



## **Constitution and Bylaws**

As a result of continued Church growth, the Constitution and Bylaws were edited in January of 2016 to enable more effective and efficient management of a large congregation and school. Tactical and procedural items were removed. These items are now addressed in the congregational governance based policies managed by the Board of Lay Ministry.



**Constitution  
of  
Messiah Lutheran Church  
Weldon Spring, Missouri**

**Preamble**

It is the command of our Lord Jesus Christ that His disciples should preach the Gospel to the whole world (Mark 16:16, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8). That Christ's command for His church might be carried out according to His will, He has also commanded that Christians unite in worship, preach the Word, study His Word, witness to all people, encourage one another in prayer, practice fellowship with one another, help each other grow in the Word, serve the needs of all people in Christian love, and administer the Office of the Keys as His church through the local gatherings of people which His Word calls the congregation.

Since the Word of God requires that a Christian congregation shall conform to his Word in doctrine and practice and that all things be done decently and in order, we, therefore, the members of Messiah Lutheran Church, accept and subscribe to the following Constitution and Bylaws, in accordance with which all spiritual and material affairs of our congregation shall be governed.

**Article I**

The name of this congregation is Messiah Lutheran Church, Weldon Spring, Missouri. The church maintains its principal office at 5911 Hwy 94 South, Weldon Spring, Missouri 63304. The members of the church may change the principal office from one location to another. Any change of this location shall be recorded by the secretary on these Constitution and Bylaws.



## **Article II**

### **The Purpose**

In response to the love of Jesus Christ and His great commission to us, our purpose is:

1. “Living to know and share the love of Jesus Christ”
2. To experience the heart of the Messiah by growing spiritually healthy and mature disciples of Jesus who serve Him by serving others. These disciples will do whatever it takes to...
  - Know Jesus – be deeply rooted in His Word and sacraments
  - Live for Jesus – be meaningfully connected to the body of believers
  - Share Jesus – be joyfully sharing Jesus with others.

*Matthew 28:18-20: Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all peoples, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

## **Article III**

### **Confessional Standards**

This congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testament as the revealed Word of God, verbally inspired, and acknowledges and accepts all the confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran church contained in the Book of Concord of the year 1580 to be the true and genuine exposition of the doctrines of the Bible. These confessional writings are the three ecumenical creeds (Apostles’, Nicene, Athanasian), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, Luther’s Large and Small Catechisms and the Formula of Concord.



## **Article IV**

### **Membership**

#### **Section 1 - Baptized Members**

Baptized membership in this church shall consist of all who have been baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and who have been placed under the spiritual care of the church through the baptism itself, or by transfer from another Lutheran congregation or by joining the congregation from another Christian church.

#### **Section 2 - Communicant Membership**

Communicant membership in this church shall consist of all persons who trust Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and who have met the qualifications for membership.

#### **Section 3 - Qualifications for Communicant Membership**

1. Christian baptism
2. A personal faith in Jesus Christ for Salvation.
3. Completion of a junior or adult confirmation class, transfer from another Lutheran congregation or a personal profession of faith.
4. Agreement with the church's confessional standard as clarified in Article III.

#### **Section 4 - Privileges and Responsibilities of Communicant Membership**

Communicant members of this church accept the privilege of church membership and submit themselves to its leadership and discipline. Communicant members are expected to live a life which is in agreement with the Holy Scriptures (leading a Christian life and not manifesting works of the flesh...Galatians 5:19-21), and – within the context of a vital relationship with Jesus Christ – agree to be growing through Word and Sacrament in living out the following discipleship goals for members of the church as they are able and enabled by the Holy Spirit:

1. Acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord;
2. Bible study attendance;
3. Consistent church attendance and participation in Holy Communion;
4. Daily prayer and devotional life;
5. Evangelistic attitude and action;
6. Faithful use of personal spiritual gifts and treasures;



7. Godly love expressed through Christian fellowship.

Communicant members of the church may not belong to any secret, oath bound organizations that are in conflict with the Word of God. (Romans 16:17, I Corinthians 5:11-13, I Corinthians 10:19-20, I John 5:21, I Thessalonians 1:9, Acts 14:15, Numbers 25:1-6, Exodus 20:3-5a)

## **Article V**

### **The Offices of Pastor and Teacher**

The pastoral office of this congregation, as well as that of a called teacher, shall be conferred upon such ministers, teachers, and candidates only as profess and adhere to the confessional standards set forth in Article III of this Constitution and are well qualified for their work. Pastors and teachers shall, in the call extended to and accepted by them, be pledged to this confessional standard.

## **Article VI**

### **Officers**

The officers of this congregation shall be such officers, boards and teams as the Bylaws of this congregation may prescribe.

## **Article VII**

### **Affiliation – Synodical Membership**

This congregation shall be a member of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS) as long as the LCMS conforms to the congregation's confessional standard.

Nonconformance shall be agreed upon by a two-thirds majority vote of the Voter's Assembly at a meeting called for that purpose.

*“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace”* (Ephesians 4:1-3), this congregation shall join with fellow Christians in other congregations in promoting the unity of faith, providing for the proper training of pastors and teachers, and conducting mission work beyond our parochial limits. In accord with these principles, it shall:

1. Send the required delegates to the conferences and conventions of



- the LCMS;
2. Be the duty of the congregation and its individual members to support the work of the LCMS, since they thereby support their own Christ-appointed work.

### **Article VIII**

#### **Property**

If at any time a division should take place, the property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Article III of this Constitution and the established Bylaws. In the event the congregation should dissolve, the property and all rights connected therewith shall be transferred to an LCMS ministry or institution as determined by a majority vote.

### **Article IX**

#### **Amendments to the Constitution**

The following articles of the constitution or sections thereof shall be unalterable and irrevocable: III, V, and VII.

Amendments to this Constitution and the Bylaws may be adopted at a regular congregational voters meeting provided:

1. That they do not conflict with the provisions laid down in Article III or with any other article that pertains to scriptural doctrine and practice.
2. That the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing and presented to the congregation at a previous congregational assembly. Both assemblies shall be announced at least two weeks in advance in written notice to all members of the congregation.
3. The affirmative vote of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting membership shall be required for the adoption of an amendment.



**Bylaws  
Of  
Messiah Lutheran Church  
Weldon Spring, Missouri**

The following are hereby adopted and shall hereafter be effective as the Bylaws of the congregation Messiah Lutheran Church of Weldon Spring, Missouri.

**Article I**

**Communicant Membership & Voting Privileges**

**Section 1 – Application for Membership**

Applicants for communicant membership shall notify the church office of their intention to join the congregation.

1. Transfers – Those with an active membership at another LCMS congregation shall write a letter of request to that congregation for a transfer.
2. Reaffirmation – Those whose membership at an LCMS congregation has lapsed shall attend an Adult Instruction Class before making reaffirmation of their faith.
3. Confirmation – Those who are new to the Lutheran Church shall take the Adult Instruction Class before public confirmation.

All membership requests shall be processed through the church office with final approval given by the Executive Ministry Team with consultation from the Elders if needed.

**Section 2 - Privileges and Duties of Voting Members**

Every communicant member who is 18 years of age or older shall have the right to vote on the following matters:

1. The official call or removal of the Senior Pastor. Removal of the Senior Pastor may occur for one of the following reasons: teaching of false doctrine; a scandalous life; dereliction of official duties; or



- protracted inability to perform his duties.
2. Approve recommended calls for ordained pastors.
3. The acquisition or disposal of real property (i.e.: land, fixed improvements and construction of fixed properties), except for undesignated bequests and estates.
4. The disposal of personal (i.e.: unfixed) property of the church whose current value exceeds in a fiscal year \$60,000.
5. All long-term borrowing of monies (borrowing of monies with more than a three- year amortization); and the short-term borrowing of monies (borrowing of monies with a maximum three- year amortization) when the total principal of all outstanding short-term borrowing exceeds 5% of the total operating budget.
6. The adoption of the annual church budget.
7. The election of members for the Board of Lay Ministry.
8. Removal of members to the Board of Lay Ministry. Removal of a member of the Board of Lay Ministry may occur for one of the following reasons: teaching of false doctrine, a scandalous life, dereliction in official duties, or protracted inability to perform his/her duties.
9. The merger or dissolution of the church.
10. The amending of the Constitution and Bylaws of the church.
11. Yearly review, consider and act upon a long-range ministry plan as recommended by the Board of Lay Ministry.

### **Section 3 - Meetings**

#### **A. Annual Meeting**

An annual meeting of the church shall be held prior to July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, for the purpose of receiving a report on the ministry of the church, adoption of the church budget for the coming fiscal year (August 1 – July 31), and dealing with matters of voting business. Minutes shall be kept of all regular and special meetings of the church.

#### **B. Special Meetings**

The Board of Lay Ministry, the Chairman of the congregation, the Senior Pastor or any 25 congregational members, by petition, may call a special meeting of the voters, providing that they ensure proper notification has been given to announce this special meeting.

#### **C. Notification**

Proper notification for any special or annual meeting shall consist of a verbal and written announcement in congregational worship services on at least two consecutive Sundays





immediately before the meeting date. Notification must include agenda items to be voted on by the congregation.

**D. Quorum and Voting**

Whenever a meeting has been properly called, the number of the voting members present shall constitute a quorum with a minimum of 20. All decisions shall be by majority vote with the exception of the amending of the Constitution and By-Laws, the removal of the Senior Pastor, and merger or dissolution of the church, which shall be by two-thirds majority vote of members present.

**E. Rules of Order**

In addition to principles laid down in Scripture and in the constitution and bylaws of this congregation, accepted parliamentary procedures such as Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed.

**Article II**

**Termination of Communicant Membership**

Communicant members shall be removed from the church's membership role with the approval of the Elders and Executive Ministry Team for one of the following reasons only:

1. Death;
2. Personal request of the member for transfer of membership to another church;
3. Personal request of the member for release from membership;
4. "Whereabouts Unknown" for a period of one year or longer;
5. Excommunication and self-exclusion:
  - a. An erring member shall be admonished in accordance with the various steps prescribed in Matthew 28:15-17, whenever that procedure is possible.
  - b. Fruitless admonition of a manifest and impenitent sinner shall result in excommunication from the congregation by the Elders and Executive Ministry Team.
  - c. A member who refuses to submit to church discipline has thereby excommunicated himself.
  - d. After sincere repentance, an excommunicated person shall receive absolution and be reinstated into membership upon the recommendation of the senior pastor and/or assistant pastors,



members of the Elder team and subsequent approval of the Elders and Executive Ministry Team.

- e. A person whose communicant membership has been terminated has forfeited all rights of a member of this congregation and all claims upon the property of the congregations as such, or upon any part thereof, so long as he/she is not reinstated into membership.

### **Article III**

#### **Board of Elders**

The Board of Elders shall be composed of 8 to 12 male communicant members chosen at the annual meeting of the church. They shall be people who have proven faithful to the Lord and His church. They shall also have been communicant members of the church for at least two years prior to serving on the board and shall not be ministry staff members or employees of the church. They also should be people who attend worship faithfully and are involved in ongoing Bible study and a committed life of growing discipleship.

#### **Section 1 - Role of Elders**

The Elders have the responsibility to see that the church remains on a true course biblically, that its members are being appropriately shepherded, that the body is being fed through insightful and accurate biblical teaching according to the Lutheran Confessions, and that the life of the church is being well managed with the assistance of other competent and godly leaders. They are to care about the spiritual and physical well-being of members, encourage through sound doctrine and regularly praying for the sick. (I Peter 5:1-4, Acts 20:28-31, Titus 1:9, James 5:14)

*As members of the body you are instructed in scripture to obey your leaders, submit to their authority and respect those who work hard among you. (Hebrews 13:17, I Thessalonians 5:12-13)*

Because the Scriptures are clear on qualifications of an Elder, they should also meet the following qualifications based in I Timothy 3:2-7, Titus 1:6-9.



1. **Above reproach, blameless** (*I Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6-7*) - Elders must lead by example and demonstrate a lifestyle free of patterns of sin.
2. **Husband of one wife** (*I Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6*) - Elders, if married, must be a devoted spouse.
3. **Temperate** (*I Timothy 3:2*) - Elders must be self-controlled, enslaved to nothing, free from excesses.
4. **Self-controlled** (*I Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8*) - Elders must be sober, sensible, wise, balanced in judgment, not given to quick, superficial decisions based on immature thinking.
5. **Respectable** (*I Timothy 3:2*) - Elders must demonstrate a well-ordered life and honorable behavior.
6. **Hospitable** (*I Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8*) - Elders must be unselfish with their personal resources. They must be willing to share blessings with others.
7. **Able to teach** (*I Timothy 3:2*) - Elders must be able to communicate truth and sound doctrine in a non-argumentative way.
8. **Not given to drunkenness** (*I Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7*) - Elders must be free from addictions and willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others.
9. **Not violent but gentle** (*I Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7*) - Elders must be gentle, patient, and able to exercise self-control in difficult situations
10. **Not quarrelsome** (*I Timothy 3:3*) - Elders must not be given to quarreling or selfish argumentation.
11. **Not a lover of money** (*I Timothy 3:3*) - Elders must not be stingy, greedy, out for sordid gain, or preoccupied with amassing material things.
12. **Manages his own family well** (*I Timothy 3:4*) - Elders must have a well-ordered household and a healthy family life.
13. **Sees that his children obey him** (*I Timothy 3:4-5, Titus 1:6*) – Elders must be able to manage his own family.
14. **Not a recent convert** (*I Timothy 3:6*) - Elders must not be a new believer. They must have been Christians for long enough to demonstrate the reality of their conversion and depth of their spirituality.
15. **Has a good reputation with outsiders** (*I Timothy 3:7*) – Elders must be well respected by unbelievers and free from hypocrisy.
16. **Not overbearing** (*Titus 1:7*) - Elders must not be stubborn, prone to force opinions on others, or abuse authority. They must be servants.
17. **Not quick-tempered** (*Titus 1:7*)– Elders must not be easily incensed but steady and firm in matters of principle.



18. **Loves what is good** (*Titus 1:8*) - Elders must desire the will of God in every decision.
19. **Upright, holy** (*Titus 1:8*) - Elders must be a devoted Christ follower seeking to be conformed to His image. They must be committed to prayer, worship, the study of Scripture, and the guarding of their own walk.
20. **Disciplined** (*Titus 1:8*)– Elders must be regimented and show constraint in all areas of life.
21. **Does not pursue dishonest gain** (*Titus 1:7*)– Elders must deal fairly with others and their judgments must be based on scriptural principle.
22. **Keeps hold of the deep truths** (*Titus 1:9*) - Elders must be stable in the faith, obedient to the Word of God, continually seeking to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

## Section 2 - Process for Elder Selection

1. The existing Elders shall, as a board, develop a list of candidates to serve on the Board of Elders for the following ministry year. This list will include any current elders that wish to serve another year.
2. The congregation shall be provided with teaching regarding the biblical qualifications for elders and scriptural role of the elders. The members of the congregation will then be given 30 days to submit prayerfully the names for consideration as elder.
3. Both of these lists (one list from the congregation and one list from the Board of Elders) will be given to both the Executive Ministry Team and the Board of Lay Ministry for the approval of each individual.
4. Upon the approval from the Executive Ministry Team and the Board of Lay Ministry, the Elders will inform appropriate candidates, and the candidates shall be urged to engage in self-appraisal and personal evaluation in light of the scriptural qualifications. Any person may withdraw if he does not aspire to the position of elder. Approved candidates shall also indicate if they wish to be considered for the position of Head Elder.
5. The Board of Elders will then, from the approved list, elect, by secret ballot, a list of 12 Elders and designate one as Head Elder.
6. This list will be presented at the annual congregational meeting for approval. The format will provide for the election or rejection of each individual candidate and position of Head Elder. Each candidate must receive a vote from at least 50% of those voting.



### **Section 3 - Process for Elder Selection – Vacancy**

1. The existing elders shall, as a board, develop a list of candidates to add to the Board of Elders.
2. The list of candidates will be presented to the Executive Ministry Team and the Board of Lay Ministry for approval of each individual.
3. The Board of Elders will then, from the approved list, elect the new Elder(s).
4. All positions filled from vacancies will be subject to the approval of the congregation at the annual meeting.

### **Section 4 - Membership**

1. Must be a male member of Messiah for two years or more and be the age of 21 or older.
2. Elected by the congregation with the only term limits that an Elder cannot serve on the Board more than 6 years in a row. Each Elder shall be asked for a one-year commitment, subject to review, recommitment and reaffirmation by the voting church members each subsequent year.

## **Article IV**

### **The Board of Lay Ministry**

For the sake of good order, effective ministry and accountability, the congregation authorizes the Board of Lay Ministry to manage directly or through its delegation, the daily and long term needs of the church in accordance with this Constitution and Bylaws. The Board of Lay Ministry shall establish and maintain governance policies that define its desired outcomes, limitations and actions, Board – Ministry staff relationship and its governance process by which the Board of Lay Ministry will manage the Congregation's affairs. In conjunction with the Executive Ministry Team, the Board of Lay Ministry shall be responsible for mobilizing and coordinating the efforts of ad hoc and on-going ministry groups, task forces, and committees.

The Board of Lay Ministry of the church shall be composed of eight communicant members (male and female) of the church chosen at the annual meeting of the church and the Head Elder.



### **Section 1 - Membership**

1. People who have proven faithful to the Lord and His church.
2. Communicant members of Messiah for at least two years prior to sitting on the Board of Lay Ministry and shall not be ministry staff members or employees of the church.
3. People who attend worship faithfully and are involved in ongoing Bible study and a committed life of growing discipleship.
4. Elected for by the Voters' Assembly, members of the Board of Lay Ministry shall serve three-year terms established on a staggered basis, and may not serve more than two consecutive terms. The Senior Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the Board of Lay Ministry.

### **Section 2 - Meetings**

1. Minutes shall be kept of all meetings of the Board of Lay Ministry.
2. Five members shall constitute a quorum, and all actions of the Board shall require a majority vote with a minimum of four affirmative votes in order to be enacted.

### **Section 3 - Process for Board of Lay Ministry Selection**

From April 1<sup>st</sup> to May 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, communicant members shall be asked to submit in writing to the Executive Ministry Team or the Board of Lay Ministry the names of individuals for consideration as members of the Board of Lay Ministry. The Board of Lay Ministry and the Executive Ministry Team shall meet together and, from these names, submit for consideration at the annual meeting name(s) of individuals who meet the established criteria for each position open on the Board of Lay Ministry. These names shall be published in two successive written announcements preceding the annual meeting.

### **Section 4 - Process for Board of Lay Ministry Selection - Vacancy**

In cases of a vacancy on the Board of Lay Ministry, the chairman of the Board of Lay Ministry after consulting with the Senior Pastor shall select a qualified individual to serve in the position until the next annual meeting of the congregation, at which time the congregation shall select an individual to complete the remaining portion for the unexpired term which shall count as a complete term for that individual if the unexpired term to which he or she is selected exceeds one year at the time of his/her election.

### **Section 5 - Removal of members of the Board of Lay Ministry**



Any officer or member of the Board of Lay Ministry who willfully neglects the duties of the office may be removed by a two-thirds majority vote in a meeting of the Voters' Assembly.

**Article V**  
**Board of Lay Ministry**

The Board of Lay Ministry shall elect three officers who have proven faithful to the Lord and His church. The officers shall be Chairman, Vice Chairman and Treasurer. The Head Elder shall also be a member of the Board of Lay Ministry.

**Section 1 - Membership**

1. Communicant members of Messiah for at least 2 years prior to election and shall not be ministry staff members or employees of the church.
2. Since the responsibilities of the offices of Chairman and Vice-Chairman do not involve the exercise of the functions of pastoral oversight through the ministry of Word and sacrament, the positions may be held by either a male or female.

**Section 2 - Responsibilities**

The Chairman of the church shall have the responsibility to chair the meetings of the church, with the Vice-Chairman serving in his or her absence. In cases where both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are unable to attend a meeting of the church, the Chairman shall arrange for a member of the Board of Lay Ministry to chair the meeting in his or her absence.

**Article VI**  
**The Executive Ministry Team**

**Section 1 - Governance**

The Executive Ministry Team as defined by the Board of Lay Ministry, is at all times directly accountable to the Board of Lay Ministry. The Board of Lay Ministry is directly accountable to the congregation.

The Executive Ministry Team shall include the Senior Pastor and oversee the congregation with a servant's heart and a loving willingness, as examples to the Church. They must take



care not to take advantage of the authority vested in them contrary to Scripture, but as a shepherd cares for the sheep, the Executive Ministry Team is to care for the church (I Peter 5:1-4; Philippians 2:5-7; I Corinthians 3:5-7).

The congregation, in turn, is to follow the leadership of the Executive Ministry Team. This order is established in faithfulness to the Chief Shepherd Christ Jesus, and His plan to build up the body of Christ (I Thessalonians 5:12-13; Acts 16:4; I Corinthians 16:15- 16; Hebrews 13:7 & 13).

## **Section 2 - Removal of Senior Pastor**

If the Senior Pastor willfully neglects the duties of the office he may be removed by a two-thirds majority vote in a meeting of the Voters' Assembly called according to regular constitutional processes. Removal of the Senior Pastor may occur for one of the following reasons:

1. Teaching of false doctrine;
2. A scandalous life;
3. Dereliction of official duties;
4. Protracted inability to perform his duties.