

THE CONSTITUTION OF ABOITE LUTHERAN CHURCH, INC.  
FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

PREAMBLE

We love You, LORD. Out of Your undeserved love You have created us, redeemed us, and kept us in Your grace! You want all people to be saved and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Therefore, we, a number of Christians living, in the near ABOITE Township, Indiana, have come together as a church and adopted the following Constitution and Bylaws to accomplish this mission:

1.0 NAME

The name of this congregation shall be Aboite Lutheran Church, Inc., of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

2.0 MISSION

We dedicate ourselves to reaching out through Word and Sacraments with the Gospel in both traditional and new ways. In order to do this, we encourage our people to participate in worship, prayer, study, and service at congregational, small group, and individual levels. In all of this, our aim is that those we reach may be saved and grow in the following ways:

GROW UP

into a closer relationship with  
the Father as their provider and Protector,  
the Son as their Savior, Lord, and Friend,  
the Holy Spirit as their Sanctifier, Enabler, and Guide;

GROW TOGETHER

in their relationships with others;

GROW OUT

in the discovery, development, and use of their God-given gifts and abilities in satisfying service to others;

so that they may

GROW MORE

in being used by God to bring more people into His family.

### 3.0 CONFSSIONAL STANDARD

The Congregation and every member of the Congregation, accepts without reservation:  
Congregation

3.1 The Canonical Scripture of the Old and New Testaments, as the written and inspired Word of God, as the only infallible authority, source, rule and guide in all matters of faith and practice.

3.2 All of the symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, to wit: g

1. The three Ecumenical Creeds [The Apostles' Creed, The Nicene Creed, The Athanasian Creed];

2. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession;

3. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession;

4. The Smalcald Articles;

5. The Large Catechism of Luther;

6. The Small Catechism of Luther;

7. The Formula of Concord,

as a true statement and exposition of the Word of God. No doctrine or practice in conflict or inconsistent with this, our doctrinal and confessional position, shall be taught or tolerated in our Congregation.

### 4.0 MEMBERSHIP

Recognizing that is any man is in Christ, he is a new creature, that the old things have passed away and new things have come (I I Cor. 5:17), we welcome new members to join with us in the mission of the Church in accomplishing life-changing transformation.

4.1 Membership. The membership of this Congregation includes the following:  
Congregation

4.1.1 Baptized members are all who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and 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 3.0 of this Constitution, are familiar with the contents of Luther's Small Catechism, and are not members of organizations or lodges whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God and teach salvation outside of Jesus Christ.

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

## 4.2 Reception

4.2.1 Baptized and communicant members are received: a) through the sacrament of Holy Baptism; b) through the consent of one or more parent in the case of children who have been baptized in another Christian Congregation; c) through the right of Confirmation; d) through transfer from a sister congregation; and, e) through profession of faith or reaffirmation of faith.

4.2.2 Eligible communicant members maybe received as voting members upon approval by the Voters' Assembly, and signing the Constitution.

## 4.3 Duties

As living stones we are being spiritual up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, and are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy National and a people for God's own possession that we may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called us out c darkness into His marvelous light (I Peter 2:5-9).

Therefore, members of the congregation shall conform their entire lives to the rule of God's Word, and to exercise faithful stewardship of God's many gifts and talents, impart and accept eternal admonition as the need of such admonition becomes apparent, and be readily available for service in the Kingdom of Christ within and beyond the congregation.

## 4.4 Termination

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

4.4.2 A Communicant member who conducts himself in an un-Christian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20; if he remains impenitent after proper admonition, he shall be excommunicated. Each case shall be presented individually to the Voters' Assembly for a decision. If such member deliberately absents himself from the meeting(s) at which his case is to be discussed, he shall be regarded as having excluded himself from the membership of the Congregation.

## 5.0 PASTORS AND TEACHERS

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as, pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; (2 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13)

5.1 The Pastoral Office of this congregation shall be conferred only upon such qualified persons as profess and adhere to the doctrinal standards set forth in Section 3.0 (Confessional Standard) of this Constitution and who are properly certified for their work according to the Bylaws of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Pastors shall, in a Call extended to and accepted, be pledged to this confessional standard.

5.2 The office of called teacher shall be conferred only on such qualified persons who are properly certified for their work according to the Bylaws of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Both Called and contract teachers shall be pledged to the doctrinal standard set forth in Section 3.0 of this Constitution.

## 6.0 AUTHORITY OF THE CONGREGATION

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of Heaven; and whatever you shall find on earth shall be found in Heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven. (Matthew 16:19)

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 the Church Council and all organizations and societies within the congregation shall be subject to the approval and supervision of the voting members.

6.2 The right of calling pastors and teachers shall be vested in the Voters' Assembly of the congregation and shall not be delegated otherwise.

6.3 All matters shall be decided by a majority vote of the Voters' Assembly unless otherwise specified by this Constitution and Bylaws, including matters of doctrine and conscience which shall be decided only on the basis of the Word of God.

6.4 Any pastor, teacher, or officer may be removed from office by the Voters' Assembly by a two-thirds majority ballot vote, in a Christian and lawful order, for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, or willful neglect of duties.

## 7.0 OFFICERS AND BOARDS

Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. (Hebrews 13:7)

Obey your leaders, submit to them for they keep watch over your souls, as those who give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. (Hebrews 13:17)

7.1 The officers of this congregation shall be such officers, boards, or committees as the Bylaws of this Constitution may describe.

7.2 Congregational officers or committees, whether elected or appointed, shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them, and whatever authority may have been delegated may at any time be altered or revoked.

## 8.0 SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

This Congregation shall be a member of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod so long as the Synod conforms to the congregational standard.

## 9.0 DIVISION

9.1 If at any time a division should take place of counter-doctrine, the property, Congregation and benefits connected therewith shall remain with those communicant members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Section 3.0 of this Constitution.

9.2 If division takes place for any other reason, the property shall remain with the majority of the communicant members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Section 3.0 of this Constitution.

9.3 In the event the Congregation should dissolve, the property and all rights and obligations connected therewith shall be transferred to that district of the Synod in obligation the Congregation held membership at the time of the dissolution.

## 10.0 MEETINGS

Regular meetings of the Voters' Assembly shall be held as determined in the Bylaws. Announcement of meetings shall be made in the services of the two previous Sundays. Special meetings require announcement in services on two Sundays or a notification by mail and announcement in the services on one Sunday immediately prior to the meeting. Such special meetings may be called at the request of the pastor, president, three council members, or ten voting members.

## 11.0 QUORUM

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

## 12.0 AMENDMENTS

12.1 Amendments to provisions of this Constitution, except Sections 2.0 Mission, 3.0 Confessional Standard and 5.0 Pastors and Teachers, may be adopted at a voter's meeting, except as hereinafter otherwise provided:

1. The proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at a previous meeting of the Voters' Assembly and published by posting in a conspicuous place in the church or by mail prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon;
2. An affirmative vote of two-thirds majority of the voters present is secured.

12.2 In addition to the above requirements, proposals to amend Section 2.0 Mission, 3.0 Confessional Standard and 5.0 Pastors and Teachers, shall require that previous notice of such amendment and discussion of the same shall be presented at two meetings of the Voters' Assembly before the meeting at which the proposed amendment is to receive action. Due notice of the fact that a vote will be taken shall be given to all voting members of the congregation. Any changes in these articles shall not destroy the essential meaning of the same. Whether or not such essential meaning has occurred shall be decided, if challenged, by a decision of the Commission on Adjudication of the Synodical District in which the Congregation holds its Synodical membership.