

# **The Constitution of the United Lutheran Mission Association**

## **May 2005**

### **Preamble**

Our Lord commands us to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that Christ has commanded (Matthew 28:16-20).

The example of the apostolic church shows us that the people of God were one in doctrine and mission.

The forming of an association will unite the God-given resources of Lutheran congregations in order to carry out Christ's command to proclaim law and gospel.

### **Article I Name**

The name of this association shall be: The United Lutheran Mission Association.

### **Article II Conditions Under Which A Congregation and Pastor May Join and Remain A Member**

- A. A congregation and its pastor(s) must accept without reservation the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the verbally inspired, inerrant, written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and practice.
- B. A congregation and its pastor(s) must accept without reservation all the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the "Book of Concord of 1580," as true and unadulterated statements and expositions of the Word of God:
  - 1. The Three Ecumenical Creeds (Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian).
  - 2. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
  - 3. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession.
  - 4. The Smalcald Articles and Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope.
  - 5. The Large Catechism of Luther.
  - 6. The Small Catechism of Luther.
  - 7. The Formula of Concord.
- C. A congregation and its pastor(s) are not required to change their own constitution, but must accept without reservation the "Constitutional Guidelines for Mission Congregations" and the constitution which governs the United Lutheran Mission Association.
- D. A mission congregation can become a member when it no longer receives monetary support by the direction of the commission.
- E. A member of the Association may withdraw its membership anytime it so decides.

### **Article III Commission**

- A. Each member congregation shall be represented by up to four men who are 21 years or older. These men shall be voting members of the Commission.

- B. Pastors of member congregations are *ex officio* and advisory.
- C. The body of voting and advisory members shall be defined as the Commission, for it is a group of men given authority by the congregations of the Association.

#### **Article IV Objectives**

- A. With the Scripture and the “Book of Concord of 1580,” the Commission shall also familiarize itself with and diligently use the following in order to carry out its objectives: “Church and Ministry,” “The True Visible Church,” and “The Form of a Christian Congregation” by C. F. W. Walther; and the “Constitutional Guidelines for Mission Congregations.” The Commission shall also consult “**For the Sake of Christ’s Commission**” The Report of the Church Growth Study Committee The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.
- B. The Commission shall
  1. establish and maintain independent, orthodox, Lutheran, mission congregations until they are self-sufficient.
  2. consider any request from a layperson or Lutheran pastor who wishes to start or maintain an independent, orthodox, Lutheran, mission congregation.
  3. seek and collect the names of orthodox, Lutheran Pastors who might wish to establish and/or serve in mission congregations.
  4. publicize its existence.

#### **Article V Officers**

- A. The Commission shall nominate and elect a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and a Recording Treasurer. Such election shall occur every year at the spring meeting as the last item of business before adjournment and the Lord’s Prayer. No one may remain in the same elected position for more than six consecutive years, except that during the first fifteen (15) years of the existence of the Association, or until there are six (6) Member congregations of the Association, whichever occurs first, an officer may remain in the same position, if duly nominated and elected thereto. At no time may three men from the same congregation hold three elected positions. When there are four or more member congregations, no one congregation may have more than one of its own members holding an elected office.
- B. Vacancies which occur in the course of the year shall be filled for the remaining time by the appointment of the Chairman of the Commission. No person shall be appointed who is not qualified to serve according to “**Article V Officers**,” letter “A.”

#### **Article VI Duties of Officers**

- A. The Chairman shall
  1. preside at all meetings of the Commission using as a guide for parliamentary procedure a recent copy of “Robert’s Rules of Order.”
  2. work to meet the objectives of this constitution.
  3. work to achieve consensus and harmony.
  4. appoint committees when necessary. Each committee must have at least one pastor.

- B. The Vice-Chairman shall
  - 1. perform the duties of the Chairman whenever the Chairman is absent or unable to perform the duties of his office.
  - 2. become the Chairman if that position becomes vacant.
  
- C. The Secretary shall
  - 1. keep accurate minutes of the meetings of the Commission.
  - 2. submit a copy of the approved minutes of every meeting to every member congregation.
  - 3. keep a list of orthodox, Lutheran pastors who wish to establish and/or serve in mission congregations.
  - 4. keep a directory of all the congregations of the Association, update it at the beginning of the year, and send it to the pastors of member congregations who will in turn make copies for the four voting commission members in their church.
  
- D. The Recording Treasurer shall
  - 1. record pledges from contributors.
  - 2. under the authority of the Commission direct a contributor to disburse a pledge.
  - 3. keep an accurate record of what pledge was disbursed for what purpose and entity.
  - 4. advise contributors outside of the Association to contribute their gift to a member congregation; designating the gift to be used for the United Lutheran Mission Association.
  - 5. submit a report at every meeting of the Commission to be included in the minutes.

### **Article VII Meetings**

Regular meetings shall be held in the spring and in the fall of each year on dates scheduled at a preceding General or Special Meeting. Special Meetings may be called by the Chairman, must be announced by letter with the reason at least twenty-one days prior, and must be held on a Saturday. The place of all meetings should be in a central location that is agreeable to all or most and where cost is kept to a minimum. The time should take into consideration the location of Association congregations. Each meeting shall not last more than five hours unless the Commission votes to extend it. All meetings of the Commission are open to those who wish to attend and are members of an Association congregation and may be granted auxiliary status by their own congregations. The following format may be used:

- 1. Call to order.
- 2. Opening prayer and/or devotion (not to exceed 10 minutes).
- 3. Approval of the Minutes.
- 4. Recording Treasurer's Report.
- 5. Reading of the Reports and Requests submitted by Mission Congregations.
- 6. Old Business.
- 7. New Business.
- 8. Adjournment with the Lord's Prayer.

The Word of God shall decide all matters of doctrine and conscience. All other matters shall be decided by the majority vote of the Commission members present. In the event of a tie, the motion shall be considered as having failed. The Commission shall always work for as much consensus and harmony as possible.

## **Article VIII Power and Limitation**

The Commission shall

- A. retain the right to terminate the direction of financial support at any time.
- B. review and approve or reject the constitution and bylaws or changes to an existing constitution and bylaws of a mission congregation receiving financial support resulting from the direction of the Commission.
- C. evaluate the progress and orthodoxy of mission congregations receiving support.
- D. be advisory in its relationship to a mission congregation.
- E. not issue a divine call or remove a pastor from office.
- F. not become a bureaucracy where pastors are employed in full time positions.
- G. not own equity in any mission congregation it establishes or maintains.
- H. not direct the Recording Treasurer to direct pledgers to reimburse any voting or advisory member of the Commission for expenses such as travel, accommodations, meals, or any personal needs resulting from regular and special meetings of the Commission or committee meetings. Participating congregations are strongly encouraged to take care of their own.
- I. not hold contributions.

## **Article IX Obligations and Rights of Mission Congregations**

A mission congregation shall

- A. accept the “Constitutional Guidelines for Mission Congregations” and the “Constitution of the United Lutheran Mission Association”.
- B. submit a brief report with any requests to the Chairman of the Commission before the spring and fall meetings which shall be included in the minutes. Included in the report shall be the vital statistics of the congregation and information that helps the members of the Commission and Association share in both the joys and troubles that are a part of mission work.
- C. familiarize itself and diligently use the writings mentioned in this constitution, “**Article IV Objectives**” letter “A.”
- D. use in its public services and ministerial acts only such hymns, prayers, liturgies, and agendas which conform to Scripture and all the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, such as “The Lutheran Hymnal” and “Lutheran Worship” and corresponding agenda.
- E. divinely call pastors who are certified, ordained ministers in the Lutheran Church and confess “**Article II Conditions Under Which A Congregation and Pastor May Join And Remain A Member**” letters “A” and “B.” The pastor must be a graduate from an LCMS, ELS, or WELS

seminary, from the Walther Theological Seminary, or from a church body in fellowship with the LCMS, ELS, or WELS (foreign or domestic), with at least a Master of Divinity Degree or the equivalent thereof.

- F. use “Luther’s Small Catechism” for junior and adult instruction.
- G. not solicit funds from known pledgers to the United Lutheran Mission Association.
- H. retain the right to remove itself from the auspices of the Commission any time it so decides.

### **Article X Constitutional Changes**

Amendments to this constitution of the United Lutheran Mission Association and amendments to the “Constitutional Guidelines for Mission Congregations” may only be adopted by members of the Association as follows:

1. Any member congregation or the Commission itself may propose an amendment.
2. Upon the proposal of such an amendment, the Chairman of the Commission shall have two weeks to send it to the member congregations for consideration and decision.
3. Each member congregation shall respond affirmatively or negatively within eight weeks of receipt. If there is no response then their vote is forfeited.
4. An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the member congregations is required for adoption.
5. Upon adoption, the Chairman of the Commission will issue a revision within six weeks and notify each member and mission congregation.
6. Each mission congregation shall notify the ULMA Commission of their receipt and acceptance of the newly amended Constitution.

### **Article XI Disciplinary Procedures for Members of the Commission and the Removal of a Member Congregation of the United Lutheran Mission Association**

- A. Members of the Commission are subject to disciplinary procedures as set forth in the current copy of “Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised.” These disciplinary procedures may be used for either an individual or collective offenders of the Commission whether an offense occurs in or outside a meeting of the Commission.
- B. Members of the Commission may be removed from the United Lutheran Mission Association Commission as set forth in the current copy of “Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised” for such reasons that may include, but are not limited to, manifest sins, persistent adherence to false doctrine, and words and actions that tend to injure the good name of the Association, disturb its well being, or hamper it in its work.
- C. Proceedings under this Article shall be presided over by the Chairman of the Association unless the alleged offender is the Chairman, in which case the proceedings shall be presided over by the Vice-Chairman.
- D. All proceedings shall be conducted in executive session. Members of the Commission shall be removed by a 2/3 vote.
- E. If, for any reason, all the delegates/representatives of a Member Congregation are removed or resign from the Commission (both voting members and *ex officio* members), it will be understood that the Member Congregation is no longer a member of the United Lutheran

Mission Association.

- F. A Member Congregation that has been removed from the United Lutheran Mission Association may seek membership again after appropriate measures have been taken to deal with the offense and bring about reconciliation.

Revisions:     Minor grammatical corrections made on January 12, 2007.  
                  Added word "verbally" to Article II, Para. A. on January 10, 2009.  
                  Various articles clarified and approved by member congregations, November, 2010.  
                  Added Article XI on Disciplinary Procedures, January 10, 2012.  
                  Added Walther Theological Seminary to Article X, Para E. , March, 2015.