

# HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH OF PACIFIC PALISADES

## CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS

(ROUGH DRAFT AS OF August 20, 2026)

### PREAMBLE

Whereas the Word of God demands that a Christian congregation not only conform to the Word of God in doctrine and practice (Ps 119:105; Gal 1:6-8; 2 Tim 4:1-5), but that also all things be done decently and in order (1 Cor 14:40), therefore we, the members of HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH OF PACIFIC PALISADES, Pacific Palisades, California, set forth by this present document, signed by ourselves, the Constitution and the By-laws in accordance with which our congregational affairs, spiritual and material, will be conducted.

### ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this congregation will be HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH OF PACIFIC PALISADES, Pacific Palisades, California.

### ARTICLE II. MISSION

The purpose for which we have organized as a congregation is to have the Word of God preached among us in truth and purity, to have the Sacraments administered according to divine institution, to impart Christian Education to our members, and to proclaim the good news throughout the community and the world.

### III. CONFESSIONAL STANDARD

This congregation accepts without reservation the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as the written Word of God, verbally inspired (“verbatim”), as the only rule and norm of faith and practice, and all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God as contained in the Book of Concord of 1580.

### IV. SYNOD MEMBERSHIP

This congregation will be a member congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) as long as the confession of faith and constitution of the Synod remain in accord with the congregation’s confessional standard as set forth in Article III of this constitution.

### V. MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION

Anyone can become or be a member of this congregation and enjoy the rights and privileges of such membership provided he or she: (a) is baptized, (b) accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired (“verbatim”) and as the only divine rule and standard of faith and conduct; (c) is acquainted with, and accepts, Luther’s Small Catechism (and also the Unaltered Augsburg Confession); leads a Christian life and abstains from manifest works of the flesh (Gal 5:19-21); (e) attends divine services faithfully and partakes of the Lord’s Supper frequently; (f) submits, for the sake of love and peace, to the regulations already made, or still to be made, by this body, provided they do not conflict with the Word of God, and suffers brotherly admonition when having erred or offended; (g) is not a member of any secret or other organization conflicting with the Word of God.

When a member of this congregation, after fruitless admonition in the various grades prescribed by the Word of God (Matt 18:15-20), where the observance of such grades has been possible, is expelled by unanimous vote from the congregation, such person will have forfeited all rights of a member of this congregation and all claims upon the property of the congregation as such, or upon any part thereof, as long as he or she is not again received into membership by the congregation. The same will apply to such members as refuse to submit themselves to church discipline and thus excommunicate themselves, as also to those who sever their connection with the congregation.

## VI. CALLED CHURCH WORKERS

The voters assembly of this congregation (as defined in the bylaws of this constitution) will have the exclusive right to call ordained ministers who are members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod or who have satisfied the requirements for assignment of first calls within the Synod, or ordained members in good standing of church bodies in altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod. It may also call commissioned ministers who are members of the Synod. In every case, it will obtain counsel from the president of the congregation’s district.

Called ordained or commissioned ministers may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the voters assembly for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of duties, the inability to perform those duties, or domineering in office.

## VII. AUTHORITY OF AND WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

The voters assembly, as defined in this congregation’s bylaws, will be its governing body and will be empowered to call its ordained and commissioned ministers, elect its

officers, and administer and manage its affairs as specified in the bylaws. Only the voters assembly may encumber, purchase, or sell real property, including buildings; adopt the annual budget of the congregation; incur non-budgeted (emergency) expenses; and dissolve the congregation or terminate its membership in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

## VIII. MEETINGS

Meetings of the voters assembly may be called at the request of the pastor, the congregation's officers, or ten members of the voters assembly. Such meetings will be announced at worship services each of the two weeks prior, with efforts made to notify all voting members. The voting members present at a properly called meeting will constitute a quorum. In addition to principles laid down in the Holy Scriptures and in the constitution and bylaws of this congregation, basic parliamentary procedures will be followed.

## IX. OFFICERS AND BOARDS

This congregation will have such officers and boards as provided in its bylaws, in addition to any that the congregation will establish from time to time.

## X. DIVISION

The congregation will receive, acquire, hold title to, and manage, such real estate and other property as it may need to accomplish its purpose (Article II) and may sell or dispose of such real estate and other property or any part thereof; and will have all the rights and the powers that are granted by the laws of the State of California to religious corporations. If at any time division will take place within this congregation, efforts will be made to resolve differences in a God-pleasing manner. If division into factions occurs, the counsel of the district president will be sought to determine which group will retain the property.

## X. AMENDMENTS TO THIS CONSTITUTION

This constitution may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the voters' assembly in the following manner.

A. Ordinarily, amendments to the provisions of this constitution will be submitted in writing for public posting two weeks prior to the two consecutive meetings at which the proposed amendments will be discussed. A two thirds affirmative vote of the voters present will be required to continue to amendment process.

B. Amendments to Articles II, III, and V will not alter their essential meaning. Notice of discussion of these amendments will be given to all members prior to the two voters'

assemblies when the proposed action will be discussed. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the voters present at these meetings will be required on both occasions to continue the amendment process.

C. All revisions will be submitted to the president of the district for review by the district's constitution committee and favorable action by the district's board of directors prior to final adoption by the congregation by a two-thirds affirmative vote.

# BYLAWS

## 1. BAPTIZED MEMBERSHIP

Baptized members of this congregation are all persons who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and are under its spiritual care. Expectations of baptized membership include:

- a. Faithful and regular attendance at worship services.
- b. Living a Christian life (Galatians 5:19–26).
- c. Submission to Christian admonition (Matthew 18).
- d. Contribution of time, talents, and treasure toward the maintenance of the congregation and extension of the church at large as God has blessed.
- e. Willingness, in due time, to be instructed in the Christian faith in preparation for confirmed membership in this congregation.

## 2. CONFIRMED MEMBERSHIP

Confirmed members are all baptized persons within the congregation who have completed a course of instruction in Christian doctrine. The congregation's supervising pastor will ascertain the interested person's understanding of and commitment to the congregation's Confession of Faith (Constitution Art. III). The pastor will determine whether additional instruction will be required and the appropriate method for such instruction. The pastor will also be authorized to extend confirmed membership to the person and announce such in a public worship service.

In addition to the duties of baptized members, expectations of confirmed members include:

- a. Acceptance of the confession of faith described in constitution (Article III).
- b. Familiarizing themselves with the doctrine of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
- c. Partaking of the Lord's Supper.
- d. Participation in continuing Christian education.
- e. Training their children in the Christian faith by making use of educational opportunities in the congregation to enable parents to be spiritual teachers of their children and to nurture their faith.

## 3. VOTING MEMBERSHIP

Voting Members are confirmed members who have reached the age of majority, request membership by attending a voters' meeting of the congregation, and sign the constitution of the congregation. The total number of voting members constitutes the voters' assembly of the congregation.

#### 4. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the congregation may be terminated in the following manners:

- a. A member desiring to transfer membership to another LCMS congregation will inform the president of the congregation, who will be responsible for creating and mailing a letter of transfer to the receiving congregation.
- b. A member whose whereabouts is unknown or who has moved from the area may be removed from membership after a period of one year.
- c. A member whose actions call into question his/her continued membership in the congregation will be the subject of Christian discipline in accord with Matthew 18:15–20, its purpose to renew the member's relationship with the Lord and the church.
- d. A member who is not responsive to the witness and ministry of the church will be considered self-excluded.

#### 5. OFFICERS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

This congregation will have the following officer positions:

- a. A president will preside at all meetings of the congregation and monitor the congregation's compliance with the constitution and bylaws of the congregation. He or she will also perform such other duties as are common for his or her office or as directed by the congregation from time to time.
- b. A vice president will preside over meetings in the president's absence, support operations, help achieve strategic goals, and may lead committees or task forces. He or she may be assigned additional responsibilities by the board or by the president.
- c. A recording secretary will keep and preserve accurate records of the congregation, making available minutes of its meetings, also handling its correspondence and such other duties commonly required of the office.
- d. A treasurer will keep and preserve accurate records of all disbursements, submit a written report at all regular meetings of the congregation, and assure the accuracy and propriety of its financial transactions.

e. A financial secretary will keep and preserve accurate records of all receipts and donations, and assure the accuracy and propriety of its financial transactions.

## 6. NOMINATIONS, ELECTIONS, TERMS OF, AND REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

Officer positions of this congregation will be filled and function according to the following provisions:

- a. Individuals may be nominated by voting members at an annual election meeting. All nominees will be voting members noted for their Christian knowledge, zeal, and experience in the work of the church.
- b. Nominees who receive a majority of the votes cast by the voting members present at the meeting will be declared elected.
- c. All elected officers will begin terms of office on the second Sunday of the month following their election.
- d. Officers will serve terms of two years and will serve no more than two successive terms in a position without a break of at least one year.
- e. Elected officers will not receive compensation from the congregation.
- f. In the event of a vacancy in an office, the office will be filled by election.

## 7. BOARDS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

This congregation will have one or more boards established by the voters' assembly of the congregation with responsibilities established by resolution of the congregation as are necessary to assist the called workers, elected leaders, and members of the congregation in carrying out its mission and ministry.

## 8. AMENDMENTS TO THESE BYLAWS

These bylaws may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the voters' assembly in the following manner:

- a. Amendments will be adopted by a majority of all votes cast, provided the proposed change has been announced in a previous meeting or has been submitted in writing to all communicant members at least two weeks prior to the meeting.
- b. Revised bylaws must, as a condition of continued membership in good standing in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, be submitted to the president of the district for review by the district's constitution committee and favorable action by the district's board of directors before being adopted by the congregation.

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