

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Faith Lutheran Church
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
935 South Crystal Glen Drive
Lecanto, Florida 34461

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

935 S. Crystal Glen Drive
Lecanto, FL 34461

VISION

Build Faith Lutheran Church into a more vibrant, diverse, caring Christian body which serves the spiritual and physical needs of its members and the Kingdom of our Lord.

MISSION

Demonstrate our Christian love to every member of the congregation by ensuring that both their spiritual and physical needs are cared for through our ministry to each other.

Reach out to the local community by means of:

1. An active outreach program
2. Offering Christian education opportunities for all age groups.
3. Offering diverse Christian fellowship opportunities.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 1- Name

The name of this congregation shall be **FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH - LCMS**.

ARTICLE 2- Mission

The purpose of this congregation shall be to give honor and glory to God, to carry out His will, to assist in preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world, to manifest the unity of our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior, to foster Christian fellowship and love, to extend a helping hand in human need, and to achieve our objectives by the preaching of the Word of God, by the administration of the sacraments, and by the religious instruction of all its members according to the confessional standard of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod.

ARTICLE 3- Confessional Standard

This congregation accepts without reservation:

3.1 The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice.

3.2 All the Symbolic Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, to wit: the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord 1580.

Article 4- Membership

4.1 Membership

The membership of this congregation includes the following:

4.1.1 Baptized members are all who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and who are under the spiritual care of the pastor of this congregation, including the children who have not yet been confirmed.

4.1.2 Communicant members are those baptized members who have been confirmed in the Lutheran faith, accept the confessional standard of Section 3 of this constitution, are familiar at least with the contents of Luther's Small Catechism, and are not members of organizations whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God.

4.1.3 Voting members are communicant members who have reached the age of 18 years and have been received by the Voters Assembly.

4.2 Reception

Baptized and communicant members are received through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, through the consent of one or both parents in the case of children who have been baptized in another Christian congregation, through the rite of confirmation, through transfer from a sister congregation, through profession of faith or reaffirmation of faith. The reception shall be approved by the voters assembly, or upon recommendation of Pastor and the board of Elders at a Council meeting.

4.3 Duties

Members of the congregation shall conform their lives to the rule of God's Word, and to that end make a diligent use of the means of grace, exercise faithful stewardship of God's many gifts and talents, impart and accept fraternal admonition as the need of such admonition becomes apparent, and be readily available for service in the kingdom of Christ.

4.4 Termination

4.4.1 Membership shall be terminated by transfer to a sister congregation, by death, by joining a congregation outside the fellowship of this congregation, by self-exclusion or by excommunication.

4.4.2 Communicant members who conduct themselves in an unchristian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20; if they remain impenitent after proper admonition, they shall be excommunicated. Each case shall be presented individually to the voters assembly for a decision. If such members deliberately absent themselves from the meeting(s) at which their case is to be discussed, they shall be regarded as having excluded themselves from the membership of the congregation.

ARTICLE 5- Pastors, Teachers and Assistants

5.1 This congregation shall establish the pastoral office, which shall be conferred only on such a pastor or candidate who professes and adheres to the confessional standard set forth in Article 3 of this constitution, who is qualified for his work.

5.2 Any pastor, assistant minister, called teacher or officer may be removed from office by the voters assembly by a two-thirds majority ballot vote, in Christian and lawful order, for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect or inability to perform the duties of the office.

5.3 The congregation may request the resignation of any pastor, assistant minister, called teacher or officer from their position in the congregation in the case of prolonged incapacity or general incompetence.

ARTICLE 6- Authority of the Congregation

6.1 The Voters Assembly shall be the governing body of this congregation and shall be empowered to administer and manage all its affairs. The establishment and conduct of all Officers, Organizations and Societies within the congregation or related directly to it shall be subject to the approval and supervision of the Voters Assembly.

6.2 All matters shall be decided by a majority vote of the Voters Assembly unless otherwise specified by this constitution or bylaws, including matters of doctrine and conscience, which shall be decided only on the basis of the Word of God.

6.3 The right of calling pastors or teachers shall be vested in the Voters Assembly and shall not be delegated otherwise.

ARTICLE 7- Officers and Boards

This congregation shall have the following officers and boards in addition to any which the congregation shall authorize from time to time.

7.1 Officers

7.1.1 President

The president shall be a male of at least 21 years of age. He shall serve a term of two (2) years and serve for not more than two (2) consecutive terms. The president is primarily responsible for the administrative affairs of the congregation. He shall work directly with the Pastor on both the spiritual and administrative needs of the congregation. He shall maintain contact with the pastor through timely conferences. He shall prepare the agenda for all meetings at which he presides. He shall preside at all Voters Assembly and Church Council meetings, if feasible. He will be governed in his decisions by parliamentary procedure as outlined in "Robert's Rules of Order". He shall see that all boards and committees are functioning and carrying out their assignments. He shall

make interim appointments when a vacancy occurs on any board or office. He shall appoint special committees as required, except those expressly elected by the Voters Assembly, and fill appointed positions. These appointments are subject to review by the Church Council. The president shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees of the congregation. He shall see that all boards and committees approved by the Voters Assembly or appointed by the president are properly established and a chairman be duly elected.

7.1.2 Vice-President

The vice-president shall serve a term of two (2) years and serve for not more than two (2) consecutive terms. The vice-president shall assist the president and shall preside in his absence or upon his request.

He shall make no permanent appointments.

He shall attend all meetings.

He shall be chairman of the Constitution and By-law committee.

He shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him by the Church Council.

In the absence of the president, he shall provide a report of such activities and actions taken at each of the proceedings to the president.

7.1.3 Recording Secretary

The recording secretary shall keep full and accurate minutes of all meetings and transactions of the congregation, and shall perform all such duties as generally pertain to his/her office. The secretary shall keep a record of attendance of all active voting members at all meetings and special voters assembly meetings. The secretary shall be responsible for all general correspondence. The secretary shall, at the end of his/her term, surrender all records to his/her successor.

7.1.4 Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be a voting member of the congregation.

He/she shall be responsible for the following:

1. Disbursing funds of the congregation in accordance with its resolutions, approved budgets, and as directed by the church council.
2. Filing of all tax forms by the appropriate date.
3. Investing all funds as directed by the congregation or church council.
4. Monitoring the cash flow of the operational budget and make prudent decisions in disbursing funds in periods of low receipts.
5. Maintaining cash journals, general ledger, and all subsidiary ledgers.
6. Giving complete financial reports at each church council or voters assembly.
7. Providing other financial information as requested by the church body.
8. Keeping informed as changes occur in requirements for reporting of tax and financial information.
9. Maintaining all records for the various designated funds and trusts and administering such monies as set forth by the church council, voters assembly and the desires of the donors.
10. The president, treasurer, assistant treasurer or financial secretary is authorized to sign checks.
11. The Treasurer shall, at the end of his/her term, surrender all records to his/her successor.

7.1.4.1 Assistant Treasurer

The Assistant Treasurer shall be a voting member of the congregation.

The Assistant Treasurer will be an elected officer of the congregation but not a member of the church council

He/she shall be responsible for the following:

1. Learning the job of the Treasurer, so that in the event the Treasurer is unable to perform his/her duties the Assistant Treasurer will assume the responsibilities of the Treasurer.
2. Learning the computer program used by the Treasurer.
3. Keeping updated copies of the checkbook register and other reports generated by the Treasurer. Also keeping monthly backup discs provided by the Treasurer.
4. Assist the Treasurer when needed.

7.1.5. Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall be a voting member of the congregation.

He/she shall be responsible for the following:

1. Oversee the counting of all service offerings and deposits to the bank account.
2. Organize volunteers to count and deposit all monies.
3. Assign envelopes at the end of the year and maintain a current list of numbers.
4. Provide the Treasurer with a weekly offering report showing the total breakdown of contributions for the week.

5. Oversee the posting of all contributions to individual member's contribution records and to resolve disputes in posting errors.
6. Report to the church council monthly.
7. Report to the voters assembly twice yearly.
8. Make sure donors receive proper substantiation for all gifts.
9. He/she shall at the end of his/her term surrender all records to his/her successor.

7.1.5.1 Assistant Financial Secretary

The Assistant Financial Secretary shall be a voting member of the congregation.

The Assistant Financial Secretary will be an elected officer of the congregation but not a member of the church council.

He/she shall be responsible for the following:

1. Learning the job of the Financial Secretary, so that in the event Financial Secretary is unable to perform his/her duties the Assistant Financial Secretary will assume the responsibilities of the Financial Secretary.
2. Assist the Financial Secretary as needed.

7.1.6 Public Relations Committee

The Public Relations Chairman shall be responsible for all published advertising as well as newspaper articles and announcements, and for preparation and distribution of periodic (monthly or bi-monthly) newsletter.

The Chairman shall, at the end of his/her term surrender all records to his/her successor.

The Public Relations Chairman shall be responsible for creating and/or maintaining a church website.

7.2 Boards

7.2.1 A Board of Elders

The nature of the duties of this board requires that only men noted for their Christian knowledge, zeal and experience in the spiritual work of the Kingdom of Christ shall be elected to membership. The elective term of office shall be three (3) years and no elder shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. Because of the very nature of their work, the elders shall be particularly careful to set the example of a devout Christian life. The board shall consist of at least three (3) members including the Chairman of the board. The chairman shall be elected to said office by the board and shall represent the elders on the Church Council. In the event of his absence another elder may take his place.

The elders shall provide counsel and assistance to the Pastor in the spiritual care of the congregation. They shall correct the erring and admonish the careless and indifferent and those lax in church and communion attendance. They shall offer assistance to and comfort those in distress and be particularly concerned about the poor and needy of the congregation. In case of contention and strife within the congregation, they shall endeavor to reconcile the disagreeing parties.

They shall be in charge of all public services, maintain good order, and render such assistance as may be necessary for various official acts. They shall provide for substitute preachers or reading services whenever the pulpit of the congregation cannot be filled by the pastor. They shall have overall responsibility for the music furnished at any public service.

The board of elders shall work in concert with the Board of Outreach whose special concern shall be to gain souls for Christ and His Church. Toward this objective, they shall help in the visitation of prospective members. They shall greet and welcome visitors. In general, they are to encourage greater participation in church activities on the part of all members and to stimulate increased giving for church purposes. They shall supervise the staff of ushers, who in addition to other duties shall receive the plate offerings and deposit them with the appointed representative of the Treasurer and/or Financial Secretary.

The Elders shall oversee:

1. The keeping of attendance records at all Divine Services, Bible Study and Sunday School Classes.
2. The keeping of a record of all communicants at all Communion services.
3. The keeping of an up-to-date record of the names and address of all members of the congregation.
4. The sending of letter for absenteeism, birthday, anniversaries and get-well-cards.
5. The making, maintenance and giving out of name tags.

7.2.2 Board of Trustees

1. The Board of Trustees will hold and administer all property, real and personal, belonging to the congregation.
2. The Board shall represent the congregation in all legal matters and retain all legal documents and insurance policies.
3. The Board shall ensure all legal documents are kept in a safe place.
4. The Board shall be responsible for an annual inspection of all properties in which the congregation has liability, and also assure that the insurance is adequate and financial obligations are being fulfilled.
5. The Board shall maintain all buildings and property so long as the expenses fall within the amount stipulated by the full Council.
6. Any maintenance expenses that would exceed the budgeted amount must have Council approval.
7. The Board shall have the authority to hire competent repairmen.
8. The Board shall proceed immediately with the repair to protect the church properties against unsafe conditions or the possibility of serious injury to people or damage to property. These expenditures are authorized only in the amount needed to prevent further damage, deterioration or danger.
9. The Board shall undertake scheduled maintenance and routine repairs as required. The Board is also authorized to proceed with routine repairs provided the cost of each is less than \$500.00 and that the board's budget for such purposes has not been exceeded.
10. The Board is also authorized to proceed with repairs of any kind covered by insurance.
11. The Board shall supervise the janitorial work and supplies used.
12. The Board shall annually review all insurance coverages and recommend necessary changes and up-dates to the council.
13. The Board shall recommend procedures for the disposing of obsolete property.
14. The Board shall issue keys and provide for the physical security of the church building and keep a list of persons to whom the keys have been issued. Maintain a current list of codes and names and send to Alarm Company with updates.
15. The Trustees will obtain bids on any project for major repairs that have been sponsored and approved by the Church Council.
16. In addition to the aforementioned duties, the Chairman of the Board will submit annually a budget for the upcoming year for the approval by the Council.
17. The elected term of office for Board members shall be three (3) years. The Board shall comprise at least five (5) members.
18. The Board shall open and maintain accounts at all necessary purchase/supply houses.

19. The Board shall select a chairman by vote from among their members each year following elections at the December Congregational meeting. The Board's organizational meeting shall occur prior to the January Council meeting. No Board chairman shall serve more than three successive one-year terms.

7.2.3 A Board of Education

The board of education shall be responsible for the nurture and growth of the members of the congregation.

Members of the board shall include, but not be limited to, the Pastor, Education/Sunday School Superintendent, Sunday School Teachers and Adult Bible Education Instructors.

7.2.3.1 An Education/Sunday School Superintendent

The duties shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Endeavor to foster the concept of Christian Education as a total Congregational effort.
2. Ensure that Educational Doctrines being taught are consistent with the Mission and Confessional standards of this Constitution.
3. Plan programs to assist Sunday School Teachers and Bible Instructors in teaching skills, and improvement in Biblical and Doctrinal knowledge.
4. Encourage Youth in Christian Service and provide opportunities to strengthen them in Christian growth.
5. Supervise the Administration and Budget of the Sunday School and Christian Education programs, under the guidance of the Board of Christian Education.

7.2.4 A Board of Outreach

A Board of Outreach shall be made up of members who are at least 18 years of age. It shall be the duty of this board to see that the Gospel is proclaimed to those in the community who do not know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. They shall foster a climate of evangelism which encourages congregation members to informally and spontaneously witness Christ to one another, other Christians and to the unchurched. They shall encourage prayer in church and home for sincere Evangelistic concern towards all people, inside and outside the church. They shall encourage members to invite the unchurched to worship and other church related activities. The board shall emphasize outreach and promote its programs locally, nationally and throughout the world, in and through the societies and organizations of the congregation. They shall sponsor such activities. They shall contact prospective members to attend church and church functions. They shall contact prospective members to attend Pastor's information classes.

They shall encourage and assist new members of the congregation to become active in the societies and organizations of the church. They should be aware and conscious of the atmosphere of friendliness in the congregation toward members and visitors and suggest ways for improvement. They shall organize periodic canvasses of the community, to gain information about and share the ministry of the church. They shall seek ways to reach the community with the Gospel and inform it as to the ministry of the church. They shall amass and distribute to the new members of the congregation an "Assimilation Package" which they will have composed.

7.2.5 A Board for Stewardship

A Board for Stewardship shall promote education and appreciation of the privileges and responsibilities of membership in a Christian Congregation.

They shall promote training in the grace of giving and adequate support for the program of the congregation, including its outreach through District and Synod.

They shall promote the enlistment and training for the stewardship work of the church.

They shall promote a cultivation of a greater mission consciousness and concern.

7.2.6 Terms of Office

The above categories will be filled and acted upon by the voters' assembly as needed. The terms of office will be for two (2) years and not for more than two (2) consecutive terms except for Elders and Trustees, which terms will be for three (3) years. The two consecutive terms limitation shall not apply to Trustees.

7.2.7 Financial Review Committee

The President/Chairman of the congregation shall appoint a Financial Review Committee.

A financial review shall be performed as soon as practical after the close of each fiscal year, with the results published and also reported to the congregation at the next Voters Assembly meeting.

The purpose of a review of the congregations' books is:

1. To support the congregational treasurer in his/her duties.
2. To help the treasurer to perform his/her duties effectively and efficiently through suggestions generated while in the financial review process.
3. To verify that the financial records are being maintained in an acceptable and consistent manner.
4. To verify that the cash receipts and disbursements are posted consistently, correctly, and reconciled with the bank.
5. To verify that the financial reports that have been issued to the congregation are in agreement with the official financial records of the congregation.

ARTICLE 8- Synodical Membership

This congregation shall be a member of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. The authority of the Synod over this congregation shall not be legislative, but advisory.

ARTICLE 9- Membership, Separation and Dissolution

9.1 This congregation may receive, hold title to, acquire and manage such real estate and other property as it may need and may sell or dispose of such real estate and other property or any part thereof; and this congregation shall have all the rights and powers that are granted by the laws of the State of Florida to religious organizations.

9.2 If, at any time, a separation should take place within this congregation, the officers of the District and Synod shall be consulted in an effort to resolve the differences. If, despite all efforts to resolve differences in peace and love, a division into factions of the congregation shall occur, the property of the congregation and all benefits therewith connected shall remain with those members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Article 3 of this Constitution.

ARTICLE 10- Meetings

Regular meetings of the Voters Assembly shall be held as determined in the bylaws. Announcement of the meeting shall be made in the services of the two previous Sundays. Special meetings require announcement in services in the two previous Sundays or notification by mail and announcement in the previous services of one previous Sunday. Such special meetings may be called at the request of three officers or ten voting members.

ARTICLE 11- Quorum

All members present at a validly called meeting shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE 12- Limitations on Holding Office

Women who are communicant members may hold voting membership in the congregation and serve as officers and as members of Boards and Committees, as long as these positions are not directly involved in the specific functions of the pastoral office, (preaching, the public administration of the sacraments, church discipline), and as long as this service does not violate the order of creation (usurping authority over men). Accordingly, they shall not serve as Pastor, as a member of the Board of Elders, as President or Vice President of the congregation.

ARTICLE 13- Amendments

To alter or amend any alterable or amendable paragraph of this Constitution or By-Laws, it shall be necessary that the alteration of amendment be proposed in person at a Voters' Assembly or submitted in writing at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting to all voting members, the alteration will then be announced in the divine service, and resolved upon two-thirds (2/3) majority of those present at the next regular or special Voters Assembly meeting.

Articles 2 and 3 shall not be altered or amended.

Amendments to provisions of this constitution, except those named above may be adopted at a regular Voters Meeting except as hereinafter otherwise provided:

1. That the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at a previous meeting of the Voters Assembly and published, posting in a conspicuous place in the church or distributed in person or by mail prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE 14- Procedures for Calling Pastors

After consultation by the Church Council with the District President, suggested candidates shall be proposed to the Voting Members. Any voter shall be entitled to make additional nominations prior to the Congregational Call Meeting. There must however, be sufficient time allowed to review the candidate's credentials. The list of candidates will be distributed at worship services on two (2) consecutive Sundays. The voting members shall vote, by secret ballot, for one (1) candidate. The candidate receiving the majority of votes shall be extended a call.

ARTICLE 15- Church Council (Board of Directors)

15.1 Membership

The Church Council shall be the board of directors and shall consist of the president, the vice-president, the recording secretary, the treasurer, the financial secretary, the public relations chairman and chairpersons of any existing boards. The pastor shall be an advisory member of the Church Council. The president and recording secretary of the congregation shall serve as president and recording secretary of the Church Council.

15.2 Meetings

The Church Council shall meet in regular sessions at least quarterly. Special meetings may be called by the chairman (or pastor) or any three (3) members of the Church Council by sending a notice which shall be delivered to the residence of each member at least 24 hours in advance. A majority of the voting members of the council shall constitute a quorum.

15.3 Duties

It shall be the principal duty of the church council to coordinate the program and activities of the various departments of the congregation. It shall have the power to act in behalf of the congregation between meetings of the voters' assembly.

ARTICLE 16- Nominations and Elections

Officers shall be elected for a term of two (2) years. Elections of officers shall take place in the regular December meeting. All elections shall be by ballot. President and Vice-President shall be elected on alternate years. The Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall not serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms. The treasurer and financial secretary shall be elected on alternate years. The Elders and Trustees shall serve for a term of three (3) years. Annually the president shall appoint a Nominating Committee no later than four (4) weeks prior to the regular December Voters Assembly meeting for the purpose of presenting a slate of candidates for all elective offices which will be vacant the following January. The committee shall consist of at least three (3) members, including the president. The pastor shall serve as an ex-officio member of the committee. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a final slate of candidates to be presented to the Voters Assembly in the December meeting.

In the event of a vacancy, the unexpired term of office, with the exception of the president, shall be filled by an appointee appointed by the president with the approval of the Church Council. Formal confirmation shall be announced. The presidential vacancy shall be filled by the vice-president for the unexpired term of the president. A vice-president shall then be appointed by the procedure in Article 7.1.1.

ARTICLE 17- Official Duties

Officers and members of boards shall perform the duties prescribed in the constitution. The congregation shall also have the privilege from time to time of detailing and enlarging these responsibilities by majority vote of the Voters Assembly. It may also call such other boards and committees into being as it may need from time to time.

ARTICLE 18- Regular Meetings

The Voters Assembly shall meet at least twice per year, once in the spring season and once in the autumn season.

ARTICLE 19- Rules of Order

In addition to principals laid down in Scripture, the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed.

ARTICLE 20 – Amendments

These by-laws may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the Voters' Assembly by a majority of all voting members present, provided the proposed change has been announced in a previous meeting or has been submitted in writing at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting to all voting members.