

Constitution  
of the  
Apostolic Lutheran Church  
of  
Vancouver, Washington

This congregation is founded upon God's Holy Word which is contained in the Prophetic, Evangelic and Apostolic Books of the Old and New Testaments, and is summarily retained in the three original ecumenical confessions: The Apostolic, the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds; and also the unaltered Augsburg Confession.

This congregation regards God's Holy Word as the highest law and the only authority according to which all functions of this congregation shall be performed and by which all doctrine is to be examined and judged.

# By-Laws of the Apostolic Lutheran Church of Vancouver, Washington

## ARTICLE 1 - MEMBERSHIP

### SECTION 1 - Members

PAR. 1 - The congregation shall consist of the baptized and confirmed persons who accept the provisions of the Constitution and By-Laws and who have been duly received into membership as herein provided, and such children as have been received through Holy Baptism. These members are those who are born again and believe in justification by faith and in the forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name and blood through the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A. Voting members shall be those members who retain voting privileges according to Art. I, Sec. 2, PAR. 2.

PAR. 2 - Non-voting, supporting members are those who are seeking a church home, desiring to enjoy its blessings, support it, uphold its doctrine, Constitution, Articles of incorporation and By-laws.

### SECTION 2 - Reception of Members

PAR. 1 - Admission into the congregation shall take place in any of the following ways:

A - Baptism. Children and unbaptized adults shall be received through baptism. Adults, however, must be properly counseled and instructed prior to their baptism. In their case, the rite of confirmation shall not be required.

B - Validation of confession of Faith. Baptized persons shall be admitted who have received adequate and sound instruction in the Word of God and accept the provisions of the Constitution and By-Laws. This also includes persons who have fallen from their baptismal covenant and have subsequently, by God's grace, repented.

PAR. 2 - Requests for new membership shall be presented to the Pastor who shall carefully counsel the applicant of the responsibilities as a member. The Pastor shall submit to the Board a recommendation as to the applicants eligibility. After the Board of Trustees has received the Pastor's recommendation and determined the applicant has fulfilled their requirements outlined in Section 1, PAR. 1, and there are no challenges presented, the applicant shall become a member.

A. These members shall be recognized as those who have attained the age of eighteen years, who have upheld the material needs of the church.

- i. These persons shall receive voting privileges six months after receiving membership.
- ii. Voting members shall not retain voting rights in another congregation.

PAR. 3 - No person shall be received into membership or be retained as a member who is associated with an organization or movement inconsistent with the Christian faith or which gives offense to the Church of God.

### SECTION 3 - Duties of Members

PAR. 1 - Members are to encourage all to attend services and by God's grace to be a light unto others by bringing the message of salvation to them as instructed in I John 3:16-18.

PAR. 2 - Recognizing that all good gifts come from above, members shall, in the measure that God has prospered them, contribute regularly and consistently to the financial support of the congregation as well as to the general work of the Church.

PAR. 3 - Parents are to bring their children to be baptized in early infancy and by God's grace bring them up in the reverence of the Lord. Parents are to instruct their children in readiness for confirmation and voting membership.

### SECTION 4 - Surrendering Membership

PAR. 1 - Surrendering membership in the congregation may occur as follows:

- A. By a written or oral notice rendered to the Board or Pastor.
- B. By transfer to another congregation.

- C. By any member who has left the congregation or the community and has not notified the congregation of his/her intent to return.
- D. By an act of Church discipline.

## SECTION 5 – Church Discipline

PAR. 1 – In order to preserve the purity of doctrine, peace, and mutual love in this congregation, the Church law as defined in the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew shall be administered. The Pastor(s) and Board of Trustees shall be responsible for such administration.

- A. Any meetings pertaining to church discipline shall be closed meetings excepting witnesses.

## ARTICLE 2 – ADMINISTRATION

### SECTION 1 – Board of Trustees

PAR. 1 – The administration of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the congregation shall be placed with the Board of Trustees, together with the Pastor(s).

- A. Each trustee shall be known for his Christian life and character, and for his support of the congregation. He should be well qualified for his duties, as recorded in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
- B. The trustee must be a voting member of the congregation for at least one year.

PAR. 2 – The Board of Trustees of this congregation shall consist of three, five, or seven members who shall be elected at the annual congregational meeting for a term of three (3) years.

- A. In order to maintain year-to-year continuity within the Board of Trustees, no more than one member of a three member Board, two members of a five member Board, or three members of a seven member Board shall be elected in any one year.
- B. A nominating committee shall nominate the candidates for election. Or, a member of the congregation may submit a name, in writing, to the board thirty (30) days prior to the annual meeting for consideration.

- C. Incumbent members may be nominated for re-election.
- D. No trustee shall serve more than two consecutive terms (6 years).
- E. Election of the Board positions shall be carried out by secret ballot one position at a time. Elected positions shall require a 50% majority.
- F. The size of the Board may be increased or decreased at the annual meeting, prior to the elections at the meeting, as voted by two-thirds (2/3) majority of the congregation present.

PAR. 3 – A quorum of the Board shall be: three of a three-member Board; four of a five-member Board; or five of a seven-member Board.

PAR. 4 – If any member of the Board of Trustees moves away, resigns, or because of some other reason cannot fulfill his term, the Board of Trustees shall choose a qualified person to replace him, to fulfill the unexpired term.

- A. This decision shall be ratified by the congregation members present at the subsequent annual meeting.
- B. If the decision is not ratified, another person shall be elected by the congregation members present to fulfill the unexpired term.

PAR. 5 – Appointment of Board offices.

- A. A chairman shall be elected by the Board from the Board of Trustees, after the annual meeting.
- B. Other officers shall be elected at the first Board meeting subsequent to the annual meeting.
- C. A three member Board shall consist of a Chairman, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.

## SECTION 2 - Duties of the Board of Trustees

PAR. 1 – The duties of the Officers shall be such as usually pertain to these offices.

- A. Chairman. The Chairman is the spokesman for the congregation. He shall conduct all meetings unless he delegates otherwise. He is to state the matters that are to be examined and/or voted on. He is to follow "Robert's Rules of Order" in conducting all meetings. He does not vote. In case of a tie he shall cast the deciding ballot.
- B. Secretary. The Secretary shall record the motions and the decisions made at all meetings into the minutes and read them for approval at meetings. He/she is to have read and/or posted all letters and notices to the congregation. He/she is to keep a record of all voting members of the congregation and to observe that the congregation's treasury and financial report is ready for the auditors. He/she is to be responsible for all congregational correspondence.
- C. Treasurer. The Treasurer is to keep a record of all monies received, listing all income and expenses. The financial record shall be balanced monthly. The Treasurer shall submit a report of the records for approval at meetings. He/she is to oversee the payments of the commitments of the congregation. He/she is to submit a financial report to the Board of Trustees per Board meeting, as well as an annual financial report to the Board of Trustees that will be read for approval at the annual meeting, including a statement of assets and liabilities. The annual financial report shall include a proposed budget for the coming year. The records will be audited before all annual meetings and at any time deemed necessary by the Board of Trustees.
- D. Vice-officers. The Vice-officers shall assist the Officer in his/her respective duties. If an Officer is absent at a meeting, the Vice-Officer shall act in his/her stead.

PAR. 2 - The duties of the Board of Trustees shall include the following:

- A. The Board of Trustees shall review the list of names of all voting members of the congregation. This list must be in possession of the Secretary so that it may be posted for public inspection, three consecutive Sundays prior to the annual meeting
- B. The Board shall arrive at a consensus on its intentions prior to submission of those intentions to the congregation.

- C. The Board is authorized to act on all forthcoming expenses. However, expenditures of five hundred dollars or more beyond the approved budget shall require congregational approval.
- D. The Board together with the Pastor(s) shall supervise the worship and teaching of the congregation, seeing that the correct Christian doctrine and the by-laws are upheld.
- E. Members of the Board may be authorized by resolution of the Trustees to sign documents on behalf of the Board.
- F. The Board of Trustees is obliged to make an open account of their activities before the congregation. Each member of the Board is responsible for the matters and funds entrusted to his/her care and management until released by the congregation or by Board action.
- G. The Chairman shall call the Board to session as the need arises. The Board will also convene at the request of any of its members.
- H. The Board will have charge of the property of the congregation and the general management of its affairs. The Board shall keep and preserve accurate records of such affairs.
- I. The Board shall examine and vote on any applications for voting membership to the congregation that have been challenged.
- J. The Board shall, if need be, exercise church discipline as is defined in Article 1, Section 6.
- K. The Board shall provide for pastoral supply during sickness or absence of the Pastor and during periods of vacancy.
- L. The Board together with the Pastor(s) shall be responsible for the speakers schedule and the order of the worship service.
- M. The Board may recommend guest speakers. However, a congregation member desiring to call a speaker shall submit such request to the Board. The Board will then review and act on the request. Any guest speaker that is called must meet the requirements set forth in Article 3.

PAR. 4 - If any member of the Board of Trustees shall transgress these By-Laws or otherwise conduct him/her self unbecoming of his/her position, such a member shall be subject to Christ's church law as described in Article 1, Section 5. Such a board member shall step down until the remaining board members have resolved the matter.

## ARTICLE 3 - THE PASTOR

### SECTION 1 - Qualifications of the Pastor

PAR. 1 - The Pastor of the congregation shall be a man who demonstrates soundness in the faith, aptness to teach, and other qualifications as referenced in I Timothy 3 and II Timothy 2. He shall have been examined and approved by the church, shall accept and adhere to the Constitution and By-Laws of the congregation, and shall demonstrate a life and conduct that are above reproach.

### SECTION 2 - Terms of the Office of Pastor

PAR. 1 - The term of office of the Pastor shall be continued as long as he abides in the doctrine and love of the congregation. However, the congregation retains the right of electing a new Pastor, providing it gives the present Pastor six (6) months notice. The dismissal of the Pastor due to disciplinary action may take place immediately.

PAR. 2 - If the Pastor intends to resign, he must notify the Board of Trustees in writing six (6) months in advance of the intended resignation. However, the Pastor will not be required to remain six (6) months if released by the congregation.

PAR. 3 - The remuneration and/or salary of the Pastor(s) shall be determined annually by the Board. The congregation shall then approve the proposed remuneration.

PAR. 4 - The Pastor shall have the support and the co-operation of the Board of Trustees in the exercise of his duties.

### SECTION 3 - Duties of the Pastor

PAR. 1 - The duties of the Pastor shall include the following:

- A. To preach the Word of God and administer the sacraments according to the Gospel.
- B. To devote himself to prayer, study and the ministry of the Word.



- C. To visit the sick, the infirm, the destitute and afflicted, and to exercise pastoral care among the members of the congregation.
- D. To devote himself diligently to the instruction of the youth.
- E. To comfort and give instruction in righteousness publicly and privately, to the members of the congregation as the Word of God directs in I Timothy 2:1-7.
- F. To keep and preserve accurate church records, as pertaining to his office.
- G. To be ever mindful of his calling as a winner of souls, both within and without the congregation and to encourage the congregation in similar action.
- H. To exercise, together with the Board of Trustees, necessary discipline in the congregation.
- I. To submit a pastoral report at the annual meeting of the congregation.

PAR. 2 - The Pastor shall not reveal to any person that which an individual in a private confession has confided to him.

#### SECTION 4 - Discipline of Pastor

PAR. 1 - Charges against the Pastor of neglect of duty, or of false doctrine, or un-Christian conduct, if supported by two or more witnesses, shall be communicated in writing to the Board of trustees. A true copy will then be sent to the Pastor. The offense shall be dealt with as prescribed in Article 1, Section 5, with the Chairman of the Board presiding. Should the Pastor be found guilty and refuse to repent, he shall be suspended from his office.

PAR. 2 - The Board of Trustees has the power of recommendation for the dismissal of the Pastor.

PAR. 3 - If the Pastor does repent of the offense, he must abide by the desire of the congregation regarding his service to them.

### ARTICLE 4 - MEETINGS, ELECTIONS AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

#### SECTION 1 - Meetings

##### Subsection 1 - Congregational Meetings

PAR. 1 - The annual meeting of the congregation shall be held on the earliest convenient date in January or on such date as the Board of Trustees shall agree.

PAR. 2 - The Trustees may call special meetings of the congregation.

PAR. 3 - Notice of all congregational meetings shall be posted and also announced at least three consecutive Sundays in advance of such meeting. The subject of the meeting shall be stated in such a notice.

PAR. 4 - A majority of all votes cast shall be conclusive in all cases, unless otherwise provided for in the By-Laws. If votes for or against a given proposition are equally divided, the Chairman of the congregation shall cast the deciding vote.

PAR. 5 - All voting members of the congregation are to be assembled at posted meetings of the congregation or they must accept the decisions of those present.

PAR. 6 - There shall be no voting by proxy.

#### Subsection 2 – Urgent/Impromptu Meetings

PAR 1 – The Board of Trustees may call Urgent/Impromptu Meetings without regard to the rule of notification for congregational meetings.

PAR 2 – Any decision Made at these meetings shall be ratified at the subsequent congregational meeting.

PAR. 3 – No By-law changes shall be made at such meetings.

#### SECTION 2 - Elections

PAR. 1 - All elections for Trustees shall take place at the annual meeting of the congregation as in Article 2, Section 1, Par. 2.

PAR. 2 - The Congregation shall elect its church positions as deemed necessary by the board.

PAR. 3 - All workers engaged by the congregation shall be elected at congregational meetings unless otherwise provided in the By-laws.

PAR. 4 - No election for a Pastor can be held unless intent of such

election be announced and posted before the congregation at least three consecutive Sundays in advance of said election.

PAR. 5 - Two (2) election examiners are to be chosen from voting members to examine and verify votes at elections.

### SECTION 3 - Property Rights

PAR. 1 - In the event of dissolution of the congregation, all its real and personal property shall be dispersed as set by the current board, according to the following priorities:

- A. Payment of outstanding debts.
- B. If church Federation member – church Federation Treasury.
- C. If non-member – to further mission work.

PAR. 2 - The congregation, by and through its Trustees, may buy, sell, and convey (or otherwise dispose of any of its real property). But no such conveyance, encumbrance or purchase shall be made by the Trustees except when first authorized by resolution of the congregation and adopted by two-thirds (2/3) vote.

PAR. 3 - No individual member shall dispose of congregational property without congregational approval.

PAR. 4 - The Board may rent the church by resolution of its trustees. The costs are to be determined by the Board.

## ARTICLE 5 – AMENDMENTS AND BY-LAWS

### SECTION 1 - Amendments

PAR. 1 - Any alterations or amendments to the By-Laws must receive a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote at an annual or special meeting of the congregation.

### SECTION 2 - By-Laws

PAR. 1 - Any By-Laws, resolutions, or enactments of the congregation or its Board of Trustees differing from or in conflict with the Constitution are hereby superseded and repealed.