

Provisional Constitution
Of
The Wisconsin/Upper Michigan
Mission District
of the
North American Lutheran Church

Adopted October 22, 2011

Article 1 – Name and Incorporation

1.01 The name of this District shall be the Wisconsin/Upper Michigan Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church. The official abbreviation of this District shall be “the WI/UM District of the NALC.”

1.02 The WI/UM District of the NALC shall be incorporated, and Articles of Incorporation consistent with this Constitution shall be filed, under the laws of the State of Wisconsin.

Article 2 – Confession of Faith

The WI/UM District of the NALC 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 the Holy Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God’s revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them the Holy 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, "according to which all doctrines should and must be judged." (Formula of Concord, Epitome, Part I)

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 Scriptures 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 WI/UM District of the NALC honors and accepts The Common Confession (2005), attached in an appendix hereto, as a summary of teachings otherwise affirmed in the Lutheran Confessions.

Article 3 – Nature of the Church and the Ministry

3.01 The Church is the universal assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel. (Augsburg Confession VII)

3.02 The hearers of the Gospel are a people, called and sent by God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to be a community of faith, hope and love, who witness to Christ and His coming Kingdom before all the world.

3.03 To carry out its witness to the world, this community structures itself both as congregations and in wider and more universal bodies. The WI/UM District of the NALC derives its character and polity both from the sanction of its congregations and from its nature as a manifestation of the universal assembly of all believers. The North American Lutheran Church and the WI/UM District of the NALC understand themselves to be within the one holy, catholic, and apostolic church.

3.04 All authority in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ and is manifested through the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments. The structures and assemblies of the WI/UM District of the NALC exist and exercise their ministry in the service of Christ and His authority.

3.05 Within the people of God and for the sake of the Gospel ministry, entrusted to all believers, God has instituted the office of the ministry of Word and Sacrament. To carry out this ministry the North American Lutheran Church, on behalf of the WI/UM District of the NALC, ordains qualified persons, both men and women. Within the office of the ordained ministry is a ministry of oversight in the church. In the North American Lutheran Church this ministry of oversight includes a bishop and others in leadership who, in a collegial manner, serve the church in Word and Sacrament, visit among the congregations, provide support for pastors and congregations, participate in the process of doctrinal discernment, and authorize ordinations on behalf of the Church.

3.06 Congregations exercise the critically important ministry within the mission of the WI/UM District of the NALC. Each congregation embodies the Church in its community or area of service. Simultaneously, and for the sake of mission, each congregation lives in cooperative partnership with other congregations within the WI/UM District of the NALC and within the other structures of the North American Lutheran Church. All structures within the North American Lutheran Church affirm that they share a common mission: to bear witness to Christ.

3.07 The Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies all who believe in Jesus Christ to be priests for service to others in Jesus' name, and desires to make use of the spiritual gifts He has given through the priesthood of all believers. In its structures, the church equips and supports its members for their ministries in the world and in the Church.

3.08 As the WI/UM District of the NALC reflects on and makes decisions regarding its mission, ordained ministers and lay delegates elected by the congregations, as well as congregations themselves, shall participate in the decision-making process of the WI/UM District of the NALC.

Article 4 – Ordained Ministry

4.01 The WI/UM District of the NALC recognizes that ordination, and reception of ordained clergy, shall be a function of the NALC, according to Article 4 of the NALC Constitution.

Article 5 – Commissioned Lay Ministry

5.01 The WI/UM District of the NALC recognizes that commissioning and reception of lay ministers shall be a function of the NALC, according to Article 5 of the NALC Constitution.

Article 6 – Membership and Property

6.01 The WI/UM District of the NALC is a member region of the North American Lutheran Church made up of congregations and pastors. One of the requirements for membership, as stated in Article 6 of the NALC Constitution, shall be to subscribe in writing to the constitution of the North American Lutheran Church.

6.02 The WI/UM District of the NALC shall have no right to or interest in the property of any congregation unless the congregation has expressly conveyed such a right or interest to the WI/UM District of the NALC.

Article 7 – Wisconsin/Upper Michigan Mission District Annual Convocation

7.01 A convocation of the WI/UM District of the NALC shall be held annually during the first two weeks of October.

7.02 Delegates with voting privileges at a convocation of the Wisconsin District shall be the ordained ministers of the WI/UM District of the NALC and the lay delegates. Each congregation of the WI/UM District of the NALC shall elect one lay delegate to the convocation for every 750 baptized members, or fraction thereof, of such congregation. In the event that the total number of lay delegates elected pursuant to the preceding sentence is less than the total number of ordained clergy, the Executive Council of the WI/UM District of the NALC shall apportion additional lay delegates based on the relative size of the congregations of the WI/UM District of the NALC.

7.03 All delegates of the convocation shall represent their congregations.

7.04 The responsibilities of the annual convocation shall include: election of the Dean, the District Executive Council and any other position requiring election; adoption of a budget for the subsequent fiscal year (to be defined as January 1 - December 31) by a majority vote; consideration of mission and ministry needs of the District; reception of reports; and other items of business as may be determined by the District Executive Council or by the Convocation.

7.05 Special convocations may be called for specified purposes by the Dean or by the District Executive Council.

7.06 Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern the business of a convocation absent the approval by the convocation of alternative rules of procedure by at least two-thirds of the votes cast.

Article 8 – Dean

8.01 The Dean shall be an ordained minister who is a member of the WI/UM District of the NALC. Pursuant to District 11.03 of the NALC Constitution, the Dean shall be accountable to the Bishop and shall support the work of the Bishop by conducting similar functions in the WI/UM District of the NALC. Deans shall serve as pastor to pastors, their families, and congregations and will conduct a ministry of teaching and visitation with pastors and congregations. The Dean may continue to serve under the call of a congregation.

8.02 The convocation shall elect the Dean from a ballot consisting of any candidates nominated from the floor. Any convocation delegate may nominate a candidate, whose name shall be added to the ballot if the candidate is eligible and agrees to serve if elected.

8.03 On any ballot, any candidate who receives a majority of the votes cast shall be elected. If no candidate receives a majority on the first ballot, all but the top four candidates by votes received, including ties, shall be eliminated. Thereafter, if no candidate receives a majority, the candidate receiving the fewest votes, plus ties, shall be eliminated until two candidates remain. When two candidates remain, voting shall continue until one candidate receives a majority.

Article 9 – Officers and Staff

9.01 In addition to the Dean, the other officers of the WI/UM District of the NALC shall be a Recording Secretary and a Treasurer. The Recording Secretary and the Treasurer shall be appointed by the Executive Council of the Wisconsin District.

9.02 The officers of the WI/UM District of the NALC shall serve two-year terms. The Dean shall be eligible to serve a maximum of six consecutive terms.

9.03 The Recording Secretary shall assure that proper records are made and retained.

9.04 The Treasurer shall be bonded and be the chief financial officer of the WI/UM District of the NALC, overseeing the receiving and disbursing of all funds and keeping accurate accounts of all transactions. Further, the Treasurer shall make complete and accurate reports for review by all members of the WI/UM District of the NALC.

9.05 The WI/UM District of the NALC shall be empowered to hire pastoral, programmatic, and support staff as needed to carry out its mission.

9.06 In the event of vacancy in the office of Dean, the District Executive Council shall appoint an interim Dean to fill the vacancy until the next convocation of the Wisconsin District, which shall elect a successor for a new term of office.

Article 10 – District Executive Council

10.01 The District Executive Council shall consist of the Dean, and three clergy and three lay members who shall be elected for two-year terms. No member of the Executive Council, except the Dean, may serve more than three consecutive full terms. The Recording Secretary and Treasurer shall have voice but not vote on the District Executive Council; unless appointed from the District Executive Council.

10.02 During the interim between convocations, the District Executive Council shall implement the work and policies of the WI/UM District of the NALC and shall act for the WI/UM District of the NALC, subject in all matters to review of its actions by subsequent convocations.

10.03 The duties and function of the District Executive Council shall be to:

- a. Act as Board of Directors for the corporation of the WI/UM District of the NALC.
- b. Establish policies and procedure to guide the Executive Council and District.
- c. Ensure financial integrity and, to the extent possible, solvency.
- d. Ensure and approve long-range planning for the WI/UM District of the NALC to be presented at the annual convocation.
- e. Prepare the proposed annual budget, including an estimate of the percentage of congregational income required to fund the budget, set salaries and provide for fiduciary oversight for the WI/UM District of the NALC.
- f. Approve a proposed agenda and program for each convocation.
- g. Create and oversee committees and task forces appointed to assist the Executive Council in carrying out its duties as needed.
- i. Report all actions to the next annual convocation.

Article 11 – Indemnification

11.01 Any person who at any time shall serve or shall have served as a director, officer, or employee of the WI/UM District of the NALC, or of any other enterprise at the request of the WI/UM District of the NALC, and the heirs, executors, and administrators of such person shall be indemnified by the WI/UM District of the NALC in accordance with, and to the fullest extent permitted, by Wisconsin State Statutes, as they may be amended from time to time.

11.02 Nothing contained in this Article 11 shall affect any rights to indemnification to which the personnel of the WI/UM District of the NALC may be entitled by contract or otherwise under law.

11.03 The WI/UM District of the NALC may, but shall not be required to, purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of a person in that person's official capacity against any liability asserted against or incurred by the person in or arising from that capacity, regardless of whether the WI/UM District of the NALC would have been required to indemnify the person against the liability.

Article 12 – Amendments to the Constitution

12.01 The District Executive Council may propose amendments to this Constitution no less than 90 days prior to the next annual District convocation. The adoption of such changes shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the delegates present and voting at such convocation. No amendments shall be made to this constitution that are in conflict with the NALC Constitution.

12.02 A minimum of fifteen delegates to a District convocation may propose an amendment to the Constitution. The adoption of such an amendment shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the delegates present and voting at such convocation. No amendments shall be made to this constitution that are in conflict with the NALC Constitution.

12.03 Notwithstanding the foregoing, any amendment to Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 of this Constitution, or affecting the subject matter thereof, is contingent upon a corresponding change in the NALC Constitution articles of the same number. Upon final ratification of such changes in the NALC Constitution (see Art. 17), an equivalent amendment to this Constitution will occur as a matter of course.

12.04 By-laws not in conflict with this Constitution may be adopted or amended by a majority vote of a District convocation.

APPENDIX: THE COMMON CONFSSION (2005)

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.