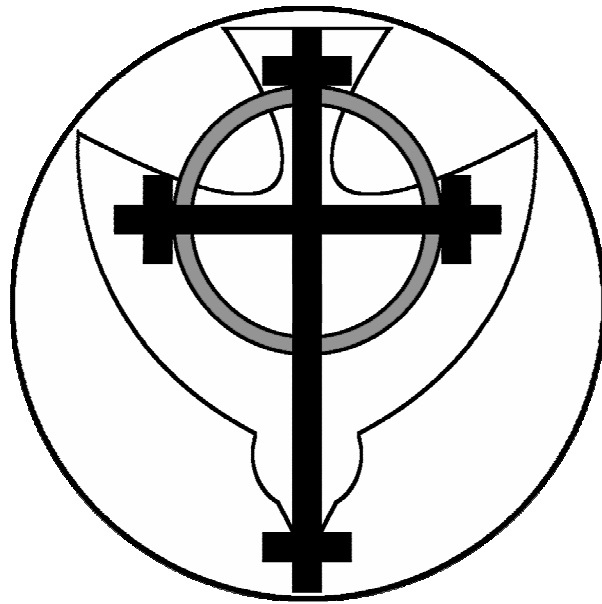


**The Constitution
and Bylaws
of
Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church
325 E. Warwick Dr.
Alma, MI 48801**



PREAMBLE

The Word of God requires a Christian congregation to conform to this Divine Word in doctrine and practice (Ps. 119:105; Matt. 28:18-20; Gal. 1:6-8; 2 Tim. 4:1-5) and that all things within the congregation be done in decency and order (1 Cor. 14:40). Therefore, we, the members of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church, accept and subscribe to the following Constitution and Bylaws according to which all spiritual and physical affairs of our congregation shall be governed.

1.0 NAME

The name of this congregation shall be **Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church** of Alma, Gratiot County, Michigan. It shall be located at 325 E. Warwick Dr., Alma, Michigan 48801.

2.0 PURPOSE AND MISSION

The purpose of this congregation shall be to give honor and glory to the Triune God, to carry out His will, to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to each other, our community, and to all the world, to express the unity of our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior, to foster Christian fellowship and love, to extend a helping hand to human need whenever possible, and to achieve all of these objectives by the preaching of the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ, by the administration of the Sacraments according to Christ's institution, and by the religious instruction of all our members according to the confessional standard of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

2.1 Mission Statement

The mission of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church is to welcome all people into the fellowship of God's love by proclaiming the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ and to nurture our members with God's Holy Word and Sacraments.

3.0 CONFESSIONAL STANDARD

This congregation acknowledges and accepts without reservation:

- 3.1 All the canonical books of the Old and the New Testament as the revealed, inerrant, verbally inspired Word of God and the only rule and norm of Christian faith and practice.
- 3.2 All the Confessional Writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 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, and the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, The Smalcald Articles, The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord.

4.0 SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

This congregation shall be a member of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as long as the Synod conforms to the congregation's confessional standards as set forth in this Constitution. It shall be the duty of the congregation to send its pastor and a lay delegate to the District Convention of Synod.

5.0 MEMBERSHIP

This congregation distinguishes between three types of congregational membership.

5.1 The membership of this congregation includes the following:

- 5.1.1 *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 into communicant membership.
- 5.1.2 *Communicant* members are those baptized members who have been instructed and are familiar with the contents of *Luther's Small Catechism*, have been confirmed in the Lutheran faith, and subscribe unconditionally to the confessional standard of

Article 3.0 of this Constitution.

- 5.1.3 *Voting* members are communicant members who have reached the age of eighteen (18) years and shall be entitled to vote and to hold offices in this congregation except as limited by Article 10.0 of this Constitution and the Bylaws.
- 5.2 The members of this congregation are received in the following manner:
 - 5.2.1 Baptized members are received through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism or through the consent of one or both parents (or legal guardian[s]) in the case of children who have been baptized in another Christian congregation.
 - 5.2.2 Adult members are received through the rite of confirmation and Sacrament of Holy Baptism as appropriate, through transfer from a sister congregation, or through profession or reaffirmation of faith.
- 5.3 Members of this congregation shall conform their entire lives to the authority of the Word of God and to that end shall make diligent use of the means of grace by attending Divine Services frequently, exercise faithful stewardship of their God-given time, talents, and treasures, impart and accept fraternal admonition as the need of such admonition becomes apparent, and be readily available for service in the kingdom of Christ within and beyond this congregation. Membership in organizations whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God is prohibited.
- 5.4 Membership in this congregation shall be terminated as follows:
 - 5.4.1 Membership shall be terminated by transfer to a sister congregation, by joining a congregation outside the fellowship of this congregation, by excommunication or self-exclusion, or by death.
 - 5.4.2 Communicant members who conduct themselves in an un-Christian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20. If they remain impenitent after proper admonition, they shall be excommunicated. Each case of excommunication or self-exclusion shall be presented to the Voters' Assembly for a decision. A two-thirds majority vote of the Voters' Assembly shall be required.

6.0 CALLED CHURCH WORKERS

The Voters' Assembly of this congregation shall have the exclusive right to call ordained ministers of the Gospel and commissioned ministers. This right shall not be delegated to a smaller body or an individual.

- 6.1 The pastoral office shall be conferred only upon pastors or candidates who profess and adhere to the confessional standard of Article 3.0 of 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.
- 6.2 Only those commissioned ministers shall receive a call who adhere to the confessional standard of Article 3.0 of this Constitution, who are qualified for the work of the ministry to which they are called, and who have been endorsed by and are members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
- 6.3 Called ordained or commissioned ministers may be removed from office in Christian and lawful order by a two-thirds majority ballot vote of the Voters' Assembly for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of the duties of office, or the inability to perform those duties.
- 6.4 When a vacancy occurs in an office of an ordained or commissioned minister, the congregation shall notify the District President to receive assistance in temporarily filling the vacancy and to receive his counsel in calling a new pastor, teacher, or other church worker (Bylaw 15.0).

7.0 AUTHORITY OF AND WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

The Voters' Assembly shall be the governing body of this congregation and shall be empowered to administer and manage all its affairs.

- 7.1 The establishment and conduct of all organizations and societies within the congregation or related directly to the congregation shall be subject to the overall authority and general oversight of the Voters' Assembly.
- 7.2 All matters before the Voters' Assembly shall be decided by a majority vote unless otherwise specified by this Constitution or Bylaws. Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided only on the basis of the confessional standard of Article 3.0 of this Constitution. Any decisions rendered by the Voters' Assembly which are contrary to Article 3.0 of this Constitution shall be null and void.

8.0 MEETINGS

Regular meetings of the Voters' Assembly shall be held on the fourth Sunday of January, April, July, and October.

- 8.1 Announcements of regular meetings of the Voters' Assembly shall be made (by word or in the Service bulletin) in the Divine Services of the two previous Sundays.
- 8.2 Announcements of special or emergency meetings of the Voters' Assembly shall be made (by word or in the Service bulletin) in the Divine Services of the two previous Sundays or in the Divine Service of the previous Sunday when accompanied by notification of all voting members by mail. Such special or emergency meetings may be called by the pastor, Board of Elders, president of the congregation, or Church Council.
- 8.3 All voting members present at a properly called meeting shall constitute a quorum.

9.0 OFFICERS AND BOARDS

This congregation shall have the following officers and boards in addition to any which the congregation shall establish from time to time. The officers and the chairpersons of the boards, and the pastor as an advisory member, shall constitute the membership of the Church Council (Bylaw 16.0). Those officers identified by state law shall serve as legal representatives of the congregation.

- 9.1 The officers of this congregation shall be:
 - 9.1.1 President
 - 9.1.2 Vice President
 - 9.1.3 Secretary
 - 9.1.4 Treasurer
 - 9.1.5 Financial Secretary
- 9.2 The boards of this congregation shall be:
 - 9.2.1 Board of Elders
 - 9.2.2 Board of Trustees
 - 9.2.3 Board of Christian Education
 - 9.2.4 Board of Evangelism
 - 9.2.5 Board of Stewardship
- 9.3 Any officer or board member who fails to carry out his/her duties of office or who fails to perform the responsibilities of communicant membership (see paragraph 5.3 above) may be removed from office by a two-thirds majority ballot vote of the Voters' Assembly, in Christian and lawful order. Matthew 18 should be followed under such circumstances.

10.0 LIMITATIONS ON HOLDING OFFICE

Women who have reached the age of eighteen (18) may 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, the public exercise

of church discipline), and as long as this service does not violate God's order of creation (usurping authority over men). Accordingly, a woman shall not serve as pastor, as a member of the Board of Elders, as president or vice president of this congregation.

11.0 DOCTRINAL LITERATURE

Only such hymns, prayers, and liturgies shall be used in the public services of this congregation, and in all ministerial acts, as conform to the confessional standard of Article 3.0 of this Constitution. Likewise, only those books and instructional materials which conform to Article 3.0 shall be used in all facets of Christian education within this congregation.

12.0 DIVISION AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

If at any time a division of the congregation should take place for any reason, the following principles will govern:

- 12.1 The property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those communicant members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to the confessional standard of Article 3.0 of this Constitution.
- 12.2 In the event that the congregation dissolves, all property shall be disposed of by the final Voters' Assembly for the payment of debts and all just claims against the congregation, and any and all surplus and all rights connected therewith shall be conveyed to and become the property of the Michigan District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

13.0 BYLAWS

This congregation may adopt such Bylaws as may be required for the accomplishment of its purpose.

14.0 CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION

The Constitution of this congregation consists of both unalterable and amendable articles.

- 14.1 The content of the following articles of this Constitution and paragraphs thereof shall be unalterable:
 - 14.1.1 Article 3.0
 - 14.1.2 Article 6.0
 - 14.1.3 Article 11.0
- 14.2 All other Articles of this Constitution may be amended at a properly called meeting of the Voters' Assembly, provided:
 - 14.2.1 Such amendments do not conflict with the confessional standard of Article 3.0 of this Constitution.
 - 14.2.2 Such amendments have been submitted in writing at a previous Voters' Assembly.
 - 14.2.3 Such amendments receive a two-thirds majority ballot vote of the Voters' Assembly.

The Bylaws to the Constitution

15.0 CALLING CHURCH WORKERS

When this congregation calls an ordained minister of the Gospel or a commissioned minister, the following procedures shall be followed:

- 15.1 When an ordained or commissioned minister is to be called, every member of the congregation shall be provided the opportunity to suggest one or more names for consideration, all of which shall be added to the list of names provided by the District President.
- 15.2 A call committee shall be appointed [or an existing board or committee designated] by the Church Council to serve as a screening committee and shall evaluate the list of candidates after it has received all the pertinent information from the District President and from any other sources available. The committee shall then present to the congregation by public announcement its proposed list of candidates and their biographical sketches.
- 15.3 At a Voters' Assembly called for the purpose of calling a new ordained or commissioned minister, the proposed list may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the assembly. When possible, information regarding additional candidates shall be provided by the District President and/or his representative at the meeting.
- 15.4 Ballot voting shall continue until a majority vote determines the disposition of the call. The election shall, if possible, be made unanimous by a rising vote, and the call shall be sent to the elected ordained or commissioned minister.

16.0 CHURCH COUNCIL

The Church Council shall provide direction to the congregation on behalf of the Voters' Assembly.

- 16.1 The Church Council shall consist of the congregation's president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, financial secretary, the chairpersons of its boards listed in Article 9.0 of the Constitution, and the pastor as an advisory member. The president and secretary of the congregation shall also serve as the chairman and secretary of the Church Council.
- 16.2 The principal duty of the Church Council shall be to coordinate the programs and activities of the congregation. It shall also have the power to act on behalf of the congregation between meetings of the Voters' Assembly within the limitations established by the Constitution and Bylaws, which actions shall be reported to the next meeting of the Voters' Assembly. As a standing rule, the Church Council shall not authorize any expenditure exceeding \$2500.00 without the approval of the Voters' Assembly.
- 16.3 The Church Council shall meet on a monthly basis. Special meetings may be called by the chairman, the pastor, or any three members of the Council by providing notice to all Council members at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting. A majority of the voting members of the Council present at a regularly scheduled meeting shall constitute a quorum.
- 16.4 To promote order and to permit the elected officers of the congregation to perform their duties, the meetings of the Church Council shall be closed. Any member of the congregation who desires to address the Council shall present the matter to the appropriate officer, chairperson, or to the pastor, who shall present the matter to the Council on his/her behalf, with the following exceptions:
 - 16.3.1 When the chairperson of one of the congregation's boards must be absent, he/she may appoint a board member to attend the meeting on his/her behalf and the appointed board member shall be granted the privilege to participate fully in the meeting, having the right to vote in place of the absent Council member.

- 16.3.2 When the chairman determines, based on the counsel of the pastor or other Council members, that it would be more beneficial for a non-Council member to address the Council directly, he shall permit that person to attend the meeting. However, that person's participation in the meeting shall be limited to the specific purpose for which he/she is present.

17.0 NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS

The procedures for the nomination and election of elected and appointed officers shall be as follows.

- 17.1 A nominating committee consisting of the pastor, president, chairman of the Board of Elders, and chairman of the Board of Trustees shall present a slate of candidates for each elected office at the October meeting of the Voters' Assembly. The slate shall normally provide at least two names for each office, which shall be published in the Service bulletin the Sunday before the October meeting. In the case of elected positions, additional nominations may be made from the floor. No person shall be nominated without his/her consent.
- 17.2 A majority of the votes cast by ballot at the October meeting of the Voters' Assembly shall be required for all elections. Candidates receiving the lowest number of votes shall be eliminated in each succeeding ballot.
- 17.3 All officers shall be elected for the terms specified in these Bylaws (Bylaw 19.0).
- 17.4 Officers and board members, both elected and appointed (Bylaw 18.0), shall be inducted into office during a Divine Service of the congregation. They shall assume their respective duties on January 1.
- 17.5 In case of a vacancy in an elective office, the president of the congregation shall appoint a successor to serve until the next election. Service for more than one-half of a term shall constitute a full term.
- 17.6 An individual shall not hold more than one elective office at a time.

18.0 APPOINTED OFFICES

The following offices shall be appointed by the president of the congregation with the advice and counsel of the pastor. In the event that an agreement cannot be reached between the president and pastor, the Church Council shall decide the matter by majority vote.

- 18.1 Chairpersons for the Boards of Evangelism and Stewardship. The boards shall consist of volunteer members.
- 18.2 A Youth Director
- 18.3 A Budget/Finance Committee, consisting of at least three volunteer members to assist the treasurer in overseeing the finances of the congregation.

19.0 TERMS AND DUTIES OF ELECTIVE OFFICERS

Officers and members of boards and committees shall serve for the terms and shall perform the duties specified below. A more detailed explanation of their respective duties and responsibilities can be found in the Personnel Manual of the congregation, which includes Position Descriptions developed and approved by the Church Council. Upon nomination for any office or position in the congregation, the nominee shall be presented with a position description and upon election or appointment shall be required to sign a copy of that position description before assuming his/her duties.

- 19.1 President
 - 19.1.1 The term of office for the president shall be two years, shall not run concurrently with that of the vice president, and shall be limited to two consecutive terms.
 - 19.1.2 The president shall serve as the chairman of the Church Council and shall preside

- over all its meetings.
- 19.1.3 The president shall preside over all meetings of the Voters' Assembly and shall perform all other duties in keeping with his office as listed in the position description.
- 19.2 Vice President
- 19.2.1 The term of office for the vice president shall be two years, shall not run concurrently with that of the president, and shall be limited to two consecutive terms.
- 19.2.2 The vice president shall assist the president in performing his duties and shall assume the duties of the president in his absence. In the event that a vacancy occurs in the office of the president, the vice president shall succeed to the office of president for the remainder of the term.
- 19.2.3 The vice president shall perform all other duties in keeping with his office as listed in the position description.
- 19.3 Secretary
- 19.3.1 The term of office for the secretary shall be two years and shall be limited to two consecutive terms.
- 19.3.2 The secretary shall serve as secretary of the Church Council.
- 19.3.3 The secretary shall keep accurate minutes of the meetings of the Church Council and Voters' Assembly to be retained in the permanent records of the congregation. All minutes recorded by the secretary are the property of the congregation.
- 19.3.4 The secretary shall perform all other duties in keeping with his/her office as listed in the position description.
- 19.4 Treasurer
- 19.4.1 The term of office for the treasurer shall be two years, shall not run concurrently with that of the financial secretary, and shall be limited to two consecutive terms.
- 19.4.2 The treasurer shall pay all bills authorized by the congregation, shall keep accurate records of the receipts and disbursements of the congregation in books which shall be and remain the property of the congregation, and shall, with the assistance of the budget/finance committee, develop an annual budget to be approved by the Voters' Assembly.
- 19.4.3 The treasurer shall be responsible for all financial papers.
- 19.4.4 The treasurer shall submit a report at all meetings of the Church Council and Voters' Assembly showing the actual year-to-date receipts and expenditures of the congregation compared with the budgeted amounts. In the event that the treasurer must be absent from a meeting of the Church Council or Voters' Assembly, he/she shall appoint one of the members of the budget/finance committee to stand in for him/her so that a treasurer's report can be heard at every meeting. In the case of a Church Council meeting, that person's participation in the meeting shall be limited to making the treasurer's report unless that person is a member of the Church Council.
- 19.4.5 The treasurer shall perform all other duties in keeping with his/her office as listed in the position description.
- 19.5 Financial Secretary
- 19.5.1 The term of office for the financial secretary shall be two years, shall not run concurrently with that of the treasurer, and shall be limited to two consecutive terms.
- 19.5.2 The financial secretary shall receive, record in books kept for such purpose, and deposit in the congregation's designated depository, all monies received by the congregation.

- 19.5.3 The financial secretary shall notify all members of their annual contributions. Interim quarterly reports may be prepared upon request.
- 19.5.4 The financial secretary shall perform all other duties in keeping with his/her office as listed in the position description.
- 19.6 Board of Elders
 - 19.6.1 The term of office for a member of the Board of Elders shall be three years with no limitation of consecutive terms. At least one elder shall be elected each year.
 - 19.6.2 The Board of Elders shall elect a chairman annually.
 - 19.6.3 The Board of Elders shall assist the pastor in all matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the congregation.
 - 19.6.4 The Board of Elders shall perform all other duties in keeping with their office as listed in the position description.
- 19.7 Board of Trustees
 - 19.7.1 The term of office for a member of the Board of Trustees shall be three years with no limitation of consecutive term limits. At least one trustee shall be elected each year.
 - 19.7.2 The Board of Trustees shall elect a chairman annually.
 - 19.7.3 The Board of Trustees shall administer all property belonging to the congregation and conduct all the business assigned to them by the Church Council and/or Voters' Assembly.
 - 19.7.4 The Board of Trustees shall perform all other duties in keeping with their office as listed in the position description.
- 19.8 Board of Christian Education
 - 19.8.1 The term of office for a member of the Board of Christian Education shall be three years with no limitation of consecutive terms. At least one member shall be elected each year.
 - 19.8.2 The Board of Christian Education shall elect a chairperson annually.
 - 19.8.3 The Board of Christian Education shall assist the pastor in all matters pertaining to the Christian education of the congregation.
 - 19.8.4 The Board of Christian Education shall perform all other duties in keeping with their office as listed in the position description.

20.0 RULES OF ORDER

In addition to the principles laid down in Scripture and in the Constitution and Bylaws of this congregation, accepted parliamentary procedures such as Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed.

21.0 AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the Voters' Assembly.

- 21.1 Amendments shall be adopted by a majority of all votes cast, provided the proposed change has been announced in a previous meeting or has been submitted in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting to all communicant members.
- 21.2 The revised Bylaws shall, as a condition of continued membership in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, be submitted to the District President for review by the District's Constitution Committee and favorable action by the District's Board of Directors before being placed into practice by the congregation.

Soli Deo Gloria!

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

A Christian Congregation Conforms to the Word of God in Doctrine and Practice:

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” (Psalm 119:105).

“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:18-20).

“I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel - which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!” (Gal. 1:6-8)

“In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-- with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry” (2 Tim. 4:1-5).

A Christian Congregation Does All Things in Decency and Order:

“But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way” (1 Cor. 14:40).

A Christian Congregation Disciplines Brothers and Sisters According to the Word of God:

“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector” (Matt. 18:15-17).