Board of Deacons, make himself/herself acquainted with the faith and life of the person in question. If the Pastor and the Board of Deacons approve of his/her admission, his/her application for membership shall be accepted.
2. When non-Lutheran persons desire to become members of this congregation, aside from being able to satisfy the requirements for membership mentioned in Article III of this Constitution, they should be willing to receive instruction in Luther's Small Catechism, with special attention to the "Articles of the Creed" and the Lutheran interpretation of the two Holy Sacraments. Christian truth as set forth in the Catechism must be accepted unreserved by such applicants, either by the rite of confirmation or in some other manner satisfactory to the Board of Deacons, prior to their acceptance into membership.
3. When new members have been approved for membership, they shall be formally received and welcomed at a public service. The Pastor shall ask the adult candidates: (i) if they will abide by the constitution and bylaws of the church; (ii) live a life becoming to a Christian and to be faithful in attendance at divine worship; (iii) employ spiritual gifts for the edification of the church; and (iv) contribute according to ability to the expenses of the congregation. To these questions each one shall audibly answer "Yes." Thereupon he shall declare them members of the congregation and shall emphasize the meaning of this relationship in a short talk or intercessory prayer in a manner that will be to the edification of both the congregation and those admitted into it.
4. The Pastor and his family shall automatically become members of this congregation by his acceptance of the letter of call.

SECTION X The Exercise of the Right to Vote

1. A list of the active voting members of the congregation shall always be available for the President at every meeting of the congregation and shall be read upon demand by the congregation.
2. Members who are under church discipline cannot exercise their right to vote from the time their case is laid before the congregation by the Board of Deacons until they are again received into full fellowship by the congregation.
3. Status of an active voting member is established by voluntarily filling out the active membership form annually.

SECTION XI Conflict Resolution and Church Discipline

The congregation zealously watches over the purity of doctrine and life of its members, and when anyone is overtaken in any trespass it strives in the spirit of meekness and love to restore such a one in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17. As members of this congregation, instead of legal action, we subscribe to the course laid out below.

1. With this purpose in mind, it is forbidden anyone to accuse a brother before the congregation without first having sought privately to admonish him in love.
2. If such admonition fails, the case may be brought before the Board of Deacons which thereupon, after careful consideration, shall seek through admonition and conviction by the Word of God to bring the erring to confession and repentance.
3. If these methods fail, the Board of Deacons shall submit the matter to the congregation together with its recommendation as to the proper course to be pursued. The means [of censure] the congregation may employ are:

- a. Admonition and intercessory prayer in the assembly of the congregation.
 - b. Exclusion from participating in the Lord's Supper.
 - c. Exclusion from voting in all matters.
 - d. Expulsion from the congregation.
6. Manifest Indifference to the Word of God and persistent non-attendance at divine worship shall be investigated by the Board of Deacons, which shall be by loving admonition and prayer in their behalf, seek to bring the negligent members of the congregation back to the assembly of the church.

SECTION XII **Change of By-Laws**

A motion for amendment of these By-laws must be made in writing at any meeting of the congregation and cannot be enacted until the said amendment has been considered again at the next annual meeting, at which time a two-thirds majority vote of those present shall be required.

LETTER OF CALL

Date: _____

To: _____

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

Pursuant to a resolution passed at a legally called meeting held by the congregation of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (AFLC), Beulah, North Dakota on the _____ day of _____ 20____, we hereby call you to become Pastor of said church.

As Pastor we require of you:

1. That in public and in private you preach the Word of God in its purity as given in the Holy Scriptures and in conformity with the articles of faith accepted by our Lutheran Church.
2. That publicly and privately you lead a life in keeping with the sacred ministry of the Gospel.
3. That you diligently visit those in the congregation who are in physical or spiritual distress, or who for other reasons are in need of the ministry of Christian love.
4. That you take pains to promote the instruction of the young in the Christian religion.
5. That you observe the Constitution and By-Laws of this Congregation, a copy of which is included herewith.

On behalf of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church we hereby covenant and promise:

1. That as a Christian congregation we will respect you as our Pastor and teacher in accordance with the Word of God and the Constitution and By-Laws of the Church.
2. That we, the Board of Deacons and the Board of Trustees, as well as other members of this Church, will, as God gives us grace and to the best of our ability, assist you in performing the duties of your ministry and in maintaining Christian order and discipline within the congregation.
3. That we in true Christian Fellowship will share with you our temporal as well as our spiritual blessings. Therefore we promise to pay you a stated salary of \$ _____ per annum, to be payable bimonthly, unless otherwise arranged by mutual agreement.
4. You will be given ___ weeks' vacation with pay each year.
5. You will be encouraged to share you God given abilities through evangelism as the Lord leads with a maximum of two weeks per year away from our Congregation in the service of other AFLC Congregations.
6. You will be encouraged to attend the Pastors' Conference and the annual conference of our AFLC; such meetings will not be counted as vacation time.
7. Your entire moving expense will be cared for by the congregation.

This letter of call is hereby committed to the Lord of the Church for His direction as you give it prayerful consideration. We request that you acknowledge receipt of this letter within ten days and respond to the call within thirty days.

Signed _____
Secretary of Congregation

Deacons:

Trustees:

