

The Augustana District Constitution

PREAMBLE

As members of the priesthood of all believers, called by the Holy Spirit to confess the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in its purity, we give thanks for God's continual faithfulness and, by adopting this constitution, form this fellowship and association of congregations, uniting to carry out God's mission in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Article 1 - Name and Incorporation

- 1.01. The name of this association shall be The Augustana District. Augustana is a district organized under and operating in mission with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC). For the purpose of this constitution, The Augustana District may also be designated as "Augustana" or "this association."
- 1.02. Augustana is incorporated and its Articles of Incorporation are filed under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

Article 2 - Statement of Faith

- 2.01. To supplement and further explicate the Statement of Faith set out in the LCMC Constitution, a Statement of Faith to which the churches of Augustana expressly subscribe, the churches of the Augustana District also add:
- 2.02. Sinners are made right with God by grace alone through faith alone on account of Christ alone. This is the article of faith by which the church stands or falls.[1]
- 2.03. The Word of God is Jesus Christ[2], the proclamation of him[3], and the Holy Scriptures[4]. This Word functions as both law and gospel, which need to be distinguished, but not separated. The law orders society and convicts us of sin, showing us our need for a Savior[5]. The gospel is the power of God that liberates us from sin, death, and the power of the devil, and brings us, by grace, from death to life[6].
- 2.04. Christ commanded that his Word be proclaimed[7]. Through it, the Holy Spirit works faith when and where he pleases[8] and repentant sinners are elected unto salvation. Christians live out their earthly lives as totally justified and totally sinful[9].

1 *Augustana IV; Smalcald*, Part II, Article 1: "Nothing in this article can be given up or compromised."

2 John 1:1, 14

3 Matthew 18:20; I John 1:1, 2

4 II Timothy 3:16

5 *Smalcald*, Part III, Article II. The Law

6 Romans 1:16

7 Luke 24:46-47

8 Romans 10:17; *Augustana V; Small Catechism* Part II, Third Article.

9 *Smalcald*, Part III, Article III. Penitence.

2.05. Because the church is the assembly of believers among whom the Gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly, it is not necessary that human traditions, rites and ceremonies, instituted by men, should be alike everywhere.[10] God instituted one office of ministry through which the means of salvation are provided.[11] For the sake of good order, a pastor is authorized to function in this public office by virtue of a church's call.[12] Churches band together in fellowship and mission to strengthen their ministries, acknowledging participation in the universal Church of our Lord.[13]

Article 3 - Ministry

- 3.01. This association affirms the priesthood of all believers. It commits itself in function and structure to the equipping and supporting of all members of its congregations for their ministries within and outside of the household of faith. It is within and from this context of ministry that Augustana declares that some are called by God to the public ministry of Word and Sacrament and other specific ministries. At the same time, all baptized members of our congregations are priests called by God to ministries in their daily lives.
- 3.02. Ministry standards shall be established as provided by the bylaws of Augustana and approved by the annual gathering of Augustana; these standards may be altered or amended only with the ratification and approval of a majority of the member congregations of Augustana.
- 3.03. A called minister of Word and Sacrament of this association shall subscribe to the confession of faith and otherwise comply with the ministry standards as established by this association and shall be subject to discipline as set forth in the rules and regulations adopted by this association.
- 3.04. God's call of a particular man or woman to the office of public ministry is confirmed by the call of a congregation. All calls to the public ministry will be issued by a congregation. Chaplains, missionaries, and pastors employed in other types of special ministries will be called by their congregation, or a congregation that chooses to sponsor them, and listed as deployed. Candidates for these ministries must meet the credential standards of the agencies they are endorsed to serve in addition to the credential requirements of Augustana.

Article 4 - Membership

- 4.01. Augustana is an association of congregations belonging to Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC). Each congregation that subscribes in writing to this constitution in a manner determined by the District Council shall be a member of this association provided, however, that any congregation rejected for membership in

10 *Augustana VII; Smalcald Part III, Article XII.*

11 *Augustana V.*

12 *Augustana XIV.*

13 *Ephesians 4:4-6*

Augustana by the District Council shall have a right of appeal to the annual convention of Augustana. Member congregations agree to participate in the affairs of the district, support the district financially and otherwise, and abide by the Constitution and Bylaws of this association.

- 4.02. Except as otherwise agreed in writing between this association and one or more member congregations, each congregation retains its own property and assets and Augustana makes no claim to any congregational assets or property.
- 4.03. Augustana, by action taken by the District Council, may suspend or remove a congregation from the association by three-quarters vote of a quorum of the District Council. The District Council shall give at least sixty (60) days written notice of intent to seek suspension or removal from the association. The District Council shall adopt rules and regulations, approved by the annual gathering of Augustana, governing the suspension or removal of congregations from Augustana. Any congregation removed or suspended by action of the District Council shall have a right to appeal such action to the annual convention of Augustana. Any removal or suspension by the District Council may be reversed by a majority vote of the convention.

Article 5 - Governance

- 5.01. This association shall be organized through congregations, an annual convention of congregational delegates, a District Council elected at the annual convention of Augustana, and such other organizational tools as its members choose to adopt.
- 5.02. This association shall meet annually as convened by the District Council or as otherwise provided in the bylaws of this association. The annual convention of Augustana shall have only such authority as is specifically granted by this constitution, the bylaws of this association or otherwise granted by the members of the association.
- 5.03. Each congregation shall be entitled to two delegates at all conventions where Augustana business is conducted. Congregations with average worship attendance in excess of 500 shall be entitled to one additional delegate for every additional 250 average worship attendees over the 500 member base. Delegates shall be selected by member congregations pursuant to such internal procedures as member congregations may, from time to time, adopt. The manner of determining how delegates cast votes on behalf of their respective member congregations at conventions shall be determined by the member congregation on whose behalf the delegates are acting. Pastors not identified as delegates by a congregation shall be entitled to voice but not vote at Augustana conventions.
- 5.04. Subject to the limitations imposed by this constitution, the bylaws of this association and such other restrictions as may be imposed by the annual convention of Augustana, the business and affairs of Augustana shall be managed by or shall be under the direction of the District Council.
- 5.05. Other matters of governance, organization, and order shall be addressed in the by-laws of this association.

Article 6 - Amendment of Constitution and By-laws

- 6.01.** An amendment to this constitution may be proposed in writing by ten percent (10%) of the member congregations. At least four months prior to the next annual convention, the proposed amendment shall be referred to the District Council for review, comment and recommendation, and shall thereafter be submitted in writing to the delegates to the annual convention of Augustana. Regardless of the position taken by the District Council on the proposed amendment, such proposed amendment shall be presented to the delegates to the annual convention as required by this constitution. The adoption of any amendment shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the delegates present and voting at the annual convention of Augustana provided that such amendment shall not become effective unless it is ratified in accordance with Section 6.03 below.
- 6.02.** The District Council may propose a constitutional amendment at least six months prior to a regularly scheduled annual convention of Augustana. The adoption of such an amendment shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the delegates present and voting at the annual convention of Augustana but shall not become effective until ratified as provided in Section 6.03.
- 6.03.** Any constitutional amendment, regardless of origin, must be affirmatively ratified by two-thirds majority vote of the member congregations acting in and through such internal procedures as member congregations may, from time to time, adopt. Any proposed amendment not ratified within two years of the date of approval by the annual convention of Augustana shall be deemed rejected. The District Council is authorized to adopt rules and regulations governing the ratification process provided, however, that such rules and regulations are not inconsistent with this constitution. For the purposes of ratifying constitutional amendments, each congregation shall have one vote. Voting procedures shall also comply with the bylaws of Augustana.
- 6.04.** Bylaws not in conflict with this constitution may be adopted or amended by the annual convention of Augustana provided however that all such bylaws are approved by a majority vote of the delegates present and voting at the annual convention of Augustana and provided further that a majority of the member congregations of this association do not reject the adopted or amended bylaw.
- 6.05.** The provisions of this Constitution shall become effective upon adoption by a majority vote of the delegates present at the first annual convention of Augustana held in May 2010.