

# The Constitution of Tangible Grace Lutheran Fellowship Allen, Texas TBD, 2015

## 1.0 NAME

The name of this Congregation shall be Tangible Grace Lutheran Fellowship, hereinafter referred to as “Tangible Grace” or the “Congregation.”

## 2.0 MISSION

The Mission of Tangible Grace is: Grow in the love of the Trinity, learning to love one another and reaching out with Tangible Grace to those around us.

## 3.0 CONFESSION OF FAITH

This Congregation acknowledges and accepts all the Canonical Books of the Old and the New Testament as the revealed and inerrant Word of God, verbally inspired, and submits to them as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith.

This Congregation acknowledges and accepts all the confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the Book of Concord of the year 1580, as true and genuine expositions of the doctrines of the Bible. These confessional writings are the three Ecumenical Creeds (The Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian), The Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, Luther’s Large and Small Catechisms, and the Formula of Concord.

## 4.0 SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

This Congregation shall be a member of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS) as long as the Synod conforms to the Congregation's confessional standards as set forth in this Constitution.

## 5.0 INDIVIDUAL AFFILIATION

5.1 The membership of this Congregation includes the following:

5.1.1 *Baptized* members are those in the Congregation who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God, whether children or adults, and are under the pastoral care of this Congregation.

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5.1.2 *Communicant* members are those baptized members who have received a course of instruction in the foundations of Christian doctrine, which meets with the approval of the Senior Pastor. They are welcome to receive the sacraments, pastoral care, teaching, and other ministries of the Congregation. They are invited to share in the Mission of the Congregation, freely giving of their time, skills, and financial resources in the service of the Lord.

5.1.3 *Voting* members are communicant members who have reached the age of 18 years. They are eligible to vote at Congregational meetings.

5.1.4 *Guest* members are those, such as college students and seasonal visitors, who are under the pastoral care of this Congregation for a portion of the year. They are invited to receive the sacraments, pastoral care, teaching, and other ministries of the Congregation. They are encouraged to share in the Mission of the Congregation, freely giving of their time, skills, and financial resources in the service of the Lord. When Guest members complete the member's assimilation seminar and have reached the requirements of a Communicant member, they are eligible to participate in the Congregation as a voting member

5.2 The members of this congregation are received in the following manner:

5.2.1 Baptized members are received through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism or through the consent of one or both parents in the case of children who have been baptized in another Christian congregation.

5.2.2 Adult members are received through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism as appropriate, through transfer from an LCMS congregation, or through profession of faith or reaffirmation of faith. Those who are received into Communicant Membership may, in addition, choose to complete the member assimilation seminar to become voting members.

5.2.3 Eligible communicant members may be received as voting members upon application for such privilege and upon approval of the voters' assembly.

5.3 Members of this Congregation shall conform their entire lives to the authority of God's Word and to that end shall make diligent use of the means of grace, exercise faithful stewardship of God's many gifts and talents, impart and accept fraternal admonition as the need of such admonition becomes apparent, and be readily available for service in the kingdom of Christ within and beyond the congregation. Membership in organizations whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God is prohibited.

5.4 Membership in this congregation shall be terminated as follows:

5.4.1 Membership shall be terminated by transfer to an LCMS congregation, by joining a congregation outside the fellowship of this congregation, by excommunication or self-exclusion, or by death. Release from membership, for any reason, forfeits one's claims to the property of the Congregation.

## 6.0 THE OFFICES OF PASTOR AND OTHER CALLED WORKERS

6.1 The voters' assembly of this Congregation shall have the exclusive right to call ordained ministers of religion. The right to call commissioned ministers of religion also belongs to the Congregation but may be delegated to the Mission Support Team of the Congregation, subject to the conditions and restrictions set forth in this Constitution and/or the Bylaws. The calling of ministers of religion is never to be delegated to an individual.

6.2 The pastoral office shall be conferred only upon pastors or candidates who profess and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in this Constitution, who are qualified for the work of the ministry, and who have been endorsed by and are members of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.

6.3 Only those commissioned ministers shall receive a call who adhere to the confessional standard set forth in this Constitution, who are qualified for the work of the ministry to which they are called, and who have been endorsed by and are members of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.

6.4 Called, ordained, or commissioned ministers may be removed from office in Christian and lawful order by a two-thirds majority ballot vote of the voters' assembly for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of the duties of office, or the inability to perform those duties. The congregation shall notify the officials of the district before taking action to remove a called, ordained, or commissioned minister.

6.5 When a vacancy occurs in an office of an ordained or commissioned minister, the Congregation shall notify the president of the district to receive assistance in temporarily filling the vacancy and to receive his counsel in calling a new pastor, teacher, or other church worker.

## 7.0 AUTHORITY OF AND WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

7.1 The voters' assembly shall be the governing body of this Congregation and shall be empowered to administer and manage all its affairs. The establishment and conduct of all organizations and societies within the Congregation or related directly to the Congregation shall be subject to the overall authority and general oversight of the voters' assembly.

7.2 In the interest of expediency and efficiency, the voting membership of the Congregation delegates to its Mission Support Team the right, power, authority and responsibility to manage, direct, oversee and control the business and temporal affairs of the Congregation, subject to the conditions and restrictions set forth in this Constitution and/or the Bylaws. The Mission Support Team shall consist of such representatives of the Congregation, and the members thereof shall be elected, be appointed, hold office and be replaced, as set forth in the Bylaws.

7.3 Any right, power, authority or responsibility delegated to the Mission Support Team shall always be subject to review, revision and revocation by the voting membership.

7.4 The voters' assembly is the final authority of the Congregation and has the sole responsibility which cannot be delegated for: amendment of the Constitution and Bylaws; purchase and sale of real property; approval of the annual operating budget, including incurring a substantial indebtedness and any indebtedness secured by Congregational property; approval of Officers; and erection of facilities.

7.5 All matters before the voters' assembly shall be decided by a majority vote unless otherwise specified by this Constitution or Bylaws. Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided only on the basis of the Word of God.

## 8.0 MEETINGS

Meetings of the voters' assembly shall be held as determined in the Bylaws.

8.1 Announcements of regular meetings shall be made during the Worship Gatherings of the two previous weeks.

8.2 Announcements of special meetings shall be made during the Worship Gatherings of the two previous weeks, or during the Worship Gatherings of the previous week when accompanied by notification through the regular communication channels of the Congregation. Such special meetings may be requested by the

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Senior Pastor, the Mission Support Team, the Elder Team, or ten voting members. The ten voting members shall only call a special meeting after meeting with the Senior Pastor and the Mission Support Team to resolve the issue in the spirit of Matthew 18. The Mission Support Team shall set and properly communicate the time, place, and purpose of special meetings. Only announced agenda items may be considered at special meetings.

8.3 All voting members present at a properly called meeting shall constitute a quorum. The Mission Support Team will abstain from voting at voter's assemblies

### 9.0 OFFICERS AND TEAMS

This Congregation will have the following officers, and teams, in addition to any which the congregation will establish from time to time. The Congregation's two standing teams are the Mission Support Team and the Elder Team. The Senior Pastor shall serve as a voting member of the Mission Support Team..

9.1 The voters' assembly shall elect a President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, who shall be the Officers of the Mission Support Team and of the Congregation. The voters' assembly may also elect other individuals who, along with the three officers and the Senior Pastor, shall comprise the voting members of the Mission Support Team. The nomination and election of Officers and other Mission Support Team members shall be as specified in the Bylaws of Tangible Grace (Section 15.0).

9.2 The Mission Support Team shall have the authority to develop and implement policies, procedures, boundaries, and measurements as necessary to execute the vision and plans of the Congregation. The Mission Support Team shall hold the Senior Pastor accountable to the Mission, Values, and annual goals of the Congregation. Furthermore, they shall support the Mission of the Congregation by providing oversight to financial, business, and legal issues.

9.3 The Officers of the Mission Support Team shall also serve as the Board of Directors for Tangible Grace, a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization of the State of Texas. They shall have the authority to administer all property belonging to the congregation, make contracts, accept and receive grants and bequests, sign documents, appear in court, review the Constitution and Bylaws, report to the Congregation when appropriate, and take other such action as may be authorized by the Mission Support Team.

9.4 The Elder Team is appointed in such manner as laid out in the Bylaws of the Congregation. This team, made up of men only, provides encouragement and prayer support to Congregation, staff, and to the called Pastors, specifically. They shall advise the called Pastors on spiritual matters and assist them in the ministry of the Word and the sacraments. These trusted individuals shall also provide avenues for pastoral care, core attitude modeling, conflict resolution, discipline, and restoration.

9.5 This Congregation shall have such committees as are necessary to assist the called workers, elected leaders, and members in carrying out their Mission and ministry

9.6 Any elected Officer or Mission Support Team member who fails to perform the duties of office or the responsibilities of confirmed membership may be removed from office by the voters' assembly by a two-thirds majority ballot vote, in Christian and lawful order. Matthew 18 should be followed under such circumstances.

### 10.0 LIMITATIONS ON HOLDING OFFICE

Only Voting members shall serve as Officers of the Congregation or as members of the Elder Team.

## 11.0 DIVISION

It is an unhappy fact of life that disagreements occur in Christian congregations. If at any time a division of the Congregation should take place for any reason, the following principles will govern:

11.1 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 standards set forth in this Constitution.

11.2 In the event that the Congregation dissolves, all property shall be disposed of by the final voters' assembly for the payment of debts and all just claims against the congregation, and any and all surplus and all rights connected therewith shall be conveyed to and become the property of the Texas District of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.

## 12.0 AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended in the following manner:

12.1 Amendments to the provisions of this constitution not identified in the following paragraph shall be submitted in writing at a meeting of the voters' assembly and announced to the congregation by public posting and/or mail to all communicant members prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the voters present shall be required for adoption.

12.2 Amendments to Articles 3.0 (Confession of Faith), 4.0 (Synodical Affiliation), and 6.0 (The Offices of Pastor and other Called Workers) shall not destroy their essential meaning. Amendments shall be submitted in writing at a meeting of the voters' assembly and made public to the Congregation by public posting and/or by mail to all communicant members. Notice of the discussion of such amendments shall be given prior to regular voters' assemblies when the proposed action will be discussed. Notice that action will be taken on proposed amendments shall be provided to all voting members prior to the meeting when a vote will be taken. The date of approval shall be referenced in any amendment adopted.

12.3 The revised constitution shall, as a condition of continued membership in The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, be submitted to the president of the district for review by the district's constitution committee and favorable action by the district's board of directors before being implemented by the Congregation.