

***THE CONSTITUTION***  
***&***  
***BY LAWS***  
***Of***  
***GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH***  
***Of Mastic Beach, New York***

*240 Mastic Road at Lincoln Avenue*

*Mastic Beach, New York 11951*

*Last Changed on 3 December 2013*



## Summary of Changes

<b>DATE Adopted:</b>	<b>Item:</b>	<b>Summary</b>
25 January 1970	Unknown	Oldest Copy Found {signed by Congregation up to 1987}
1976	Multiple	Copy states "revised 1976" there are numerous changes based on context or grammar as well as changes to: Constitution Article IV A,C; VI A; BY-Laws Article II A; Added II D; Changed Article IVA; Article V; VI; VII{extensive}; VIII; IX. There are no dates of changes made and adopted by congregation.
UNKNOWN	Multiple	The Constitution & By-Laws were changed between 1976 and 1995 and reverted many terms back to the 25 January 1970 Constitution, No documentation found to validate these changes; however the 1995 Constitution shows them.
1995	Multiple	Copy states "revised 1995" there are numerous changes based on context. There are Constitutional Changes to Article II; Article IVA, C {voting age changed to 18}; Article VI A,C,D,E; By-Laws Article I A [extensive] Removed Article I B; 1 C; Article II [extensive]; Article III; Article IV [extensive]; Article V [terminology] ;Article VI [extensive]; Article VII [terminology]; Removed Articles VIII, IX, X, XI, XII
<b>NOT ADOPTED For Unknown Reason</b>	Constitutional: Article VI, VI By-Laws: Articles VI, VII,VIII, IX,XI	14 March 1999, attempts to add Constitutional Article VI [Deacons] and change Article VI A [Councils voting procedures]; and to Change Article II, VI, VII, IX, Delete Article VIII & XI of the By-Laws. These were read twice but minutes indicate no vote was taken. Subsequent records indicate No further attempt to pass these changes was made.
15 January 2006	By-Laws: Article IX	Changed the name of the "Board of Social Outreach" to "Board of Social Ministry", and changed some wording for that board.
25 February 2007	By-Laws: Article IX	Changed some wording for the board of Christian Education. Changed the age in Line1 from Grade 6 to Grade 4 and added bible studies and Sunday school. Added line 4 which delineates the ministries that are guided by this board [Men's, Woman's, Children's, Library, Marriage Enrichment programs]
20 September 2009	By-Laws: Article VI	Provided the Council an avenue to fill vacancies that occur due to resignations of Officers or Board Chairpersons.
24 November 2013	By-Laws: Article IX	The Office of Lay Deacon added by The Congregation
3 December 2013	By-Laws: Article IV A 3 Article IX	Changed the word "declares" to "declared" and; Added the word "Lay" to all references of the "Deacon" To bring the title in line with the Atlantic District program.

# **THE CONSTITUTION**

## **PREAMBLE**

*The Word of God requires that a Christian congregation shall conform to this Divine Word in doctrine and practice (Ps. 119:105; Matt. 28:18-20; Gal. 1:6-8; 2 Tim. 4:1-5) and all things be done decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40). Therefore, we, the members of Grace Lutheran Church, accept and subscribe to the following Constitution and By-Laws in accordance with which all spiritual and material affairs of our congregation shall be governed.*

## **ARTICLE I**

### **NAME**

*The name of the congregation shall be*

***Grace Lutheran Church of Mastic Beach, New York.***

## **ARTICLE II**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

*It is the mission of Grace Lutheran Church, according to God's will sought in prayer and by His power received in Word and Sacrament:*

- † to give glory to God in our worship individually and together;*
- † to grow in maturity as disciples of Jesus Christ by learning and acting on God's Word;*
- † to reach out to this community and the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ;*
- † to show the unconditional love of Jesus in words and actions within the church, community and the world;*
- † to encourage and support each other in our walk as brothers and sisters in Christ.*

## **ARTICLE III**

### **CONFESSIONS**

*This congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God, verbally inspired, and acknowledges and accepts all the Confessional Writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the Book of Concord of the year 1580, to be the true and genuine exposition of the doctrines of the Bible. These Confessional Writings are the three Ecumenical Creeds (Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, Luther's Small and Large Catechisms, and the Formula of Concord.*

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

*When one is baptized, that person is joined to Jesus Christ (Romans 6) and becomes part of the one holy Christian Church of which Grace church is a part. Grace church has a special caring relationship to those baptized persons who are part of the church, but not yet members, especially to the children of members of Grace church.*

## **THE MEMBERSHIP OF THIS CONGREGATION INCLUDES:**

### **A. COMMUNICANT MEMBERS**

*Communicant members are those:*

- 1. Who are baptized in the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;*
- 2. Who accept all canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the only divine rule and standard of faith and life;*
- 3. Who have received a period of instruction in Christian teaching as understood in the Lutheran Church and declared their acceptance of it.*
- 4. Who attend divine services faithfully.*
- 5. Who lead Christian lives and do not live in manifest works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21);*
- 6. Who partake of the Lord's Supper frequently.*
- 7. Who contribute regularly and faithfully, in proportion to what God has given them, toward the building of Christ's kingdom in the congregation and throughout the world.*
- 8. Who contribute regularly and faithfully a proportion of their time and talent to the building of Christ's kingdom in the congregation and throughout the world*
- 9. Who permit themselves to be fraternally admonished and corrected when they have erred.*

## **B. VOTING MEMBERS**

*All communicant members shall be considered voting members, but for purpose of voting in regard to physical property and in eligibility to be an officer or chairperson of a Board, a communicant member must be 18 years or older.*

## **ARTICLE V**

### **OFFICE OF THE PASTOR**

***The Pastoral office of this congregation shall be conferred upon such ordained Lutheran ministers or seminary candidates only as profess and adhere to the Confessional standards as set forth in Article III of this constitution and are well qualified for their work. Pastors shall, in the call extended to and accepted by them, be pledged to this confessional standard.***

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

#### **A. GENERAL**

*The congregation as a body, through its members, shall have the supreme power to administer and manage all external and internal affairs.*

*The congregation, however, shall not be empowered to decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, (Article III) and any such decision shall be null and void.*

*Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided by the Word of God; other matters shall be decided at a board level, council level, congregational assembly level and congregational level. On which level a decision is to be made will be decided by a unanimous vote of the council.*

#### **B. RIGHT OF CALLING**

*The right of calling a pastor shall be vested in the congregation assembly and shall never be delegated to a small body, board, committee, or any individual*

#### **C. POWERS OF LEADERS**

*All Congregational officers, Board chairpersons, Board members, and committee members shall have no authority beyond that which had been conferred upon them, and whatever power may have been delegated to them at any time may be altered or revoked by the congregational assembly.*

## **D. REMOVAL FROM OFFICE**

*The Pastor may be removed from office by the congregation, by ballot, in Christian and lawful order, for one of the following causes; persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, and inability to perform his official duties or willful neglect of them.*

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **OFFICERS**

*The officers of this congregation shall be such as the By-laws of this congregation may prescribe*

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **PROPERTY RIGHTS**

*If, at any time, a separation should take place on account of doctrine, the property of the congregation and all benefits therewith connected shall remain with those voting members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Article III of this constitution. In the event the congregation shall totally disband, the property and all rights therewith shall be transferred to the Atlantic District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.*

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **DOCTRINAL LITERATURE**

*Only such hymns, prayers and liturgies shall be used in public services of the congregation and in all ministerial acts as conform to the confessional standard of Article III. Likewise, in all classes for instruction in Christian Doctrine only such books shall be used as conform to this standard.*

## **ARTICLE X**

### **SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP**

- A. This congregation shall hold membership in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. It shall send its pastor and lay delegate to the District convention of Synod.*
- B. It shall be the duty of the congregation and its individual members to support the work of the Synod, since they thereby support their own Christ-appointed work.*

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **BY-LAWS**

*This congregation may adopt such By-laws as may be required for the accomplishment of its purpose.*

## **ARTICLE XII**

### **CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION**

#### **A. UNALTERABLE ARTICLES**

*The following articles of this Constitution or sections thereof shall be unalterable and irrevocably: III, V, and IX.*

#### **B. AMENDMENTS**

*Amendments to this Constitution and the By-Laws may be adopted at a regular Congregational Assembly, provided:*

- 1. That they do not conflict with the provisions laid down in Article III or with any section of any other article that pertains to Scriptural doctrine and practice; and:*
- 2. That the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at a previous Congregational Assembly. The affirmative vote of two-thirds majority of the voting membership present at the Congregational Assembly shall be required for the adoption of an amendment.*

# **The BY-LAWS**

## **ARTICLE I**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

#### **A. BECOMING A COMMUNICANT MEMBER**

*Baptized persons become communicant members as defined in the constitution by attending a confirmation or discipleship class, which centers on Jesus as Savior and Lord, growing in the faith by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the place of Lutheranism in the Body of Christ. They are then welcomed into membership as they declare their faith and their desire to become members of Grace Church in a public worship service.*

#### **B. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

*Communicant members terminate their membership by transfer to another congregation or by failure to fulfill the commitment they have made in becoming a communicant member of the church as outlined in Article IV of the constitution.*

*A person whose communicant membership has been terminated has forfeited all rights as a member of this congregation and all claims upon property of the congregation.*

## **ARTICLE II**

### **MEETINGS**

- A. *Regular meetings of the Congregational Assembly shall be held at least 3 times per year with dates to be set by the Church Council.*
- B. *Non-voters are invited to be present and shall have the privilege of speaking but not the privilege of voting.*
- C. *Special meetings of the Congregational Assembly may be called by the Church Council.*
- D. *Every meeting of the Congregational Assembly shall be announced in the Sunday bulletin at a Sunday prior to it. Whenever a meeting has been thus announced, it shall be considered a properly convened legal meeting capable of transacting business. In the Congregational Assembly, a two-thirds vote of voting members in attendance shall be required for the adoption of a resolution, unless otherwise provided by state law. Votes shall be taken by a "show of hands" unless a secret written ballot is voted on by those present at the assembly.*
- E. *In all decisions on the congregational level, a two-thirds vote of the voting membership within the provision of Article IV of the Constitution all be required for adoption of a resolution.*

## **ARTICLE III**

### **CALLING OF PASTORS AND TEACHERS**

*Upon a vacancy of the pastoral office, the President of the congregation shall inform the District President. The Council shall then appoint a Calling Committee composed of a broad cross-section of the congregation. This committee shall hold a number of open meetings with the membership in order to discuss gifts and abilities needed for effective pastoral ministry in this church. This committee shall also receive names of candidates from the District President and from the congregation.*

*After prayer and discussion, the committee shall determine qualified candidates for this congregation and submit them to the Congregational Assembly. The assembly shall adopt an official list of candidates. At a subsequent Congregational Assembly, one of the candidates shall be chosen in a secret ballot and then called as the pastor-elect.*

## **ARTICLE IV**

### ***BECOMING AN OFFICER, BOARD MEMBER, OR ELDER***

*The Chairperson, or the Council if there is no chairperson, shall invite those working with the Board and showing the gift and actions of leadership to become a member of the Board.*

*The Chairperson brings this name to the Board of Stewardship which coordinates the use of gifts in the congregation, including the gift of leadership, and after approval brings these names to the Council.*

*After approval by the Council, the name is brought to the Congregational Assembly for approval.*

*Elders are nominated by the Pastor who will bring their names to the Board of Stewardship. They shall then be submitted to the Council and Congregational Assembly for approval.*

*Officers of the church are proposed to the Council by the Board of Stewardship from present or former members of the Boards. These names are then submitted to the Congregational Assembly for approval.*

*In selecting new chairperson, the present Chairperson shall submit a list of possible successors to the Council for approval before speaking to them. If there is no chairperson, the Board of Stewardship will submit names for approval.*

*Officers and Board members shall assume their respective duties on January first.*

## **ARTICLE V**

### **OFFICERS**

*The officers of this congregation shall be: the President, the Vice President, the Secretary, and the Treasurer.*

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **CHURCH COUNCIL**

*The Church Council shall be composed of the Officers of the church, the Elders of the church, and the Chairpersons of the following Boards: Building and Grounds, Education, Evangelism, Fellowship, Social Ministry, Stewardship, Worship, and Youth. The Pastor, Lay Ministers, and other administration staff that the church shall have, such as a Director of Outreach and Adult Education and Director of Children's Ministries shall be ex-officio members of the Council.*

*It shall be the duty of the Church Council to meet once a month to consider and discuss all matters pertaining to the general welfare of the congregation as presented by the various boards and to present recommendations to the Congregational Assembly and congregation.*

*The Council shall have custody and control of all real and personal properties of the congregation and shall administer the same in accordance with the resolutions of the congregation and the laws of the state of New York. They shall furthermore act as official representatives of the congregation in legal transactions and in court.*

*The Church Council shall act in matters committed to it in the areas which are appropriate to its level of responsibility.*

*The Council meeting shall be open to all former council members in a non-voting capacity.*

*Two-thirds of the membership of the Council shall constitute a quorum. All decisions of the Council shall be by unanimous vote with the exception of Article X of the By-Laws.*

*In the event of a vacancy of an Officer or Board Chairperson, the Council may exercise the right to appoint a replacement candidate to serve for the remaining portion of that calendar year and that first consideration would be to those currently serving on the Board in question.*

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **TERMS OF OFFICERS**

#### **ELDERS, BOARD CHAIRPERSONS AND BOARD MEMBERS**

*The term of officers shall be two years. They may be reelected but their term of office shall not exceed four consecutive years. They may, however, remain on the Board. In the event of a vacancy in the office of the President, the Vice President shall succeed to the office of President for the remainder of the term.*

*The term of Board Chairperson shall be two years but never to exceed four consecutive years. The term of office of members of the Board shall be 2 years but there is no limit on the terms.*

*There is no term limit for Elders.*

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS**

#### **PRESIDENT**

*The President shall preside at all meetings of the Council and Congregational Assembly and shall organize all decision and voting at the congregational level. He shall, to the best of his ability, enforce the Constitution and By-Laws of the congregation and carry out the expressed will of the congregation as embodied in the resolutions of the Council, Congregational Assembly, and congregation. All Boards and Committees in the congregation shall be responsible to the President.*

#### **VICE PRESIDENT**

*The Vice President, in the absence of the President, shall act for and in the stead of the President. The Vice President shall work closely with the President and be available for whatever duties shall be assigned.*

#### **SECRETARY**

*The Secretary shall keep accurate records of the meetings of the Council, the Congregational Assembly, and the nature and results of all voting at the congregational level. The Secretary shall also be in charge of all permanent records at all levels of congregational affairs.*

## **TREASURER**

*The Treasurer shall work closely with the bookkeeper who is appointed by the Council and, using the bookkeeper's records, present a monthly report to the Council and a current financial report at the Congregational Assembly.*

*The Treasurer shall oversee the Counters and determine such procedures as may be necessary in their work.*

*The Treasurer shall be responsible for keeping an accurate list of memorials and other gifts received by the congregation and for acknowledging these gifts.*

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **DUTIES OF THE BOARDS AND ELDERS**

#### **BOARD OF ELDERS**

*It shall be the duty of the Elders to:*

- 1. Assist the pastor in the public worship of the church and in all matters pertaining to the general spiritual welfare of the congregation.*
- 2. Work with the pastor in helping every member grow in their life of discipleship and to fulfill the commitment they made in becoming a member of Grace Church*

## **BOARD OF BUILDING AND GROUNDS**

*It shall be the duty and responsibility of this board to:*

- 1. Determine the condition of the physical properties of the congregation and provide for the maintenance and improvement of these physical properties.*
- 2. Plan and carry through this necessary repair and maintenance through volunteers or contracted companies whichever is deemed appropriate.*
- 3. Plan and carry through all needed capital improvement of the physical property after approval of the Council and Congregation Assembly as deemed necessary.*
- 4. Direct and supervise the work of the Custodian and/or volunteers in the cleaning of the building.*

## **BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

*It shall be the duty and responsibility of this board to:*

- 1. Provide learning and growth opportunities for children through Grade 4, plus adults, by means of Sunday School, Bible Studies, and other learning experiences.*
- 2. Foster spiritual growth in the devotional life of individual Christians.*
- 3. Provide proper facilities and materials needed for this ministry at all levels.*
- 4. Provide guidance and direction to those overseeing the Men's Ministry, Women's Ministry, Church Library, Children's Ministry and the Marriage Enrichment Program.*

## **BOARD OF EVANGELISM**

*It shall be the duty and responsibility of this board to:*

- 1. Plan, organize, and promote ministries to help the people of the church to be involved in world-wide ministries.*
- 2. Plan, organize, and encourage ways for the people of the church to reach out in this community as a body.*
- 3. Help to equip members to be personal witnesses in their daily life.*
- 4. Provide for a continuing response to people who have made contact with the church in worship or other activities with the goal of membership.*

## **BOARD OF FELLOWSHIP**

*It shall be the duty and responsibility of this board to:*

- 1. Provide and carry out opportunities for the church to meet together in informal settings and organized gatherings in order to build up the life of the congregation in mutual cooperation, trust, and enjoyment.*
- 2. Be the channel for groups within the church, organized primarily (although not exclusively) for fellowship to be represented on the Council.*
- 3. Be responsible for assimilating new members into the church and provide means for all members to become more acquainted with each other and grow in the oneness that is shared in Jesus Christ.*

## **BOARD OF SOCIAL MINISTRY**

*It shall be the duty and responsibility of this board to:*

- 1. Seek to discover and be aware of the physical needs of members and regular visitors to the church.*
- 2. Direct the resources of the church to help in these needs as much as possible.*
- 3. Be aware of and encourage the witness of the church in the community, providing food, travel vouchers and referrals to outside agencies that provide services needed.*

## **BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP**

*It shall be the duty and responsibility of this board to:*

- 1. Help each member discover their gifts and to use their gifts in the up-building of the church.*
- 2. Establish and maintain a record of the gifts of members and their use in the congregation and help to make this record available to those who need it.*
- 3. Work with other boards and leaders in the church to help people find the ministry to which God has called them.*
- 4. Teach and help members to grow in proportional giving of their money, time, and gifts, for work in the kingdom.*
- 5. Lead in the preparation of the budget to be presented to the Council and Congregational Assembly each year.*
- 6. Serve as the coordinating board for members proposed for leadership.*

## **BOARD OF WORSHIP**

*It shall be the duty and responsibility of this board to oversee the following:*

- 1. The physical aspects of worship, including lighting, heating, sound, and space.*
- 2. All material needs and supplies needed for worship.*
- 3. All those who help others to worship and prepare physically for worship, such as Acolytes, Ushers, and those who serve on the Altar Guild.*
- 4. Orders of worship, including all music and all special services, being conscious of the liturgical heritage of the church and the present leading of the Holy Spirit in the worship life of the church*

## **BOARD OF YOUTH**

*It shall be the duty and responsibility of this board to*

- 1. Plan and develop a ministry to youth centered in Christ in grades 7-12, which provides opportunities for worship, spiritual growth, fellowship, evangelism, and service.*
- 2. Involve youth not only in activities within Grace Church, but encourage and plan for the youth to be involved in activities with other churches in the community, the country and the world.*
- 3. Invite and develop members to work in various activities of youth ministry.*
- 4. Be an advocate and voice for youth in the entire program and ministry of the church.*
- 5. Encourage the church to support Christian youth ministries outside of the church.*

## **LAY DEACONS**

*This Congregation recognizes the office of Lay Deacon as an office of this church. It shall be conferred on those members who have been recommended by this congregation for training, have completed the training offered by the Atlantic District of the Lutheran Church -Missouri Synod, and have been officially commissioned to serve in this Congregation and in the Atlantic District.*

*The Lay Deacon is part of the pastoral ministry of the church and is responsible to the Pastor, the Congregation, and to the President of the Atlantic District. The Lay Diaconate ministry is a ministry of "Word and Service". It should not to be confused with the Pastoral role of "Word and Sacrament". The Lay Deacon or Lay Deacons meet regularly with the pastor, work together with various boards of the congregation in an advisory capacity, as well as lead various ministries in keeping with their gifts and the needs of the congregation and greater church. These relationships and activities will be in keeping with Atlantic District Lay Diaconal Guidelines*

*As per the Atlantic District Guidelines, Lay Deacons are certified for a three-year period, renewable on a three-year basis without limitation, congruent with the triennium Atlantic District Convention.*

*Lay Deacons shall be removed from the Atlantic District Lay Diaconate roster for three reasons:*

- *Adherence to false doctrine*
- *Neglect of duties/incompetence*
- *Immoral lifestyle*

## **ARTICLE X**

### **REMOVAL FROM OFFICE**

*Any Elected Officer or Board Member who willfully neglects or abuses the duties of his/her office may be deposed by a three-fourths majority vote of the Church Council excluding the person in question.*

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **GUIDELINES FOR CONGREGATIONAL ASSEMBLY, COUNCIL AND BOARDS**

*Distribution of votes of the Church Council are as follows:*

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| <i>a. President</i>  | <i>1 Vote</i> |
| <i>b. Vice President</i>                                     | <i>1 Vote</i> |
| <i>c. Treasurer</i>  | <i>1 Vote</i> |
| <i>d. Secretary</i>  | <i>1 Vote</i> |
| <i>e. Elders, each Elder</i>                                 | <i>1 Vote</i> |
| <i>f. Chairperson of the Board of Building &amp; Grounds</i> | <i>1 Vote</i> |
| <i>g. Chairperson of the Board of Education</i>              | <i>1 Vote</i> |
| <i>h. Chairperson of the Board of Evangelism</i>             | <i>1 Vote</i> |
| <i>i. Chairperson of the Board of Fellowship</i>             | <i>1 Vote</i> |
| <i>j. Chairperson of the Board of Stewardship</i>            | <i>1 Vote</i> |
| <i>k. Chairperson of the Board of Social Ministry</i>        | <i>1 Vote</i> |
| <i>l. Chairperson of the Board of Worship</i>                | <i>1 Vote</i> |
| <i>m. Chairperson of the Board of Youth</i>                  | <i>1 Vote</i> |

*The Pastor and other administrative staff of the church are ex-officio members and therefore do not vote on the Council.*

## **ARTICLE XII**

### **CHANGES OF PROCEDURE**

*The Constitution and By-Laws can only be changed according to Article XII of the Constitution.*

*The Congregational Assembly may, from time to time, adopt, alter, or amend rules and regulations for the guidance of Officers, Council, and Boards in their work which do not change the Constitution or By-Laws.*