



## **Constitution/Guiding Principles International Lutheran Council**

### **I. NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the International Lutheran Council (ILC).

### **II. CONFSSIONAL BASIS**

The International Lutheran Council (ILC) is a worldwide association of established confessional Lutheran church bodies which proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of an unconditional commitment to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God and to the Lutheran Confessions contained in the *Book of Concord* as the true and faithful exposition of the Word of God.

### **III. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The International Lutheran Council is an organization of its member church bodies which enables them, through their authorized representatives, to share information, study theological questions and concerns together, issue statements when asked to do so by its members (e.g., in addressing contemporary questions facing the church), discuss effective and coordinated means of carrying out the mission and ministry of the church, nurture and strengthen their relationships with each other, and work toward the closest possible joint expression of their faith and confession.

The ILC provides a “forum” to which member churches may bring their theological and practical needs and challenges for mutual responsibility. At the same time, the resources and experiences of other members may be shared and applied to these issues for their mutual nurture and support and for the furtherance of the Lord’s mission in the world. Member churches recognize that each church may face peculiar challenges that require solutions suited to its own place and culture. In finding solutions to problems, member churches, out of fraternal love and consideration, should be mindful of how their actions might affect the unity of the group.

The ILC is not a church body nor does it carry out churchly functions. It does not intend to prescribe any course of action for its member bodies, but rather seeks to assist and strengthen them in their confessional witness and mission.

Although membership in the ILC does not imply or require the existence of formally declared altar and pulpit fellowship between all member church bodies, all member church bodies are pledged to exhibit mutual respect and fraternal regard for each other as fellow Christians and confessional Lutherans, and to foster, strengthen, and preserve confessional agreement which manifests itself at the altar and in the pulpit.

#### **IV. MEMBERSHIP**

There are two types of memberships in the International Lutheran Council: voting and associate. Voting members shall consist of those church bodies who accept the confessional basis of the ILC as well as this document. Each church body holding voting membership is entitled to cast one vote by its president/bishop/chairman or his representative. Associate memberships may be held by other Lutheran Church bodies who accept the confessional basis of the ILC but do not find it expedient to accept this document, and whose request for such membership has been approved by a majority of the voting members; such members are welcome to participate in all functions and activities of the ILC, but their representatives may not vote or hold office.

A new member, whether voting or associate, may be accepted into membership by a majority of the voting members acting upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee after the Committee has reviewed the official documents, including the constitution and bylaws, of the proposed member church body and consulted with ILC member church bodies from its world area.

The Executive Committee, acting upon the recommendation of a member church body, may invite any church bodies, individuals, or groups who are interested in the work of the ILC to participate as guests or observers in any of the activities, conferences, or meetings of the ILC.

#### **V. WORLD AREAS**

For various organizational and representational purposes, the membership of the ILC is divided into the following five world areas: Asia, North America, Latin America, Europe, and Africa.

#### **VI. OFFICERS**

The officers of the International Lutheran Council shall be a Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary. The Chairman and the Secretary shall be elected by a majority of the voting members from the Presidents/Bishops/Chairmen of voting member church bodies. The Vice-Chairman, who shall come from a different world area from the Chairman, shall be elected by the Executive Committee from among the five individuals serving as world area

representatives to the Executive Committee, following the triennial meeting of the ILC.

The Primary responsibilities of the officers are as follows:

Chairman: He shall preside over the official meetings of the ILC and its Executive Committee, and shall consult with the staff person in the preparation of the agenda for those meetings. At the request of the ILC or its Executive Committee, he may represent the ILC and communicate its policies, activities, and invitations, as appropriate.

Vice-Chairman: In the absence or at the request of the Chairman, he shall carry out the responsibilities of the Chairman.

Secretary: He shall keep an accurate record of all official proceedings of the ILC and its Executive Committee.

## **VII. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Membership: The Executive Committee shall consist of seven persons: The Chairman and Secretary (who do not represent world areas), and one representative from each of the five world areas (one of whom serves as Vice-Chairman). The latter five representatives shall be elected on a church body basis (rather than on an individual basis) by the plenary assembly of member churches and shall serve renewable three-year terms. In addition, the staff person shall serve as an advisory member of the Executive Committee, but without vote.

Responsibilities: The Executive Committee shall see to it that the objectives, purposes, and policies of the ILC as stated in this document are realized, and that all actions of the ILC are carried out. To that end, the Committee will formulate and implement policies and guidelines as necessary; such policy statements are intended only for the efficient operation of the ILC and are not binding on the member church bodies as such.

In addition, the Executive Committee shall plan the program and supervise the arrangements for meetings and conferences of the ILC, issue invitations to ILC activities and events, arrange for appropriate publicity of all matters pertaining to the ILC, foster good relationships and provide for communication of information and ideas among ILC members, develop and monitor the annual budget of the ILC, supervise and support the work of the staff person, and carry out such other duties as may be necessary or assigned to it from time to time by the ILC.

Meetings: In addition to meeting in connection with the triennial meeting of the ILC, the Executive Committee will ordinarily meet during each of the two years prior to this meeting.

## **VIII. STAFF SERVICES**

The Executive Committee shall provide for the necessary staff services, which shall be directed by a person with appropriate qualifications. This person, under the general supervision of the Executive Committee, shall be responsible for providing effective administrative and technical support for the ILC and its Executive Committee. He shall see to it that all decisions of the ILC and its Executive Committee are implemented in a timely fashion, make arrangements for meetings, manage the budget, see to it that ILC publicity and communications are prepared and distributed, and perform such other duties as may be requested by the ILC or its Executive Committee from time to time. He shall also attend meetings of the ILC and its Executive Committee in an advisory capacity, but without vote.

## **IX. VACANCIES**

If any member of the Executive Committee shall resign, retire, or fail to be re-elected as head of his church body, he shall immediately cease to be a member of the Executive Committee.

If the office of Chairman becomes vacant, the Vice-Chairman shall immediately succeed him as Chairman.

If the office of the Vice-Chairman becomes vacant, the Executive Committee will first fill the vacancy of the world area representative, and it will then elect from its members a new Vice-Chairman.

If the office of Secretary becomes vacant, the Executive Committee shall fill the newly created vacancy on the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall also ensure that the functions of the vacant office are carried out.

If any representative of a church body head holds membership on the Executive Committee, his membership shall cease in the event that a new head of his church body comes into office, unless he is reappointed by the new head.

## **X. CONFERENCES**

Official meetings of the ILC, known as "Conferences" and attended by the official representatives of member church bodies and invited guests, are ordinarily held every three years. They are hosted by a church body whose invitation is accepted in the previous Conference. Prior to accepting an invitation, the Conference shall receive a favorable report and recommendation from the executive Committee based on the staff person's review of all invitations. If the church body whose invitation has been accepted is unable to host the Conference, the Executive Committee shall select the site, giving consideration to any other invitations that had been

submitted. In the event that no invitation is received or accepted, the Executive Committee shall select the site.

The Executive Committee, subject to finances, shall arrange for conferences of theologians and seminary teachers. It may also from time to time seek to arrange for conferences of mission staffs, those involved with human care, and other such groups.

Conferences shall be held in readily accessible and reasonably economical sites within each of the five world areas represented in the ILC. Although a strict rotation of Conferences from one world area to the next may not be possible or desirable, no world area will ordinarily host two Conferences in succession. In offering and accepting invitations, ILC member churches will be guided by such factors as the potential for furthering the confessional witness and the mission and ministry of the church, cost, convenience, extent of interaction with the host church, and length of time since a Conference was held in that world area.

In planning the program and supervising the arrangements for a Conference, the Executive Committee and staff person will work closely with the host church.

## **XI. CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS**

Each member church body, whether holding voting or associate membership, shall ordinarily be represented at ILC Conferences by its President/Bishop/Chairman. If the church body head is unable to attend an ILC Conference, he may designate a representative to represent him; such persons, however, are not eligible for election as Chairman, Vice-Chairman, or Secretary of the ILC.

In addition to such official representatives, participants may include those observers and guests who have been invited by the Executive Committee upon the recommendation of a member church body. The Executive Committee may also approve and invite the attendance of others, such as interpreters, church body staff persons, and essayists. Before issuing invitations to other than official representatives, the Executive Committee shall see to it that adequate financial provisions have been made for their attendance.

## **XII. LANGUAGE**

The primary language for ILC meetings and materials will be English. Church body representatives who do not speak English (or another language which is readily understandable or translatable by several ILC members) may bring an interpreter to ILC meetings. In such cases, it is desirable, but not mandatory, that some or all of the interpreter's travel and conference costs will be borne by his church body. In order to avoid unnecessary expense,

the anticipated attendance of an interpreter should be cleared in advance with the staff person.

### **XIII. FINANCES**

Each member church body is expected to contribute, on an annual basis, its fair share of the costs of operating the ILC, including travel to Conferences and meetings of the ILC and its Executive Committee (at the lowest available fare for direct travel), and all other budgeted expenses. The Executive Committee, assisted by the staff person, is responsible for developing, approving, and supervising an annual operating budget for the ILC, and for informing all member church bodies of their expected annual contributions.

The amount of the annual contribution expected from each member church body shall be determined on the basis of that church body's baptized membership at the end of the previous calendar year, and taking into account the GNP per capita of the country in which the church body is located. Member church bodies may elect to pay more than their "fair share" amount in order to assist those church bodies (and officially invited Conference guests) who cannot afford the full amount. Member church bodies may also encourage individuals within their church bodies to contribute toward a special ILC fund that would help to subsidize ILC costs and expand its programs on behalf of confessional Lutheranism worldwide.

Officially invited guests at ILC Conferences, other than essayists and presenters, are ordinarily expected to pay their full travel costs as well as a fair portion of Conference costs. The host church may also wish to assume some Conference costs rather than charge them to the ILC budget, but this is not mandatory.

### **XIV. VOTING**

Unless otherwise stated in this document, all elections and other decisions of the ILC shall require a simple majority of votes cast, with each voting church body eligible to cast one vote, and with abstentions not counted as votes. Associate members, invited guests, and others in attendance may not participate in elections or vote on other ILC business; however, if they plan to attend the next Conference, they are welcome to participate in the decision on its location.

### **XV. AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to this document, including expansions and deletions, can be made by a two-thirds majority vote of ILC voting members.

Adopted September 9, 1993 and revised September 24–30, 2007.