

# Faith Lutheran Church of Shreveport, Inc., Shreveport, Louisiana

## *Constitution*

### **Preamble**

Since God called us into this community of faith and declared us to be His *chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light* (1 Peter 2:9 ESV); therefore, we shall honor our gracious God and dedicate ourselves to live our lives to His glory and in witness of our salvation to the people whose lives we touch within and through this faith community of Faith Lutheran Church, Shreveport, Louisiana.

And, to that end, accept and subscribe to the following CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS in accordance with which all spiritual and material affairs shall be governed.

### **Article I: Name and Location**

The name of this congregation shall be Faith Lutheran Church, Inc., 4175 Lakeshore Dr. Shreveport, Louisiana.

### **Article II: Mission**

The mission of this congregation shall be to serve its members and reach out to the community and world by preaching and teaching the Word of God, administering the Sacraments and foster Christian fellowship and charity.

### **Article III: Confessional Standard**

3.1 This congregation accepts, acknowledges and conforms in doctrine and practice to all canonical books of the Bible, Old and New Testament, as the inspired and inerrant Word of God.

3.2 We further accept, acknowledge and conform in doctrine and practice to all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 as the true and genuine exposition of the Bible.

3.3 These confessional writings are  
The three Ecumenical Creeds (Apostles', Nicene, Athanasian).  
The Unaltered Augsburg Confession.  
The Apology to the Augsburg Confession.  
The Smalcald Articles.  
The Formula of Concord.  
Luther's Large Catechism.  
Luther's Small Catechism.

#### **Article IV: Synodical Membership**

- 4.1 This congregation is and shall remain a member of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod as long as the Synod remains steadfast in the doctrinal basis outlined in **Article III, Confessional Standard** above.
- 4.2 This congregation shall partner with its sister congregations throughout Synod in being God's voice and arms throughout the world.
- 4.3 Synodical nonconformance shall be agreed upon by a two-thirds majority vote of a properly called voters' meeting for that specific purpose and following interactive communication with Southern District Office of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

#### **Article V: Membership within the Congregation**

- 5.1 Baptized, confirmed and voting memberships as defined in **Article I** of the Bylaws.
- 5.2 Termination of membership defined in **Article I** of the Bylaws.

#### **Article VI: Authority of the Congregation**

##### **6.1 General**

- 6.1.1 The term "Voters' Assembly" as defined in the Bylaws shall be the governing body of this congregation and shall be entitled to administer and manage all its affairs.
- 6.1.2 The "Voters' Assembly" shall establish organizations, ministries, boards, committees and offices it deems necessary for the purpose of carrying out its mission described in **Article II** above.
- 6.1.3 All established entities enumerated in 6.1.2 shall be subject to the supervision and discipline of the congregation per directives set forth in the Bylaws.

##### **6.2 Right of Calling.**

- 6.2.1 The right of calling ordained and commissioned ministers shall be vested in the Voters' Assembly as outlined in the Bylaws to this constitution.
- 6.2.2 The pastor(s) of this congregation and any other called ministers shall profess and adhere to the confessional standards set forth in **Article III** of this constitution and be certified for such service by the proper certification authorities of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod as described in its Bylaws, Article II, 2.5 sub paragraphs 1-4, pages 57-58 of the 2013 Handbook of the Lutheran church, Missouri Synod.

##### **6.3 Decisions.**

- 6.3.1 Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided by the Word of God.

6.3.2 Other matters shall be decided by the Voters' Assembly by a majority vote, unless otherwise specified by this Constitution and its Bylaws.

#### 6.4 **Removal from Office**

6.4.1 Any called ordained or commissioned minister of the congregation may be removed from his/her office by a two-thirds majority of the Voters' Assembly present at a meeting specifically called to consider removal from office.

6.4.2 Any officer of the congregation as described in **Article 6.1.2** of the Bylaws may be removed from his/her office by a simple majority of the Voters' Assembly.

6.4.3 Removal from office may be for any of the following causes:

6.4.3.1 Persistent adherence to false doctrine.

6.4.3.2 Scandalous life.

6.4.3.3 Inability to perform his/her official duties or willful neglect of them.

### **Article VII: Property Rights**

7.1 Decision to dispose of this property and relocate elsewhere, shall be vested in the Voters' Assembly called specifically for that purpose in accordance with any applicable directives in this Constitution and its Bylaws.

7.2 If a separation should take place because of doctrine or any other reason, the property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith, shall remain with those members who continue to adhere in confession and practice of **Article III** of this constitution.

7.3 If the congregation should totally disband, the property and all rights connected therewith may be

7.3.1 Deeded to a sister congregation of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, within the city of Shreveport;

7.3.2 Sold and all profits be given for the expressed purpose of underwriting mission work within the Southern District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

7.4 Resolution of the matter stated in 7.2 and 7.3 above shall be in consultation with the officials of the Southern District of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod.

### **Article VIII: Bylaws**

This congregation may adopt such Bylaws as may be required for the accomplishment of its mission stated in **Article II** of this Constitution.

**Article IX: Changing this Constitution and its Bylaws**

- 9.1 **Articles III** and **IV** of this constitution shall remain unalterable and not be repealed.
- 9.2 Amendments to this Constitution and its Bylaws may be adopted at a regular Voters' Assembly if:
  - 9.2.1 The proposed amendment does not conflict with **Article III** or any other section of this Constitution that pertains to doctrine and practice.
  - 9.2.2 The proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at a previous Voters' Assembly.

**Article X: Record of Incorporation**

- 10.1 Faith Lutheran Church shall be incorporated in accordance with the State of Louisiana under the laws for incorporation and filed with the Secretary of State.
- 10.2 The effective incorporation date is November 1, 1993.
- 10.3 The property deed shall be recorded with the proper officials at the Caddo Parish Courthouse, Shreveport, Louisiana.

**To God alone be the glory!**

# Faith Lutheran Church, Shreveport, Louisiana

## *Bylaws*

### **Article I: Membership**

- 1.1 **Baptized.** Members are all those members who have been baptized in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and are under the spiritual care of the congregation.
- 1.2 **Confirmed.** Members are those baptized members who have received a course of instructions as practiced within the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod and declared their faith through the rite of confirmation in a worship service.
- 1.3 **Voting.** A communicant member, at least 18 years of age, may participate as a voting member. He/she must be present in person to cast a vote.
- 1.4 **Reception.** Reception into membership may be through baptism, confirmation, transfer of membership from a sister congregation of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod or by profession of faith.
- 1.5 **Termination of baptized or confirmed membership.**
  - 1.5.1 Death.
  - 1.5.2 Transfer to a sister congregation of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.
  - 1.5.3 Release to a Christian congregation not affiliated with the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.
  - 1.5.4 Whereabouts unknown.
  - 1.5.5 Excommunication as described in “An Explanation of the Small Catechism,” questions 279-284 of Luther’s Small Catechism, Concordia Publishing House, 2005.
  - 1.5.6 Self-exclusion.
  - 1.5.7 Non-participating members, residing locally or have moved a long distance from the congregation making association with the congregation impractical, shall be counseled by the Pastor as regards to their membership intentions. The Pastor shall report his findings to the Board of Elders for disposition of the matter.
  - 1.5.8 Members who have moved away and reside long distances from Shreveport, but would like to keep their membership at Faith Lutheran, shall be placed on a “nonresident” status and remain there until a transfer is requested.
  - 1.5.9 All termination of membership and nonresident status of members shall be approved by the Voters’ Assembly.
  - 1.5.10 The Pastor, by right of privileged communication, shall have the final determination regarding grievances of any member concerning his/her termination of membership.

### 1.6 **Reinstatement.**

A member whose membership has been terminated may be reinstated by making his/her

intention known to the Pastor. The Pastor shall bring the matter to the attention of the Board of Elders and the Voters' Assembly for deliberation.

## **Article II: Voters' Assembly**

- 2.1 The Voters' Assembly shall be the ultimate authority in matters of doctrine and practice in concert with the Holy Scriptures. It may delegate its authority to elected officers and offices for the purpose of administering the affairs of the congregation.
- 2.2 The Voters' Assembly shall be comprised of congregational members who meet the criterion in Article 1.3 of these Bylaws.
- 2.3 The Voters' Assembly shall meet in the months of January, June and November. Additional Voters' Assemblies may be called by the Board of Directors, the Pastor with the approval of the Chairman of the congregation and one additional Voters' Assembly member.
- 2.4 The date and purpose of a Voters' Assembly shall be determined by the Board of Directors and announced at least two weeks prior to the meeting date via a phone calling committee, email or surface mail, the Sunday worship bulletins, oral announcements at regular Sunday worship services and other public media. The Recording Secretary shall oversee the notification process.
- 2.5 The voting members present at a properly called Voters' Assembly shall constitute a quorum.
- 2.6 The chairman of the congregation shall preside at a Voters' Assembly in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order. The chairman of the Office of the Elders shall preside at a Voters' Assembly in the absence of the chairman of the congregation.
- 2.7 The agenda for a Voters' Assembly shall be set by the Board of Directors and include an opening and closing devotion, approval of the minutes of the previous meeting, unfinished business, reports from the Pastor and all officers and/or boards, new business.
- 2.8 A special Voters' Assembly may be called in response to a disaster requiring immediate attention without the time restrictions noted in 2.4, but must adhere to the stipulations for calling such an assembly laid out in 2.3.

## **Article III: Board of Directors**

- 3.1 To carry out its mission, the congregation, through its November Voters' Assembly, shall elect members from the congregation eligible to hold an office to carry out its ministry in harmonious cooperation with the congregation's pastor through a Board of Directors.
- 3.2 The Board of Directors shall consist of the following established offices
  - 3.2.1 Office of Chairman of Congregation.
  - 3.2.2 Office of Recording Secretary.
  - 3.2.3 Office of Financial Secretary. *No voting privilege. See 3.3.3.1 below.*
  - 3.2.4 Office - Treasurer. *No voting privilege. See 3.3.3.1 below.*

- 3.2.5 Office of Elders - one elder for every ten resident households within congregation shall be elected by the Voters' Assembly. Only the chairman of the Office of the Elders shall sit on the Board of Directors for the duration of the chairmanship.
  - 3.2.6 Office of Education - one member.
  - 3.2.7 Office of Evangelism - one member.
  - 3.2.8 Office of Trustees - one member.
  - 3.2.9 Office of Stewardship - one member.
  - 3.2.10 Office of Social Welfare - one member.
  
- 3.3 For the sake of continuity, the Board of the Directors shall be elected as follows:
  - 3.3.1 Odd-numbered years: Office of Chairman of the congregation, Office of Elders, Office of Education and Office of Evangelism.
  - 3.3.2 Even-numbered years: Office of Recording Secretary, Office of Trustees, Office of Stewardship and Office of Social Welfare.
  - 3.3.3. The Financial Secretary and the Treasurer, in view of the special financial skills required, shall be appointed by the Pastor, Chairman of the Congregation and Stewardship member on the Board of Directors in consultation with the Board of Directors for a period of two years.
    - 3.3.3.1 Since they are appointed and not elected they shall not have voting privileges on the Board of Directors.
    - 3.3.3.2 The Financial Secretary and the Treasurer may be reappointed for as many two-year terms as agreeable to the appointee and the Board of Directors.
    - 3.3.3.3 The Financial Secretary shall be appointed in the odd-numbered years and the Treasurer shall be appointed in the even-numbered years.
  - 3.3.4 If these Bylaws take effect in an odd- numbered year, the Office of Chairman of the Congregation, the Office of Financial Secretary, the Office of Elders, the Office of Education and the Office of Evangelism shall be elected to one full two-year term. The Office of Recording Secretary, the Office of Treasurer, the Office of Trustee, the Office of Stewardship and the Office of Social Welfare shall be elected to a term of one year.
  - 3.3.5 If these Bylaws take effect in an even-numbered year, the Recording Secretary, Trustee, Stewardship and Social Welfare shall be elected to a full two year term. The Chairman of the Congregation, Financial Secretary, Elder, Education and Evangelism shall be elected to a term of one year.
  
- 3.4 Each elected officer may be elected for a two-year calendar term and be re-elected to one more two-year calendar term for a total of four years in that office.
  - 3.4.1 Each member of the Board of Directors, who has fulfilled a two year term of service may be elected to another office if he/she desire to do so.

- 3.4.2 When a member of the Board of Directors has served two two-year terms for a total of four years, he/she may not be elected to that same office for a period of one year; that member, however, may be elected to another office
- 3.5 Each elected officer shall be installed into his/her respective office at the worship service on the first Sunday in January and assume his/her duties.
- 3.6 The specific responsibilities of each office and board shall be delineated in an appendix to these Bylaws entitled “Faith Lutheran Church Ministry Manual.” The Manual may be amended as specific needs arise by the Board of Directors.
- 3.7 If an officer finds it necessary to vacate his/her office because he/she cannot fulfill the responsibilities of the office for any reason, the Board of Directors shall appoint someone else to fill the remaining time of the vacated office.
- 3.8 Each office shall meet once a month to transact its business.
- 3.9 The Pastor and Chairman of the congregation shall be ex officio members of each board.
- 3.10 The Board of Directors shall meet every month for the purpose of transacting the congregation’s business.
- 3.11 Each member on the Board of Directors, with the exception of the Office of the Elders, may enlist other members within the congregation to join him/her in carrying out the responsibility of said office with the approval of the Pastor and Board of Directors.

**Article IV Faith Lutheran Church Ministry Manual**

- 4.1 The responsibilities of each Board of Director shall be enumerated within the attached “Faith Lutheran Church Ministry Manual.”
- 4.2 The Manual shall contain a “Job Description” and a “Standard Operation Procedure” section.
- 4.3 The Manual may be amended by each Office within the Board of Directors with affirmation from the Board of Directors.

**Article V: Calling an Ordained (Pastor) or Commissioned Minister**

- 5.1 When an ordained (pastor) or commissioned ministerial vacancy occurs, the Office of the Elders shall solicit the congregation for possible names suitable for the vacant position.
- 5.2 The Office of the Elders shall work with the District Office in the calling procedure and request the District Office to identify further suitable candidates.
- 5.3 The District-approved names of all candidates for the vacated position shall be made known to the congregation and the congregation be given an opportunity to voice its opinion on the candidates.
- 5.4 The Office of the Elders, in consultation with the Board of Directors, may offer its



preferential suggestions to the congregation for consideration of an ordained or commissioned minister candidate.

- 5.5 A two-thirds majority of voters present at a meeting specifically called for the calling of a Pastor or Commissioned Minister shall be required in selecting a candidate to whom a call may be extended.
- 5.6 The voting shall be by secret ballot.

**Article VI: Record of revisions to this Constitution and its Bylaws**

- 6.1 This Constitution and its Bylaws were modeled after an undated constitution entitled “Faith Lutheran Church of Shreveport Inc.”
  - 6.1 Work on this Constitution and its Bylaws began on Saturday, January 5, 2019.
  - 6.2 Constitution Committee Members:

Robert Conway (chairman), Lolitha Shepherd (secretary), Dwain Brobst,  
Robert Ferguson, Hugh Bradford, Debra Thomas, Pastor Mike Shannon.  
*Ex officio consultant:* Sig Kunz.
  - 6.2 The Constitution and its Bylaws.
    - 6.2.1 Presented to the congregation of Faith Lutheran Church, Shreveport, Louisiana on \_\_\_\_\_.
    - 6.2.2 Forwarded for review to the Office of the Southern District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod on \_\_\_\_\_.
    - 6.2.3 Ratified by Faith Lutheran Church of Shreveport, Louisiana on \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 6.3 Further revisions to this Constitution and its Bylaws are to be dated.

**All glory be to God alone.**