

# CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church  
Westlake, OH



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Constitution and Bylaws

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## **CONSTITUTION**

### **Preamble**

We, baptized members of the Church of Christ, responding in faith to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, desiring to unite together to preach the Word, administer the sacraments, and carry out God's mission, do hereby adopt this constitution and solemnly pledge ourselves to be governed by its provisions. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

### **Chapter 1 Name and Incorporation**

- C1.01. The name of this congregation shall be Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
- C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church congregation is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."
- C1.03. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the state of Ohio.
- C1.04. The seal of this congregation presents a circle with the words "Prince of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Westlake, Ohio" around a smaller circle, within which is inscribed "1960."

### **Chapter 2 Confession of Faith**

- C2.01. This congregation confesses the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- C2.02. This congregation confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.
  - a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creations.
  - b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creations, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
  - c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

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- C2.03. This congregation accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.
- C2.04. This congregation accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this congregation.
- C2.05. This congregation accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
- C2.06. This congregation accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and interpretations of the faith of the church.
- C2.07. This congregation confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

### **Chapter 3 Nature of the Church**

- C3.01. All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.
- C3.02. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.
- C3.03. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or "this church") as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three expressions – congregations, synods and the church wide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the church wide organization to which specific references may be made herein.

### **Chapter 4 Statement of Purpose**

- C4.01 The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.

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- C4.02. To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:
- a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
  - b. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
  - c. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministries with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
  - d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs.
  - e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
  - f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.
- C4.03 To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:
- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the Sacraments are administered.
  - b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
  - c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.
  - d. Teach the Word of God.
  - e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
  - f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
  - g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for the congregation's ministry and the ministry of other parts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the church wide organization of the ELCA.
  - i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with church wide policy.

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- C4.04. This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational groups and shall review their actions. [Such descriptions shall be contained in the bylaws.]
- C4.05. This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.
- C4.06. References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church – congregations, synods, and the church wide organization – as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describes the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God’s mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

## **Chapter 5 Powers of the Congregation**

- C5.01 The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.
- C5.02. The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregation Meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.
- C5.03. Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregations Council or other organizational units in the congregations’ governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by the congregation. The congregation is authorized to:
- a. Call a pastor;
  - b. Terminate the call of a pastor;
  - c. Appoint or terminate the appointment of associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers in conformity with the applicable policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - d. Adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in chapter 17, and amendments to the bylaws, as specified in chapter 16, and continuing resolutions, as provided in chapter 18.
  - e. Approve the annual budget;
  - f. Acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful purpose;
  - g. Hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
  - h. Sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
  - i. Elect its Congregation Council; and require the members of the council to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions;
  - j. Terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.

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- C5.04. This congregation shall choose from among its voting members laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by the congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the Northeast Ohio Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

## **Chapter 6 Church Affiliation**

- C6.01. This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the Northeast Ohio Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- C6.02. This congregation accepts the Confession of Faith and agrees to the Purpose of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and shall act in accordance with them.
- C6.03. This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which:
- a. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
  - b. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the bishop of the synod. These special circumstances are limited either to calling a candidate approved for the roster of ordained ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or to contracting for pastoral services with an ordained minister of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion.
  - d. This congregation agrees to consider associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers for appointment to other staff positions in the congregation according to the procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - e. This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution with the synod for review to ascertain that all of its provisions are in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or with the constitution of the synod.
- C6.04. Affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be terminated as follows:
- a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.
  - b. This congregation ceases to exist.

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- c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- d. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in C6.05.

C6.05. A congregation may terminate its relationship with this church by the following procedure:

- a. A resolution indicating the intent to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of the congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present. Such meeting may be held no sooner than thirty (30) days after written notice of the meeting is received by the bishop of the synod, during which time the congregation shall consult with the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any. The times and manner of the consultation shall be determined by the bishop in consultation with the congregation council. Unless he or she is a voting member of the congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the meeting.
- b. The secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of the congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted.
- c. The bishop of the synod and the congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph (a.) above, during a period of at least ninety (90) days after receipt by the synod of the notice as specified in paragraph (b.) above.
- d. If the congregation, after such consultation, still seeks to terminate its relationship, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members and to the bishop at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting. Unless he or she is a voting member of the congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the meeting.
- e. A copy of the resolution, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, shall be sent to the bishop within ten (10) days after the resolution has been adopted, at which time the relationship between the congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to paragraphs (g.), (h.), and (i.) below. Unless this notification to the bishop also certifies that the congregation has voted by a two-thirds vote to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, the congregation will be conclusively presumed to be an independent or non-Lutheran church.
- f. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the bishop to the secretary of this church, who shall report the termination to the church wide assembly.
- g. Congregations seeking to terminate their relationship with this church which fail or refuse to comply with each of the foregoing provisions in \*C6.05., shall be required to receive synod council approval before terminating their membership in this church.
- h. Congregations which had been members of the Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing

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provisions in \*C6.05., to receive synodical approval before terminating their membership in this church.

- i. Congregations established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in \*C6.05., to satisfy all financial obligations to this church and receive synod council approval before terminating their membership in this church.
- j. If a congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at the congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph (a.) above, another special meeting to consider termination of relationship with this church may be called no sooner than six (6) months after that first meeting. If a congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at the congregation's second meeting as specified in paragraph (d.) above, another attempt to consider termination of relationship with this church must follow all requirements of \*C6.05. and may begin no sooner than six (6) months after that second meeting.

- C6.06. If this congregation is considering relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.
- C6.07. If this congregation considers developing an additional site to be used regularly for worship, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate program unit of the church wide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action.

## **Chapter 7    Property Ownership**

- C7.01. If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the Northeast Ohio Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- C7.02. If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedures for discipline, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.
- C7.03. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a regularly called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to transfer to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation, provided the process for termination of relationship in \*C6.05. has been followed. Before this congregation takes action to transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Northeast Ohio Synod.
- C7.04. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a regularly called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body and have followed the process for termination of relationship in \*C6.05., title to property of this

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congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with the congregation by the established synodical process, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of the congregation. If the Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to continue as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

## **Chapter 8    Membership**

- C8.01.    Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of the congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have declared and maintained their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.
- C8.02.    Members shall be classified as follows:
- a. Baptized members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregation or by affirmation of faith.
  - b. Confirmed members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.
  - c. Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of the congregation.
  - d. Associate members are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. They have all the privileges except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Congregation Council of this congregation.
- C8.03.    All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Congregational Council.
- C8.04.    It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregation to:
- a. Make regular use of the means of grace, both Word and sacraments;
  - b. Live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran Church, and
  - c. Support the work of this congregation and of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.

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- C8.05. Members in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:
- a. Death;
  - b. Resignation;
  - c. Transfer or release;
  - d. Disciplinary action by the Congregation Council or
  - e. Removal from the roll due to inactivity as defined in the bylaws.

Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the church has a continuing pastoral concern.

## **Chapter 9 The Pastor**

- C9.01. Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of the voting members present and voting at a meeting called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by the congregation council to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- C9.02. Only a member of the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or who has been recommended for it by the synodical bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.
- C9.03. a. Every ordained minister shall:
1. preach the Word;
  2. administer the sacraments;
  3. conduct public worship;
  4. provide pastoral care; and
  5. speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
- b. Each ordained minister with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
1. offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
  2. supervise all schools and organizations of this congregation;
  3. install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council; and
  4. with the council, administer discipline.
- c. Every pastor shall:
1. strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;
  2. seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
  3. impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications; and
  4. endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the church wide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and of the Northeast Ohio Synod of the ELCA.

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- C9.04. The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.
- C9.05. a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which, except in the case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated only following consultation with the synodical bishop and for the following reasons:
1. mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term of years;
  2. resignation of the pastor; which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, thirty (30) days after the date on which is was submitted;
  3. inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor;
  4. the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
  5. disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, continued neglect of duty;
  6. the dissolution of the congregation; or
  7. suspension of the congregation as a result of disciplinary proceedings.
- b. In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity of the pastor or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office have come to the attention of the bishop of the synod, the bishop in his or her sole discretion may, or when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by Congregation Council, or by a petition signed at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop shall, investigate such conditions personally in company with a committee of two ordained ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged physical or mental incapacity competent medical testimony shall be obtained. When such disability is evident, the bishop of the synod with the advice of the committee shall declare the pastorate vacant. Upon the restoration of a disabled pastor to health, the bishop of the synod shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another field or labor.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties which imperil the effective functioning of the congregation, all concerned persons shall be heard, after which the bishop of the synod together with the committee described in C9.05.b. shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor and the congregation. If they agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action shall be taken by the synod. If either party fails to assent, the congregation may dismiss the pastor at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a.) by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b.) by a simple majority vote of the voting

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members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

- e. If, in the course of proceedings described in C9.05.d., the committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action to the synodical bishop who may bring charges, in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the constitution of this synod.
  - f. If, following the appointment of the committee in the course of the proceedings, it should become apparent that the pastoral office cannot be conducted effectively in the congregation(s) being served by the ordained minister due to local conditions, the bishop of the synod may temporarily suspend the pastor from service in the congregation(s) without prejudice and with pay provided through a joint church wide/synod fund and with housing provided by the congregation.
- C9.06. At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor may be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.
- C9.07. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregational Council. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Unless previously agreed upon by the synod council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.
- C9.08. This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting related to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- C9.09. When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities to each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the congregation council and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- C9.10. Reserved.
- C9.11. With the approval of the bishop of the synod the congregation may depart from C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term of years. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop, shall meet with the pastor and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of C9.05.a.

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- C9.12. The pastor of this congregation:
- a. Shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptism, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from this congregation;
  - b. Shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod; and
  - c. Shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- C9.13. The pastor(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least ninety (90) days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- C9.14. The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of the congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his or her hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another field of labor or the granting by the synod of retired status to the pastor.

## **Chapter 10 Congregation Meeting**

- C10.01. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.
- C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of the congregation upon the written request of ten percent of the voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.
- C10.03. Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail to all voting members at least ten (10) days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or paid, sent to the last known address of such members shall be sufficient. Electronic notice of meetings may be provided in addition to notice by regular mail.
- C10.04. A quorum shall be defined as the voting members (as defined in C8.02 c.) in attendance at a meeting called as described in C10.01-C10.03.
- C10.05. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- C10.06. All actions by the congregation shall be by majority vote except as otherwise provided in this constitution.

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- C10.07. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

## **Chapter 11 Officers**

- C11.01. The officers of this congregation shall be a president, first vice-president, second vice-president, secretary, financial secretary and treasurer.
- a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
  - b. The officers shall be voting members of the congregation
  - c. If the Congregation Council elects its officers, the president, first vice president, and second vice president shall be selected from membership of the Congregation Council.
- C11.02. The Congregation Council shall elect its officers and they shall be the officers of the congregation. The president, first vice-president and second vice-president shall be chosen from the voting members of the Congregation Council. The other officers, if not members of the Congregation Council, shall be accorded the privilege of voice without vote at its meetings. The officers shall be elected by written ballot and shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the Congregation Council meeting at which they are elected.
- C.11.03. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time.

## **Chapter 12 Congregation Council**

- C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the rostered staff and not more than twelve members of the congregation. Any voting member of the congregation who is at least 18 years of age may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation, or b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause.
- C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council except the rostered staff shall be elected to serve for two (2) years or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than six (6) years consecutively. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected. Ideally their tenure shall be so arranged that one-half of the terms expire annually. The nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be deemed elected to full terms. If additional members must be elected to fill unexpired terms the nominees receiving the next highest number of votes shall

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be deemed as elected to fill the unexpired terms. If elections are by voice vote, council shall determine those serving full and unexpired terms.

- C12.03. Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council may elect, by major vote a successor until the next annual meeting.
- C12.04. The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:
- a. To lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
  - b. To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
  - c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
  - d. To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.
  - e. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
  - f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
  - g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
  - h. To emphasize partnership with the synod and church wide units of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - j. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the gospel.
- C12.05. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.
- a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of trustees of this congregation, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the management of its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Ohio, except as otherwise provided herein.
  - b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.

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- c. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to ten percent of the amount expended during the proceeding financial year for current expenses for items not included in the budget.
  - d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in partnership with the synod and church wide organization.
  - e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies to the synodical treasurer.
  - f. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.
- C12.06. The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution, its bylaws and the continuing resolutions are carried out.
- C12.07. The Congregation Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.
- C12.08. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the staff of this congregation. Nothing in this provision shall be deemed to affect the congregation's responsibility for the call, terms of call, or termination of call of any employees who are on a roster of this church
- C12.09. The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.
- C12.10. Reserved.
- C12.11. The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president, and shall be called by the president at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.
- C12.12. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the rostered staff or interim pastor, except when the rostered staff or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting, which shall be the only business considered at that meeting. Chronic or repeated absence of the pastor or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Congregation Council, following consultation with the synodical bishop.
- C12.13. The Congregation Council shall provide for a financial review of all accounts of the congregation.

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## **Chapter 13 Congregational Committees**

- C13.01. The officers of this congregation who are also members of the Congregation Council and the rostered staff shall constitute the Executive Committee.
- C13.02. Reserved.
- C13.03. Reserved.
- C13.04. A Mutual Ministry Committee (in the absence of a mutual ministry committee, their duties shall be fulfilled by the Executive Committee) shall be appointed jointly by the rostered staff and the president or the first vice-president if the pastor is the president.
- C13.05. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of at least six voting members shall be appointed by the Congregation Council. Term of office will terminate at installation of the newly-called pastor.
- C13.06. Other congregational committees may be formed as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council.
- C13.07. Duties of congregational committees shall be specified in the bylaws.

## **Chapter 14 Organizations within the Congregation**

- C14.01. All organizations within this congregation shall exist to aid it in ministering to the members of this congregation and to all persons who can be reached with the Gospel of Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of this congregation's life, the organizations are subject to its oversight and direction. This congregation at its meetings shall determine their policies, guide their activities, and receive reports concerning their membership, work, and finances.
- C14.02. Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council and specified in a continuing resolution.

## **Chapter 15 Discipline of Members**

- C15.01. Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps: a) private admonition by the pastor, b) admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, and c)

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citation to appear before the Congregation Council. If for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by A. and B. hereof, the president (if not the pastor) or vice president shall administer such admonitions.

- C15.02. The process for discipline of a member of the congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. If discipline against a member proceeds beyond counseling and admonition by the pastor, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing shall be prepared by member(s) of the congregation who shall sign the charges as the accuser(s). The written charges shall be filed with the pastor, who shall advise the congregation council of the need to issue a written citation to the accused and the accusers that specifies the time and place of the hearing before the congregation council. The written charges shall accompany the written citation to the accused. The written citation that specifies the time and place of the hearing before the congregation council and requests the presence of a member charged with the offense shall be sent at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting. If the member charged with the offense fails to appear at the scheduled hearing, the congregation council may proceed with the hearing and may pass judgment in the member's absence.
- C15.03. Members of the congregation council who participate in the preparation of the written charges or who present evidence or testimony in the hearing before the congregation council are disqualified from voting upon the question of the guilt of the accused member. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the congregation council who are not disqualified but who are present and voting, and renewed admonition prove ineffectual, the council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:
- a. Censure before the council or congregation;
  - b. Suspension from membership for a definite period of time; or
  - c. Exclusion from membership in this congregation. Disciplinary actions b. and c. shall be delivered to the member in writing.
- C15.04. The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Congregation Council shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Synod Council. Such right may not be abridged and the decision of the Synod Council shall be final.
- C15.05. Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Congregation Council upon receipt of a) evidence that injustice has been done, or b) evidence of repentance and amendment.
- C15.10. Adjudication
- C15.11. When there is a disagreement among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation shall have access to the synodical bishop for consultation after informing the chair of the Congregation Council of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the Consultation Committee of this

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synod shall consider the matter. If the Consultation Committee shall fail to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to the Synod Council, whose decision shall be final.

## **Chapter 16 Bylaws**

- C16.01. This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.
- C16.02. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting.
- C16.03. Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least sixty (60) days before a regular or special Congregation meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the members of the proposal with its recommendations at least thirty (30) days in advance of the Congregation Meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or paid, sent to the last known address of such members shall be sufficient.
- C16.04. Approved changes to the bylaws shall be sent to the synod.

## **Chapter 17 Amendments**

- C17.01. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least five voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council sixty (60) days before formal consideration by this congregation at its regular or special meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the members of the proposal with their recommendation at least thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or attached, sent to the last known address of such members shall be sufficient.
- C17.02. A proposed amendment to this constitution shall:
- a. Be approved and ratified at properly called meeting according to this constitution by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present and voting.
  - b. Be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting; and
  - c. Have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.

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- C17.03. Any amendments to this constitution shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The amendment shall become effective within 120 days from the date of the receipt of the notice by the synod unless the synod informs this congregation that the amendment is in conflict with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or the constitution of the Northeast Ohio Synod.
- C17.04. This constitution may be amended to bring any section into conformity with a section or sections, either required or not required, of the Model Constitution for Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, as most recently amended by the church wide assembly. Such amendments may be approved by a simple majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of the congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided that the congregation council has submitted by mail notice to the congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council's recommendations, at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of any voting members of the congregation, the congregation council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following a vote of approval.

## **Chapter 18 Continuing Resolutions**

- C18.01. The congregation in a legally called meeting or the congregation council may enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this congregation.
- C18.02. Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a simple majority vote of the congregation at an appropriately called meeting, or a two-thirds vote of all voting member of the Congregational Council. Such continuing resolution may not conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this congregation.

## **Chapter 19 Indemnification**

- C19.01. Consistent with the provisions of the laws under which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt a provision providing indemnification for each person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a congregation council member, officer, employee, agent or other member of any committee of this congregation, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.

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## **BYLAWS**

### **Section 1. Annual Meeting**

- B1.01. The annual congregational meeting shall be held on a Sunday in February designated by the Congregation Council.
- B1.02. At the annual meeting, the pastor(s), treasurer, financial secretary, officers of the various organizations and committees shall submit reports in writing.

### **Section 2. Statement of Mission and Vision**

- B2.01. Our mission is to welcome all people into a community of peace, to become empowered followers of Jesus Christ.
- B2.02. Our statement of vision is: As a dynamic community of caring Christians, we will continually seek to enlarge God's kingdom by sharing His story, living His love and transforming lives.
- B2.03. Our core values are:  
    **G**ive of Ourselves  
    **R**espect Others  
    **A**ppreciate Others  
    **C**elebrate Others  
    **E**nergize others with grace

### **Section 3. The Congregation Council**

- B3.01. Nominations for the Congregation Council membership shall be made by the Congregation Council to the number up to the vacancies to be filled. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- B3.02. The Congregation Council shall meet regularly during the second week of the month on a day designated by the council.
- B3.03. The usual order of business shall be defined from time to time by a continuing resolution of the congregational council but shall include attention to the following: roll call, actions on excuses for absence, minutes of previous meeting(s), financial reports, committee reports, staff reports, reception of petitions, administrative reports, synod and church wide communications, unfinished business, and new business. Meetings shall begin with a devotion or prayer and shall adjourn with prayer.

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## **Section 4. The Congregation Officer's Duties**

- B4.01. The president shall preside at meetings of the congregation and the Congregation Council. In the event of the president's inability to serve, the first vice-president shall preside and in the event of the first vice-president's inability to serve, the second vice-president shall preside.
- B4.02. The secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation and of the council in a volume provided by the congregation, which shall be preserved permanently in its archives.
- B4.03. The financial secretary shall receive and keep records of all income from contributing members and other sources.
- B4.04. The treasurer shall keep the books of account of the congregation, and shall receive from the financial secretary all funds and disburse them on proper orders, making monthly remittance of benevolence receipts to the treasurer of the synod.
- B4.05. The treasurer shall make written report of all financial transactions to the Congregation Council monthly and to the congregation, together with a satisfactory financial review, at its annual meeting. All financial officers shall give corporate surety, in amounts determined by the Congregation Council, for which the premium shall be paid by the congregation. Fidelity coverage provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be deemed a fulfillment of this requirement.

## **Section 5. Standing Committees**

- B5.01. At its regular March meeting of each year, the Congregation Council shall appoint as many standing committees as the local and wider concerns of the congregation shall require. Each such committee, serving from April through the following March, shall be composed of one or more members of the Congregation Council, and in addition, other confirmed members. Although appointed by and responsible to the Congregation Council, these committees shall be recognized as representatives of the interests of, and performing essential services for, the congregation as a whole.
- B5.02. Except as stipulated in the following paragraphs, the duties of all committees shall be assigned by the Congregation Council, along with such instructions as in the judgment are in the best interests of the congregation. All actions of committees shall be subject to review by the Congregation Council.
- B5.03. There shall be a committee on Christian Education. This committee, in association with the pastor(s), shall oversee the conduct and promotion of the schools and the activities of all organizations within the congregation. It shall encourage the use of teaching and worship materials published or approved by

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- the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and seek to introduce to the church's periodicals and books of family devotion into the homes of the congregation. One of the primary aims of the committee of Christian Education shall be to bring the call to the ministry of Gospel and to other full time church vocations to the attention of qualified youth of the congregation.
- B5.04. There shall be a Property committee. This committee shall see to the proper maintenance and protection of all property of the congregation and shall take care that the same is kept in good repair.
- B5.05. There shall be a Finance committee of which the treasurer shall be member ex-officio. It shall prepare a draft budget for the succeeding year, including this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in its behalf by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the synod, and shall submit such draft budget to the Congregation Council for its action and later presentation to a congregation meeting. The committee shall exercise oversight of all the financial affairs of the congregation to make sure that they are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies to the synodical treasurer. It shall, subject to the approval of the Congregation Council, be responsible for the congregation's investments and its total insurance program. It shall provide for annual audits of the accounts of the treasurer, as well as of the accounts of the schools and organizations within the congregation.
- B5.06. There shall be a Worship and Music committee. It shall assist the Congregation Council in seeing that the services of God's house are conducted regularly and in accordance with the liturgy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, that competent ushers and greeters are recruited and trained, and that hymnals and other devotional materials are provided and properly cared for. This committee shall supervise, and strive to advance the welfare and effective service of the congregation. It shall arrange for the care of paraments and vestments. In consultation with the pastor(s), the organist and the choir director(s) shall furnish music supplies appropriate for use in the worship of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- B5.07. There shall be an Executive committee. This committee shall meet at the call of the President to plan the agenda and expedite business for the Congregation Council meetings.
- B5.08. There shall be a Mutual Ministry committee. This committee shall support, guide and counsel the rostered staff in accordance with the synod and church wide guidelines on mutual ministry.

## **Section 6. Removal from the Roll**

- B6.01. A member may be removed from the roll of members by the Congregation Council due to inactivity if the member has failed to receive Holy Communion and has not made a contribution of record for a period of two consecutive calendar

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years. This procedure shall take place with the approval of the pastor(s) or the interim pastor if there is no pastor under call to serve this congregation.

## **Section 7. Endowment Committee**

- B7.01 The endowment committee shall consist of five voting members, one of whom shall be elected annually by the Church Council from its own membership, and four of whom shall be elected from the congregation on a staggered basis for two-year terms by the congregation at annual meetings. The senior pastor shall serve as a non-voting advisory member. A member appointed by the Finance Committee shall serve as a non-voting advisory member. Actions from the committee must be agreed to by at least three of the voting members. The committee shall meet at least two (2) times per year. The Church Council shall have authority to appoint members to the committee to fill vacancies which occur on the committee. The term of the appointment shall be until the next annual meeting of the congregation. This includes the authority of the Church Council to establish the initial five members of the committee by appointment.
- B7.02 The Duties of the Committee are:
- a. To establish the Endowment Funds: which include the Prince of Peace General Endowment Fund and the Prince of Peace Benevolence Endowment Fund, and to create additional funds as may be needed to fulfill specific requirements of donors that are consistent with the Church and Fund Missions.
  - b. To determine the full procedures and policies for soliciting, processing and depositions of grant requests in accordance with the requirements and limitations of the various Funds.
  - c. To educate the congregation about the Funds, promote the Funds and solicit the donations in an appropriate manner.
  - d. To report annually to the congregation including: new gifts, investment returns earned by the Funds, size of the Funds, details of specific grants given, a list of all grant requests and deposition of requests.
  - e. To assist donors in the process of making gifts to the Funds.
  - f. To establish policies and procedures for accepting and rejecting proposed gifts by donors.
  - g. To directly or indirectly administer the Funds and maintain complete and accurate records.
- B7.03 The Prince of Peace General Endowment Fund and the Prince of Peace Benevolence Endowment Fund shall be established to strengthen and extend God's mission through the Lutheran Church, reaching out in response to human need, by making grants to promote and support Christian religion, Christian charity, Christian service including small group ministry; Christian worship and Christian education for everyone. The year's grants will be allocated to these purposes as the Endowment Committee shall determine. No grants made from the General Endowment Fund can be used for Prince of Peace Lutheran Church's normal operating expenses. The congregation may request, and the Endowment

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Committee may choose to make grants to special projects of the congregation, capital improvements of the congregation, and for other purposes. Grants from the Prince of Peace Benevolence Endowment Fund cannot be made to the congregation for any purposes, and are made to fulfill Christ's Great Commission, to reach out to others.

- B7.04 In the event the incorporated body known as Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, or its successor(s) cease to exist, then the Prince of Peace Endowment Funds shall be allocated to the ELCA Northeast Ohio Synod or its successor for the support of projects, programs, and activities of the ELCA Northeast Ohio Synod, to promote and support Christian religion, Christian charity, Christian service including small group ministry, Christian worship and Christian education for everyone. If there is no successor to the ELCA Northeast Ohio Synod, then the Prince of Peace Endowment Funds shall be allocated for the support of projects, programs and activities of the National ELCA.

## Exhibit A: Document Change Log

Date Approved	Description of Change	Presiding Pastor	Congregational President
Feb. 19, 2012 Annual Meeting	Recommended by the Congregational Council to the Congregation November 14, 2011. Changes including general updating and alignment with ELCA's Model Constitution.	Pr. Sherman Bishop	Jim Heimbuch
Feb. 17, 2017	Update section C11.01, to read: "c. If the Congregation Council elects its officers, the president, first vice president, and second vice president shall be selected from membership of the Congregation Council. " Previously, this read secretary and not second vice president.	Pr. Sherman Bishop	David Saunders