**The Constitution and Bi-Laws of**

**St. Peter’s Evangelical Lutheran Church**

1000 South Main Street

Wilkes – Barre, PA 18706



Our Mission

To proclaim the Kingdom of Jesus Christ using His Word in worship, fellowship, service and study.

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### THE CONSTITUTION

#### PREAMBLE

In accordance with the will and command of God (Acts 2:47; I Cor. 5:4), Who requires that a Christian congregation shall conform to His Divine Word in doctrine and practice (Psalm 119: 105; Matt. 28: 18-20; Gal. 1: 6-8; 2 Tim. 4: 1-5), we the members of ***St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, Wi1kes-Barre , Pennsylvania***, have united in a congregation for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a ministry of public preaching and teaching in our midst and of practicing Christian fellowship. Since it is the Lord’s will that all things should be done decently and in order in a Christian congregation 1 Cor. 14: 40; Col. 2: 5), we have resolved to adopt the following Constitution and Bylaws in accordance with which all spiritual and material affairs of our congregation shall be governed, in the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

#### ARTICLE I

#### NAME AND PURPOSE

The name of this congregation shall be St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession of Wi1kes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

The purpose of this congregation shall be to seek the honor and glory of God, to carry out His will, to manifest the unity of our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior, to spread the kingdom of God and to foster Christian fellowship and love, by the preaching of the Word of God, by the administration of the Sacraments, and by the religious instruction of all of its members, according to the confessional standard of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Article II).

#### ARTICLE II

#### CONFESSION

This congregation accepts and acknowledges all the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament as the verbally inspired Word of God, and all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the Book of Concord of the year 1580, as a true and sound exhibition of Christian doctrine taken from and in full agreement with the Holy Scriptures. These Symbolical Books are: (1) The Three Ecumenical Creeds: The Apostolic, The Nicene, and The Athanasian Creed; (2) The Unaltered Augsburg Confession; (3) The Apology of the same; (4) The Smalcad Articles; (5) Dr. Luther’s Small and Large Catechisms; (6) The Formula of Concord; (7) The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope.

No doctrine that is at variance with these Symbolical Books shall be taught or tolerated in this congregation; and according to this norm of doctrine all religious controversies which may arise in the congregation shall be decided and adjudicated.

#### ARTICLE III

#### MEMBERSHIP

**Section 1**

All such persons may be and remain members of this congregation who (a) are baptized; (b) declare their adherence to all Canonical Books of Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testament as the verbally inspired Word of God and the only divine rule and norm of faith and life; (c) are familiar with at least Luther‘s Small Catechism and subscribe to the same, (while the knowledge of the other Symbolical Books, especially of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, is very desirable); (d) diligently attend public services and after being confirmed frequently partake of Holy Communion; (e) do not live in manifest sins of the flesh but lead a Christian life, (Gal. 5: 19-23); (f) are neither active nor passive members of lodges or other unchristian organizations; (g) submit to the resolutions of the congregation as far as they are not contrary to the Lord of God; and (h) are willing to be admonished in a brotherly manner when they have erred (Gal . 6: 1-2 and Matt. 18: 15-20).

**Section 2**

All members shall be Christians. This is manifested through:

##### Baptized Membership

#####  Definition

Baptized members are all members who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and who are under the spiritual care of the Pastor and of this congregation, including children who have not yet confirmed their baptismal vow.

* + - 1. **Reception**

Baptized members are received through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, through transfer, or with the consent of one or both parents or guardians in the case of children who have been baptized in another Christian congregation.

* + - 1. **Duties**

Baptized members shall conform their lives to their baptismal vow.

* + - 1. **Termination**

Baptized members who have not been received as communicant members shall have their membership terminated for the same reasons that communicant membership is terminated insofar as these reasons are applicable.

**B. Communicant Membership**

1. **Definition**

Communicant members are those baptized members who have been confirmed in the Lutheran faith, accept the doctrinal standards of Article II of this constitution, and are familiar at least with the contents of Luther’s Small Catechism. Members who affiliate with or are members of organizations whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God shall be counseled by the Pastor and the Board of Elders. Matthew 18: 15-20 shall be followed.

1. **Reception**

Communicant members are received through the rite of confirmation, by transfer from a sister congregation, upon profession of faith, or by reaffirmation of faith, provided they conform to the requirements for membership in this congregation. Their reception shall be recorded by the Church Council or by the Voters’ Assembly.

1. **Duties**

Communicant members shall strive to conform their entire lives to the rule of God’s Word and to that end make diligent use of the means of grace, exercise faithful stewardship of God’s gifts, and impart and accept fraternal admonition as the need for such admonition becomes apparent.

**4**. **Termination**

 **a.** Communicant members in good standing may be transferred by the pastor to a sister congregation immediately upon their request. Such transfer shall be reported to the Voters’ Assembly for approval at its next meeting. Members who move out of the community and thereby become inactive shall be encouraged to transfer their membership to the sister congregation nearest them.

 **b.** Communicant members who join congregations outside of our fellowship thereby terminate their membership. Their names shall be removed from the membership list by resolution of the Voters’ Assembly.

 **c.** Communicant members whose whereabouts are unknown and whose addresses cannot be established shall have their names removed by resolution of the Voters’ Assembly.

 **d.** Communicant members who conduct themselves in an unChristian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18: 15-20; if they remain impenitent after proper admonition, their membership shall be terminated. Each case shall be presented individually to the Voters’ Assembly for action after the member has been duly notified. A unanimous vote by the voters present shall be required for such termination. If such member deliberately absents himself from the meeting(s) at which his case is to be discussed, or in some other manner makes it impossible to deal with him, he thereby terminates his own membership. Refer also to Article VI.

##### Voting Membership

##### Definition

Voting members are communicants who have reached the age of 18 years and who have been received by the Voters’ Assembly.

**2. Reception**

Applicants for voting membership shall be received as voting members by resolution of the Voters’ Assembly, provided they meet the requirements for such memberships in this congregation.

**3. Duties**

Voting members shall attend the meetings of the Voters’ Assembly regularly, participate in the work of the congregation, and willingly accept responsibility according to ability.

**4. Termination**

Voting membership may be terminated by resolution of the Voters’ Assembly because of continued unexcused absence. If a person is absent from the regularly called Voters’ Assembly for one Church business year beginning January 1 without an excused absence, he shall be notified that he is going to be dropped from voting membership. Termination of communicant membership automatically terminates voting membership.

**Article \_IV**

**OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

The elected officers of this congregation shall consist of:

1**.** A **Pastor** who shall be called by the congregation to administer, in her name, the office of the Word given him by God.

2**.** A **President** a male, who will be Chairman of Voters’ Assembly.

3**.** A **Secretary**

1. A **Treasurer**
2. A **Financial Secretary**
3. A **Financial Recorder**
4. A **Board of Elders** consisting of at least 3 elected members. All members shall be male and shall be called Elders.
5. A **Board of Trustees** consisting of at least 3 elected members.
6. A **Board of Stewardship** consisting of 1 elected member and at least 2 appointed members.
7. A **Board of Christian Education** consisting of 1 elected member and at least 2 appointed members.
8. A **Board of Missions and Evangelism** consisting of 1 elected member and at least 2 appointed members.
9. A **Board of Social Ministry** consisting of 1 elected member and at least 2 appointed member.
10. A **Youth Representative** consisting of one elected member. The age requirement for this position is at least 18 years of age.
11. A **Committee for Fellowship**.

All terms of office are for one year. Only voting members shall be eligible to hold the elected offices. The congregation may, however, add other officers or boards as it may in its By-Laws hereafter designate.

#### Article V

#### RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS

**Section 1 The Pastor**

The office of pastor may be conferred only upon such persons who profess their adherence to all Canonical Books of Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments as the verbally inspired Word of God and to all the Symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church enumerated in Article II as taken from the Word of God. Pastors of the congregation shall, by the call extended to them, be pledged to adhere to these books; they shall exhibit the faithfulness required by God ( I Cor. 4:2) in performing all the duties of their office according to God’s Word (1 Tim. 3: 2-7; Titus 1:9; John 21:15) and in their life and conduct be an example to the congregation.

**Section 2 The President**

The President shall preside at all meetings of the Voters’ Assembly and shall conduct the deliberations in a Christian manner and in accordance with the Rules of Order appended. In the case of the absence of the President, any other elected officer of the congregation may call the election of a chairman for the meeting.

**Section 3 The Secretary**

The Secretary shall record the proceedings of the Voters’ Assembly, register all members attending the meeting, and submit the minutes for adoption at the following regular meeting. The Secretary shall be the custodian of all Church records pertaining to the office and at the expiration of the term of office shall deliver them to his/her successor. The Secretary shall perform such other duties as may be delegated.

**Section 4 The Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall receive all funds and give receipts therefore, keep account of all receipts and disbursements, and render a report to the Church Council and Voters’ Assembly at each of their regular meetings. The Treasurer shall pay all fixed and regular expenses without order; all other disbursements shall be made on order of the Voters’ Assembly or upon receipt of a voucher signed by the Chairman of a committee authorized to expend funds. The Treasurer shall be ex officio a member of the Stewardship Committee.

**Section 5 The Financial Secretary**

The Financial Secretary shall keep a detailed, itemized account of the receipts of Church moneys in books provided for that purpose. The Financial Secretary shall keep records of individual contributions and shall send out reports to each individual member. The Financial Secretary shall be ex officio a member of the Stewardship Committee. The Financial Secretary shall make a report at all Church Council and Voters’ Assembly meetings.

**Section 6 The Financial Recorder**

The Financial Recorder is a position in which said person shall aid and assist both the Treasurer and the Financial Secretary in their duties, as the Treasurer and Financial Secretary deem fit. The Financial Recorder’s sole responsibility is to the Treasurer and Financial Secretary, therefore they shall not hold other elected positions within the church. The Financial Secretary shall make a report at all Church Council and Voters’ Assembly meetings.

**Section 7 The Board of Elders**

The Board of Elders’ special concern is the general and specific spiritual welfare of the individual and corporate membership of the congregation; therefore, it is encouraged that the Board meet at least once a month. Their specific responsibilities are as follows:

**A.** Together with the Pastor, the Board of Elders shall be concerned with all matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the congregation .

**B.** Members of the Board of Elders, individually and collectively, by word and action, shall encourage, pray for, and aid the Pastor in difficult problems of the ministry.

**C.** The Board of Elders shall be concerned about the spiritual, emotional, and physical health and welfare of their pastor and his family (proper rest, vacation, assistance in times of sickness, housing, etc.)

**D.** The Board of Elders shall concern themselves with attendance and nonattendance at the public worship of God on the part of all members.

**E.** The Board of Elders shall keep themselves informed and concerned about the use of the Sacraments by members of the congregation.

**F.** The Board of Elders shall, individually or collectively:

**1.** Seek to speak a word of commendation and encouragement to members who are giving evidence of Christian faithfulness, consecration, and growth.

**2.** Use special events and moments in the lives of members as opportunities to be concerned fellow members of the body of Christ by speaking a word of Christian joy or hope or comfort as we find it in God’s Word and the Christian faith.

**3.** Concern themselves personally with the aged and shut-in members of the congregation.

**G.** The Board of Elders, together with the Pastor, shall be concerned about adequate and thorough instruction of adults and youth for confirmation and church membership. They shall acquaint themselves with the policies and aims recommended by the Board of Christian Education.

**H.** The Board of Elders shall be responsible for extending a personal welcome to all new members.

**I.** The Board of Elders shall keep themselves informed on the program of nurture for children and youth which the Board of Christian Education and the Youth Committee are carrying out.

**J.** The Board of Elders shall review under the Pastor’s leadership, once a year, the nature, purpose, and conduct of God-pleasing worship, both corporate-public and personal-private.

**K.** The Board of Elders shall analyze, at least once each year, the regular and special worship services of the congregation. The following may serve as a guideline:

**1.** Supervise the music for all services and co-operate with the organists, the choir directors, and choir members in maintaining high standards for all services.

**2.** Supervise the work of the ushers and co-operate with them in maintaining proper Church decorum at all services.

**3**. Supervise the altar guild and encourage the members to achieve the objectives of their organization.

**4.** Review, periodically, the administration of Baptism and Holy Communion, the rite of confirmation in public services, and the high festival (Christmas, Easter, Pentecost) services of the church year and other special services (Thanksgiving, New Year’s Eve, Ascension). They shall also be responsible for God-pleasing and God-glorifying observances of various anniversaries of the congregation.

**L.** The Board of Elders, together with the Pastor, shall be responsible for arranging for pulpit and Holy Communion assistance, special services, and guest speakers.

**M.** The Board of Elders, in executing church discipline, shall:

**1**. Study and fully understand the purpose and importance of church discipline in the Christian congregation.

**2**. Consider complaints and grievances of members of the congregation using Matthew 18: 15, 16, and 17 as their guideline.

**3**. Carry out church discipline diligently, carefully, and prayerfully in accordance with the Word of God.

**N.** The Board of Elders shall encourage, as needed, other church boards and committees to intensify their activity and to fulfill their responsibilities.

**O.** The Board of Elders shall provide leadership of the congregation when a pastoral vacancy occurs by securing a vacancy pastor, by obtaining a list of candidates, and by observing God -pleasing protocol in the calling of a pastor.

**P.** The Board of Elders shall be concerned with all matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the congregation which are not assigned to another committee by the congregation’s Constitution or Bylaws.

**Q.** The Board of Elders shall make an annual recommendation in regard to the salaries of the pastor, organists, and church secretary.

**R.** The Board of Elders shall elect annually its own chairman, and it shall appoint its own secretary. It shall be authorized to appoint annually such officers and subcommittees (eg: visitation committee, music committee, etc.) as are necessary to carry out its duties, and may spend $50.00 during each calendar month (which cannot accumulate) without consulting the Voters’ Assembly. It shall report its activities at each regular meeting of Church Council and the Voters’ Assembly.

**Section 8 The Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees shall be in charge of all property of the congregation and shall see to the proper maintenance and protection of such property and shall take care that the same is kept in good repair and is adequately insured.

**A.** The Board of Trustees is authorized to close contracts concerning the congregation, sign documents, and appear in court for the congregation when necessary; in short, perform all acts which the congregation, as property owner, is called upon to perform.

**B.** The Board of Trustees, in all cases, must act according to the legal resolutions and instructions of the congregation. When the board does so, the congregation must vouch for its acts with her property and indemnify it for any expense. If, however, it acts without instructions, the board is personally responsible to the congregation.

**C.** The Board of Trustees shall determine and set up regulations governing the use of church property and equipment.

**D.** The Board of Trustees shall make an annual recommendation in regard to the salaries of the janitorial staff.

**E.** The Board of Trustees shall elect annually its own chairman, and it shall appoint its own secretary. It shall be authorized to appoint annually such officers and sub-committees (eg: day care committee, etc.) as are necessary to carry out its duties.

**F.** When it comes to any necessary repairs or improvements for the church, parsonage, basement or any area associated or owned by St. Peter’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Board of Trustees has the power to do so within $1,000 per month.

 If the necessary repairs or improvements for the church, parsonage, basement or any area associated or owned by St. Peter’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, are between $1,000 to $1,500, the Church Council has the power to approve or disapprove said repairs or improvements.

 Before expenditures of repairs and/or improvements for the church, parsonage, basement or any area associated or owned by St. Peter’s Evangelical Lutheran Church of excess of $1,500, the Board of Trustees shall, whenever possible, obtain three (3) competitive bids or estimates. These three bids then are bought forth to the Church Council to bring to the voters, where a special voters’ assembly can be called or have this business appear in a regular voters’ assembly.

 If an emergency repair presents itself, the pastor, the chairman of the board of trustees, a financial representative and the president of the congregation shall conference on the necessary steps to alleviate the situation whatever the cost may be.

The board shall report its activities at each regular meeting of Church Council and the Voters’ Assembly.

**Section 9 The Board of Stewardship**

The duties of the Board of Stewardship shall be as follows:

**A**. to supervise and direct the annual appeal of financial pledges and annually give every member an opportunity to make a commitment of his/her treasure for Kingdom work through the congregation,

**B**. to study the best stewardship literature available, periodically discuss the principles of stewardship, using every means to promote a strong stewardship consciousness in the congregation.

**C.** to sponsor stewardship talks, discussions, forums, and the like, in the various organizations, using such filmstrips, charts, films, and visual aids as will be helpful.

**D.** to encourage liberal, systematic, worshipful, sacrificial giving of one’s time, talent, and treasure on the part of the children of God here in our congregation.

**E.** to carry on a regular program of personal calling on those who have not accepted the responsibi1ites of faithful stewardship of one’s total life in relationship to Christ.

**F.** The chairman of the Board of Stewardship shall be its elected member. The Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be ex-officio members of the board. The board shall appoint its own secretary. It shall be authorized to appoint annually such officers and sub­committees as are necessary to carry out its duties, and may spend $50.00 during each calendar month (which cannot accumulate) without consulting the Voters’ Assembly. It shall report its activities at each regular meeting of Church Council and the Voters’ Assembly.

**Section 10 The Board of Christian Education**

The Board of Christian Education shall be charged with the supervision of the educational agencies and of the church societies, and to that end it shall:

**A.** assist the superintendent in the supervision of the Sunday School, provide the best materials available for instruction of the Sunday School pupils, assist the officers of the Sunday School in maintaining an adequate teaching staff and, in general, do all that is possible to increase the effectiveness of this agency.

**B.** foster and encourage a program of in-service teacher training for the purpose of maintaining a high level of instructional competence among the faculty members of the Sunday School.

**C.** encourage the development of a Bible class program in the congregation and do all that is possible to increase the participation of the congregation in organized Bible study.

**D.** encourages and promotes Christian education in the homes, societies, and other organizations of the congregation, as well as in the congregation at large.

**E.** see to it that an adequate program of youth activity is sponsored by the congregation, that the programs of the youth organizations contribute to the spiritual edification of the participants, and that every effort be made to enroll all the young people in the congregation in the church’s youth program.

**F.** promote and supervise other educational agencies within the parish which would enlarge the opportunities of the congregation in the field of Christian education.

**G.** maintains, improve and cultivate the use of the church library.

**H.** The members of the teaching staff of the Sunday School shall be chosen by the Board of Christian Education upon recommendation of the pastor.

**I.** The chairman of the Board of Christian Education shall be its elected member. The board shall appoint its own secretary. It shall be authorized to appoint annually such officers and sub-committees (eg: Sunday School secretary, youth committee, etc.) as are necessary to carry out its duties. It may spend $50.00 during each calendar month (which cannot accumulate) without consulting the Voters’ Assembly. It shall report its activities at each regular meeting of Church Council and Voters’ Assembly.

**Section 11 The Board of Missions and Evangelism**

The Board of Missions and Evangelism shall be charged with the supervision of all missionary education and endeavor within the congregation, and to that end it shal1:

**A.** encourages the organization and activity of the mission societies, such as LWML and Lutheran Laymen’s League.

**B.** sponsor periodic canvasses of the community of the congregation and see that an up-to-date list of prospects is maintained in the church office.

**C.** provide for a systematic and continuous training program for lay visitation of prospects to win them for Christ and to encourage active membership in the congregation.

**D.** sponsor and maintain a systematic program of child evangelism designed to win the unchurched children of the area for Christ.

**E.** encourages the work of public relations of the congregation.

**F.** The chairman of the Board of Missions and Evangelism shall be its elected member. The board shall appoint its own secretary. It shall be authorized to appoint annually such officers and sub­committees (eg: a mission committee, a child evangelism committee etc.) as are necessary to carry out its duties. It may spend $50.00 during each calendar month (which cannot accumulate) without consulting the Voters’ Assembly. It shall report its activities at each regular meeting of Church Council and the Voters’ Assembly.

**Section 12 The Board of Social Ministry**

The Board of Social Ministry shall be in charge of extending Christian compassion and helpfulness to the ill, the aged, the orphaned, the underprivileged, the imprisoned and, in general, to persons of all ages in need of aid in body and soul.

1. It shall strive to enlist in those efforts as many as possible of the individual members and organizations of the congregation.
2. This board shall further have the duty to study social conditions, primarily in the local community, in order to bring the cleansing and healing light of Christian truth to bear upon critical problems through thoughtful Christian discussion of facts and issues.
3. The chairman of the Board of Social Ministry shall be its elected member. The board shall appoint its own secretary. It shall be authorized to appoint annually such officers and sub-committees as are necessary to carry out its duties. It may spend $50.00 during each calendar month (which cannot accumulate) without consulting the Voters’ Assembly. It shall report its activities at each regular meeting of Church Council and the Voters’ Assembly.

**Section 13 Youth Representative**

The Youth Representative shall inform the council on the activities of the Youth Group and provide recommendations on increasing the involvement of youths in the operation of the church as well as recommendations on increasing the effectiveness of the congregation’s ministry to the youth. The representative shall report its activities at each regular meeting of the Church Council and the Voters’ Assembly.

**Section 14 Committee on Fellowship**

The committee was authorized by Voters’ to function under the direction of the Board of Elders. As such it would remain an appointive committee until additional planning provides more specific details about its functioning capacity related to all facets of church life (youth, couples, widows, elderly, etc).

**Article VI**

**RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF MEMBERS**

**Section 1**

The right of electing and calling Pastors and of other officers of the congregation shall be vested in the congregation, and shall never be delegated to an individual or to a body or group in the congregation.

**Section 2**

The congregation in its entirety has supreme authority in the administration of all church affairs in her midst. No enactment or decision in behalf of the congregation or of any member thereof, whether proceeding from an individual or from any body within the congregation, shall be valid unless given in the name and by the authority of the congregation as the supreme authority for final decision. But, not even the congregation shall have the right to order, enact, or decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the Confession of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as specified in Article II and any such ordinance, enactment, or decision shall be null and void.

**Section 3**

The congregation shall exercise church discipline according to Matt. 18: 15-20. When a member after fruitless admonition in the various grades prescribed by the Word of God, where the observance of such grades has been possible, shall have been expelled from the congregation, such manifest and impenitent sinner shall then have forfeited all rights of a member of this congregation and all claims upon the property of the congregation as such or any part thereof. The same shall also hold good with reference to such members as may have refused to submit to church discipline and have thus excommunicated themselves, as also of those who may sever their connection by removal to another place.

**Section 4**

It is the duty of every communicant member of the congregation according to God’s Word to contribute towards the maintenance and extension of the office of public preaching and teaching, to the maintenance of the church, toward the liquidation of all debts of the congregation, if there are such, proportionately, according to his or her ability.

**Section 5**

It is the duty of every member to assist his brothers and sisters in every need of body and soul with his prayers, encouragement, counsel and material aid.

**Section 6**

Parents who are members of the congregation shall be required to send their children to the Sunday School or in another way to provide for their Christian training and adequate instruction in the pure doctrine.

#### Artic1e VII

#### BOOKS FOR PUBLIC SERVICES AND CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION

In public services only such hymns which are not contrary to Article II and for all official acts only purely Lutheran forms shall be used. For instruction in Christian doctrine, besides Holy Scripture, Luther’s Small Catechism and such additional books only which are purely Lutheran shall be used.

#### Article VIII

#### PROPERTY RIGHTS IN CASE OF SEPARATION

In the event of a separation on account of doctrine —which God may prevent—all property of the congregation, as well as the use and benefits thereof, shall remain with those members, whether majority or minority, who adhere to the articles designated as unalterable in Article IX of this Constitution.

#### Article IX

#### ALTERATIONS

Unalterable articles and paragraphs are: Article II; Article III, Sec. 1; Article V, Sec. 1; Article VI; Article VII; Article VIII; Article IX.

All other articles may be changed by two-thirds majority of all members present. Motion for such a change, however, must be made in the previous meeting.

#### Article X

#### SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

This congregation shall hold membership in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as long as this Synod remains true to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. It shall send its pastor and & lay delegate to the District conventions of Synod.

#### BYLAWS

This congregation may adopt such Bylaws as may be required for the accomplishment of its purpose.

###### Section 1 VOTERS ASSEMBLY

1. **Rights**

The voters’ assembly shall be granted the authority to enact the business of the congregation as long as it does not conflict with Article VI of the constitution.

1. **Meetings**

**1.** Regular meetings of the Voters’ Assembly shall be held on the third Sunday of the month in April, October and November with special meetings if necessary. Meetings will be held right after services.

**2.** Elections will be held and the proposed budget presented in the November meeting. Installation of officers shall be the last Sunday in December. Financial and Annual Reports shall be given to the Secretary in January and present in the April Meeting.

**3.** Special meetings of the Voters’ Assembly may be called by the pastor, the president of the congregation, or the church council by publicly announcing the date and place of such meeting on a Sunday at least 3 days prior to the date of such meeting. Only business announced for the special meeting shall be undertaken.

1. **Quorum**

**1.** Twelve (12) voters present at a regular or special Voters’ Meeting shall constitute a quorum to do business. However for amending the Constitution, for the purchase of property, for the erection of buildings, for the calling of a pastor, or for the removal from office of a called pastor or elected officer, a majority of all voting members shall be required for a quorum. In the absence of a majority, those present shall fix the date for an adjourned meeting for which at least ten days written notice shall be given. The members who are present at such adjourned meeting shall constitute a quorum.

**2.** In all matters of faith and doctrine, a unanimous vote shall be required. All other matters shall be decided by a majority vote, except where otherwise provided in the constitution or bylaws.

1. **Removal from Office**

**1.** Any pastor or officer may be removed from office by the Voters’ Assembly by a two/thirds majority vote, in Christian and lawful order, for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, or willful neglect of duty.

**2.** The Voters’ Assembly may request the resignation of any pastor or officer from his position in the congregation in the case of prolonged incapacity or general incompetence.

1. **Order of Business**
The usual order of business shall be:
2. Opening with a devotion and prayer
3. Approval of the minutes
4. Report of the Treasurer
5. Report of the Financial Secretary
6. Roll call; excuses of absentees
7. Reception of new voting members
8. Minutes and recommendation of church council
9. Board and Committee Reports
10. Pastor’s Report
11. Other Business (un-finished/new)
12. Correspondence
13. Elections (when in order)
14. Closing with Prayer

**F.** **Rules of Order**

The rules contained in “Robert’s Rules of Order” shall govern the congregation in all cases to which they are applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with rules of the constitution and by-laws of this congregation or in conflict with the Scriptures.

**G.** **Legal Signatures**

The legal signatures of the Voters’ Assembly or church council shall be a member of the Board of Trustees, the president of the congregation, and the secretary of the congregation. All three must sign the document.

**Section 2 PROCEDURES IN THE CALLING OF PASTORS**

**Nominations and Elections**

**A.** At any properly called meeting of the Voters’ Assembly, eligible and qualified candidates for the office of pastor shall be received from the District President. Any voter is entitled to make additional nominations from the floor. These names shall be submitted to the District President for information related to eligibility and qualification. Successful candidates shall then be placed on a call list and on the church ballot.

**B.** The list of candidates shall be publicly announced to the congregation on at least two successive Sundays or by mail at least one week before the meeting at which the call is to be extended. The election shall proceed by ballot. A three/fifths majority of all ballots cast shall be required to elect. The election shall, if possible, be made unanimous.

**C.** The written call and any papers that accompany it shall be read at the Voters’ Assembly and approved before the call is issued.

**D.** However, if a candidate shall be called directly from one of our seminaries, the faculty of such seminary together with the committee of Synod for the distribution of calls may be requested to appoint the person to whom the call shall be extended.

**Section 3 CHURCH COUNCIL**

**A.** **Membership**

The church council shall consist of the president, the secretary, the treasurer of the congregation, the financial secretary, the financial recorder, and the chairmen of the Board of Elders, Board of Trustees, Board of Evangelism, Board of Education, Board of Social Ministry, Board of Stewardship, Youth Representative or representatives from these respective boards. The pastor shall be a member of the church council with full rights and privileges to vote. The pastor of the congregation shall be the chairman of the church council. The church council shall appoint its own recording secretary.

**B**. **Meetings**

The church council shall meet before each regularly called Voter’s Assembly and at other times which it chooses.

The pastor or any three members of the church council may call special meetings by personally informing the members of council of the time and place of such meeting at least 24 hours in advance. A majority of the voting members of the council shall constitute a quorum.

#### C. Duties

It shall be the duty of the church council to appoint a nominating committee, to consider and discuss all matters pertaining to the general welfare of the congregation, to review all reports, and to present recommendations to the Voters’ Assembly. The church council shall act in matters committed to it by the Voters’ Assembly.

The church council is encouraged to prepare an annual budget and shall have the power to spend no more than $1500.00 (which cannot accumulate) in any given month without approval of the Voters’ Assembly.

###### Section 4 NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Procedure in Nomination and Election of Officers

1. A nominating committee appointed by the Church Council shall present a slate of candidates for publication two (2) weeks prior to the November meeting. The slate proposed by the nominating committee shall, if possible, consist of two or more names for each office. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. No person shall be nominated without his/her consent.
2. The Church Council shall then prepare the ballot for the election to be held in the November meeting. All officers shall be elected by a majority ballot vote. The officers-elect shall assume their respective duties on January 1st. They shall be inducted into office in a public service of the congregation.
3. In case of a vacancy in an elective office, the Voters’ Assembly shall elect a successor to fill the unexpired term.

#### Section 5 TERMS OF OFFICE

1. All terms of office shall be for one (1) year.
2. One can succeed oneself an unlimited number of times.

**C.** If possible, one person should not hold two different offices.

###### Section 6 DISSOLUTION

In the event the congregation should totally disband, the property and all rights connected therewith shall be transferred as follows: Seventy percent (70%) shall be split equally between the Concordia Seminary, St. Louis and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. of which the congregation is affiliated with at the time of dissolution. The remaining 30% Shall be donated to local Christian charities.

###### Section 7 APPOINTED COMMITTEES

The appointed committees of the congregation shall include:

**A.** An auditing committee, consisting of three members, appointed by the president. The auditing committee shall make an audit of all financial records the audit of which the Voters’ Assembly may assign to it. It shall make its report to the Voters’ Assembly at the earliest possible date after the close of the fiscal year.

**B**. Such other committees as may be authorized by the Voters’ Assembly.

#### Section 8 AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the Voters’ Assembly by a 2/3 majority of all voting members present at two consecutive meetings, provided the proposed change has been announced at least two weeks prior to the meeting in which the amendment is voted upon .

**Section 9 MARRIAGE POLICY**

The marriage policy of St. Peter’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, a member congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, is and always has been consistent with the Synod’s beliefs on marriage. We believe that marriage is a sacred union of one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24-25), and that God gave marriage as a picture of the relationship between Christ and His bride the Church (Eph.5:32).

The official position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, as set forth in 1998 Res. 3-21 (“To Affirm the Sanctity of Marriage and to Reject Same-Sex Unions”), is that homosexual unions are categorically prohibited in the Old and New Testaments (Lev. 18:22, 24; 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:9-10) as contrary to the Creator’s design (Rom. 1:26-27). These positions and beliefs can be found on the LCMS website, along with other statements, papers and reports on the subject of homosexuality and same-sex civil unions and “marriage.”

Our pastors will not officiate over any marriages inconsistent with these beliefs, and our church property may not be used for any marriage ceremony, reception or other activity that would be inconsistent with our beliefs and this policy. Pastors also will not participate in any such unions or “marriage” and will not bless such unions or “marriage”.