

# **Lutheran CORE Constitution**

September 26, 2009

## **Chapter 1. Name and Incorporation**

- 1.01. The name of this ministry shall be Lutheran Coalition for Renewal.
- 1.02. For the purposes of this constitution, Lutheran Coalition for Renewal is hereafter designated as "Lutheran CORE."
- 1.03. This ministry shall be incorporated in the state of Minnesota as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Amendments to the articles of incorporation shall be submitted to the Steering Committee for ratification before filing.
- 1.04. Lutheran CORE shall engage in mission as:
  - a. a confessional and confessing movement for all Lutherans who identify with the purposes of Lutheran CORE;
  - b. a churchly community, grounded in Word and Sacrament, and rooted in the Holy Scriptures, the ecumenical creeds, and the Lutheran Confessions;
  - c. a free-standing synod, taking on as needed those ministries that synods typically carry out, apart from a direct relationship with another Lutheran church body;
  - d. a coalition of congregations, individual lay persons, pastors, synods and other reform movements.

## **Chapter 2. Confession of Faith**

Lutheran CORE confesses:

- 2.01. The Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- 2.02. Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.
  - a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.
  - b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
  - c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.
- 2.03. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.
- 2.04. The Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of the Church.
- 2.05. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one

with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

- 2.06. The other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.
- 2.07. The Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scripture and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.
- 2.08. The Common Confession as a summary of teachings in the Lutheran Confessions:
  1. The Lord Jesus Christ  
We are people who believe and confess our faith in the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We trust and believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.
  2. The Gospel of Salvation  
We believe and confess that all human beings are sinners, and that sinners are redeemed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God alone justifies human beings by faith in Christ—a faith that God creates through the message of the Gospel. As ambassadors for Christ, God uses us to speak His Word and build His kingdom.
  3. The Authority of Scripture  
We believe and confess that the Bible is God's revealed Word to us, spoken in Law and Gospel. The Bible is the final authority for us in all matters of our faith and life.
  4. A Common Confession of Faith  
We accept and uphold that the Lutheran Confessions reliably guide us as faithful interpretations of Scripture, and that we share a unity and fellowship in faith with others among whom the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached and the sacraments are administered in accordance with the Gospel.
  5. The Priesthood of All Believers  
We believe and confess that the Holy Spirit makes all who believe in Jesus Christ to be priests for service to others in Jesus' name, and that God desires to make use of the spiritual gifts he has given through the priesthood of all believers.
  6. Marriage and Family  
We believe and confess that the marriage of male and female is an institution created and blessed by God. From marriage, God forms families to serve as the building blocks of all human civilization and community. We teach and practice that sexual activity belongs exclusively within the Biblical boundaries of a faithful marriage between one man and one woman.
  7. The Mission and Ministry of the Congregation  
We believe and confess that the church is the assembly of believers called and gathered by God around Word and Sacrament, and that the mission and ministry of the church is carried out within the context of individual congregations, which are able to work together locally and globally.

### **Chapter 3. Nature of the Church**

- 3.01. All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this

ministry are to be carried out under his rule and authority.

- 3.02. The Church exists both as a community of believers and as congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. Lutheran CORE, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of the congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faith. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the continuity of the communion of saints through time; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

#### **Chapter 4. Membership**

- 4.01. The following are eligible for membership in Lutheran CORE:
- a. Lutheran congregations.
  - b. Individual members of Lutheran congregations, both lay people and pastors.
  - c. Reform and renewal movements within the Lutheran community
  - d. Synods or districts of Lutheran church bodies.
  - e. Lutheran seminaries, schools, and colleges.
- 4.02. Members of Lutheran CORE shall accept and adhere to this constitution, including the Common Confession, and shall agree with the goals and principles of Lutheran CORE.
- 4.03. The secretary of Lutheran CORE shall maintain an up-to-date roster of the membership of this ministry.
- 4.04. At the time of the adoption of this constitution, all current participants in Lutheran CORE shall be considered members of this ministry, unless notice to the contrary is given to the secretary of this ministry.

#### **Chapter 5. Statement of Purpose**

- 5.01. Lutheran CORE shall:
- a. Strengthen the renewal of personal faith and congregational life, and foster a sense of churchly community and identity among its supporters and partners.
  - b. Cooperate, wherever possible, with synods and other units within the ELCA and support faithful ministries; and shall in other cases provide alternative resources for congregational life in worship, Christian education, and youth ministry.
  - c. Work for the outreach of the Gospel, following the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations as a priority in the life of Lutheran CORE, developing new congregations, revitalizing existing congregations, nurturing ethnic-specific ministries and supporting global missionaries in pioneer evangelism.
  - d. Implement a plan for theological education for pastors and lay people, with special attention to continuing education and mentoring ministries.
  - e. Cooperate with synods, congregations, and rostered leaders – in ways to be determined – regarding the candidacy process, the calling process, and in disciplinary procedures; and in the resolution of congregational and other conflicts.
  - f. Develop a means for ongoing theological reflection and conversation on issues related to

- Holy Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and personal and social ethics.
- g. Provide counsel to congregations and individuals in their financial support for the mission of the Church, encouraging support for ministries that are supportive of Lutheran CORE's convictions and commitments.
  - h. Strive to engage in shared ministry with synods that are supportive of Lutheran CORE's convictions and commitments.
- 5.02. The ministry of Lutheran CORE shall be carried out in partnership with other reform movements, and Lutheran CORE's relationship with other reform movements shall be integral to its own ministry (see Chapter 6).
- 5.03. Lutheran CORE shall work for the reform and renewal of the Lutheran community and will advocate for Biblical authority and Lutheran confessional identity.

## **Chapter 6. Relationship with Other Reform Movements**

- 6.01. Lutheran CORE shall include within its ministry the ministries of other reform movements and shall cooperate with other reform movements in the development of shared resources for Christian education, theological education, global missions, worship, and others as may be determined.
- 6.02. Reform movements shall accept and adhere to this constitution; shall affirm the Common Confession; and shall be in agreement with the goals and intentions of Lutheran CORE.
- 6.03. Each reform movement within Lutheran CORE shall maintain its own goals and purposes and shall determine its own affairs.
- 6.04. The relationship between Lutheran CORE and other reform movements shall be characterized by mutual sharing, cooperation, and partnership, rather than supervision and control.
- 6.05. Reform movements may be formed according to need and interest. Such reform movements shall be included within Lutheran CORE by action of the Steering Committee.

## **Chapter 7. Convocation**

- 7.01. Lutheran CORE shall have an annual convocation which shall serve as the chief decision-making body for this ministry.
- 7.02. The responsibilities of the annual convocation shall include: election of Steering Committee members, the moderator, deputy moderator, secretary and treasurer; elections for the Committee on Appeals; adoption of a budget; reception of reports from the Steering Committee and officers; and other items of business as may be determined.
- 7.03. A quorum for conducting the business of a convocation shall be those members of Lutheran CORE who are registered and present at that convocation.
- 7.04. Unless a convocation decides otherwise, proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of this ministry.
- 7.05. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of a

convocation, unless otherwise ordered by the convocation.

- 7.06. Special convocations may be called by the moderator with the consent of the Steering Committee, or by the Steering Committee acting by itself.
- 7.07. Notice of each special convocation shall define the purpose for which it is to be held. The scope of actions to be taken at such a special convocation shall be limited to the subject matter(s) described in the notice.
- 7.08. Notice of the time and place of all convocations shall be given by the secretary of this ministry. Electronic or postal communications to all partner reform movements, individuals, and congregations, along with an announcement on the Lutheran CORE internet home page of at least thirty days before a convocation, shall be considered proper notice.

## **Chapter 8. Officers**

- 8.01. The officers of this ministry shall be a moderator, a deputy moderator, a secretary, and a treasurer.

### **Moderator**

- 8.02. The moderator shall be elected by a convocation. The moderator shall be an ordained minister of a Lutheran church body and a member of Lutheran CORE. The moderator and deputy moderator shall be elected to a term of two years and may be re-elected for an additional term. A partial term shall be considered as a full term. Such persons, upon completion of their terms as moderator or deputy moderator, will be eligible to serve on the Steering Committee defined in 11.02 below.
- 8.03. As an ordained minister, the moderator shall preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in accordance with the Lutheran Confessions. The moderator shall provide pastoral care and leadership for Lutheran CORE and its ministries.
- 8.04. The moderator shall preside at convocation meetings and meetings of the Steering Committee. The moderator shall submit a report to each annual convocation concerning this ministry's life and work.
- 8.05. In cooperation with the appropriate ELCA synod, the moderator will work to facilitate the candidacy process for those seeking ordination within the ELCA; and will strive to assist the calling process among pastors and congregations of this ministry.
- 8.06. In cooperation with the appropriate ELCA synod, the moderator will seek to work for the resolution of conflicts among ordained ministers and congregations of this ministry.
- 8.07. The moderator shall serve as the president of this ministry's corporation and be its chief executive and administrative officer, authorized, in the name of this ministry, to sign deeds or other instruments and to affix the seal of this ministry.
- 8.08. The moderator shall coordinate the work of the other officers and staff of this ministry.

### **Deputy Moderator**

- 8.09. The deputy moderator shall be elected by a convocation of this ministry. The deputy moderator shall be a member of Lutheran CORE.
- 8.10. In the event of the death, resignation, or disability of the moderator, the deputy moderator shall convene the Steering Committee to arrange for the conduct of the duties of the moderator until a new moderator shall be elected, or, in the case of temporary disability, until the moderator resumes full performance of the duties of the office.

### **Secretary**

- 8.11. The secretary shall be elected by a convocation of this ministry to a term of two years, and may be re-elected subject to the provision in 11.02 below. The secretary shall be a member of Lutheran CORE.
- 8.12. The secretary shall keep the minutes of all Convocation meetings and the meetings of the Steering Committee, and shall retain a list of members of Lutheran CORE. The secretary shall, with the moderator, sign all legal documents and shall perform other duties of this ministry as may be directed from time to time.

### **Treasurer**

- 8.13. The treasurer shall be elected by a convocation of this ministry to a term of two years. The treasurer may be re-elected subject to the provisions in 11.02 below.
- 8.14. The treasurer shall provide for the management of the monies and accounts of this ministry; shall receive and record offerings and contributions for this ministry; and shall pay regular appropriations and orders in accordance with this ministry's budget and/or at the direction of the Steering Committee.
- 8.15. The treasurer shall present at each annual convocation a detailed and duly audited report of the receipts and disbursements of this ministry for the preceding fiscal year.
- 8.16. The Steering Committee may, according to need, hire an assistant treasurer who will provide assistance in the fiscal matters of this ministry. The assistant treasurer may have voice but not vote on the Steering Committee.

### **Elections**

- 8.17. The Steering Committee shall recommend a rule of procedure to a convocation regarding the elections process to be conducted at a convocation, including to provide for staggered terms for members of the Steering Committee.
- 8.18. The terms of the officers and Steering Committee members shall begin on December 1 of the year of election. Until that date current Steering Committee members and officers shall retain their positions.

### **Chapter 9. Director and Staff**

- 9.01. The Steering Committee shall appoint a director for this ministry, who shall employ support staff as may be required consistent with the budget.
- 9.02. The director shall manage the day to day affairs of this ministry and shall report regularly to the Steering Committee.

- 9.03. The Steering Committee shall adopt a job description for the director and staff, in consultation with the director. The job description shall include responsibilities, accountabilities, and terms of service.
- 9.04. The director and other staff shall receive compensation in accordance with the budget of this ministry.

## **Chapter 10. Nominations and Elections**

- 10.01. In all elections by a convocation a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.
- 10.02. The Steering Committee shall serve as a nominating committee and shall present to a convocation of this ministry a slate of nominees. Additional nominations for all positions may be made from the floor.
- 10.03. The results of each ballot in every election shall be presented in detail to the convocation.

## **Chapter 11. Steering Committee**

- 11.01. The Steering Committee shall consist of the four officers of Lutheran CORE and six other members who shall be elected at an annual convocation. Each person elected to the Steering Committee shall be a member of Lutheran CORE.
- 11.02. The terms of office of members of the Steering Committee shall be two years. No member shall serve more than two consecutive terms, and a partial term shall be considered as a full term.
- 11.03. The Steering Committee shall be the board of directors of Lutheran CORE and shall serve as its interim decision-making body between meetings of the annual convocation. It may make decisions which are not in conflict with actions taken by a convocation or which are not precluded by provisions in this constitution.
- 11.04. The responsibilities and functions of the Steering Committee shall be to:
- a. Exercise trusteeship responsibilities on behalf of this ministry.
  - b. Recommend program goals and a budget to regular meetings of a convocation and develop strategies to implement the priorities of this ministry.
  - c. Fill vacancies until the next regular meeting of a convocation, and determine the fact of the incapacity of an officer of this ministry.
  - d. Carry out resolutions of a convocation.
  - e. Report its actions to the regular meeting of a convocation.
  - f. Serve as a nominating committee for Steering Committee elections.
  - g. Perform other functions, as may be delegated to it by a convocation.
- 11.05. No elected member of the Steering Committee shall receive compensation for such service, with the exception of the moderator, if the Steering Committee so determines. Steering Committee members and officers shall be reimbursed for reasonable and proper expenses incurred in fulfilling their duties, provided they submit valid receipts in a

manner approved by the Steering Committee.

- 11.06. The Steering Committee shall normally meet at least quarterly.
- 11.07. According to need, and with the consent of at least three of the officers, the Steering Committee may on occasion deliberate and make decisions by conference phone calls. Under the same circumstances, the Steering Committee may make decisions by electronic devices.
- 11.08. A quorum for Steering Committee meetings shall be a majority of its members, including the officers.

## **Chapter 12. Committees and Task Forces**

- 12.01. The Steering Committee and/or a convocation shall appoint committees, task forces, or other working groups to meet the needs of this ministry. Initially, the following working groups will facilitate the ministry of Lutheran CORE: finances, synodical consultation, organization, mission, benevolence, vision and planning, theological education, and congregational life and pastoral support.
- 12.02. The Steering Committee shall appoint the members of an Advisory Council, for endorsement by a convocation. The members of the Advisory Council shall be members of Lutheran CORE. As much as possible, the Advisory Council shall include one representative from each reform movement in this ministry, as well as others as may be determined. The Advisory Council shall report to the Steering Committee; and shall provide counsel, support and advice to Lutheran CORE on matters of significance for this ministry and shall meet at least annually. The Steering Committee will name the chair of the Advisory Council.
- 12.03. The annual convocation shall elect a Committee on Appeals, as referred to in Chapter 16. There shall be seven members on the Committee on Appeals. Members of the Committee on Appeals shall serve a term of two years and shall be eligible to serve an additional term.

## **Chapter 13. Subdivisions**

- 13.01. According to need, for the sake of mission, and as may be determined, Lutheran CORE may be subdivided geographically or in other ways.
- 13.02. The Steering Committee will approve the formation of any subdivisions of this ministry.

## **Chapter 14. Financial Matters**

- 14.01. The fiscal year of this ministry shall be January 1 through December 31.
- 14.02. On the basis of estimated income, the Steering Committee shall authorize expenditures within the budget for the fiscal year. Expenditure authorizations shall be subject to revision by the Steering Committee in light of changing conditions.
- 14.03. This ministry shall arrange to have an annual review of its financial records by a certified public accountant selected by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee may

determine to carry out an audit of financial records according to need and circumstances.

14.04. This ministry shall maintain adequate, continuous insurance coverage.

### **Chapter 15. Indemnification**

15.01. Any person who at anytime shall serve or shall have served as a director, officer, or employee of this Corporation, or of any other enterprise at the request of this Corporation, and the heirs, executors, and administrators of such person shall be indemnified by this Corporation in accordance with, and to the fullest extent permitted, by Minnesota Statutes Section 317A.521, as it may be amended from time to time.

### **Chapter 16. Adjudication**

16.01. The moderator and the Steering Committee shall be available to give counsel when disputes arise within this ministry.

16.02. The moderator and Steering Committee shall receive expressions of concern within the membership of this ministry, and shall make appropriate recommendations for their resolution.

16.03. When the matter at issue cannot be resolved in this manner, the matter will be referred to the Committee on Appeals. The Committee on Appeals shall provide a hearing for all parties, and shall make a final decision on the matter.

16.04. When the matter in dispute is a matter of discipline, either for a pastor or a congregation, the Steering Committee shall work in close cooperation with the appropriate unit of the Lutheran church body with whom the pastor and congregation are related; or, if applicable, with the appropriate reform movement.

### **Chapter 17. Amendments**

17.01. Amendments to this constitution may be adopted by this ministry through either of the following procedures:

- a. An amendment may be presented to a convocation over the signatures of at least ten members of this ministry, and approved by a two-thirds vote at such a convocation. At a subsequent convocation the amendment may be adopted by a two-thirds vote.
- b. The Steering Committee may propose an amendment, with notice to be sent to the members of this ministry at least three months prior to the next convocation meeting. Such an amendment shall require for adoption a two-thirds vote at such a convocation.