

# *The Fundamental Principles*

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE LUTHERAN FREE CHURCH & ASSOCIATION OF FREE LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS SINCE 1897.

1. According to the Word of God, the congregation is the right form of the Kingdom of God on earth.
2. The congregation consists of believers who, by using the means of grace and the spiritual gifts as directed by the Word of God, seek salvation and eternal blessedness for themselves and for their fellow men.
3. According to the New Testament, the congregation needs an external organization with membership roll, election of officers, stated times and places for its gatherings, and other similar provisions.
4. Members of the organized congregation are not, in every instance, believers, and such members often derive false hope from their external connection with the congregation. It is therefore the sacred obligation of the congregation to purify itself by the quickening preaching of the Word of God, by earnest admonition and exhortation, and by expelling the openly sinful and perverse.
5. The congregation directs its own affairs, subject to the authority of the Word and Spirit of God, and acknowledges no other ecclesiastical authority or government above itself.
6. A free congregation esteems and cherishes all the spiritual gifts which the Lord gives for its edification, and seeks to stimulate and encourage their use.
7. A free congregation gladly accepts the mutual assistance which congregations can give one another in the work for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.
8. Such assistance consists partly in the mutual sharings of spiritual gifts among the congregations through conferences, exchange visits, lay activities, etc., whereby congregations are mutually edified, and partly in the voluntary and Spirit-prompted cooperation of congregations for the accomplishing of such tasks as exceed the ability of the individual congregation.
9. Among such tasks may be mentioned specifically the training of pastors, distribution of Bibles and other Christian literature, home missions, foreign missions, Jewish missions, deaconess homes, children's homes and other work of mercy.

10. Free congregations have no right to demand that other congregations shall submit to their opinion, will, judgment, or decision: therefore, domination by a majority of congregations over a minority is to be rejected.

11. Agencies found desirable for conducting the joint activities of congregations, such as conferences, committees, officers, etc., cannot in a Lutheran Free Church impose any obligations or restrictions, exert any compulsions, or lay any burden upon the individual congregation, but have the right only to make recommendations to, and requests of, congregations and individuals.

12. Every free congregation, as well as every individual believer, is constrained by the Spirit of God and by the privileges of Christian love to do good and to work for the salvation of souls and the quickening of the spiritual life, as far as its abilities and power permit. Such free spiritual activity is limited neither by parish nor by synodical boundaries.