

**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS  
OF  
ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
OF  
FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA**

The Constitution and By-Laws, contained herein, were adopted by this congregation on March 3, 2002, and the Constitution revised on December 6, 2009, and supersede, all documents of similar nature previous to this date.

**CONSTITUTION**

**PREAMBLE**

Mission and Ministry Statement: Our mission is to share the life-changing good news of God's love for all people in Jesus Christ. St. Paul's Lutheran Church is a growing family of people who share a Christ-centered faith and who meet regularly for prayer and celebration. We seek to deepen that faith by offering opportunities for Christian education. We seek to create an atmosphere of Christian love within our congregation, and to extend that love to others. We are committed to making responsible use of God's gifts of time, talent, and resources to serve the needs of our community of Falls Church and beyond.

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In accordance with God's Word, (1 Corinthians 14:40) which says: "Let all things be done decently and in order", ~~we~~ we, the members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Falls Church, Virginia, accept and subscribe to the following Constitution and By-Laws, in which we establish the principles under which we are organized and by which all internal and external affairs of our congregation shall be governed.

**ARTICLE I NAME**

The legal name of this congregation shall be "St. Paul's Lutheran Church". The congregation is located in Falls Church, Virginia. St. Paul's Lutheran Church is not incorporated.

**ARTICLE II PURPOSE**

The purpose of this congregation shall be to serve its members and to extend the Kingdom of God by the preaching of the Word of God, by the administration of the Sacraments, and by the religious instruction of youth and adults according to the Confessional Standard of the Lutheran Church, and to foster Christian fellowship and charity.

**ARTICLE III CONFESSIONAL STANDARD**

This congregation holds all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired Word of God and the sole rule of faith and life.

This congregation accepts all the Symbolic books of the Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of the year 1580, viz. the Ecumenical Creeds (The Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian); the Unaltered Augsburg Confession of 1530; the Apology of the Augsburg Confession; the Catechisms of Martin Luther; the Smalcald Articles; and the Formula of Concord, as a correct and sound exposition of Christian Doctrine, taken from and in full accord with the Holy Scriptures. ~~This article is unalterable and irrevocable.~~

#### ARTICLE IV ~~SYNODICAL AFFILIATIONS~~SYNOD MEMBERSHIP

This congregation shall be ~~affiliated with a member of the~~ Lutheran Church Missouri Synod ~~LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD~~ and the District in which it is geographically located, so long as the confessions and constitution of the Synod and District are in accord with the confession and constitution of this congregation.

#### ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP

##### A. Kinds

##### 1. Baptized Membership

All those who are baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" and who are under the spiritual care of this congregation shall be regarded as baptized members.

##### 2. Communicant Membership

All persons shall be regarded as communicant members of this congregation:

- a. Who are baptized, give evidence of their ability to "examine themselves" (I Cor. 11:33 ff.) and partake of the Lord's Supper.
- b. Who accept Christ as Savior and Lord, and witness to the same in word and deed.
- c. Who, under the lordship of Christ, constantly remain on guard against associations which deny this lordship.
- d. Who willingly live within the discipline of love as exercised by the church in its ministry of reconciliation.
- e. Who signify their agreement with the Confessional Standard set forth in Article III of this Constitution.
- f. Who have been received into communicant membership in accordance with the By-Laws of this Congregation.

##### 3. Voting Members

Voting members of this congregation shall be confirmed members who have attended at least six (6) worship services in the last twelve (12) months or are homebound and maintain a communicate relationship with the Church, and who have accepted the Constitution and By-Laws of this congregation.

B. Duties

It shall be the duty of the members of this congregation to attend the public worship services faithfully, to partake frequently of the Holy Communion, to partake in the work and activities of the Church to the best of their ability, to contribute toward the support of the Church as God has prospered them, and to provide for the Christian training of their children at home, and through Sunday School, Confirmation classes and other agencies of this congregation for that purpose.

ARTICLE VI OFFICERS

~~The Principal Officers of this congregation shall be a President, a Vice President, a Recording Secretary, a Financial Secretary and a Treasurer.~~

~~Other officers include members of the congregational Boards, and such others as provided in the By Laws. Qualifications for holding office, the method of selection, term of office, the duties and responsibilities of an officer, and provisions for filling an in term vacancy shall be provided in the By Laws, Article 4.~~

ARTICLE VII AUTHORITY IN THE CONGREGATION GOVERNMENT OF THE CONGREGATION

A. Governing Body

The Voters' Assembly, consisting of all voting members as defined in Article V shall be the governing body and shall administer all congregational affairs, material and spiritual. The establishment and conduct of the Council, Boards, Committees, appointed officers, and all organizations within the congregation, such as ~~Stephen Ministry~~, Christian Day School, Sunday School, special interest groups, and choirs, shall at all times be subject to the approval and supervision of the Voters' Assembly. The Church Council shall be responsible to the Voters' Assembly for the day to day administration of church business which may be carried out by staff, congregational Boards, or appointed officers or committees. The Voters' Assembly may void, substitute, or amend resolutions of the Council. Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided by the Word of God; any other matter shall be decided by a majority of the Voters' Assembly, unless otherwise specified by the Constitution and By-Laws.

B. Right of Calling

The right of calling pastors and other called professionals shall be vested in the Voter's Assembly and shall never be delegated to any individual or group of individuals.

C. Power of Officers Officers and Boards

The officers and boards of this congregation shall be such as the Bylaws of this Constitution prescribe. Whether elected or appointed, officers and committees shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them by the Voters' Assembly. Powers delegated to officers and committees may be altered or revoked by the Voters' Assembly at any time.

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D. Removal from Office

~~Any officer, pastor or called professional may be removed from office by the Voters' Assembly in Christian and lawful order, for one or more of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false teaching contrary to the Confessional Standard of this congregation, scandalous conduct, inability to discharge responsibilities, or willful neglect of duties. This action shall be taken only after the accused officer, pastor or called professional has been pre-advised of the charges and has been given the opportunity to answer such charges. The Circuit Counselor and District President shall have full knowledge of removal procedures when they are initiated against a pastor or called professional, and all such actions shall be taken in full consultation with said officials.~~

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ARTICLE VII PROPERTY RIGHTS OF THIS CONGREGATION

This congregation may receive, acquire, hold title to, and manage such real estate and other property as it may deem necessary to accomplish its purpose as a Congregation and may sell or dispose of such Real Estate and other property or any part thereof; and this congregation shall have all rights and powers that are granted by the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia to religious organizations.

Should a separation in this congregation occur, the entire property of this congregation and all rights connected therewith shall remain with those members who hold fast to this Constitution. The decision as to how the assets and liabilities should be divided among the contending factions shall be decided by a three-person investigatory panel appointed by the President of the District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to which the congregation belongs. In the event this congregation should disband, the property and all rights connected therewith shall be transferred to the District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod of which the congregation is a member .

ARTICLE ~~IX~~-VIII CALLED POSITIONS MINISTERS OF RELIGION—ORDAINED AND COMMISSIONED

A call in this congregation shall be extended to such candidates whose beliefs are in accord with the Confessional Standard of this congregation (Article III) and who have been approved by the Synod as being qualified.

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## ARTICLE IX AMENDMENTS

~~Amendments to this Constitution must be in writing and must receive two-thirds vote of the voting members present at two consecutive regular meetings of the Voters' Assembly.~~

~~This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in a meeting of the Voters' Assembly. The Bylaws may be amended by a simple majority of the votes cast in a meeting of the Voters' Assembly. A resolution to amend or repeal any provision of this Constitution must be filed with the Recording Secretary at least thirty days prior to the first regular meeting at which a vote will be taken on such resolution. There will be no temporary amendments to this Constitution. The wording of the amended Constitution and Bylaws shall be distributed to all members in a mailing as far in advance as possible, but no fewer than two weeks in advance. In addition, the revisions will be distributed to the congregation assembled for worship on two different Sundays prior to the date upon which the amendment is presented for action.~~

~~The revised constitution and/or bylaws shall, as a condition of continued membership in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, be submitted to the President of the district to which the congregation is assigned for approval and shall not be effective or implemented by the congregation until such approval is received.~~