

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Northern Plains District of the LCMC

CONSTITUTION

Preamble

As members of the priesthood of all believers, called by the Holy Spirit to confess the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in its purity, we give thanks for God's continual faithfulness and, by adopting this constitution, form the Northern Plains District of the LCMC, uniting to carry out God's mission in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Article 1 - Name and Incorporation

C1.01 The name of this corporation shall be Northern Plains District of the LCMC. It shall herein be referred to as "Northern Plains District" and the official abbreviation for Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ is LCMC.

C1.02 Northern Plains District of the LCMC is incorporated and its Articles of Incorporation are filed under the laws of the State of North Dakota.

Article 2 - Statement of Faith

C2.01 We, the members of Northern Plains District of the LCMC believe, teach and confess the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

C2.02 We believe, teach and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe in Him.

- 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, reconciles people to Himself, and gives eternal life.
- b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and offering mercy in the person and work of Jesus Christ through whom God was pleased to reconcile all things to Himself.
- c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering on Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world. As the inspired Word of God, the Scriptures are the sole authoritative source and norm of our proclamation, faith, and life.

C2.03 We accept the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian creeds as true declarations of the scriptural faith we believe, teach and confess.

C2.04 We believe, teach and accept the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism as true witnesses to the Word of God, normative for our teaching and practice.

C2.05 We believe, teach and confess the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise, the Large Catechism and the Formula of Concord, as further valid expositions of the Holy Scriptures.

C2.06 We believe, teach and confess 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 - Ministry

C3.01 The members of Northern Plains District affirm the priesthood of all believers. Northern Plains District commits itself to equip its members to ministries of witness, fellowship and service both within and beyond the church.

C3.02 Northern Plains District may establish and amend ministry standards complementing those lawfully adopted by LCMC, provided they do not conflict with those lawfully adopted by LCMC and provided such ministry standards are approved by Northern Plains District's convention and ratified by a majority of Northern Plains District's member congregations.

C3.03 A called minister of Word and Sacrament of a Northern Plains District member congregation shall subscribe to the confession of faith and otherwise comply with any ministry standards established by Northern Plains District and LCMC and shall be subject to discipline as set forth in the rules and regulations adopted by Northern Plains District.

C3.04 God's call of a particular man or woman to the office of pastoral ministry will be confirmed by the call of a congregation. A congregation shall issue the call to public ministry. A congregation also may call a chaplain, missionary or pastor employed in another type of special ministry.

Article 4 - Membership

C4.01 Northern Plains District is a district of LCMC. Like LCMC, Northern Plains District is an association of its member LCMC congregations. Every LCMC congregation seeking membership in Northern Plains District must subscribe in writing to this constitution and these bylaws and be approved by the Northern Plains District Council according to B1.03 and other guidelines that promote the well-being and peace among member congregations.

C4.02 Except as otherwise agreed in writing, each congregation retains its own property, assets and title and Dakota District makes no claim to any of them.

C4.03 The District Council of Northern Plains District shall adopt such rules and regulations governing the suspension of membership, as it deems necessary. Such rules and regulations shall be approved by the convention of Northern Plains District. By action of its District Council, Northern Plains District may suspend the membership of a congregation by a two-thirds majority vote of a quorum at a regularly called meeting of its District Council. The District Council shall give 60 days written notice of its intent to seek suspension of membership of a member congregation. The council shall report the suspension of any member congregation to all its member congregations within 30 days of taking such action. The suspension of a member congregation by the council shall remain in force until the next convention of Northern Plains District at which time a decision to terminate membership of a member congregation may be made by a two-thirds majority vote of eligible delegates.

Article 5 - Governance

C5.01 Northern Plains District shall be organized through congregations, District Council, its convention and other entities as its members choose to adopt. The District Council shall be elected at the district convention.

C5.02 The convention of congregational delegates shall be Northern Plains District's means to legislate the authority and the powers of the Northern Plains District. This authority and these powers shall be guided and limited by the provisions of Northern Plains District's articles of incorporation, constitution, bylaws and the convention's own resolutions. The convention shall meet annually in regular session but may meet as called by the District Council. The convention shall have only such authority as specifically granted in Northern Plains District's constitution and bylaws. Congregations shall select delegates and delegates shall represent their congregation and shall vote in a manner that reflects the will of their congregation.

C5.03 Subject to the limitations imposed by this constitution and Northern Plains District's bylaws, the business and affairs of Northern Plains District shall be managed by its District Council.

C5.04 Other matters of governance, organization and order shall be addressed in the bylaws of Northern Plains District.

Article 6 - Amendment of Constitution and Bylaws

C6.01 Any member congregation of Northern Plains District may propose, in writing, an amendment to this constitution. The proposed amendment shall be referred, at least four months prior to the next convention, to the District Council for review and comment. The proposed amendment shall immediately thereafter be submitted in writing to the member congregations 60 days prior to a convention. The amendment shall be presented for vote to the delegates to the convention. The adoption of any amendment shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the delegates present at the convention and ratified in accordance with Section 6.03 below.

C6.02 The District Council may propose an amendment, in writing to member congregations, three months prior to the next regularly scheduled convention. The adoption of such amendment shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the delegates present and voting at such convention but shall not become effective until ratified as provided in Section 6.03 below.

C6.03 Any constitutional amendment must be ratified by two-thirds majority vote of the member congregations, with each congregation entitled to one vote. Any proposed amendment not ratified within one year of the date of approval by the convention shall be deemed rejected. The District Council is authorized to oversee the ratification process in a manner consistent with this constitution.

C6.04 Bylaws not in conflict with this constitution may be adopted or amended by Northern Plains District's convention by a majority vote of the delegates present and voting at the convention and provided that a majority of Northern Plains District's member congregations do not reject the adopted or amended bylaws.

BYLAWS

These bylaws are duly adopted and govern the affairs of Northern Plains District of the LCMC hereinafter referred to as "Northern Plains District." Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ shall hereafter be referred to as LCMC.

Bylaw Section 1 - Membership

B1.01 Northern Plains District is a district comprised of LCMC congregations subject to the provisions of the constitution of Northern Plains District and these bylaws. Northern Plains District's voting members shall be member congregations.

B1.02 A congregation is a community of baptized persons gathered around Word and Sacrament. Each member congregation of Northern Plains District shall adopt governing documents and govern itself in a way consistent with the faith and governing documents of LCMC and Northern Plains District. Northern Plains District does

not direct, control or supervise the affairs of individual congregations except as provided specifically in the constitution.

B1.03 Northern Plains District shall recognize, receive and maintain a list of member congregations. Member congregations shall, by their practice and their governing documents:

- a. Preach the Word and administer the sacraments in accord with the Augsburg Confession;
- b. Uphold and subscribe to Northern Plains District's constitution and bylaws;
- c. Support the life and work of Northern Plains District by their prayer, practice, and mission.

B1.04 A congregation may terminate its membership in Northern Plains District by:

- a. Following such internal congregational procedures as are required by that congregation and giving notice to Northern Plains District that it no longer desires to be a member of Northern Plains District;
- b. Ceasing to exist;
- c. Taking action to dissolve itself as a congregation.

Bylaw Section 2 - Ministry

B2.01 Member congregations of Northern Plains District are authorized to call and ordain ministers pursuant to such standards as the Northern Plains District convention may adopt.

B2.02 All called and ordained ministers of Northern Plains District shall subscribe in writing to Northern Plains District's statement of faith and such ministry standards as may be established by Northern Plains District. Ordained ministers may be subject to discipline as provided for in these bylaws or as otherwise provided for in a discipline plan adopted by the District Council and ratified by the Northern Plains District convention.

B2.03 Ministry standards, once adopted by Northern Plains District may be amended only by Northern Plains District's convention with such amendments being ratified by an affirmative vote of a majority of the Northern Plains District member congregations. Any amendment to the Northern Plains District ministry standards shall first be made in writing to the District Council for review and comment and shall thereafter be submitted to the Northern Plains District convention for approval. Following approval by the convention, any amendment to the ministry standards shall, within one year of the date of approval by the convention, be ratified by a majority of the Northern Plains District member congregations. Any amendment not so ratified shall not be effective. Northern Plains District may establish ministry standards, which complement, supplement or enhance the ministry standards of LCMC, provided the ministry standards of Northern Plains District are not in conflict with those of LCMC. The ministry standards of LCMC shall serve as the ministry standards of Northern Plains District unless and until such time as Northern Plains District has adopted ministry standards of its own.

B2.04 Called and ordained pastors of Northern Plains District may belong to the clergy rosters of other associations or churches.

Bylaw Section 3 - Statement of Purpose and Objectives

B3.01 The purpose of Northern Plains District is to support our common mission to bear witness to the good news that sinners are put right with God through repentance and faith alone in Jesus Christ. We take it upon ourselves to resist any corruption of this Gospel and support fellow congregations who seek to do likewise. This means that we will live in such a way as to serve the Kingdom of God by a faithfulness to God's Word as law and gospel, center our witness on the cross of Christ and give ourselves to God without reservation as servants and workers.

B3.02 To serve and support the Northern Plains District member congregations in their mission to proclaim the gospel, Northern Plains District may, among other things:

- a. Assist its member congregations, where needed, in the process of interviewing and calling pastors to the ministry of Word and Sacrament;
- b. Assist pastors in obtaining calls to ministry of Word and Sacrament;
- c. Assist seminary graduates in the endorsement, call and ordination process of their first call;
- d. Endorse chaplains for specialized services, e.g., military, medical, social services or special ministries of Northern Plains District member congregations;
- e. Plant new mission congregations and support missionary ministries;
- f. Assist individuals in obtaining the proper academic instruction to qualify to receive a call to a Northern Plains District member congregation;
- g. Encourage and support confessional Lutheran seminarians by providing, among other things, mentors and guidance through the seminary process;
- h. Sponsor inspirational and educational gatherings, foster fellowship and worship opportunities;
- i. Strengthen Christ's body on earth by encouraging worship in Northern Plains District member congregations, prayer for one another and study of the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessional writings;
- j. Sponsor youth events that train young people in the beliefs and teachings of our faith, providing guidance and leadership training necessary to raise up a new generation of biblically trained and spiritually grounded Christian leaders; and
- k. Support congregational confirmation and other faith building programs by providing members sound theological resources and training where available.
- l. Support pastors and congregations in their work through pulpit supply, continuing education, fellowship, and other services as necessary.

Bylaw Section 4 - Organization and Convention

B4.01 As an association of congregations, Northern Plains District recognizes a need for checks and balances in its governance and operational procedures.

B4.02 Northern Plains District shall seek to engage people in tasks and office by calling and gift.

B4.03 The time and place of the convention shall be determined by the District Council, which shall give at least 60 days written notice to member congregations of the date and place of each convention. Each member congregation shall be entitled to two voting delegates to all conventions where Northern Plains District's business is being conducted. Delegates may be asked to present appropriate credentials from their congregations before they are recognized at the Northern Plains District convention. Members of the District Council serve as at large delegates to the convention having voice and vote.

B4.04 The convention shall have the authority to establish entities to assist in the management of Northern Plains District's affairs.

B4.05 The convention is authorized to adopt continuing resolutions, rules and regulations to assist in governing Northern Plains District's affairs, provided such do not otherwise conflict with and are not prohibited by Northern Plains District 's constitution and/or bylaws.

B4.06 The convention shall be convened by Northern Plains District's council and shall be chaired by the chairperson of the District Council or a Council member appointed by the chairperson. The agenda may include but is not limited to, election of the District Council members or the filling of any vacancies on the District Council, approval of the annual budget, approval or amendments of ministry standards.

B4.07 Northern Plains District's District Council shall convene a convention within 60 days of submission of a written petition signed by 25 percent of the then-existing member congregations requesting a convention. Either the chairperson or any three members of the District Council will convene a convention by giving 30 to 60 days notice to all of the member congregations of the Northern Plains District of the date and time of the meeting. The notice may be given by mail, telephone, electronic mail, or in person.

Bylaw Section 5 - District Council

B5.01 Subject to the limitations of the constitution and bylaws of this association, Northern Plains District's business and affairs shall be managed by its District Council.

B5.02 There shall be minimum of five to nine members of the District Council and each council member shall hold office for a three year term. Any person who is a voting and active member of a Northern Plains District congregation shall be eligible for election to the District Council. Council members shall be elected by a majority of those delegates to the convention who are then present and voting. The number of council members to be elected shall be determined by the Northern Plains District convention, having heard the advice of the District Council. Council members shall serve three-year terms. Council members are eligible to serve up to two consecutive terms in office.

B5.03 There shall be no voting by proxy by members of the District Council. District Council will meet at least once per quarter either in person or via telecommunications.

B5.04 Either the chairperson or any three members of the District Council may call a board meeting by giving 10 days notice to all of the other council members of the date and time of the meeting. The notice may be given by mail, telephone, electronic mail, or in person.

B5.05 A majority of the council members currently holding office is a quorum for the transaction of any business.

B5.06 Vacancies on the District Council resulting from the death, resignation or removal of a council member may be filled by the affirmative vote of a majority of the remaining council members. Each council member elected under this section to fill a vacancy shall hold office until a qualified successor is elected at the next Northern Plains District convention.

B5.07 The District Council may, by resolution, establish committees or other entities to conduct Northern Plains District's affairs and business.

B5.08 Except as otherwise provided by the constitution, the bylaws and continuing resolutions, if any, the parliamentary authority found in Robert's Rules of Order shall govern Northern Plains District's meetings.

B5.09 Nothing in these bylaws is intended to discourage electronic participation in Northern Plains District's Council affairs, provided such electronic participation is consistent with good order.

B5.10 The District Council shall give equal opportunity to candidates for District Council to make known their vision and values to the delegates at a Northern Plains District convention by written word or other means.

Bylaw Section 6 - Association Officers

B6.01 Northern Plains District shall have as its officers a chairperson of the District Council, a vice-chairperson of the District Council, a secretary, a treasurer and such other officers as the District Council shall, from time to time, create. The District Council may remove any officer by a two-thirds majority vote with or without cause.

B6.02 All officers shall be elected by the District Council from among the District Council's members to serve a one-year term. There shall be no limit to re-election as officers except the stated term limits.

B6.03 The chairperson of the District Council shall serve as president whenever a president is needed.

B6.04 The vice chairperson shall preside over all meetings of the District Council where the chairperson is unable to preside and shall serve under the direction of the chairperson.

B6.05 The secretary shall serve as Northern Plains District's recording officer and shall keep the minutes, have responsibility for records, rosters, archives and other documents of the association, and such other duties as may be assigned to the secretary by the District Council. The secretary shall make available approved council minutes to member congregations.

B6.06 The treasurer shall oversee the finances and books of Northern Plains District according to the guidelines set by the District Council.

B6.07 Should the chairperson of this association die, resign or be unable to serve, the vice chairperson shall be charged with the responsibilities of the president until the election of a new chairperson or until the chairperson is able to serve again. Should the vice chairperson, secretary or treasurer die, resign or be unable to serve, the District Council shall elect a new officer to fulfill the responsibilities of the position.

B6.08 All candidates presenting themselves for election to the District Council shall be entitled to the names and addresses of district congregations for the purpose of communicating the candidate's vision and the candidate's desire to seek election to the District Council.

Bylaw Section 7 - Amendment of Bylaws

B7.01 The bylaws of this association may be amended at any convention where the amendment to the bylaws has been presented in writing by the District Council or by at least two of the member congregations. The District Council shall review and find clarification of the proposed bylaw changes transmitted by member congregations but shall submit any proposed bylaw changes to the Northern Plains District convention for action without prejudice. Any proposed bylaw or amendment to an existing bylaw shall first be approved by a majority of those delegates present and voting at the Northern Plains District convention. Thereafter, member congregations shall have one year from the date of enactment by the convention to reject the proposed bylaw or amendment to existing bylaw. A majority of member congregations is required to reject a proposed bylaw or proposed amendment to an existing bylaw. No amendments to Northern Plains District's bylaws shall become effective until the one year time period for rejection by member congregations has passed. Rejection by a majority of member congregations terminates all action on that proposed bylaw or amendment.

Bylaw Section 8 - Transition Provisions

B8.01 Members of the District Council elected at Northern Plains District's first convention shall serve staggered terms of office as determined by unanimous agreement of those elected or, failing unanimous agreement, by random draw. Any term of two years or less shall be considered a full term out of the two eligible consecutive terms.

B8.02 Charter member congregations shall consist of any LCMC congregation from North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Montana, Wyoming, and Canada by accepting this Constitution and these Bylaws and have attested to this fact in writing by **date TBD.**