

CONSTITUTION

ST. PETER LUTHERAN CHURCH

WALBURG, TEXAS

PREAMBLE

We, baptized members of this 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.

ARTICLE 1

NAME AND INCORPORATION

1. The name of this Congregation shall be ST. PETER LUTHERAN CHURCH of Walburg, Texas.
2. For the purpose of this Constitution and the accompanying Bylaws, the St. Peter Lutheran Church of Walburg, Texas Congregation is herein-after designated as "this Congregation".
3. This Congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas.

ARTICLE 2

CONFESSION OF FAITH

1. This Congregation confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. 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 creation.
 - 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 Creation, 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.
3. 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.

4. This Congregation accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the Faith of this Congregation.
5. 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.
6. 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 the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.
7. 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 priesthood of all believers for God's mission in the world.

ARTICLE 3

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

1. All power in this Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its Head. All actions of this Congregation are to be carried out under His rule and authority.
2. 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.
3. 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 the 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.
4. 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.
 - h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the District, and the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.
 - i. Foster and participate in Ecumenical relationships consistent with (LCMC) church-wide policy.
5. This Congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the Bylaws. The Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each Committee, Task Force, or other Organizational Groups and shall review their actions.
6. This Congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement and goals which will provide specific direction for its programs.

ARTICLE 4

POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

1. The powers of this Congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.
2. The powers of this Congregation are vested in the Congregation Meeting called and conducted as provided in this Constitution and Bylaws.
3. Only such authority as is delegated to the Council or other Organizational Units in the Congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by the Congregation. The Congregation is authorized to:
- a. Call a Pastor; as provided in Article 8.
 - b. Terminate the call of a Pastor; as provided in Article 8.
 - c. Appoint or terminate the appointment of Associates in Ministry in conformity with the applicable policy of the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.
 - d. Approve the Annual Budget.
 - e. Acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means.
 - f. Hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose.
 - g. Sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, otherwise dispose of its real property by any lawful means.
 - h. Elect its Congregation Council, Boards, and Committees, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the Constitution Bylaws, and continuing resolutions, and
 - i. Enter into or terminate its relationship with the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ or any other affiliation as provided in Article 5.

ARTICLE 5

INDEPENDENCE AND AFFILIATION

1. This Congregation shall be an independent, voluntary member of the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ Association.
2. This Congregation may affiliate with other Lutheran church bodies as it so decides. A decision to join or leave a Lutheran church body shall require a majority vote of a quorum of Voting Members present and voting, at a legally called congregational meeting. This vote shall be ratified by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of a quorum of Voting Members present and voting at a legally called congregational meeting no less than sixty (60) days after the initial vote.

ARTICLE 6

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

1. All property that is acquired by this Congregation will be held, owned, and titled in the name of this Congregation. This Congregation's real property will not be purchased, leased, disposed of or encumbered in any manner except as approved by two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of a quorum of Voting Members present and voting.
2. If this Congregation is removed from membership in any association they are affiliated with, title to property shall continue to reside with this Congregation.
3. If a two-thirds majority of a quorum of Voting Members of this Congregation present and voting at a legally called and conducted meeting of this Congregation, vote to transfer to another Lutheran Church Body, relate to a non-Lutheran church body, or become independent, title to property shall continue to reside with this Congregation.
4. If this Congregation ceases to exist, title to un-disposed property shall pass to a legal entity determined by the Council, and approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of a quorum of Voting Members present and voting at a legally called meeting of this Congregation.

ARTICLE 7

MEMBERSHIP

1. Members of this Congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of this Congregation at the time that this Constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and its Bylaws.
2. 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 Congregations. They may also be youth baptized into another Christian congregation and transferred to St. Peter by parental Affirmation of Faith.
 - b. Confirmed Members are Baptized Members who have been (1) Confirmed in this congregation; (2) transferred as Confirmed Members from other Lutheran Congregations; or (3) received as a Member by Affirmation of Faith.

- c. Voting Members are Confirmed Members, provided, however, that as to questions involving the sale or encumbering of real estate, only Confirmed Members eighteen (18) years of age and older shall be entitled to vote. Furthermore, Voting Members shall have communed and made contributions of record to this Congregation at least 4 times during the immediate past twelve (12) months prior to the date of a special or regular congregational meeting in order to be eligible to vote. Voting Members serving on active duty with the armed forces of the United States, who are present at the meeting, shall be exempt from these requirements.
 - d. Associate Members are persons holding membership in other Lutheran (Christian) congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the Life and Mission of this Congregation. They shall have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights, eligibility for election to the Council, and use of the cemetery privilege.
 - e. Friends of St. Peter are regular guests who wish to retain ties (newsletters, etc.) to this Congregation. They may include (1) previous members of this Congregation; (2) non-members living within the household of a member; (3) non-members on the staff of this Congregation; and (4) visitors who do not meet the above requirements of a Confirmed or Associate Member. They shall have no voting rights, eligibility for election to the Council, nor use of the cemetery privilege.
- 3. All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Council.
 - 4. 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 through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as Biblical Stewards.
 - 5. Membership in this Congregation shall be terminated by the Council due to any of the following:
 - a. Death
 - b. Resignation
 - c. Transfer or Release as defined in the Bylaws
 - 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.

ARTICLE 8

THE PASTOR

- 1. A Pastoral call shall be approved by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a congregational meeting called for that purpose.
- 2. Consistent with Article 2-Confession of Faith and the Faith and Practice of the Lutheran Churches in Mission for Christ, every ordained minister will:
 - a. Preach the Word;
 - b. Administer the Sacraments;

- c. Conduct public worship;
 - d. Provide pastoral care;
 - e. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world;
 - f. Offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - g. Supervise all schools and organizations of this Congregation;
 - h. Install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council,
 - i. With the Council, administer discipline; and
 - j. Seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel and strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad.
3. 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.
4. 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 for the following reasons:
- a. Mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term of years.
 - b. Resignation of the Pastor.
 - c. Inability to conduct the Pastoral office effectively in this Congregation in view of local conditions (without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the Pastor) or the physical or mental incapacity of the Pastor, or the incompetence of the Pastor. This action requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of a legally called congregational meeting.
 - d. Disqualification of the Pastor through discipline on grounds of Doctrine, Morality, or continued Neglect of Duty; or
 - e. The dissolution of this Congregation.
5. During the period of service, an Interim Pastor shall have the rights and duties in this Congregation of a regularly called Pastor and may delegate the same in part to a Supply Pastor with the consent of this Congregation or Council. The Interim Pastor and any ordained Pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a Pastor.
6. 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.
7. When a Pastor is called to serve in company with another Pastor or Pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each Pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the Pastors and the Council. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
8. The Pastor shall keep accurate parochial records of all Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages, Burials, Communicants, Members Received, Members Dismissed, or Members Excluded from this Congregation, and shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the Council.

ARTICLE 9

CONGREGATION MEETING

1. The Annual meetings of this Congregation shall be held at those times specified in the Bylaws.
2. Notice of all scheduled Annual meetings and special meetings of this Congregation shall be given at the Services of Worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail or email (when available) 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.
3. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the Pastor, the Council, or the President of this Congregation, and shall be called at the written request of ten (10) 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.
4. Twenty-Five percent (25%) of the Voting Members shall constitute a quorum. If a quorum is not present, the meeting shall be moved to the following Sunday, until a quorum can be achieved.
5. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
6. All actions by this Congregation shall be by majority vote except as otherwise provided in this Constitution.
7. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this Congregation.

ARTICLE 10 OFFICERS

1. The Officers of the Council and this Congregation shall be a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
 - a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the Bylaws.
 - b. The officers shall be Voting Members of this Congregation.
2. The Officers shall be elected by the Council by written ballot and shall serve for one year. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. Officer terms shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31.
3. All Voting Members of the Council, twenty-one (21) years of age or older, are eligible to be elected as an Officer of this Congregation.

ARTICLE 11 THE COUNCIL

1. The members of the Council (except the Pastor(s)) shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation during the month of October. Their term of office shall last for two (2) years with the term of office beginning on January 1 and ending on December 31. Such members shall not be eligible to serve consecutive terms. Newly elected Council members shall be installed at Sunday worship preceding the January Church Council meeting.

2. The voting membership of the Council shall consist of no less than six (6) and no more than nine (9) members of this Congregation. Any Voting Member of this Congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Council may be declared vacant if the member:
 - a. Ceases to be a Voting Member of this Congregation or
 - b. Is absent from four regularly scheduled meetings of the Council per calendar year without good cause.
 - c. Should a member's place on the Council be declared vacant, leaving less than six Voting Members, the Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor for the duration of the unexpired term of the vacancy.
3. The 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 Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ. The duties of the 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, and Congregational Committees, 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, appointment, 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. The Council shall be responsible for identifying and reviewing the credentials of all interim and/or contract pastors.
4. The Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this Congregation and shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this Congregation are being conducted efficiently.
 - a. The Council shall be the Board of Directors 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 Texas, except as otherwise provided herein.
 - b. The Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, lease, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of this Congregation.
 - c. The Council may enter into contracts or purchase agreements to spend up to fifteen hundred dollars (\$1,500.00) for items not included in the budget. All items in excess of fifteen hundred dollars (\$1,500.00) must be approved by the Congregation in a legally called Congregation Meeting.
 - d. The Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this Congregation, and shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following adoption. Council may spend available funds for items/expenses approved by the Congregation within the Budget,

even when exceeding fifteen hundred dollars (\$1,500.00). This includes approved amounts for salaries, insurance, utilities, etc.

- e. The Council shall be responsible for this Congregation's Investments and its total Insurance Program.
 - f. The Council is responsible for the disbursement of memorial funds in accordance with the Bylaws.
 - g. The Council, in consultation with the Properties Committee, shall be authorized to make reasonable immediate 'critical emergency repairs' which exceed fifteen hundred dollars (\$1500.00), even if they lack a budget for the work. This authority shall be limited to repair or replacement of items broken or damaged.
- 5. The Council shall see that the provisions of this Constitution and its Bylaws are carried out. The Council may enact continuing resolutions which describe the function of various committees or organizations of this Congregation.
 - 6. The Council shall provide for an annual review of the Membership Roster, taking into account the instructions found in the Bylaws.
 - 7. The Council shall be responsible for the appointment and supervision of the salaried lay workers of this Congregation.
 - 8. The Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this Congregation at the annual meeting.
 - 9. The Council shall normally meet once each month. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor, President, or at the request of at least one-half of the members of the Council. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Council.
 - 11. The Council may appoint delegates to conventions.
 - 12. The Council shall review and disposition facility use requests for non-congregational meetings and events, as specified in the Bylaws.

ARTICLE 12

CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEES

- 1. The officers of this Congregation and the Pastor shall constitute the Executive Committee.
- 2. A Nominating Committee of four (4) Voting Members of this Congregation, two of whom shall be outgoing members of the Council, shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year.
- 3. An Audit Committee of three (3) Voting Members of this Congregation shall be elected by the Council. The Audit Committee shall review any and all financial records of the church. A report shall be presented to this Congregation at the annual meeting. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Council. Term of office will be three (3) years, with one (1) member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for reelection. The members shall be elected no later than the final Council meeting of each calendar year.

4. A Staff Support Committee (in the absence of a Staff Support Committee, their duties shall be fulfilled by the Executive Committee) shall be appointed jointly by the President and the Pastor. Term of office shall be two (2) years, three (3) members appointed each successive year. Committee members will hold no other office in the Congregation during their term (unless fulfilled by the Executive Committee).
5. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of five (5) Voting Members shall be appointed by the Council and will report to the council. Term of office will terminate at installation of the newly-called Pastor.
6. Other Congregational Committees may be formed as the need arises, by decision of the Council.

ARTICLE 13

DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

1. 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 (2) or three (3) witnesses, and
 - c. Citation to appear before the Council.
2. A member charged with the offense shall appear before the Council having received a written notice, specifying the exact charges that have been made against the member, at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting.
3. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the Council, 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.
4. The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Council shall have the right to appeal the decision to this Congregation at a legally called special Congregational Meeting. Such right may not be abridged and the decision of this Congregation, by a majority vote of those Voting Members present and voting, shall be final.
5. Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Council upon receipt of:
 - a. Evidence that injustice has been done to the disciplined member or
 - b. Evidence of repentance and amendment

ARTICLE 14

BYLAWS

1. This Congregation may adopt Bylaws. No Bylaw may conflict with this Constitution.

2. 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.
3. Changes to the Bylaws may be proposed by any Voting Member provided, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Council at least sixty (60) days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose and that the Council notify the members of the proposal with its recommendations at least thirty (30) days in advance of the Congregation Meeting.

ARTICLE 15 AMENDMENTS

1. Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by at least ten (10) Voting Members or by the Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Council sixty (60) days before formal consideration by this Congregation at its annual meeting or at a special meeting called for that purpose. The Council shall notify the members of the proposal, with their recommendations, at least thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting.
2. A proposed amendment to this Constitution shall:
 - a. Be approved at a properly called meeting according to this Constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting; and
 - 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.

THE BYLAWS

SECTION 1 NURTURE OF CHILDREN

- A. As Lutheran Christians, we recognize it is our duty to raise our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and to have them carefully and conscientiously instructed in the articles of our Holy Christian Faith.
- B. In order that the children may be adequately taught in the Faith of the Church, and trained in the fear of God, instruction to prepare them for their Confirmation shall be given them by the Pastor and this Congregation.

SECTION 2 COMMUNION PARTICIPATION

- A. This Congregation invites all of its members, who have been prepared to receive the Sacrament, to participate regularly in Holy Communion.
- B. Participation in Holy Communion shall be open to members of other Congregations, who accept the Lutheran teaching in regard to this Sacrament.
- C. It shall be made known to prospective participants that the belief of this Congregation is:
 - 1. Participation in the Lord's Supper is the reception of the "Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, given with bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself, for us to eat and drink".
 - 2. We hold that a "person is well prepared and worthy, who believes these words, 'given and shed for you for the remission of sins'. But anyone who does not believe these words, or doubts them is neither prepared nor worthy, for the words 'for you' require simply a believing heart".
- D. Record of participation in Holy Communion shall be maintained. If a member of another Congregation communes, notice shall be sent to the Pastor of that Congregation, if requested.

SECTION 3 BUSINESS MEETINGS

- A. A scheduled Annual Congregational Meeting shall be held in October of each year. The preferred date is the 2nd Sunday, but dates may be adjusted by the Council with at least 60 days advanced notice when the 2nd Sunday would present a schedule conflict for events important to the Congregation. Annual meetings may be temporarily postponed in the event of a local or national emergency as well. Agendas, arrangements, and times shall be determined by the Council, and announced as stipulated in Article 9 of the Constitution.

SECTION 4 NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

- A. Council Members shall be elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting. Voting shall be done in accordance with Robert's Rule of Order, latest edition.
- B. All Voting Members of this Congregation are eligible to be elected as a member of the Council.

1. A slate of nominees shall be presented by the chairperson of the Nominating Committee.
2. All specific nominations for election shall be made from the floor of the meeting, and may also include nominees other than those presented by the committee.
3. Provisions shall be made in the nominations and elections for Council positions to ensure at least the minimum and not more than the maximum members as stated in Article 11.1.
4. The term of office for a Council member shall be as stated in Article 11 of the constitution.

SECTION 5

DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

A. The duties of the PRESIDENT shall be:

1. Preside and officiate at all legal meetings of this Congregation.
2. Preside and officiate at all legal meetings of the Congregation Council.
3. Upon invitation, and with Council approval, serve as the public representative of this Congregation at functions other than Congregational activities.
4. Work closely with the Pastor to insure that the day-to-day operation of this Congregation does not interfere with effective performance of those specific duties of the Pastor as stated in the Pastoral call.
5. Perform other duties requested by the Pastor or the Council.

B. The duty of the VICE PRESIDENT shall be:

1. Fulfill all duties of the President at such time and for such duration as the President is unable to perform those duties.
2. Assist the President at all meetings of this Congregation and/or Council in such things as insuring the presence of a quorum, counting ballots, etc.
3. Perform other duties requested by the Pastor, the President, or the Council.

C. The duty of the TREASURER shall be:

1. Record all offerings and contributions, and insure that they are deposited into this Congregation's bank accounts appropriately.
2. Insure accurate individual records are kept on specified offerings and contributions.
3. Pay all bills of this Congregation.
4. Keep accurate records of all receipts and disbursements.
5. Submit an audited annual report of the prior calendar year, to be presented at the Annual Congregational Meeting.
6. Insure that in any foreseen absence of the Treasurer, that ample notice of such absence be forwarded to the President and/or Pastor; and insure that, for an extended absence, appropriate measures be in place for the fulfillment of this Congregation's financial responsibilities.

E. The duty of the SECRETARY shall be:

1. Keep an accurate record of the proceedings of all Congregational and/or Council Meetings, and to submit those records for approval at the next meeting.
2. Carry on any official correspondence of this Congregation.

SECTION 6

STANDING COMMITTEES AND ORGANIZATIONS

- A. Article 12 of this Constitution defines the Executive Committee, Nominating Committee, Audit Committee and Staff Support Committee. These are independent Committees reporting to the Congregation. Article 12 also defines the Call Committee which reports to the Council.
- B. In addition to the above Committees, the work of the Lord, as expressed by this Congregation, shall be assisted by Standing Committees with members appointed by and reporting to the Council. The Council may also authorize Organizations within the Congregation. Standing Committees and Organizations shall routinely submit to the Council their meeting minutes, schedule of proposed future meetings and events, and proposed actions requiring Council approval. They shall submit the coming year's budget requirements to the Council Treasurer each August, and shall prepare an annual report to the Congregation each December.
- C. The following Standing Committees report to the Council:
 - 1. Worship Committee
 - a. Structure: The committee shall include at least 5 members approved by the Council for a one (1) year term. Successive re-appointments are allowable. The Committee shall elect a Chair and Secretary.
 - b. Objective: To prayerfully and thoughtfully support and assist the Pastor to plan meaningful worship experiences and vibrant music. This shall include:
 - i. Selection of songs;
 - ii. Arrangements for special services - such as dates and times for Lenten and Christmas services, with decoration plans when necessary;
 - iii. Present non-traditional service proposals (such as Polka Service) to Council for approval;
 - iv. Identification and scheduling of qualified musical accompanists;
 - v. Arrangements for supply pastors during Pastor's vacations;
 - vi. Coordinate annual volunteers for Alter Guild, Lectors, Ushers and Greeters;
 - vii. Post flower charts and advertise needs for flowers at services;
 - viii. Coordinate annual volunteers for Alter Guild, Ushers and Greeters; and,
 - ix. Other duties as necessary.
 - 2. Education & Evangelism-Outreach Committee
 - a. Structure: The committee shall include at least 5 members approved by the Council for a one (1) year term. Successive re-appointments are allowable. The Committee shall elect a Chair and Secretary. The Pastor shall be a member of this Committee.
 - b. Objective: To proclaim the Gospel of Salvation through Jesus Christ; to develop and promote opportunities to experience this Gospel to an ever-wider audience (whether at St. Peter or other Christian institutions); to reach out to all who will hear with Bible-based Christian education for all ages; and to maximize the active retention of members and visitors. Responsibilities shall primarily include:
 - i. Develop and host Confirmation classes;
 - ii. Develop and host Lutheran Affirmation of Faith classes for adults;
 - iii. Develop and host Bible study classes;
 - iv. Follow-up with visitors and inactive members to encourage participation;

- v. Expand the reach of St. Peter through Media ministries.

3. Fellowship Committee

- a. Structure: The committee shall include at least 5 members approved by the Council for a one (1) year term. Successive re-appointments are allowable. The Committee shall elect a Chair and Secretary. The Committee may establish sub-teams to manage large events such as the Chili Supper.
- b. Objective: To organize fellowship events for the cultivation of community life together; to help integrate new and prospective members into the life of the church and to get acquainted with other members and organizations within the church; and, to extend fellowship to the surrounding community. This shall include:
 - i. Coffee socials;
 - ii. Pot luck meals;
 - iii. Soup and chili suppers;
 - iv. Special events such as Trunk or Treat and Easter Egg Hunt; and,
 - v. Other duties as necessary.

4. Bereavement & Parking Committee

- a. Structure: The committee shall include at least 5 members approved by the Council for a one (1) year term. Successive re-appointments are allowable. The Committee shall elect a Chair and Secretary. The Committee may establish sub-teams for Bereavement & for Parking.
- b. Objective: To facilitate funerals held at St. Peter; to organize fellowship events to support and console bereaved families. This shall include:
 - i. Organizing & instructing workers to direct orderly parking around the church;
 - ii. Organizing & serving meals following funerals;
 - iii. Visiting with families to comfort and share Christian hope; and,
 - iv. Other duties as necessary.

5. Properties Committee

- a. Structure: The committee shall include at least 5 members approved by the Council for a one (1) year term. Successive re-appointments are allowable. The Committee shall elect a Chair and Secretary.
- b. Objective: To ensure the properties of the Congregation are adequately maintained and that repairs, upkeep and maintenance are scheduled in a timely fashion. This includes:
 - i. Identify immediate & long-range facility needs; develop proposals and budgets for resolution; request timely action from Council;
 - ii. Schedule and advertise clean-up days at the church and cemetery;
 - iii. Update job descriptions, solicit bids & make recommendations for routine building/ground maintenance; and,
 - iv. Other duties as necessary.

6. Cemetery Committee

- a. Structure: The committee shall include at least 3 members approved by the Council for a one (1) year term. Successive re-appointments are allowable. The Committee shall elect a Chair and Secretary. The Treasurer shall be a member of this Committee.
- b. Objective: To manage the St. Peter Cemetery burial instructions and gravesite maps at the Cemetery; to plan for future needs with the Properties Committee; to identify current maintenance requirements; and to ensure Cemetery Funds are spent according to those Bylaws.

7. Finance Committee

- a. Structure: The Finance Committee shall include at least 3 members approved by the Council for a one (1) year term, including the Treasurer of the Congregation and a secretary.
- b. Objective: To promote responsible stewardship of the congregation's finances and to encourage long-range planning for future financial needs. This shall primarily include:
 - i. Annual budget proposal;
 - ii. Proposed benevolence recipients;
 - iii. Making prior year books available for annual audits; and,
 - iv. Other duties as necessary.

D. The following are Council authorized Organizations within the Congregation. Each develops its own goals and manages the expenditure of its funds at St. Peter. These Organizations shall support social and benevolent causes, seeking to spread the Love of Jesus Christ to neighbors in our community and around the globe. Each Organization shall provide regular written reports of activities and finances to the Council.

1. Ladies Aid Organization
2. Golden Oldies Organization

SECTION 7 INACTIVE MEMBERS

- A. The Council shall annually review the membership roll of this Congregation as stipulated in Article 11.6 of the Constitution. Those members who are not taking an active part in this Congregation shall be contacted, by telephone, mail, or by visit, either by the Pastor or a Representative of the Council as the first step to attempt to get them to become active again in this or another Christian congregation. All contact with the inactive member shall be documented and reported to the Council.
- B. For members who confirm they have transferred their membership to another congregation:
 1. A letter shall be sent to the member(s) and to the new congregation to request official confirmation of transfer and confirm the date that the member(s) may be removed from the St. Peter list of Voting Members.
 2. If there is no objection within 30 days, the Council has the authority to (a) change their status from 'Member' (Baptized, Confirmed, Voting or Associate) to 'Friend of St. Peter'; or (b) delete their name(s) from the membership roll of this Congregation
- C. After the inactive member has been contacted and there is no positive response, the following steps shall be taken:
 1. A letter shall be sent encouraging the member(s) to become active.
 2. If after a month there has been no response, a certified, return receipt letter is to be sent.
 3. If there is no response to the certified letter within a month, the Council has the authority to either change their status from 'Member' (Baptized, Confirmed, Voting or Associate) to 'Friend of St. Peter' or delete their name(s) from the membership roll of this Congregation.

SECTION 8 CHURCH CEMETERY

- A. Only Voting Members of this Congregation, their spouses, and young children living within the Member's home are permitted to be buried in the church cemetery. There is no cost to our members for the plots; however plots will not be reserved. However, in the event of the death of a member, the spouse may at that time reserve his/her spot next to the deceased loved one. Should the living spouse move away or transfer his/her membership, he/she will remain entitled to be buried next to the deceased spouse.
- B. When a double row of graves has been started, all graves dug after its beginning must follow in succession until the row is completed. All rows will begin along the south-southeast (the road) side and proceed toward the north-northwest (the fence) side, with enough space left available between the fence and the last grave in each row to allow for a driveway.

SECTION 9 CEMETERY FUND

- A. Statement of purpose: The purpose of the St. Peter Lutheran Church Cemetery Fund is to:
 - 1. Provide funds for future land purchase or facilities such as a Columbarium which might be needed for additional burial space at the church cemetery;
 - 2. Provide funds for the care and maintenance of the church cemetery;
 - 3. Provide funds for general improvement needed at the church cemetery.
- B. Guidelines: The Cemetery Fund of St. Peter Lutheran Church will be operated according to the following guidelines:
 - 1. Monies from memorials, special gifts, or estates designated for the St. Peter Lutheran Church Cemetery Fund will be placed in special accounts as determined by the Cemetery Committee and Church Council of St. Peter Lutheran Church;
 - 2. Administrators of this fund will be the Cemetery Committee and Church Council of St. Peter Lutheran Church;
 - 3. The Principal(s) of this (these) account(s) is to be used only for the purchase of additional land or facilities (such as a Columbarium) for future expansion of the St. Peter Lutheran Church Cemetery;
 - 4. Interest or dividends earned from the Cemetery Fund is to be used for payment of the care and maintenance of St. Peter Lutheran's Cemetery;
 - 5. Any amendments to these guidelines and policies of the Cemetery Fund will require the approval of a simple majority of the Voting Members of St. Peter Lutheran Church.
- C. The above Statement of Purpose and Guidelines are a revision to the 1985 Purpose and Guidelines. This revision was approved by the Congregation on October 11, 2015.

SECTION 10 MEMORIAL FUNDS

- A. The Council shall be responsible for the disbursement of memorial funds. The Council shall attempt to support the desires of the family of the deceased.
- B. The family shall be contacted six (6) months following the funeral and asked about specific desired uses for the memorials. Family shall be notified that the Council will have final approval on specific uses,

based upon the needs and directions of the Congregation. Council may direct use any funds not specified for other uses toward the general needs of St. Peter. Family contacts shall be attempted in the following sequence:

1. Surviving spouse
2. Surviving child
3. Closest surviving member of Congregation

SECTION 11

FACILITY AND PROPERTY USE

- A. To fulfill the requirements in Article 11.4.a and Article 11.12, the Council shall manage the rules and procedures for the facilities and property belonging to this Congregation. Any authorized use shall support the Christian mission of this Congregation for its members and for the local community. Rules for use shall be appended to the Bylaws for ease of access, but may be modified by official Council action at a scheduled Council meeting.
- B. The Christian Mission for existing real properties of this Congregation
 1. The Sanctuary supports Christian worship and special Christian services such as weddings and funerals. The building shall not be rented. Availability shall be limited to active members (i.e. Voting Members) of the Congregation for funerals and weddings. These events and schedules require advanced approval by the Pastor and Council.
 2. The Parish Hall and Gym building is solely intended for Christian education and fellowship initiated by the Council, a Committee, an Organization of the Congregation, or led by a Voting Member of the Congregation. Events and schedules require advanced approval by the Council according to the Use Policy.
 3. The Cemetery shall be used exclusively for burials and Christian services as defined in Section 8 of these Bylaws (Church Cemetery). Burials and services shall require advanced approval by the Pastor after review with the Chairman of the Cemetery Committee.
 4. The Parsonage shall house the St. Peter Pastor and the Pastor's family.
 5. The Pasture adjacent to the Parish Hall shall be available for over-flow parking and long-range expansion. Other uses and schedules require advanced approval by the Council.
- C. The Council has established guidelines for use in areas that are likely to be controversial. The most recent version of these documents shall be distributed with the Constitution and Bylaws, but they are separate documents which may be modified by the Council without Congregational approval. Check with the church office for the most current version.
 1. Wedding Guidelines
 2. Parish Hall and Gym Use Policy

**Editor's Notes about Addendums & Updates
to St. Peter Lutheran Church of Walburg Constitution & Bylaws**

On March 31, 1889, St. Peter Lutheran Church was founded by ten German immigrants to Texas. The original German language constitution proclaimed, "The purpose being to preach the word of God, observe the sacraments, save souls, and teach and live Godly life in peace and harmony."

The St. Peter constitution has been updated numerous times throughout the years. This included the changes necessary when joining or merging with new Lutheran organizations. St. Peter had originally belonged to the Texas Synod. In 1896, the Texas Synod joined a federation with the Iowa Synod. In 1930, The Texas and Iowa Synods participated in the organization of the American Lutheran Church.

In 1982, St. Peter Lutheran Church adopted a new constitution. Then, in 1986, the congregation narrowly passed the proposition to dissolve the American Lutheran Church (ALC) and merge its membership with those of the Lutheran Church of America (ALC) and with the American Evangelical Lutheran Church (AELC) to form the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). In 2012, the congregation voted to leave the ELCA and join the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC). The current constitution was rewritten and approved in January 2013, to align with the LCMC format and organization.

The 2013 constitution has continued to evolve through routine updates. The above version includes all updates approved by the congregation and council through 2024.