

# CONSTITUTION FOR A FREE AND LIVING CONGREGATION

*A recommendation for new AFLC church plants*

## **I. NAME**

The name of this organization, a nonprofit Corporation, shall be the \_\_\_\_\_ Free Lutheran Church.

## **II. STATEMENT OF FAITH**

The Statement of faith of this church shall be the same as that of Association of Free Lutheran Congregations and its local district. Our church family subscribes to the 66 books of the Christian Bible and acknowledges these books as the inspired, infallible and inerrant Word of God. We also accept the three ancient creeds of the early church, that is, the Apostolic, Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, Luther's Small Catechism as an accurate expression of simple Christianity, and the Fundamental Principles and By-Laws of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. (This article cannot be altered).

## **III. STANDING**

This church shall maintain membership with The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations and its local district. Its pastor should be in good standing on the AFLC clergy roster, or accepted by the fellowship roster of the AFLC.

## **IV. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this church shall be to bring glory to God by making more disciples who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and honor God with reverence in corporate worship. These disciples are established in living faith in Christ, and committed to obedience, responsive to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and loving one another in humility and joy, penetrating our spheres of influence with the dynamic gospel of Christ.

## **V. MEMBERSHIP**

The church shall receive as members those who are confirmed as believers, baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and have received Jesus Christ as their Savior, and are seeking to be open to God's will for their lives. We encourage our members to manifest the fruits of the Spirit in their lives, and to support the doctrine and polity of this church. (A statement about our process of membership and church discipline are published in our by-laws.)

## **VI. PROPERTY RIGHTS**

If the church membership votes to dissolve and cease to function as a church of like faith and practice, or if the membership should dissolve through some disaster or dysfunction, the property rights shall be assigned to the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations to enable the church family or its home mission department to renew the work or use the values thereof for further Gospel enterprises.

## **VII. GOVERNMENT**

We believe that the congregation is the right form of the kingdom of God on earth, and our church family is built on the consensus and unity of the body of Christ. Ultimate authority lies in Christ as the head of the church and in the Scripture as the basis for all faith and practice. Leadership in the church derives its authority from congregation, and answers to the body of Christ as a whole, as directed by the Spirit of God and the Word of God. This church shall remain free and self-governing. The government is vested in its membership and administered by its officers. In function, final authority shall reside in the membership. They shall approve and affirm Biblically qualified leadership to carry out Christ's purposes, and promises to honor and bless congregation-approved spiritual leadership and affirm them as humble servant leaders.

## **VIII. OFFICERS**

The officers of this church shall be the deacons, elders, trustees and officers as deemed necessary by the local church, and will affirm the pastor or pastors as non-voting leaders in the congregation. Senior pastors shall be elected, affirmed and dismissed by a two-thirds majority of the congregation.

## **IX. PROVISION FOR BY-LAWS AND POLICY MANUAL**

A supplement to this constitution known as the BY-LAWS shall embody the stated qualifications for church leaders and officers. The BY-LAWS shall also include officers' duties, provisions for appointment of additional leaders and teachers, conditions for membership, method by which members are received, along with other rules and regulations for church activities as needed. A Policy Manual shall cover such items as operational, job descriptions for all positions in the church, etc. The by-laws attached provide a vehicle to implement and carry out the principles outlined by the Constitution.

## **X. AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to this constitution may be made at any business meeting when said proposed Amendments have been presented to the membership in writing and posted for at least one month prior to the business meeting. A two-thirds majority is required for passage.

