

# **Constitution and By-Laws of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America**

(Revised August 2014)

## **Article I**

Name

Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America

## **Article II**

Doctrinal Statement of Faith  
Church of the Lutheran Brethren

- A. The Bible, including both Old and New Testaments as originally given, is the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God and is free from error in the whole and in the part, and is therefore the final authoritative guide for faith and conduct.
- B. There is one God eternally existent in three distinct persons in one divine essence, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- C. God the Father has revealed Himself as the Creator and preserver of the universe, to Whom the entire creation and all creatures are subject.
- D. God created Adam and Eve in His image to live in fellowship with Him. They fell into sin through the temptation of Satan and thereby lost fellowship with God. Through their disobedience the entire human race became totally depraved, that is, self-centered sinners who oppose God, and who by nature are unable to trust, fear or love Him. They are subject to the devil, and are condemned to death under the eternal wrath of God.
- E. Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son, is the image of the invisible God. To accomplish our redemption, He became fully human, being conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus Christ, who is true God and true man, by His perfect obedience and substitutionary death on the cross, has purchased our redemption. He arose from the dead for our justification in the body in which He was crucified. He ascended into heaven, where He is now seated at the right hand of God, the Father, as our interceding High Priest. He will come a second time personally, bodily, and visibly to gather the believers unto Himself and to establish His millennial kingdom. He will judge the living and the dead and make an eternal separation between believers and unbelievers. His kingdom shall have no end.
- F. The Holy Spirit is a divine person eternally one with the Father and with the Son. Through the Word of God He convicts people of sin, persuades them to confess their sinfulness to God and calls them to faith through the Gospel. He regenerates, sanctifies, and preserves believers in the one true faith. He comforts, guides, equips, directs, and empowers the church to fulfill the great commission.
- G. The knowledge and benefit of Christ's redemption from sin are brought to the human race through the means of grace, namely the Word and the sacraments.
1. Through the Word of the Law God brings sinners to know their lost condition and to repent. Through the Word of the Gospel He brings sinners to believe in Jesus Christ, to be justified, to enter the process of sanctification, and to have eternal life. This occurs as the Holy Spirit awakens them to see their sin, convicts them of their guilt of sin, and calls them to repent and believe, inviting and enabling them to accept God's grace in Christ. Each one who thus believes is instantly forgiven and credited with Christ's righteousness. The Word then teaches and guides the believer to lead a godly life.
  2. In the Sacrament of Baptism, God offers the benefits of Christ's redemption to all people and graciously bestows the washing of regeneration of newness of life to all who believe. God calls the baptized person to live in daily repentance, that is, in sorrow for sin, in turning from sin, and in personal faith in the forgiveness of sin obtained by Christ. By grace we are daily given the power to overcome sinful desires and live a new life in Christ. Those who do not continue to live in God's grace need to be brought again to repentance and faith through the Law and Gospel.

Because the sinfulness of human nature passes on from generation to generation and the promise of God's grace includes little children, we baptize infants, who become members of Christ's believing church through baptism. These children need to come to know that they are sinners with a sinful nature that opposes God. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, they need to confess their sinfulness and yield to God; and possess for themselves forgiveness of their sin through Jesus Christ, as they are led from the faith received in infant baptism into a clear conscious personal faith in Christ as their Lord and Savior and being assured of salvation, rely solely on the finished work of Christ, and the power of the Gospel to live as children of God.

3. In the Sacrament of Holy Communion, Christ gives to the communicants His body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine. He declares the forgiveness of sin to all believers, and strengthens their faith.

H. Eternal salvation is available to every living human being on earth by God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. This salvation consists of an instantaneous aspect and an ongoing, continual aspect.

1. Justification is God's gracious act by which He, for Christ's sake, instantaneously acquits repentant and believing sinners and credits them with Christ's righteousness. At that moment, God gives each one who believes a new and godly nature and the Holy Spirit begins the process of sanctification. There is no place for human effort in justification.

2. Sanctification is God's gracious, continual work of spiritual renewal and growth in the life of every justified person. Through the means of grace, the Holy Spirit works to reproduce the character of Christ within the lives of all believers, instructing and urging them to live out their new nature. The Holy Spirit enables believers more and more to resist the devil, to overcome the world, and to count themselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit produces spiritual fruit in and bestows spiritual gifts upon all believers. He calls, empowers and equips them to serve God in the home, in the community, and as part of the Church Universal. The process of sanctification will be complete only when the believer reaches glory.

I. The Church Universal consists of all those who truly believe on Jesus Christ as Savior. The local congregation is an assembly of believers in a certain locality among whom the Gospel is purely taught and the sacraments are rightly administered. The confessing membership of the local congregation shall include only those who have been baptized into "the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," confess personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, maintain a good reputation in the community and accept the constitution of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren. It cannot, however, be avoided that hypocrites might be mixed in the congregation; that is, those whose unbelief is not evident to the congregation.

J. The Church of the Lutheran Brethren practices the congregational form of church government and the autonomy of the local congregations. The office of pastor and elder is to be filled by men only. The synodical administration has an advisory function as it relates to the congregation and an administrative function as it relates to the cooperative efforts of the congregations.

K. The Lutheran confessions are a summary of Bible doctrines. We adhere to the following confessional writings: The Apostles' Creed, Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, unaltered Augsburg Confession, and Luther's Small Catechism.

### **Article III** Synodical Management

A. **Membership:** The Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America shall be composed of Lutheran congregations and individual Christians who accept this constitution. Their admission takes place at the Biennial Convention when a request or petition has previously been filed with the Synodical Secretary. A local congregation may withdraw from the Synod at any time, provided such decision to withdraw is done in accordance with its own constitution and by-laws.

B. Synodical Regions: Initially five geographical Regions shall function within the Synod: four in the United States, roughly equal in number of congregations, and a fifth Region which is the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Canada. The Regions shall have oversight, leadership, direction, support and coordination of the cooperative functions and activities of the congregations within the Regions. They shall meet biennially in Regional Conventions, during the off-year of the Synodical Biennial Convention.

1. The Regions within the United States shall recommend new congregations to the Biennial Convention of the Synod for membership.

2. Congregations of the Canadian Region are members of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America (CLBA) by virtue of their membership in the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Canada (CLBC). Therefore, subject to the approval of a new congregation's constitution by the Theological Council which includes Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Canada representation (set forth in Article III. E. 2 which defines the Theological Council), the Canadian Region may accept a new congregation into membership.

3. The Council of Directors, as hereinafter defined in Article III. E. 1. shall periodically review the size and the number of the Regions and be empowered to change the size and geographic boundaries of the Regions. Notwithstanding Article V Amendments of this Constitution, any changes adopted by the Council of Directors under this paragraph shall be automatically incorporated as changes to this Constitution without a vote of the Biennial Convention. The Regions' constitutions shall be consistent with the Constitution of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America. Changes in the Regions' constitutions shall be subject to ratification by the Council of Directors.

C. Biennial Convention: A meeting of duly accredited delegates shall be held in the month of May, June, July, or August every other year. Only the following shall be recognized as eligible to cast one vote each at the Biennial Convention: delegates representing individual congregations, rostered Ministers of the Gospel, all voting members of the Council of Directors and members of the Board of Lutheran Brethren Seminary. Each delegate must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age. Each congregation shall seek to send a delegation of no less than 50% men. "Robert's Rules of Order" shall be the basis for parliamentary procedure in all the deliberations of the Biennial Convention. A parliamentarian shall be selected at each convention who will advise the President with respect to parliamentary procedure. Visiting Christians may be given the right to speak by a majority vote upon recommendation of the Committee on Credentials. Reports shall be submitted to the Biennial Convention through the Council of Directors. Such reports shall be published well in advance of the Biennial Convention.

1. The following committees, the size of which shall be determined from year to year, will receive biennial reports. These committees may present feedback on approved mission plans. They may also request that potential items be considered by the Council of Directors at their regularly scheduled meetings.

- a. The Committee on Finance.
- b. The Committee on Communication.
- c. The Committee on International Mission.
- d. The Committee on North American Regional Mission.
- e. The Committee on Theological Issues and Preparation for Mission.

2. Other committees that shall function during the Biennial Convention shall be as follows:

- a. A Committee on Credentials consisting of two delegates shall be appointed by the Synodical President.
- b. A Committee on Resolutions consisting of two delegates shall be elected by the convention.

D. Election of Officers.

The Biennial Convention shall elect the Synodical President, Synodical Secretary and the Regional members (as defined in Article III. E. 1. b.) of the Council of Directors for a term of four years each on a rotating basis. The delegates, as defined above, will debate and vote on proposed constitutional changes, on appropriate proposals relating to the interpretation, amendment and/or changes to the Church of the Lutheran Brethren Statement of Faith and on Position Papers that are brought forth from the Theological Council. Upon recommendation from the

Regions in the United States, it will accept new congregations to the Synod. It will officially welcome new congregations to the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Canada.

E. The following governing bodies shall function within the Synod.

1. The Council of Directors shall be composed of voting members and non-voting members as determined by sub-paragraphs a and c below. It is the denominational governing authority accountable to the Synodical Biennial Convention.

a. The voting members of the Council of Directors will be the Synodical President, the Synodical Secretary, two laypersons (at least one ordained) and one pastor from each of the Regions. These members are nominated by their Region and elected by the Church of the Lutheran Brethren Biennial Convention for a four year term. If any voting member of the COD is unable to complete his/her term (the "Retiring Member"), the Executive Committee of the region which the Retiring Member represents, shall appoint a qualified person to replace the Retiring Member. The replacement member shall serve on the COD until the next CLB biennial convention.

b. Elected members, with the exception of the President, are limited to serving 12 consecutive years. A member who has served for 12 consecutive years may be reelected after an absence of a minimum of one year.

c. Non-voting members of the Council of Directors will be the Regional Pastors, Departmental Directors, the President of Lutheran Brethren Seminary, the Director of Operations, and the Director of Women's Ministries.

d. A Finance Committee of the Council of Directors shall be composed of at least five of the elected members of the Council of Directors appointed from its own membership. They shall function as the trustees for state law purposes and be the body invested with the fiduciary responsibilities of the Council of Directors. The Director of Finance and Personnel shall be an ex-officio member of this committee.

2. The Theological Council shall be composed of the Regional Pastors, the Director of International Mission, two of the ordained layperson members of the Council of Directors selected annually by the Council of Directors, the President of the Lutheran Brethren Seminary, one member of the Seminary faculty (selected annually by the Seminary faculty), and the Synodical President. The Synodical President shall chair the Theological Council. It will meet at the call of the Synodical President and/or Council of Directors.

3. The Board of Lutheran Brethren Seminary shall be composed of nine members, three of whom shall be members of the Theological Council not on the Seminary staff and one of whom shall be a representative of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Canada. The initial members of the Board shall be appointed by the Council of Directors. Subsequent members will be selected by the Board of Lutheran Brethren Seminary from a slate of nominees provided by the Council of Directors for four-year terms and can serve a maximum of three consecutive terms.

a. The Executive Committee of the Board of Lutheran Brethren Seminary shall be composed of the Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary of the Board.

b. The Seminary Administrative Committee shall be composed of the President, the Academic Dean and the Chief Financial Officer of the Seminary.

4. In addition, the following administrative bodies are established:

a. The Synodical Mission Team shall be composed of the Synodical President, the Director of Operations, the President of Lutheran Brethren Seminary, the Director of Finance and Personnel, the Director of International Missions, the Director of Communications and Prayer and a Regional Pastor selected by the Synodical President.

b. The Office of President shall be composed of the Synodical President, Director of Operations, and other assistants to the President as may be hired.

c. The President's Advisory Council for Congregational Ministries shall be composed of the Synodical President and the Regional Pastors.

d. Such committees as may be deemed necessary by the Synodical President and/or the Council of Directors as standing committees, or on an ad hoc basis.

#### F. Relation Of Local Congregation To The Synod.

With respect to governance of the Synod, we practice the congregational form of church government and the autonomy of the local congregation. The Synod has an advisory function rather than a ruling function. Its power to rule extends to the cooperative efforts of the congregations of the Synod. In the case of discipline problems in the local congregation, the Council of Directors has whatever authority is delegated to it by the local congregation. It may also, upon recommendation from the Region in which the congregation is located, expel a local congregation from membership in the Synod if the congregation no longer reflects the position of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren. It may also revoke the ordination of a pastor for doctrinal, moral, or other sufficient reasons.

### **Article IV**

#### Congregational Management

A. Definition. A Lutheran congregation is an assembly of believing Christians in a certain locality, among whom the Word of God is preached in harmony with the fundamental doctrines of the Lutheran faith as expressed in the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church and the sacraments are administered in accordance with the Lord's institution. Remark: It cannot be denied that false Christians might be found in the congregation: that is, those whose true spiritual state is not manifest or provable to men. "The secret things belong unto Jehovah our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." Deuteronomy 29:29.

B. Congregational Membership. According to the Scriptures and our Lutheran confessions the Church is made up only of regenerated persons. Therefore, the local congregation shall conform to the scriptures in that its membership be made up only of those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and whose testimony and life confirm that confession. Since it is also the will of God, according to Scripture, that the Church of Christ shall appear in the world as an externally visible organization, it becomes necessary for individual believers in every locality to unite themselves into assemblies, or congregations, in order thereby more effectually to discharge their duties, to wit: inwardly by the chastening, guiding, and sanctifying power of the congregation to effect its own preservation and growth, and outwardly by its quickening and disseminating activity to fulfill its mission as the light and salt of the world.

C. Church Leadership. Christ is the Head of the Church. Through His Spirit He guides the Church by His Word. According to His Word, He bestows upon the Church gifts of grace necessary for the effectual performance of its various ministrations. Among these ministrations we especially emphasize the office of the pastor, the teaching and governing elders, evangelists, teachers, and deacons. (Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5; I Peter 5:1-4; I Thessalonians 5:12, 13; Ephesians 4:11; II Timothy 4:5; Acts 6:2-6; Philippians 1:1). Pastors and elders continue to serve as long as the congregation finds it practicable. Elders of our congregations who because of ill health or advanced age are unable to fulfill the functions of their office may retire, but they continue to serve the church as they have opportunity.

### **Article V**

#### Amendments

A. Except for changes adopted by the Council of Directors regarding the number and size of the Regions, this Constitution can be amended only at the Biennial Convention. Such amendments shall be proposed in writing by petition of a member congregation or by ten delegates at the previous Biennial Convention. The amendment requires a two-thirds majority vote.

B. A proposed amendment may be formulated and signed by 10 confessing members of the LB congregations and submitted for reading at each regional convention. It will then be discussed and voted on at the next synodical biennial convention. The amendment requires a two-thirds majority vote.

# By-Laws

## Article I

### Synodical Management

#### A. Duties of Officers and Qualifications.

##### 1. Synodical President.

He shall devote his time to taking care of matters pertaining to the congregations and synodical work.

- a. He shall be an ordained pastor or elder of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.
- b. He shall preside at the Biennial Convention, receive reports from the various congregations, and submit a biennial statement of his own work and of the state of the Synod.
- c. He shall, as often as possible, visit every congregation to give encouragement and advice.
- d. He serves as the pastor and spiritual leader of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.
- e. He will recommend, to the Council of Directors, candidates for all Departmental Director positions with the exception of the President of Lutheran Brethren Seminary.
- f. He presents to the Council of Directors all departmental policies, plans, procedures and budgets for its action.
- g. He is responsible for executing the plans and policies established by the Council of Directors. He meets regularly with the Council of Directors to communicate progress, to report needed changes to current plans or policies, and to propose new plans and policies based upon assessments from meetings with Regional Pastors and Departmental Directors.
- h. He develops goals, plans, and strategies that will accomplish synodical ministry plans and policies. He works together with the Synodical Mission Team to establish these goals, plans, and strategies.
- i. He will also serve as the liaison between the Church and its affiliated ministries.
- j. He shall be the Chair of the Theological Council.
- k. He shall be a voting member of the Council of Directors.

##### 2. Director of Operations.

- a. He shall report directly to the Synodical President, and shall be a member of the Synodical Mission Team.
- b. He shall coordinate the execution of Church of the Lutheran Brethren goals, plans and strategies by the Synodical Departments and Regional Pastors.
- c. He shall coordinate the day-to-day operations of the Departmental Directors and Regional Pastors.
- d. He shall be a non-voting member of the Council of Directors.

##### 3. Synodical Secretary.

- a. He shall keep a record of the Biennial Convention.
- b. He shall receive and satisfy the correspondence of the Synod.
- c. He shall receive and preserve parochial reports.
- d. He shall record matters of special importance within the Synod and submit an annual report to the Council of Directors.
- e. He shall be a voting member of the Council of Directors and shall take minutes and maintain continuity of files, records and data for the Council of Directors.

##### 4. Director of Finance and Personnel.

- a. He shall report directly to the Synodical President, and shall be a member of the Synodical Mission Team.
- b. He shall have a general supervisory authority for the funds of the Synod.
- c. He shall be an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee of the Council of Directors.
- d. He shall manage all buildings and property owned by the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.
- e. He shall conduct functions of finance and accounting for all synodical departments including the Lutheran Brethren Seminary, for which he shall act as the Chief Financial Officer.

- f. He shall be the corporate treasurer as required by Minnesota law for not-for-profit corporations.
- g. He shall provide the oversight for the trust funds, administer the management of endowments and administer and oversee the management of pension and benefit funds of all synodical employees and pastors.
- h. He shall provide oversight and conduct all the functions of Human Resources for all synodical offices and shall recommend to the Synodical President candidates for hire as synodical offices employees.
- i. He shall be a non-voting member of the Council of Directors.

5. Director of International Mission.

- a. He shall be an ordained pastor or elder of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.
- b. He shall report directly to the Synodical President and shall be a member of the Synodical Mission Team.
- c. He shall submit plans for Church of the Lutheran Brethren international mission efforts and execute those plans.
- d. He shall be the contact person for the Church of the Lutheran Brethren missionaries and also provide information about the Church of the Lutheran Brethren International Mission work for Church of the Lutheran Brethren churches.
- e. He shall be a non-voting member of the Council of Directors.

6. President of Lutheran Brethren Seminary.

- a. He shall be an ordained pastor or elder of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.
- b. He shall be appointed by and governed directly by the Board of Lutheran Brethren Seminary.
- c. He shall be a member of the Synodical Mission Team.
- d. He shall be a member of the Theological Council.
- e. He shall submit plans and reports to the Board of Lutheran Brethren Seminary and will execute them under the direction of the said Board.
- f. He shall be a member of the Seminary Administrative Committee.
- g. He shall be a non-voting member of the Council of Directors.

7. Director of Communications and Prayer.

- a. He shall report directly to the Synodical President and shall be a member of the Synodical Mission Team.
- b. He shall manage the communication of prayer requests to the Synodical Prayer Team.
- c. He shall be responsible for stewardship functions of the Synod.
- d. He shall manage the oversight and creation of Faith & Fellowship and other Synodical publications.
- e. He shall manage all information technology functions, including the Church of the Lutheran Brethren website.
- f. He shall manage the publication and distribution of all materials required to support the mission of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren, including but not limited to communications, both external and internal, video production and all print communication that bears the denominational logo.
- g. He shall support the communication functions of the other synodical departments.
- h. He shall make available low-cost assistance to the local church in the area of web design and promotional materials.
- i. He shall be a non-voting member of the Council of Directors.

8. Regional Pastor.

- a. He shall be an ordained pastor or elder of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.
- b. The United States Regional Pastors shall be nominated by the Synodical President and appointed by the Council of Directors. The Canadian Regional Pastor shall be appointed by the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Canada and affirmed by the Council of Directors.
- c. His performance shall be evaluated annually by the Synodical President with input from the pastors and congregations in the Region.

- d. His appointment shall be affirmed every two years by the congregations within the Region at their Regional Biennial Convention.
- e. He shall report directly to the Synodical President.
- f. He shall preside at the meetings of the Regional Executive Committee (as defined in By-Laws Article III. B).
- g. He shall provide assistance in the shepherding/mentoring of pastors, and in the areas of synodical and congregational relations, pastoral and congregational health, conflict resolution, and training/education.
- h. He shall encourage, facilitate and support Ministry Clusters, congregations in the Region working together in various aspects of ministry.
- i. He shall be responsible for regional and cluster communication.
- j. He shall provide assistance in church planting efforts within the Region. He will work with individual congregations and clusters of congregations to reach people in new communities and will provide coaching, resources and encouragement.
- k. He shall pursue opportunities to utilize the resource of young people, by training, equipping, empowering, and networking in unity of mission and purpose.
- l. He shall generally preside at regional official functions (ordinations, installations, dedications, etc.) unless the local congregation should request the services of the Synodical President or some other mutually acceptable person.
- m. He shall recommend pastoral candidates to congregations seeking his advice.
- n. He shall schedule individuals and groups traveling through the Region unless the congregations make their own arrangements.
- o. He shall have other synodical responsibilities as assigned by the Synodical President.
- p. He shall be a non-voting member of the Council of Directors.

#### B. Duties of Councils, Boards, and Offices.

- 1. The Council of Directors will be the approving authority for mission, will establish the budgets, plans and policies for the Church of the Lutheran Brethren, will present the nomination slate to the Biennial Convention, and will have fiduciary responsibility for all denominational funds and property.
  - a. It shall elect its Chairman from its elected, ordained layperson members.
  - b. It will appoint a Synodical Vice President from the Synodical Mission Team (as defined in Article III. E. 4. a.). The Vice President shall serve as Synodical President until the next Biennial Convention if the Synodical President is unable to serve.
  - c. It shall have general supervisory authority over the work of the Synod and its workers.
  - d. It shall appoint and remove Departmental Directors upon recommendation of the Synodical President.
  - e. It shall appoint and remove the Regional Pastors upon recommendation of the Synodical President.
  - f. It shall have the authority to remove the Synodical President by a two-thirds vote if the Synodical President fails to uphold the duties, beliefs, calling, or moral standards required by this office.
  - g. It shall approve all departmental policies, procedures, plans and budgets for the Church of the Lutheran Brethren upon recommendation of the Synodical President.
  - h. It shall present the nomination slate to the Biennial Convention.
  - i. It shall review, analyze, and recommend issues prior to presentation at the Biennial Convention.
  - j. It shall determine the place, program and agenda for the Biennial Convention.
  - k. It shall prepare a biennial report, a biennial ministry plan, and a financial report for the Biennial Convention.
  - l. It shall appoint the initial Board of Lutheran Brethren Seminary.
  - m. It shall nominate candidates for election to the Board of Lutheran Brethren Seminary.
  - n. It shall have reserve powers over the property and the mission of the Lutheran Brethren Seminary.
  - o. It shall arrange for the ordination of candidates approved by the Theological Council.



- p. It shall, through its ordained members, act on all proposals relating to the interpretation, amendment and/or changes to the Church of the Lutheran Brethren Statement of Faith and Position Papers that are received from the Theological Council.
- q. It shall be the final court of appeal on any personnel matter.
- r. It shall approve the call of all Synodical workers, set salaries for their services, and determine the conditions of their call.
- s. In support of regional church planting efforts, it shall adopt the regional plans and budgets for church planting presented by the Synodical President and adopt appropriate policies and procedures.
- t. It shall be the sole member of the Hillcrest Lutheran Academy corporation.
- u. Through its Finance Committee:
  - i. It shall be empowered for and on behalf of the Synod to conduct all financial, real property, and business matters as provided for in the Constitution, Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws, and the laws of the State under which the Synod is organized;
  - ii. It shall supervise and direct the operation of all trust fund activity of the Synod;
  - iii. It shall have fiduciary responsibility for all funds and property of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America;
  - iv. It shall coordinate personnel benefits, deferred giving, and stewardship activities;
  - v. It shall determine and administer the Synodical pension program;
  - vi. It shall establish and oversee a Retirement Committee whose scope of duties is as follows: to evaluate and monitor the synodical pension program and make such recommendations to the Council of Directors which it considers appropriate and helpful;
  - vii. It shall provide for an annual audit of all synodical accounts;
  - viii. It shall take such measures as are deemed necessary and advisable for the solicitation of funds to maintain and promote all synodical work.

2. The Theological Council shall provide leadership for the church on theological issues. It shall make its recommendations to the Council of Directors on all proposals relating to the interpretation, amendment and/or changes to the Church of the Lutheran Brethren Statement of Faith and Position Papers. The Theological Council's recommendations to the Council of Directors shall be voted upon only by the ordained members of the Council. Non-ordained members shall not vote upon and will also be excused from the discussion and voting sessions that involve disciplinary matters.

- a. It shall interview and recommend candidates for the Minister of the Gospel roster and publish the roster annually.
- b. It shall recommend ordination candidates to the Council of Directors for certification as Ministers of the Gospel—Ordained and shall recommend recognition of ordination for colloquy candidates.
- c. It shall deal with disciplinary action when ordained clergy have violated their ordination vows.
- d. It shall receive annual reports from the Office of the President regarding changes in the Licensed and Commissioned rosters.
- e. It shall be available to advise the Synodical President on theological issues.
- f. It shall be responsible for the oversight of a mandatory continuing education program for active clergy.
- g. It shall review the constitution of new congregations that the Regions recommend to the Synodical Biennial Convention.

3. The Board of Lutheran Brethren Seminary shall be responsible to fulfill the mission of the Lutheran Brethren Seminary.

- a. It shall be responsible for the fiduciary management of the Seminary.
- b. It shall fill vacancies on the Board from the slate of nominees prepared by the Council of Directors, with the directive that one shall be a representative of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Canada and there shall always be three members of the Theological Council on the Board.
- c. It shall select the President of the Lutheran Brethren Seminary.
- d. It shall supervise and direct the academic phase of the educational institutions of the Synod.
- e. It shall call teachers and workers, determine the conditions of their call, and set their salaries.

- f. It shall direct the publicity of the Seminary and take such measures as will promote the educational facilities of the Synod.
- g. It shall recommend the budget for the Seminary to the Council of Directors.
- h. The Executive Committee of the Board of Lutheran Brethren Seminary is empowered to act on the Board's behalf between meetings.
- i. It shall formulate and maintain a written long-range plan for the Seminary.

4. The Office of the President shall carry out the programs defined by the Synodical President subject to review by the Council of Directors.

5. The Synodical Mission Team shall meet at the call of the Synodical President. It shall work with the President to develop and have input on appropriate policies and procedures, and on a unified ministry plan and budget for presentation to the Council of Directors.

6. The President's Advisory Council for Congregational Ministries shall advise the President and his staff on operational programs designed to serve the church in areas such as youth ministries, pastoral candidate training, in-service training, advisory services for special needs and other ministries directed toward strengthening the parish ministry.

C. Scope of Business. The Biennial Convention, through its properly accredited delegates, shall deliberate and take action in all matters placed before it.

D. Delegates: Each church is allowed two delegates to the Biennial Convention for the first fifty adult confessing members or fraction thereof, plus an additional delegate for each additional fifty adult confessing members or fraction thereof.

## **Article II**

### Congregational Management

A. The Pastor. For the office of pastor, the congregation shall call a man who is recognized as a true Christian, who accepts this constitution, and who otherwise has the necessary qualifications. His ordination shall take place in the midst of the congregation(s) which he is to serve. The congregation(s) shall make arrangements to have the ordination performed by the proper officials of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren or by their own elders. A candidate for ordination must have a permanent call. The pastor shall particularly attend to the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments. He shall also perform such other services within the church as are required by the Word of God.

B. The Elder. The elders shall support the pastor, watch over the spiritual condition of the congregation, and insure that the work is done in accordance with the Word of God.

C. Ordination and Installation. Pastors and elders shall be ordained and installed according to the ritual of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America.

D. Church Council. Together, the pastors and elders shall constitute the Church Council, and to this body the congregation as a whole commits its spiritual direction.

1. It examines and recommends applicants for membership, whereas actual acceptance and admission is decided by the congregation.

2. It makes certain that church discipline is exercised in accordance with Matthew 18:15-18, I Corinthians 5; II Corinthians 2:5-11; and I Timothy 5:20.

3. It has authority on behalf of the congregation to exclude an individual from the Lord's Supper. However, expulsion from the congregation can be brought about only by the action of the congregation itself in a lawfully assembled meeting.

4. It also calls a meeting of the congregation as often as the congregation demands it or as the council finds it necessary.

5. Elections and other matters of primary importance shall be considered by the Church Council before being brought to the business meeting of the congregation for discussion and final decision.

6. When the Church Council needs to consider matters which pertain to the temporal affairs of the church, the Board of Deacons, the Board of Trustees and/or the Finance and Property Committee may participate in the meeting with the privilege of discussion and voting.

E. The Deacons, Trustees and/or Finance and Property Committee shall have charge of the material interests of the congregation and submit annual reports.

F. Classification of Members: Members of the congregation are classified as follows:

1. Confessing members. Confessing members shall have been baptized into “the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” confess personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, maintain a good reputation in the community and accept this constitution.

a. All requests for confessing membership are made to the Board of Elders which recommends candidates to the congregation.

b. Baptized children of the congregation who have become confessing Christians may request confessing membership when they reach confirmation age.

c. Only confessing members of the congregation who have reached the voting age determined by the local congregation may vote at congregational business meetings. They shall not have membership in any secret society or other organization which in its official statements or rites assert that individuals are reconciled to God outside of Jesus Christ and his atonement.

2. Baptized children of the congregation. Children baptized in the congregation and all baptized children of confessing members shall be designated baptized children of the congregation. This status continues until they reach the voting age determined by the congregation, or are accepted as confessing members of the congregation, whichever occurs first. Those not requesting adult membership shall become parishioners. The congregation shall diligently guide these children and youth by teaching the Word of God and modeling godly attitudes and behavior. Every congregation shall arrange for Sunday Schools, Bible Schools, youth ministries, pastoral instruction, confirmation and other Christian training programs. These young people shall be made the objects of prayer as the congregation seeks to guide them to conscious faith, spiritual growth and confessing membership in the church.

G. Parishioners. Baptized children of the congregation become parishioners upon reaching voting age if they have not been received as confessing members. In addition, the Board of Elders may include as parishioners those who wish to call this their church home. The Board of Elders may also remove the names of parishioners when they deem it necessary or advisable.

### **Article III**

#### **Regional Management**

A. Membership. Voting congregations shall consist of congregations in the Region holding membership in the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.

B. Executive Committee.

1. Regional Pastor. He shall preside at meetings of the Executive Committee.

2. Regional Chairman. He shall moderate the Regional Biennial Convention.

3. Secretary/Treasurer. He shall assume such duties as are stipulated in the Regional Constitution.

C. Scope of Business.

1. The Region shall work in a manner that is consistent with the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.
2. The Region shall work through Ministry Clusters to reach people in new communities and in church planting efforts.
3. The Region shall promote region-wide conferences, Bible Camps, youth conferences, Sunday School Workshops as appropriate.
4. The Region shall recommend new congregations to the Synod.

**Article IV**

Affiliate Organizations

We recognize and encourage with our prayers, goodwill and fellowship, the status of certain organizations operating within the framework of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren and supplementing its work, as affiliate organizations. These organizations do not receive direct support from the synodical budget, nor are their officers elected by the Synodical Biennial Convention.

They may apply for listing within this constitutional By-Law by requesting such listing from the Biennial Convention. Such request shall be channeled through the Council of Directors and shall be subject to their recommendation and its ratification at the Biennial Convention.

The Biennial Convention may also remove such an organization from this list by action at the Biennial Convention. Affiliate organizations shall be required to accept the constitution of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren and work in harmony with the Synod. Their president and/or executive director shall be a member of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.

**Article V**

Amendments

These By-Laws can be amended only at the Biennial Convention. Such amendments shall be submitted in writing to the Synodical President by a member congregation or by the Council of Directors. It must be in the hands of the Synodical President previous to the Biennial Convention. Its adoption requires a two-thirds majority vote.