

**LAMB OF GOD LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

FINAL DRAFT –MARCH 2, 2006

CONSTITUTION

1 NAME

The name of this congregation shall be Lamb of God Lutheran Church of Lithia Florida, Inc.

2 MISSION

The purpose of this congregation shall be to give honor and glory to the Triune God, carry out His will, proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the entire world, manifest the unity of our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior, foster Christian fellowship and love, and extend a helping hand in human need. As such, this congregation shall be a religious organization established and maintained not for profit, but to promote the Christian religion and maintain the public ministry through the public and private administration of the means of grace in accordance with the confessional basis set forth in Section 3 below.

3 CONFSSIONAL STANDARD

This congregation accepts without reservation:

3.1 the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice; and,

3.2 all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, to wit: the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord.

4 MEMBERSHIP

4.1 The membership of this congregation includes the following:

4.1.1 Baptized Members are all who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and who are under the spiritual care of the pastor of this congregation, including the children who have not yet been confirmed;

4.1.2 Communicant Members are those Baptized Members who have been instructed in the Lutheran faith, accept the confessional standard of Section 3 of this Constitution, and are not members of organizations whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God;

4.1.3 Voting Members are Communicant Members who have reached the age of eighteen (18)

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years, have been received by the Voters' Assembly, and have signed the Constitution of the congregation.

4.2 Reception

4.2.1 Baptized Members are received through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, the consent of one or both parents in the case of children who have been baptized in another Christian congregation, or the transfer from a congregation that is a member congregation of or in altar and pulpit fellowship with The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

4.2.2 Communicant Members are received through the rite of Confirmation, the transfer from a congregation that is a member congregation of or in altar and pulpit fellowship with The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, or through profession or reaffirmation of faith.

4.2.3 The reception shall be approved by the Board of Elders. Eligible Communicant Members may be received as Voting Members upon approval by the Voters' Assembly and upon signing the Constitution.

4.3 Duties

It is expected that all Communicant Members shall faithfully: use the Word of God; attend public worship; celebrate Holy Baptism; and, partake of Holy Communion. It is further expected that Communicant Members will give evidence of a Christian faith through a Christian life and by the contributions of their time, talent and treasure as God has prospered them for the maintenance and extension of His church. All Communicant Members shall agree to abide faithfully by this Constitution.

4.4 Termination

4.4.1 Membership shall be terminated by transfer to a congregation that is a member congregation of or in altar and pulpit fellowship with The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, death, joining a congregation outside the fellowship of this congregation, excommunication, or self-exclusion. Each case of excommunication shall be presented individually to the Voters' Assembly for a decision.

4.4.2 Communicant Members who conduct themselves in an un-Christian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20. If they remain impenitent after proper admonition, they shall be excommunicated. In all disciplinary cases, the congregation will follow its stated and adopted guidelines.

5 CALLED CHURCH WORKERS

5.1 This congregation has the exclusive right to call ordained and commissioned ministers.

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- 5.1.1 The pastoral office shall be conferred only on such a pastor or candidate who professes and adheres to the confessional standard set forth in this Constitution, is qualified for his work, has been endorsed by the Synod, and is a member of the Synod.
- 5.1.2 The congregation shall only call commissioned ministers who profess and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in this Constitution, are qualified for their work, and have been endorsed by the Synod.
- 5.2 Any ordained or commissioned minister may be removed from office for: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect, or inability to perform the duties of the office.
 - 5.2.1 Ordained or commissioned ministers under consideration for removal from office for persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, or willful neglect shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20. If they remain impenitent after proper admonition, their removal shall be brought before a properly called Voters' Assembly. In all disciplinary cases, the congregation will follow its stated and adopted guidelines.
 - 5.2.2 Removal from office of any ordained or commissioned minister must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the Voters' Assembly using a ballot vote.
- 5.3 Upon a vacancy in the office of an ordained or commissioned minister, the congregation shall notify the president of the District. The District president may assist in temporarily filling the vacancy with the consent of the congregation. The District may also give assistance in regard to the calling of a new ordained or commissioned minister.

6 AUTHORITY OF THE CONGREGATION

- 6.1 The Voters' Assembly shall be the governing body of this congregation and shall be empowered to administer and manage all its affairs. The establishment and conduct of all organizations and societies within or related directly to the congregation shall be subject to the approval and supervision of the Voters' Assembly.
- 6.2 All non-doctrinal matters shall be decided by a majority vote of the Voters' Assembly unless otherwise specified by this Constitution or Bylaws. Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided only on the basis of the confessional standard set forth in Section 3.
- 6.3 The right of calling ordained or commissioned ministers shall be vested in the Voters' Assembly and shall not be delegated otherwise.

7 OFFICERS AND BOARDS

This congregation shall have the following officers and boards in addition to any which

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the congregation shall authorize as needed:

7.1 Officers

7.1.1 A President, who shall serve as the chief executive officer of the congregation regarding all temporal matters of the congregation in accordance with the duties defined in the congregation's Bylaws. The President shall serve as the chairman of the Church Council.

7.1.2 A Vice President, who shall fill the role in the President's absence or inability to act in accordance with the duties defined in the congregation's Bylaws.

7.1.3 A Secretary, who shall be responsible for the duties defined in the congregation's Bylaws. The Secretary shall serve as the Secretary of the Church Council.

7.1.4 A Treasurer, who shall serve as the chief financial officer of the congregation in accordance with the duties defined in the congregation's Bylaws.

7.1.5 A Financial secretary who shall oversee the receipt of all monies and deposit the same in an account established in the name of the congregation in accordance with the duties defined in the congregation's Bylaws

7.1.6 Other officers as deemed necessary by the Voters' Assembly by incorporation into the congregation's Bylaws.

7.2 Boards and Committees

The congregation shall provide for boards and committees in its Bylaws. Such boards and committees shall be defined and established as needed to ensure that the mission of the congregation is adequately supported and the called workers of the congregation are enabled to perform their duties. The boards and committees will include a Church Council and a Board of Elders (as defined in the congregation's Bylaws).

7.3 Removal from Office

Any officer or board member may be removed from office for: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect, or inability to perform the duties of the office.

7.3.1 Officers and board members under consideration for removal from office for persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, or willful neglect shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20. If they remain impenitent after proper admonition, their removal shall be brought before a properly called Voters' Assembly. In all disciplinary cases, the congregation will follow its stated and adopted guidelines.

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- 7.3.2 Removal from office of any officer or board member must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the Voters' Assembly.

8 AFFILIATION

8.1 Synodical Membership

This congregation shall be a member of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as long as the Synod conforms to the congregation's confessional standards set forth in this constitution as determined by a majority vote of the Voters' Assembly at a meeting properly called for that purpose.

8.2 District Membership

This congregation shall be a member of the Florida-Georgia District of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as long as the District conforms to the congregation's confessional standards set forth in this constitution as determined by a majority vote of the Voters' Assembly at a meeting properly called for that purpose.

9.0 DIVISION

- 9.1 If at any time a division of the congregation should take place for any reason, the property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those Communicant Members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to the confessional standards set forth in Section 3, as determined by the dispute resolution process described in the Bylaws of the Synod.

- 9.2 In the event the congregation should dissolve, the property and all rights connected therewith shall be transferred to that District of the Synod in which the congregation held membership at the time of dissolution.

10 MEETINGS

Meetings of the Voters' Assembly, whether regular or special, shall be held as determined in the Bylaws. Special meetings may be called at the request the pastor, President, church council, or ten (10) Voting Members.

11 QUORUM

All voting members present at a properly called meeting shall constitute a quorum.

12 LIMITATIONS ON HOLDING OFFICE

Women who have reached the age of eighteen (18) may hold voting membership in the

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congregation and serve as officers and as members of boards and committees as long as these positions are not directly involved in the specific functions of the pastoral office (e.g., preaching, the public administration of the sacraments, church discipline) and as long as this service does not violate the order of creation (usurping authority over men). Accordingly, women shall not serve as pastor, a member of the Board of Elders, President of the congregation or Vice President of the congregation.

13 AMENDMENTS

- 13.1 Amendments to provisions of this constitution except Sections 2, 3, 5, 8, and 13 may be adopted at a regular meeting of the Voters' Assembly only after:
 - 13.1.1 the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at a previous meeting of the Voters' Assembly;
 - 13.1.2 published by posting in a conspicuous place in the church or by mail to all Communicant Members of the congregation prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon; and,
 - 13.1.3 an affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the voters present is secured.
- 13.2 Proposals to amend Sections 2, 3, 5, 8, and 13 may be adopted at a regular meeting of the Voters' Assembly only after:
 - 13.2.1 the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous two regular meetings of the Voters' Assembly before the meeting at which the proposed amendment is to receive action;
 - 13.2.2 the proposed amendment shall be published by posting in a conspicuous place in the church or by mail to all Communicant Members of the congregation prior to each of the meetings at which the proposed amendment will be discussed;
 - 13.2.3 due notice of the fact that a vote will be taken shall be given to all Voting Members of the congregation at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment is to receive action;
 - 13.2.4 an affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the voters present is secured; and,
 - 13.2.5 any changes in these articles shall not destroy the essential meaning of the same. Whether or not this has occurred shall be decided, if challenged, by a decision by the dispute resolution process described in the Bylaws of the Synod.

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BYLAWS

**A PROCEDURES FOR CALLING ORDAINED AND COMMISSIONED
MINISTERS**

- A.1 When a pastor or a commissioned minister is to be called, every member of the congregation shall have the privilege of making one or more nominations. The congregation shall also ask the President of the synodical district for recommendations.

In the case of a pastoral call the Board of Elders may serve as the screening committee, and in the case of the calling of a commissioned minister the Church Council may perform that function.

- A.2 In the screening process the respective board or committee shall submit all names to the respective District President for information and evaluation. After receiving information and recommendations from the District President, the respective board or committee shall present to the congregation by means of a public announcement, the preferred candidate(s), together with a biographical sketch of each.
- A.3 At the Voters' Assembly, called for the purpose of electing a new pastor or commissioned minister, the preferred list may be amended by means of a two-thirds vote of those present. At that point the Voters' Assembly shall be asked to agree to be satisfied with whatever selection is finally made by the congregation.
- A.4 Balloting shall proceed by means of a secret ballot vote. A majority is needed in order to determine the disposition of the call.

B CHURCH COUNCIL [*Board of Directors*]

- B.1 Membership

The Church Council shall consist of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary of the congregation. The Church Council shall also consist of the chairmen of the boards defined in section C of the Bylaws, and one member at large from the congregation. The pastor(s) shall be (a) non-voting, *ex officio* member(s) of the church council.

- B.2 Meetings

The Church Council shall preferably meet monthly in regular sessions and at least quarterly. Special meetings may be called by the chairman, pastor, or any three members of the Church Council by sending a notice to each Church Council member preferably at least 24 hours in advance. A majority of the voting members of the council shall constitute a quorum.

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B.3 Duties

It shall be the principal duty of the Church Council to coordinate the programs and activities of the various departments of the congregation. The Church Council shall have power to act in good faith on behalf of the congregation between meetings of the Voters' Assembly.

C BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

C.1 A Board of Elders, consisting of at least one elder for every fifteen (15) families shall assist the pastor in the spiritual life of the congregation. The pastor(s) shall be (a) non-voting, *ex officio* member(s) of the Board of Elders.

D.0 NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

D.1 A nominating committee, chosen by the Church Council, shall present a slate of candidates for all elected offices. The slate shall normally consist of two (2) names for each office. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. No person shall be nominated without his or her consent.

D.2 All officers shall be elected by a majority ballot vote and voting shall continue until a clear majority has been established after candidates receiving the lowest number of votes have been eliminated in each succeeding ballot.

D.3 The officers are elected for a term of two (2) years. The other members of the Church Council and the members of all boards shall be elected or appointed for terms of three (3) years.

D.4 Officers and board members shall be inducted into office in a public service of the congregation.

D.5 In case of a vacancy in an elective office, the Church Council shall appoint a successor to fill the unexpired term subject to the confirmation at the next Voters' Assembly.

E OFFICIAL DUTIES

Officers and members of boards shall perform the duties prescribed in the constitution. The congregation shall also have the privilege from time to time of detailing and enlarging these responsibilities by majority vote of the Voters' Assembly. It may also call such other boards and committees into being as it may need from time to time.

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F MEETINGS

The Voters' Assembly shall meet quarterly.

G RULES OF ORDER

In addition to principles laid down in Scripture, the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be followed.

H AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended in a properly convened regular meeting of the Voters' Assembly by a majority of all voting members present, provided the proposed change has been published by posting in a conspicuous place in the church or by mail to all Communicant Members of the congregation prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon.