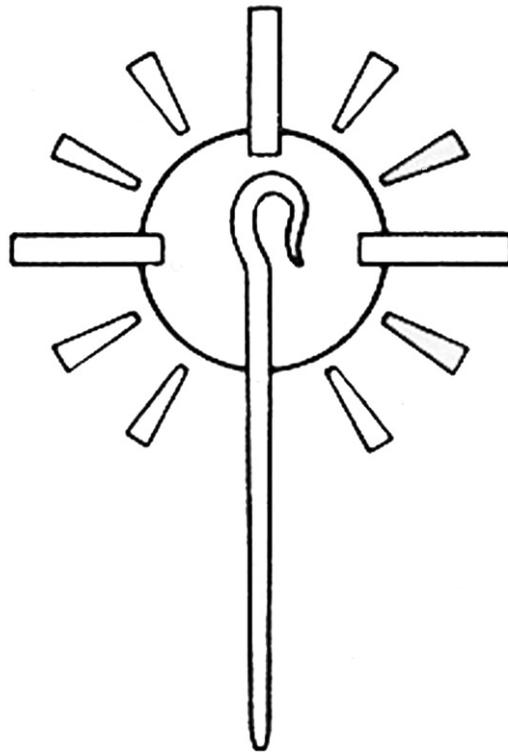


# **Constitution and Bylaws**



**Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church**  
Bolingbrook, Illinois

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## **PREAMBLE**

The Word of God requires that a Christian congregation shall conform to the Divine Word in both doctrine and practice (Psalm 119:105<sup>1</sup>; Matthew 28:18-20<sup>2</sup>; Galatians 1:6-8<sup>3</sup>; 2 Timothy 4:1-5<sup>4</sup>) and that all things be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40<sup>5</sup>).

Therefore, we, the members of Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church, accept and subscribe to the following Constitution and Bylaws, in accordance with which all spiritual and temporal affairs of our congregation shall be governed.

# **CONSTITUTION**

## **1.0 Name**

The name of this congregation shall be Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church of Bolingbrook, Illinois (hereafter Divine Shepherd).

## **2.0 Mission**

The Church, drawing her life from Jesus Christ, makes disciples by baptizing and teaching, connecting sinful humanity to Christ through the Gospel and Sacraments for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation, and keeps her members connected to Christ through the same, to the honor and glory of the Triune God.

## **3.0 Confessional Standard**

Divine Shepherd's confessional standard is twofold: We subscribe to Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.

### 3.1 Holy Scripture

Our congregation accepts without reservation all the canonical books of the Old and New Testament Scriptures as the revealed, verbally inspired, inerrant Word of God, and the only infallible divine rule and norm of faith and life (John 17:17<sup>6</sup>; 2 Timothy 3:14-17<sup>7</sup>; 2 Peter 1:20-21<sup>8</sup>; cf. The Formula of Concord<sup>9</sup>).

### 3.2 Lutheran Confessions

Our congregation accepts without reservation all the confessions of the Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580<sup>10</sup> as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God. These are:

- A. The Apostles' Creed,
- B. The Nicene Creed,
- C. The Athanasian Creed,
- D. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession,
- E. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession,
- F. The Smalcald Articles,
- G. The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope,
- H. The Small Catechism of Martin Luther,
- I. The Large Catechism of Martin Luther, and
- J. The Formula of Concord.

### 3.3 Authority of Our Confessional Standard

Every activity of Divine Shepherd—including, but not limited to, the Divine Service and prayer offices, Christian education, youth group, etc.—shall adhere to the confessional standard set forth in this article.

## **4.0 Synodical Membership**

Divine Shepherd shall be a member of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (hereafter LCMS) as long as the LCMS conforms to the confessional standard listed in Article 3.0. We will share altar and pulpit fellowship exclusively with congregations of the LCMS and with those congregations who are members of synods in fellowship with the LCMS. Selective fellowship—the practice of sharing altar and pulpit fellowship with individual congregations from erring synods—is rejected (Romans 16:17<sup>11</sup>).

## **5.0 Membership**

We believe all members shall daily die to sin and rise to newness of life in Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-11<sup>12</sup>; Ephesians 4:12-24<sup>13</sup>; 1 Peter 2:24<sup>14</sup>), regularly attend the Divine Service to receive Christ's good gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation (Third Commandment<sup>15</sup>; John 8:47<sup>16</sup>; Acts 2:42<sup>17</sup>; Hebrews 10:24-25<sup>18</sup>), and faithfully strive to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16<sup>19</sup>; Hebrews 5:12-14<sup>20</sup>; 2 Peter 3:18<sup>21</sup>).

There are three types of membership within our congregation: Baptized, Communicant, and Voting.

### 5.1 Baptized Membership

#### 5.1.1 Definition

Baptized members are those who have been baptized with water in the name of the Triune God (Matthew 28:19<sup>22</sup>) and are under the spiritual care of the pastor of this congregation.

#### 5.1.2 Reception

Reception into baptized membership is by one of the following:

- A. those who receive the Sacrament of Holy Baptism here at Divine Shepherd,
- B. those who transfer their baptized membership from a congregation in fellowship with ours,
- C. those who were baptized outside our fellowship and are brought into baptized membership by the consent of one or both parents (or legal guardians), or
- D. those who are brought into baptized and communicant membership via confirmation or profession of faith.

#### 5.1.3 Responsibilities

Baptized members are expected to:

- A. regularly attend the Divine Service and other worship services,
- B. regularly confess their sins and receive Christ's absolution,
- C. regularly hold preaching and God's Word sacred and gladly hear and learn it,
- D. grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ through Sunday School, Bible Study, and personal devotion,
- E. conform their entire life to God's Word,
- F. confess Christ in both word and deed,
- G. be fervent in prayer,
- H. exercise faithful stewardship of their time, talents, and treasures,
- I. be readily available for service to this congregation, and

J. work toward communicant membership (if not already one).

#### 5.1.4 Termination

Termination of baptized membership is by one of the following:

- A. requesting a transfer to a congregation in fellowship with our congregation,
- B. requesting a release of membership,
- C. joining a congregation outside the fellowship of our congregation,
- D. self-exclusion (see Article 5.4),
- E. excommunication (see Article 5.5), or
- F. death.

### 5.2 Communicant Membership

#### 5.2.1 Definition

Communicant members are those baptized members of our congregation who have publicly confessed the faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church<sup>23</sup> in our midst, believe and confess all that is taught in Holy Scripture and Luther's Small Catechism, declare their acceptance of and adherence to the confessional standard listed in Article 3.0, and are not members of any organization, open or secret, whose principles and/or conduct conflict with the Word of God.

#### 5.2.2 Reception

Reception into communicant membership is by one of the following:

- A. those who are catechized and confirmed here at Divine Shepherd,
- B. those who transfer their communicant membership to Divine Shepherd from a congregation in fellowship with ours,
- C. those who, having been catechized outside the fellowship of our congregation, comply to the definition listed in Article 5.2.1,
- D. those who, having been excommunicated from Divine Shepherd or another congregation in fellowship with ours, have given satisfactory evidence of repentance (as determined by the pastor and Board of Elders) and comply to the definition listed in Article 5.2.1,
- E. those who, having excluded themselves from Divine Shepherd or another congregation in fellowship with ours, have undergone additional catechesis (as determined by the pastor and Board of Elders) and comply to the definition listed in Article 5.2.1, or
- F. those who, having been wrongfully excluded or excommunicated from baptized and communicant membership (as determined by the pastor and Board of Elders), comply to the definition listed in Article 5.2.1.

#### 5.2.3 Responsibilities

Communicant members are expected to:

- A. regularly attend the Divine Service and other worship services,
- B. regularly confess their sins and receive Christ's absolution,
- C. regularly hold preaching and God's Word sacred and gladly hear and learn it,
- D. regularly receive Christ's true body and blood in the Lord's Supper,

- E. grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ through Sunday School, Bible Study, and personal devotion,
- F. conform their entire life to God's Word,
- G. confess Christ in both word and deed,
- H. be fervent in prayer,
- I. exercise faithful stewardship of their time, talents, and treasures, and
- J. be readily available for service to this congregation.

#### 5.2.4 Termination

Termination of communicant membership is by one of the following:

- A. requesting a transfer to a congregation in fellowship with our congregation,
- B. requesting a release of membership,
- C. joining a congregation outside the fellowship of our congregation,
- D. self-exclusion (see Article 5.4),
- E. excommunication (see Article 5.5), or
- F. death.

### 5.3 Voting Membership

#### 5.3.1 Definition

Voting members are communicant members who have reached the age of 18 years and have accepted and signed the Constitution and Bylaws of our congregation.

#### 5.3.2 Responsibilities

Voting members shall attend the congregational meetings regularly.

### 5.4 Self-Exclusion

Concerning the reception of His true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins, our Lord Jesus Christ commands His Church: "Do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24-25). To distribute Christ's gracious gifts in our congregation, the Divine Service is normally "celebrated among us every Lord's Day and on the other festivals."<sup>24</sup> Martin Luther encourages Christians "to receive this praiseworthy Sacrament often."<sup>25</sup> However, "when someone does not seek or desire the Sacrament at least four times a year, it is to be feared that he despises the Sacrament and is not a Christian."<sup>26</sup> "People who deprive themselves of and withdraw from the Sacrament for such a long time are not to be considered Christians."<sup>27</sup>

The pastor and Board of Elders shall monitor the frequency with which members attend the Divine Service, other worship services, and receive the Lord's Supper. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, baptized members are expected to worship here at Divine Shepherd at least four times in a period of one year, and communicant members are expected to receive the Lord's Supper here at Divine Shepherd at least four times in a period of one year. If the pastor and elders notice that any members are not participating at that level, they shall reach out to, communicate with, and encourage such members to return, worship regularly, and receive Christ's means of grace in our congregation. If this is unsuccessful, the pastor and elders shall report the matter to the Church Council and then ask the Congregational Voters Assembly to remove the delinquent members via self-exclusion.

## 5.5 Excommunication

Excommunication involves the binding of sin to an impenitent sinner until he repents and asks forgiveness (Matthew 18:15-18<sup>28</sup>; John 20:23<sup>29</sup>; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13<sup>30</sup>). The Lord's Supper is not given to those under excommunication.

Our Lutheran Confessions state: "Excommunication is also pronounced against the openly wicked and the haters of the Sacraments. These things are done both according to the Gospel and according to the old canons."<sup>31</sup> Again: "Truly Christian excommunication is this: Open and hard-hearted sinners are not admitted to the Sacrament and other communion of the Church until they amend their lives and avoid sin [1 Corinthians 5]."<sup>32</sup> And again: "A congregation in which no public excommunication or regular process of the ban is observed is not a true Christian congregation."<sup>33</sup>

Members—baptized or communicant—shall be removed via excommunication if they have conducted themselves in an un-Christian manner, have been admonished and called to repentance according to Matthew 18:15-18, and still remain impenitent.

The pastor and Board of Elders shall reach out to, communicate with, and encourage the impenitent sinner to confess his sin and ask forgiveness. If the impenitent sinner does not do so, he shall be removed. Removal by excommunication shall be determined by the Congregational Voters Assembly, with input from the pastor and Board of Elders.

## **6.0 The Pastoral Office**

"Our churches teach that ... people are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake."<sup>34</sup> "So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted."<sup>35</sup>

### 6.1 Definition

The pastoral office is a divine institution. Jesus Christ instituted the Office of the Holy Ministry on the evening of His resurrection (John 20:19-23<sup>36</sup>). While a congregation pays the pastor's salary and cares for his material and physical needs (1 Corinthians 9:14<sup>37</sup>; Galatians 6:6<sup>38</sup>), the pastor is not an "employee" of the congregation in a secular sense. Rather, God—working through the congregation—calls men to serve as shepherds and overseers in His Church (Acts 20:28<sup>39</sup>). Pastors are accountable to God for their use of the Power of the Keys (Hebrews 13:17<sup>40</sup>; 1 Corinthians 4:1-4<sup>41</sup>).

### 6.2 Qualifications

The pastoral office shall be conferred only upon pastors or candidates who are qualified for the work of the Office of the Holy Ministry (1 Timothy 3:1-2<sup>42</sup>; 2 Timothy 2:2<sup>43</sup>; 2 Timothy 2:15<sup>44</sup>; Titus 1:9<sup>45</sup>), who have been called and ordained (Augsburg Confession XIV<sup>46</sup>), who are endorsed by and are members of the LCMS, and who accept, profess, and adhere without reservation to the confessional standard listed in Article 3.0. Holy Scripture teaches that the pastoral office is to be filled by men only (1 Corinthians 14:33-34<sup>47</sup>; 1 Timothy 2:11-12<sup>48</sup>).

### 6.3 Call

The right of calling pastors shall be vested in the Congregational Voters Assembly and shall not be delegated otherwise. The divine call extended by the congregation shall following the procedures described in the Bylaws.

#### 6.4 Termination

Called pastors may be removed from office by a two-thirds majority ballot vote of the Congregational Voters Assembly for one of the following reasons only:

- A. persistent adherence to false doctrine,
- B. scandalous life,
- C. willful neglect of the duties of the Office of the Holy Ministry, or
- D. the inability to perform those duties.

Called pastors may not be removed from office for any other reason.

#### 6.5 Vacancy

When a vacancy occurs in the pastoral office, the congregation shall notify the president of the district to receive his counsel in calling a new pastor, as specified in the Bylaws.

#### 6.6 Ex Officio Status

The pastor shall be an ex officio member of the Church Council and all boards and committees.

## **7.0 Professional Church Workers**

While the pastoral office is a divine institution, other offices within the church are of human origin.

#### 7.1 Definition

Professional church workers are those whom the LCMS officially designates as “commissioned ministers.”

#### 7.2 Qualifications

Only those professional church workers shall receive a call who accept, profess, and adhere without reservation to the confessional standard listed in Article 3.0, who are qualified for the work of the position to which they are called, and who have been endorsed by and recognized as a “commissioned minister” by the LCMS.

#### 7.3 Call

The right of calling professional church workers shall be vested in the Congregational Voters Assembly and shall not be delegated otherwise. The call extended by the congregation shall following the procedures described in the Bylaws.

#### 7.4 Termination

Professional church workers may be removed from office by a two-thirds majority ballot vote of the Congregational Voters Assembly for one of the following reasons only:

- A. persistent adherence to false doctrine,
- B. scandalous life,
- C. willful neglect of the duties of their office,
- D. the inability to perform the duties of their office, or
- E. a necessary reduction in force.

Called professional church workers may not be removed from office for any other reason.

#### 7.5 Vacancy

When a vacancy occurs in the office of a professional church worker, the congregation shall notify the president of the district to receive his counsel in calling a new professional church worker, as specified in the Bylaws.

## **8.0 Congregational Voters Assembly**

The Church is not a democracy, but the Bride of Christ. Jesus Christ alone has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:19). He alone rules and governs His Church by means of His Word, never by majority vote.

Since the Holy Spirit, speaking through the Apostle Paul, encourages congregations to do everything “decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40), it is proper for some form of outward governance to be employed. Since no specific form of church governance is commanded by God in His Word or prescribed in the Lutheran Confessions, each congregation is free to devise its own form of governance as long as it does not hinder the free and pure teaching of God’s Word and the proper administration of the Sacraments.

With these principles in mind, the Congregational Voters Assembly shall be the governing body of this congregation and shall be empowered to administer and manage all its affairs.

The following principles shall govern the Congregational Voters Assembly:

- 8.1 All matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided only on the basis of God’s Word.
- 8.2 All other matters shall be decided by a majority vote unless otherwise specified by the Constitution or Bylaws.
- 8.3 The establishment and conduct of all organizations and societies within the congregation or related to the congregation shall be subject to the authority and oversight of the Congregational Voters Assembly.

## **9.0 Congregational Voters Assembly Meetings**

Meetings of the Congregational Voters Assembly shall be held as specified in the Bylaws.

- 9.1 Notice of all congregational meetings (regular or special) shall be made at least one week prior to the meeting.

- 9.2 Special meetings may be called at the request of the pastor, the Chairman, the Church Council, or ten (10) voting members.
- 9.3 All voting members present at a properly called meeting shall constitute a quorum.

## **10.0 Officers and Boards**

This congregation shall have the following officers and boards. The officers and the chairpersons of the boards, and the pastor as an ex officio member, shall constitute the membership of the Church Council.

### 10.1 Officers

The officers of this congregation—each being a voting member elected at a congregational meeting—shall be:

#### 10.1.1 A Chairman, who shall:

- A. preside at all council and congregational meetings,
- B. serve as representative of the congregation in all legal and association-related matters,
- C. be an ex officio member of all boards and committees,
- D. maintain all legal documents, and
- E. serve as interim officer/chairperson of any vacant office/board on the Church Council until a new officer/chairperson is elected or appointed.

#### 10.1.2 A Vice-Chairman, who shall:

- A. assist the Chairman when called upon,
- B. preside at any council or congregational meeting at which the Chairman is absent,
- C. be responsible for coordinating all internal and external communications,
- D. be responsible for the fellowship and social activities of the congregation,
- E. be responsible for the oversight of groups within the congregation (i.e., a women's group, a men's group, a youth group, a fraternal organization, etc.).
- F. be responsible for appointing a committee to audit the finances no later than six months after the close of each fiscal year, and
- G. serve as interim Chairman when that office is vacant, until a new Chairman is elected or appointed by the congregation.

#### 10.1.3 A Secretary, who shall:

- A. keep minutes of all council and congregational meetings,
- B. make the council meeting minutes available to the congregation within two weeks,
- C. make the congregational meeting minutes available to the congregation within two weeks,
- D. sign all legal documents requiring a second signature,
- E. be responsible for congregational correspondence, and
- F. maintain records of all official acts and memberships.

#### 10.1.4 A Treasurer, who shall:

- A. keep accurate records of the receipts and disbursements of the congregation in books and/or computer software, which shall be and remain the property of the congregation,
- B. pay all bills authorized by the council or congregation,
- C. submit a report at each council meeting showing actual receipts and disbursements compared with budgeted amounts,
- D. be responsible for the annual preparation of a proposed budget for the coming year,
- E. be bonded,
- F. be responsible for appointing counters, who shall count the offering monies following each worship service, and
- G. be responsible for appointing a Financial Secretary, who shall,
  - a. be responsible for the reception and deposit of all monies of the congregation in the bank(s) designated by the council,
  - b. be responsible for the maintenance of the deposit slips along with an itemized account of all monies received,
  - c. be responsible for the maintenance of members' contribution records, and
  - d. be responsible for annually informing members of their contributions.

## 10.2 Boards

The boards of this congregation—each having a chairperson who is a voting member elected at a congregational meeting—shall be:

### 10.2.1 A Board of Elders

This board shall consist of at least seven members, one of whom serves as the chairman. New members to the board shall be recommended by the pastor, appointed by the chairman, approved by the existing board, and reported to the Church Council and the congregation. Members of the Board of Elders shall serve indefinite terms.

The Board of Elders shall:

- A. support the pastoral office in the congregation,
- B. be responsible for assisting the pastor in the spiritual life of the congregation,
- C. be responsible for assisting the pastor in the reverent conduct of all worship services,
- D. be responsible for assisting the pastor in caring for and visiting the membership,
- E. be responsible for the human care needs within the congregation,
- F. be responsible for evangelism and outreach in our community,
- G. be responsible for teaching Scriptural stewardship within the congregation,
- H. be responsible for approval of membership recommendations from the pastor,
- I. be responsible for encouraging the congregation to support Lutheran mission work,
- J. be responsible for recommending the salaries and benefits of all called church workers,
- K. be responsible for establishing and overseeing volunteers to assist during worship services (i.e., ushers, greeters, acolytes, crucifers, altar servers, etc.),
- L. be responsible for establishing and overseeing volunteers to assist with the altar duties,
- M. be responsible for arranging area pastors to assist with worship and pastoral care during a pastoral vacancy, and
- N. work with the pastor and Board of Christian Education to insure that all Christian education conforms to Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.

### 10.2.2 A Board of Christian Education

The chairperson shall appoint other communicant members to assist in the responsibilities outlined below.

The Board of Christian Education shall:

- A. work with the pastor and Board of Elders to insure that all Christian education conforms to Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions,
- B. be responsible for the maintenance of a Christ-centered Sunday School program,
- C. be responsible for the maintenance of a Christ-centered Vacation Bible School,
- D. be responsible for the maintenance of a Christ-centered Preschool,
- E. be responsible for the maintenance of a church library,
- F. be responsible for the maintenance of a scholarship committee, and
- G. be responsible for the provision of Christian learning opportunities for all age levels.

#### 10.2.3 A Board of Trustees

The chairperson shall appoint other communicant members to assist in the responsibilities outlined below.

The Board of Trustees shall:

- A. be responsible for maintaining the physical property and equipment of the congregation,
- B. be responsible for managing and negotiating utilities such as electric, gas, water, etc.
- C. be responsible for managing and negotiating services such as lawn maintenance, garbage pickup, snow removal, etc.
- D. be responsible for managing and negotiating all necessary insurance for the physical property and equipment of the congregation, and
- E. be responsible for maintaining records related to the physical property and equipment, utilities, services, insurance, etc.

- 10.3 All officers and board chairpersons, and all members of the Board of Elders, shall have been faithful in worship and Bible study attendance at Divine Shepherd before nomination to their positions, and are expected to remain faithful in worship and Bible study attendance at Divine Shepherd while serving in their positions (Acts 2:42<sup>49</sup>).
- 10.4 With the exception of the Chairman, who may serve another position in an interim capacity during a vacancy, no one may hold more than one Church Council position at the same time.
- 10.5 Officers and board chairpersons may appoint committees, groups, guilds, etc. to assist them with their responsibilities.
- 10.6 All officers and board chairpersons shall be responsible for the annual preparation of a proposed budget for the coming year for the financial obligations that fall under their respective positions.
- 10.7 Any member of the Church Council or Board of Elders who fails to carry out his duties or who fails to perform the responsibilities of communicant membership (see Article 5.2.3) may be removed from office or appointment by the Congregational Voters Assembly by a two-thirds majority ballot vote, in Christian and lawful order.
- 10.8 Those officers identified by state law shall serve as legal representatives of the congregation.

## **11.0 Limitations on Holding Office**

Holy Scripture teaches that the pastoral office is to be filled by men only (see Article 6.1.2). Because the Board of Elders assists the pastor in the spiritual life of the congregation, women shall not serve as Chairman of the Board of Elders or on the Board of Elders. Because the Chairman serves as interim chairperson of any vacant board on the Church Council, including the Board of Elders (see Article 10.1.1), and the Vice-Chairman serves as Chairman when that office is vacant (see Article 10.1.2), women shall not serve as Chairman or Vice-Chairman. Women who are voting members may serve in any other offices, boards, and committees of this congregation.

## **12.0 Division or Dissolution**

The following principles shall govern in the event of division or dissolution:

- 12.1 In the event the congregation is divided on account of doctrine, the property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those communicant members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to the confessional standard listed in Article 3.0.
- 12.2 In the event the congregation dissolves, all physical property and equipment shall be disposed of by the Congregational Voters Assembly for the payment of debts and all just claims against the congregation. Any and all surplus at the time of dissolution, and all rights connected therewith, shall be conveyed to and become the property of the district of which Divine Shepherd is a member.

## **13.0 Amendments**

This Constitution may be amended in the following manner:

- 13.1 Article 3.0 (in its entirety), Article 13.1, and any part of any article that pertains to Scriptural doctrine and practice, shall be unalterable and irrevocable.
- 13.2 Amendments to the provisions of this Constitution not identified in Article 13.1 shall be submitted in writing at a meeting of the Congregational Voters Assembly and announced to the congregation by public posting, mail, and/or electronic communication at least one week prior to the congregational meeting at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon.
- 13.3 A two-thirds affirmative vote of the voters present shall be required for adoption. The date of approval shall be referenced in any amendment adopted.
- 13.4 The revised Constitution shall, as a condition of continued membership in the LCMS, 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 implemented by the congregation.

# **BYLAWS**

## **1.0 Procedures for Calling a Pastor**

When a pastor is to be called, the following guidelines shall be followed:

- 1.1 The Board of Elders shall serve as the calling committee.
- 1.2 If a divine call to a candidate from the seminary is to be extended, synodical procedures shall be followed.
- 1.3 If a divine call to a rostered pastor is to be extended, the Board of Elders shall prepare a list of at least two candidates to be considered. Voting members of the congregation shall have the privilege of suggesting names to be considered for inclusion in the list of candidates. Each candidate to be considered shall meet the qualifications listed in Article 6.2 of the Constitution.
- 1.4 Once the list of candidates has been prepared, the Board of Elders shall submit this list to the president of the district for information and recommendations. After receiving feedback from the president of the district, the Board of Elders shall publicly announce the slate of candidates, together with a biographical sketch of each, to the congregation.
- 1.5 At a congregational meeting, called for the purpose of electing a new pastor, the slate of recommended candidates from the Board of Elders may be amended by means of a two-thirds vote of those present. Balloting shall proceed by means of a secret ballot vote. A simple majority is needed in order to determine the disposition of the call.
- 1.6 The divine call shall be extended to the selected candidate with thanksgiving to God.

## **2.0 Procedures for Calling Professional Church Workers**

When a professional church worker is to be called, the following guidelines shall be followed:

- 2.1 The Board of Elders shall serve as the calling committee.
- 2.2 The Board of Elders shall prepare a list of at least two candidates to be considered. Voting members of the congregation shall have the privilege of suggesting names to be considered for inclusion in the list of candidates. Each candidate to be considered shall meet the qualifications listed in Article 7.2 of the Constitution.
- 2.3 Once the list of candidates has been prepared, the Board of Elders shall submit this list to the president of the district for information and recommendations. After receiving feedback from the president of the district, the Board of Elders shall publicly announce the slate of candidates, together with a biographical sketch of each, to the congregation.
- 2.4 At a congregational meeting, called for the purpose of electing a new professional church worker, the slate of recommended candidates from the Board of Elders may be amended by means of a two-thirds vote of those present. Balloting shall proceed by means of a secret ballot vote. A simple majority is needed in order to determine the disposition of the call.

2.5 The call shall be extended to the selected candidate with thanksgiving to God.

### **3.0 Meetings of the Congregational Voters Assembly**

Regular meetings of the Congregational Voters Assembly shall be held as needed, at least once a year, to receive the reports of the Church Council and to discuss and vote on necessary church business.

### **4.0 Meetings of the Church Council**

#### 4.1 Membership

The Church Council consists of the elected officers and the chairpersons of the boards. These are:

- A. the Chairman,
- B. the Vice-Chairman,
- C. the Secretary,
- D. the Treasurer,
- E. the chairman of the Board of Elders,
- F. the chairperson of the Board of Christian Education, and
- G. the chairperson of the Board of Trustees.

The pastor shall be an ex officio member of the Church Council.

#### 4.2 Meetings

The Church Council shall normally meet monthly. Special meetings may be called by the Chairman, the pastor, or any three members of the Church Council by sending communication to each Church Council member at least 24 hours in advance. A majority of the Church Council, excluding any vacancies, shall constitute a quorum. The Chairman shall have a single vote, regardless of any vacancies. Any member of the Church Council absent from a Council Meeting shall be unable to vote and cannot assign his vote to another.

#### 4.3 Duties

The Church Council shall have the power to act on behalf of the congregation between meetings of the Congregational Voters Assembly.

### **5.0 Nominations and Elections of Officers and Boards**

5.1 A nominating committee, composed of at least two voting members, shall be elected by a majority ballot of the Congregational Voters Assembly.

5.2 The nominating committee shall present a slate of candidates for all positions up for election. The slate shall preferably consist of at least two names for each position. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. No person shall be nominated without his consent.

- 5.3 All officers and board chairpersons shall be elected by a majority ballot vote of the Congregational Voters Assembly. Voting shall continue until a clear majority has been established, after candidates receiving the lowest number of votes have been eliminated in each succeeding ballot.
- 5.4 All officers and board chairpersons are elected for a term of two years. A term begins on January 1 and ends on December 31 the following year.
- 5.5 No one may serve more than three consecutive elected terms in the same Church Council position or more than eight consecutive years on the Church Council, unless approved by the Congregational Voters Assembly.
- 5.6 Officers, board chairpersons, and members of the Board of Elders shall be installed into office in a worship service of the congregation.
- 5.7 In case of a vacancy in an elected position, the Chairman shall appoint a successor until the next congregational meeting to fill the unexpired term.
- 5.8 The officers (Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer) shall be elected in even-numbered years to serve the term beginning on January 1 of the following year. The chairpersons of the boards (Elders, Christian Education, and Trustees) shall be elected in odd-numbered years to serve the term beginning on January 1 of the following year. The nominating committee shall be elected yearly.

## **6.0 Responsibilities of Officers and Boards**

All officers and board chairpersons shall perform the responsibilities listed in Article 10.0 of the Constitution. The congregation may further detail and/or enlarge these responsibilities by majority vote.

## **7.0 Marriage and Sexuality**

Our congregation follows God's holy Word in all things, including the issues of marriage and sexuality. Accordingly, we believe, teach, and confess the following:

- 7.1 Marriage is an honorable estate instituted and blessed by God in Paradise, before humanity's fall into sin (Genesis 1:27-28<sup>50</sup>; 2:18-24<sup>51</sup>).
- 7.2 As a reflection of the union between Jesus Christ and His bride (the Church), marriage is the exclusive union of one man and one woman (Mark 10:6-9<sup>52</sup>; Ephesians 5:22-33<sup>53</sup>).
- 7.3 Sexual intimacy is intended by God solely within the union of husband and wife in marriage (1 Corinthians 7:2<sup>54</sup>; Hebrews 13:4<sup>55</sup>).
- 7.4 Every type of sexual immorality—including adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography, and changing one's biological sex—is sinful and offensive to God (Exodus 20:14<sup>56</sup>; Romans 1:26-28<sup>57</sup>; 1 Corinthians 5:11<sup>58</sup>; 6:9-10<sup>59</sup>; 6:18<sup>60</sup>; cf. Sixth Commandment<sup>61</sup>).
- 7.5 In order to preserve the function and integrity of our congregation as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a Scriptural role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all

persons employed by Divine Shepherd in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Article of the Bylaws and conduct themselves accordingly (Ephesians 5:3<sup>62</sup>).

- 7.6 Our gracious God offers forgiveness to all who confess their sin and believe in Christ's all-atoning sacrifice for sinners on the cross (Psalm 32:1<sup>63</sup>; Psalm 145:8<sup>64</sup>; 1 John 1:9<sup>65</sup>).
- 7.7 Because hateful and harassing behavior is not in accord with Holy Scripture, we strive, by God's grace, to treat everyone with compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (John 13:34<sup>66</sup>; Ephesians 4:32<sup>67</sup>).

## **8.0 Rules of Order**

In addition to principles laid down in Holy Scripture, the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed for all meetings.

## **9.0 Amendments**

These Bylaws may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the Congregational Voters Assembly by a majority of all voting members present, provided the proposed change has been announced in a previous congregational meeting or has been submitted in writing to all voting members at least two weeks prior to the congregational meeting.

- 9.1 The revised Bylaws shall, as a condition of continued membership in the LCMS, 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 implemented by the congregation.

# NOTES

## Adoption

The Constitution and Bylaws of Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church were adopted by the congregation on 30 March 2014 and ratified by the Northern Illinois District of the LCMS on <DATE>.

## Quotations

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## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. [Psalm 119:105]

<sup>2</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” [Matthew 28:18-20]

<sup>3</sup> I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. [Galatians 1:6-8]

<sup>4</sup> I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. [2 Timothy 4:1-5]

<sup>5</sup> All things should be done decently and in order. [1 Corinthians 14:40]

<sup>6</sup> “Your word is truth.” [John 17:17]

<sup>7</sup> But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. [2 Timothy 3:14-17]

<sup>8</sup> Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. [2 Peter 1:20-21]

<sup>9</sup> We believe, teach, and confess that the only rule and norm according to which all teachings, together with <all> teachers, should be evaluated and judged [2 Timothy 3:15-17] are the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testament alone. ... The Holy Scriptures alone remain the judge, rule, and norm. According to them—as the only touchstone—all teachings shall and must be discerned and judged to see whether they are good or evil [1 Thessalonians 5:21-22], right or wrong. [Formula of Concord, Epitome, The Summary Content, Rule, and Norm; paragraphs 1, 7; pages 473-474]

<sup>10</sup> Other writings by ancient or modern teachers ... are subject to the Scriptures [1 Corinthians 14:32]. Other writings should not be received in any other way or as anything more than witnesses that show how this <pure> doctrine of the prophets and apostles was preserved after the time of the apostles, and at what places. Right after the time of the apostles, and even while they were still living, false teachers and heretics arose [Titus 3:9-10]. Therefore, *symbols* (i.e. brief, concise confessions) were written against the heretics in the Early Church. These symbols were

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regarded as the unanimous, universal Christian faith and confession of the orthodox and true Church. They are the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed. We pledge ourselves to these symbols, and in this way we reject all heresies and teachings that have been introduced into God's Church against them. However, schisms in matters of faith have also happened in our time. Therefore, we regard as the unanimous consensus and declaration of our Christian faith and confession ... the first, unaltered Augsburg Confession. ... We hold to this confession along with its Apology and the Articles composed at Smalcald in the year 1537. ... We also confess Dr. Luther's Small and Large Catechisms. ... They are "the layman's Bible" because everything necessary for a Christian to know for salvation is included in them. ... As announced above, all teachings are to be conformed in this way. What is contrary to these confessions is to be rejected and condemned, as opposed to the unanimous declaration of our faith. [Formula of Concord, Epitome, The Summary Content, Rule, and Norm; paragraphs 2-6; pages 473-474]

- <sup>11</sup> I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. [Romans 16:17]
- <sup>12</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death He died He died to sin, once for all, but the life He lives He lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. [Romans 6:3-11]
- <sup>13</sup> Assuming that you have heard about Him and were taught in Him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. [Ephesians 4:21-24]
- <sup>14</sup> He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed. [1 Peter 2:24]
- <sup>15</sup> You shall sanctify the holy day. *What does this mean?* Answer: We should fear and love God so that we may not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred, and gladly hear and learn it. [Small Catechism, Part I: The Ten Commandments; page 319; cf. Exodus 20:8-11]
- <sup>16</sup> "Whoever is of God hears the words of God." [John 8:47]
- <sup>17</sup> And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. [Acts 2:42]
- <sup>18</sup> And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. [Hebrews 10:24-25]
- <sup>19</sup> And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. [Ephesians 4:11-16]
- <sup>20</sup> For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. [Hebrews 5:12-14]
- <sup>21</sup> But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. [2 Peter 3:18]
- <sup>22</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. [Matthew 28:19]
- <sup>23</sup> The LCMS uses the designation "Evangelical Lutheran Church" in its Agenda and official rites in receiving individuals into communicant membership (i.e. Confirmation; Reception of Members by Transfer or Profession of Faith; etc.).
- <sup>24</sup> Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV (XII): The Mass; paragraph 1; page 220.
- <sup>25</sup> Large Catechism, Part V: The Sacrament of the Altar; paragraph 39; page 436.
- <sup>26</sup> Small Catechism, Preface of Dr. Martin Luther; paragraph 22; page 315.
- <sup>27</sup> Large Catechism, Part V: The Sacrament of the Altar; paragraph 42; page 436.
- <sup>28</sup> "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector."

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Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” [Matthew 18:15-18]

- <sup>29</sup> “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.” [John 20:23]
- <sup>30</sup> I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.” [1 Corinthians 5:9-13]
- <sup>31</sup> Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XI: Confession; paragraph 61; page 156.
- <sup>32</sup> Smalcald Articles, Part III, Article IX: Excommunication; page 281.
- <sup>33</sup> Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article XII: Other Factions and Sects; paragraph 34; page 618.
- <sup>34</sup> Augsburg Confession, Article IV: Justification; paragraph 2; page 33.
- <sup>35</sup> Augsburg Confession, Article V: The Ministry; paragraph 1; page 33.
- <sup>36</sup> On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you.” And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.” [John 20:19-23]
- <sup>37</sup> In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel. [1 Corinthians 9:14]
- <sup>38</sup> Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. [Galatians 6:6]
- <sup>39</sup> Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which He obtained with His own blood. [Acts 20:28]
- <sup>40</sup> Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. [Hebrews 13:17]
- <sup>41</sup> This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. [1 Corinthians 4:1-4]
- <sup>42</sup> The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach. [1 Timothy 3:1-2]
- <sup>43</sup> What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. [2 Timothy 2:2]
- <sup>44</sup> Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. [2 Timothy 2:15]
- <sup>45</sup> He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. [Titus 1:9]
- <sup>46</sup> “Our churches teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church, or administer the Sacraments, without a rightly ordered call.” [Augsburg Confession, Article XIV: Order in the Church; page 39]
- <sup>47</sup> As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. [1 Corinthians 14:33-34]
- <sup>48</sup> Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. [1 Timothy 2:11-12]
- <sup>49</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. [Acts 2:42]
- <sup>50</sup> So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.” [Genesis 1:27-28]
- <sup>51</sup> Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” ... So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man He made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. [Genesis 2:18, 21-24]

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- <sup>52</sup> “From the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” [Mark 10:6-9]
- <sup>53</sup> Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, His body, and is Himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of His body. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. [Ephesians 5:22-33]
- <sup>54</sup> Because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. [1 Corinthians 7:2]
- <sup>55</sup> Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. [Hebrews 13:4]
- <sup>56</sup> You shall not commit adultery. [Exodus 20:14]
- <sup>57</sup> For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. [Romans 1:26-28]
- <sup>58</sup> But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality...—not even to eat with such a one. [1 Corinthians 5:11]
- <sup>59</sup> Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, ... nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality ... will inherit the kingdom of God. [1 Corinthians 6:9-10]
- <sup>60</sup> Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. [1 Corinthians 6:18]
- <sup>61</sup> You shall not commit adultery. *What does this mean?* Answer: We should fear and love God so that we may lead a pure and decent life in words and deeds, and each love and honor his spouse. [Small Catechism, Part I: The Ten Commandments; page 322]
- <sup>62</sup> Sexual immorality ... must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. [Ephesians 5:3]
- <sup>63</sup> Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. [Psalm 32:1]
- <sup>64</sup> The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. [Psalm 145:8]
- <sup>65</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [1 John 1:9]
- <sup>66</sup> A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. [John 13:34]
- <sup>67</sup> Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. [Ephesians 4:32]