

STANDING FAST IN FREEDOM



“For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery”

Galatians 5:1

Larry J. Walker, Editor

©1996 by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.

Minneapolis, MN 5541

(763) 545-5631

Revised 2000, 2024 Reprints 2003, 2007, 2011

Quotations from the writings of Prof. Georg Sverdrup (pp. 2, 5 & 18) are taken from Professor Georg Sverdrups Samlede Skrifter i Udvalg, Andreas Helland, ed., translated by John Horn and (pp. 6 and 9) from Our Fellowship, A. B. Bataldan, ed.

Quotations from Dr. Martin Luther are taken from What Luther Says, compiled by Ewald M. Plass, ©1959 by Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO.

“Is it really wrong, then, when the days are evil and the night is approaching, to lift up our eyes and mind from the confused and dwarfed present, and to turn to the true, real picture of the congregation which the New Testament gives us?”

Georg Sverdrup

CONTENTS

History	4
The AFLC Today.....	7
Declaration of Faith	10
Structure	12
What is the AFLC	16
Fundamental Principles	20
Rules for Work	22

HISTORY

Around the beginning of the 1800s, a Norwegian farmer's son, a layman, began tramping over the mountains and valleys of the country preaching a message of repentance and personal salvation. Hans Nielsen Hauge was immediately branded a troublemaker by the government and the state church, and spent 10 years in prison. The fire the Lord lit through him, however, could not be stifled.

Hauge's message and ministry reflected the spirit of Lutheran Pietism, a powerful movement of awakening that began among German Lutherans in the late 17th century. The pietistic emphasis on personal faith, godly living and study of Scripture caught fire among the common people, igniting a spiritual and social revolution whose impact is still evident today. Revival fires burned brightly through much of Scandinavia. These evangelical movements shaped the convictions of many of the Lutherans who planted the church in America during the 19th century. They brought their faith and love of education with them, and they wanted to make sure their children had schools where they could be trained in God's Word and useful skills. Many Lutheran colleges and seminaries, which exist today, began at this time.



Hans Nielsen Hauge

Among those institutions was Augsburg College in Minneapolis, which in those days also comprised a preparatory school, an academy and a seminary. Two scholars from prominent Haugean



Georg Sverdrup

families in Norway came to Augsburg to teach in the 1870s, bringing with them a genuinely radical view of Christian education, centered on Scripture and the simple doctrines of Christianity. Their names were Georg Sverdrup and Sven Oftedal.

These two young professors, having witnessed firsthand the opposition of the church hierarchy to the revival movements, had been driven in their frustration to take a fresh look at the New Testament church. Through their study of Scripture, they had come to a stunning conclusion:



Sven Oftedal

"... in the New Testament there is no talk about any bishopric ... nor any church council, or synod. ... There is a congregation in each place where there are Christians, and this congregation has its elders or bishops; but there is no 'church ruler-ship' of any sort ..." (Sverdrup).

In other words, the local congregation is the right form of God's kingdom on earth, and no power but God's Word and Spirit may dictate to it. This conviction was not only a matter of church government, but a vision of "living" Christianity. The church they sought to plant in the New World would promote a living Lutheran orthodoxy, served by shepherds who lead rather than overlords who dominate, emphasizing an evangelism that would result in changed lives and encourage lay people to exercise their spiritual gifts.

In 1897 a group of like-minded congregations committed to these principles established the Lutheran Free Church. This group drafted a set of Fundamental Principles (see p. 19) which would guide their operations. Momentum came in the form of a tremendous spiritual revival which swept the Norwegian Lutheran churches during the 1890s. Many students came to Augsburg as a direct result of it, and through the work of pastors who graduated from the seminary the Lutheran Free Church began to expand beyond its initial concentration in eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota to other areas of the U.S. and Canada.

In time however the vision grew dim, and a new generation of leadership began to question the future of the Lutheran Free Church. They encouraged participation in a new merger, which produced the American Lutheran Church (1960). After much conflict and litigation, the FLC finally joined the ALC in 1962.

In October 1962, almost 300 people from seven states and two Canadian provinces gathered in Thief River Falls, Minnesota, to resist the merger and form what would become the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, founded on the Fundamental Principles of the Lutheran Free Church.

“Our congregations need to be set free, which is essentially the same as saying they need to be awakened or revived... When God’s Spirit comes upon a congregation, the first and most pronounced effect will be a living zeal for the salvation of souls... When those who have themselves been set free from the bonds of death, arise in the power through which Christ arose from the dead, and begin to labor for the awakening of others, then freedom has dawned in truth. Then bonds are broken, other considerations are brushed aside, and only the one thing matters: How can we get those who are bound set free, how can we get someone along with us on the way to eternal life?”

Georg Sverdrup

THE AFLC TODAY

FREE

GOSPEL: We make disciples by proclaiming the powerful Gospel message—that Jesus Christ lived in perfect obedience to the Father, was crucified for our sin, was resurrected by the power of the Holy Spirit, ascended into heaven, and will one day return to make all things new. We celebrate that His grace and forgiveness grant us true freedom to live with peace, joy, and hope.

CONGREGATION: We believe that the congregation is where God’s Kingdom is manifested and experienced in this world. We cherish that the congregation is free to be led by God’s Word and Spirit. We gladly cooperate in Gospel mission with other like-minded congregations for the salvation of souls.

LIVING

MISSION: We celebrate that God is a missionary God. He desires to bring souls to repentance and faith through the Gospel. Empowered by His Spirit, He has gifted and chosen to use the body of Christ to actively go, baptize, and teach in order to make disciples.

PIETY: We proclaim that God’s Spirit has been given to indwell His people, which cultivates a deep spiritual vitality and living fruit. We seek to joyfully walk by His Spirit, serving others with His grace gifts that He has given to each believer.

LUTHERAN

WORD & SACRAMENT: We believe the Scriptures are God’s inspired and inerrant Word. This Word is our ultimate authority and the source of our preaching and teaching. The Lord also unites His Word to the tangible gifts of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, by which He creates new spiritual life and nurtures His Church.

HISTORICAL: We are thankful for the Holy Spirit’s work throughout the centuries in the Church all around the world. We affirm the ancient creeds and Lutheran confessions as faithful expositions of Scripture, which have unified believers throughout history. We value the spiritual practices that the Lord has used to form His people, and we believe these truths and practices remain relevant for new generations in an ever-changing world.

The AFLC is not an incorporated synod, but an association. Each local congregation is a separate corporation, and several additional corporations are sponsored by them to direct our common endeavors:

The **Coordinating Committee** of the AFLC is a corporation consisting of seven members chosen from the congregations, and serves our fellowship between conferences. One of its duties is to maintain the clergy roster, and a pastor or candidate for ordination must be approved by the committee through a colloquy process before he can be recommended for a call to a congregation. This committee also maintains the congregational roster, which consists of churches who share the AFLC's faith and principles. Other ministries of the AFLC, such as youth, evangelism, parish education and publications, function under the corporate covering of the Coordinating Committee, which also has responsibility for duties not assigned to other committees.

The **Schools Corporation** consists of fifty members from AFLC congregations, and elects a Board of Trustees who are entrusted with the responsibility for the theological seminary and Bible college. The seminary, established in 1964, offers a three-year academic program for the training of parish pastors, plus a one-year internship. The Free Lutheran Bible College (FLBC) has been offering a two-year undergraduate course of study in the Bible and related subjects since 1966. Beginning in the fall of 2024, they will also be offering an Associate of Arts (AA) degree in Bible and Ministry and a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Bible and Ministry. Both schools share a spacious campus in suburban Minneapolis (Plymouth), Minnesota, with the AFLC headquarters.

The **World Missions Corporation** includes 50 members from AFLC congregations and elects a board of directors from its membership. Currently, the World Missions department has ministries in Brazil, Mexico,

Uganda, India, Paraguay, and Switzerland. Ambassador Institute and Journey Missions are also outreach programs within the World Missions Department.

The **Home Missions Corporation** also includes 50 members from AFLC congregations. From their membership, the corporation elects a board of directors, the FLAPS Board of Managers, and the Bay Broadcasting Board. The Home Missions department sponsors new church plants and partners with congregations and groups of individuals interested in planting a church.

Other corporations include the Association Retreat Center (ARC), a Bible Camp facility located near Osceola, WI. The Women's Missionary Federation (WMF) serves the women of our church with a program of Bible study and mission emphasis. The Free Lutheran Youth (FLY) sponsors a biennial convention, and is available to assist local congregations and districts in strengthening their youth programs. The AFLC Foundation exists to raise, invest, and manage funds to be distributed to ministries within the AFLC.

The AFLC schedules an **annual conference** where reports of the various ministries are presented and recommendations made for the future. The primary purpose of the conference is spiritual edification, and the agenda includes prayer hours and worship services together with the business sessions. A unique feature of an association is that all voting members of AFLC congregations may attend with speaking and voting privileges.

The official publication of the AFLC is **The Lutheran Ambassador**, published twelve times per year, devoted to Word-centered articles and news of the churches. Our **Ambassador Publications-Parish Education Department** offers The Ambassador Series, a Sunday School curriculum, plus materials for confirmation and new member instruction, Bible study and devotional reading. The **Ambassador Hymnal** is a worship resource available to congregations and individuals, containing more than 600 hymns and several orders of worship.

The Fundamental Principles state that 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.” The AFLC is not “charismatic” in the sense that the term is often used today, and the annual conference adopted a statement in 1965 cautioning against an unbalanced promotion of the charismatic movement, and warning against abuses.

The AFLC began with about 40 congregations in 1962 and now has 256, making it the sixth largest organized and established Lutheran church body in the U.S. While most of the congregations are located in the Upper Midwest, the fellowship extends into 26 different states, as well as three Canadian provinces, and contacts continue to come from new areas of the country where there is interest in free and living Lutheran congregations.

The common endeavors of the AFLC are dependent on the freewill contributions of members and friends, since there are no financial assessments or suggested goals imposed on congregations. The annual conference adopts a budget subsidy request, and when God’s people are informed of the needs they generously support AFLC ministries as the Lord provides.

DECLARATION OF FAITH

Having a common purpose and seeking one goal, we join together as free congregations for Christian fellowship, mutual edification, the salvation of souls and whatever work may be necessary that the Kingdom of God may come among us and our fellow men. No bonds of compulsion bind us save those which the Holy Spirit lays on us.

No man fully understands the times and the situations in which he lives. At best we see through a glass darkly. Nevertheless, each Christian must decide in the light of God's Word and the evidence which he has what course of action he should take and to what causes his life should be given. It is the same for the Christian congregation. Imperfect as it is, it must decide in what fellowship of other congregations it can best live out its purpose for being. Out of considerable soul searching and prayer we have come to choose to continue as Lutheran free churches.

As we stand at this particular moment of time we give thanks for the heritage of the past. We recognize and confess our indebtedness to many noble souls of the faith, both the relatively unknown who are faithful in their places and the ones on whom God placed the mantle of leadership. Even as it is true that before the Cross of Christ there are no self-made men, so it is true that we have shared in blessings from many and are debtors.

It seems good to us as we join together for common work and fellowship to state our beliefs in regard to the following matters.

Doctrine

1. We accept and believe in the Holy Bible as the complete written Word of God and preserved to us by the Holy Spirit for our salvation and instruction.
2. We endorse the statement on the Word as found in the United Testimony on Faith and Life and would quote here the following: "We bear witness that the Bible is our only authentic and infallible source of God's revelation to us and all men, and that it is the only inerrant and completely adequate source and norm of Christian doctrine and life. We hold that the Bible, as a whole and in all its parts, is the Word of God under all circumstances regardless of man's attitude toward it."
3. We accept the ancient ecumenical symbols, namely, the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds; Luther's Small Catechism and the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as the true expression of the Christian faith and life.
4. We reject any affiliations or associations which do not accept the Bible alone as definitive for the life and practice of man and the church.
5. We submit all religious teaching to the test of II John 7-11.
6. We endorse no one version or revision of the Bible to the exclusion of others. We recommend all which are reverent and true translations.

Christian Unity

1. He who believes in and accepts the sufficient work of Jesus for his salvation and is baptized is a child of God.
2. The Christian is united by the strongest bonds to those who share this faith with him whether they come from his own denomination or another.
3. We believe that Jesus in His High Priestly Prayer prayed that those who believe in Him might find and accept each other.
4. In some situations and in some times it is possible that unions of groups of congregations may be desirable.
5. We recommend that our congregations cooperate with like-minded Lutheran congregations and movements in programs of evangelism and witness.
6. We envision opportunities for our congregations to cooperate with other Protestant churches in the area of evangelism and witness to their communities. However, care must be taken not to compromise the Lutheran understanding of the Scriptures.

Church Polity

1. We believe that final human authority in the churches is vested in the local congregation, subject to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.
2. Scripture does not command or forbid any particular organization for fellowship of congregations. In the absence of this we believe it is most safe to operate in a democratic way.
3. Conferences of the congregations of our fellowship do not enact law for the congregations, but simply recommend actions and practices to them.
4. In a free association of congregations such as this, neither its officers or conferences can negotiate the union of any or all of the congregations with another fellowship of congregations. This is an individual matter for the congregation.
5. We accept the Guiding Principles of the Lutheran Free Church as a true 14 statement of our belief in regard to church polity.
6. The Holy Christian Church consists of those who in their hearts truly believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
7. A free congregation selects and calls its own pastor, conducts its own program of worship, fellowship and service, and owns and maintains its own property.

Practical Life

1. The Christian seeks to refrain from those acts, thoughts and words which are against a stated law of God.
2. Where actions and practices are neither forbidden nor encouraged in Scripture by name, the earnest believer will search the Scriptures for principles to guide his decisions and conduct.
3. He is aware that there is a separation which is necessary between the Christian and the world.
4. Ultimately every Christian makes his own decisions as to life and practice in the presence of his God. But he welcomes the sincere counsel of fellow believers.
5. Every Christian is responsible for his witness by life to others and will govern himself, with the Lord's help, accordingly.
6. The Christian will refrain from belonging to organizations which practice a religion without Christ as the only Saviour. Belonging to such a group places the believer in a hopelessly compromised position and destroys his witness for Christ.

Church Life

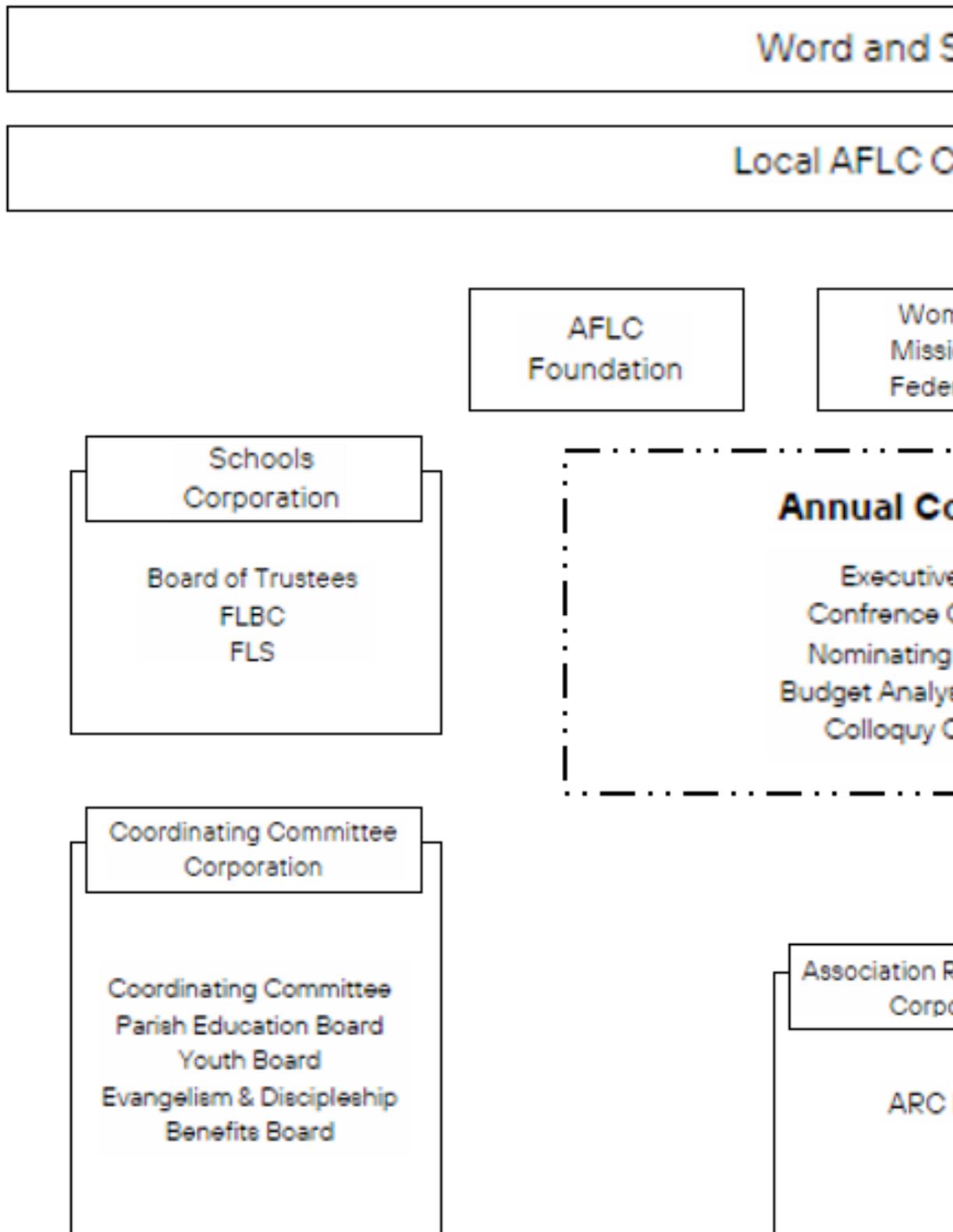
1. We make no recommendation as to the use of liturgy and vestments except that we encourage simplicity in worship.
2. We believe the earliest Christians were extremely simple in their order of service. Whatever is added to the service carries the danger of becoming only form.
3. Even the simplest parts of the service may become only form.
4. The preaching of the Word of God must be the central part of the service.
5. True Gospel preaching endeavors to meet the needs of all who hear: the believer who desires to grow in his life with God, the seeking and uncertain souls who want to see Him, the hypocrite who must be awakened from his self-righteousness, and the hardened sinner who must still be called to saving faith.
6. The Sacraments must always be met by the response of faith in the heart of the recipient to be efficacious.
7. Hymn books should be such as will give honor to the Word of God and the Sacraments.
8. Congregations will cherish opportunities for Bible study and prayer fellowship.
9. Congregations are encouraged to have fellowship with one another in various activities.
10. The Lord has given talents and gifts to Christian lay people as well as pastors, and opportunity should be given for the practice of these gifts in the life of the congregations, also in meetings of fellowship outside the congregation, and in service to a needy world.

Submitted to the Special Conference of Lutheran Congregations at Thief River Falls, Minn., October 25-28, 1962.

"The congregation is not organized, unless there is work for all. It is not for a congregation to hire a preacher to work for it, so they themselves can escape their duty. No, the congregation in this way is likened to a choir [which] has to have a song leader to instruct and lead. Shall the instructor sing alone? Shall not all join in? Such is the congregation; it is a gathering of God's servants who work for God's Kingdom, for Christ's cause. The leader is not superfluous, but is the more necessary so that they may sing in unison."

Georg Sverdrup

STRUCTURE



Spirit of God

Congregations

Men's
Ministry
Association

Free
Lutheran
Youth

Conference
Officers
Committee
Committee
Committee
Committee

World Missions
Corporation
World Missions Board
Journey Missions

Retreat Center
Corporation
Board

Home Missions
Corporation
Home Missions Board
FLAPS Board
Bay Broadcasting Board

WHAT IS THE AFLC?

This article was written by Dr. Bernhard M. Christensen, president of Augsburg College 1938-1962, under the title, "What is the Lutheran Free Church?" and originally published in "The Lutheran Messenger," the official organ of the Lutheran Free Church. All references to the Lutheran Free Church have been changed to "The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations."

I The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is a venture of faith. It is an attempt to build an effective and orderly Christian fellowship with a minimum of human organization. It is an experiment in extreme ecclesiastical democracy and decentralization. It is a searching test of faith in the power of the Spirit of God.

II The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is a fellowship of independent Lutheran congregations bound together by the bonds of loyalty to a common cause and common tasks. It is a specific and direct rejection of the superior authority of every ecclesiastical organization above the congregation. It is an attempt to test seriously the uniting power of Christian love and cooperation. It is a call to a spiritual pilgrimage with no endeavor to organize the pilgrims into the rigid battalions of an army.

III The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is a cooperative venture in building Lutheran congregations by means of a dominant emphasis neither upon organization nor upon the intricacies of doctrine but upon living and personal Christian experience. It is an attempt to carry out in everyday practice the Reformation principle of the universal priesthood of believers. It is a concrete expression of revolt against ritualism and formalism, and of the desire to nourish the spiritual life in utter simplicity upon the Word of God. It is an effort to provide orderly channels for the cultivation of the laity's personal witness for Christ, both in public and in private. Yet it cherishes the ordered ministry of consecrated and trained men, and the noble heritage of Christian worship, that its people may know themselves to be one with Christ of all the ages.

IV

The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is not a synod. It does not have the authority, save by consent of its congregations, to unite with Lutheran synods in effort to bring about an organically unified Lutheran Church. It is one of the smaller Lutheran groups, standing deeply in need of the varied contributions of other and larger bodies if it is to do its work effectively in its various fields of endeavor. It is an effort to achieve not a specific form of Church organization but a high quality of Christian life, in the faith that true spiritual life will tend to mold for itself a fitting form of organization. It was conceived to be a kind of ecclesiastical and spiritual leaven in American Lutheranism.

V

The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations was born of a dream of spiritual power and vitality; yet it has been able to carry on even when its power and spiritual vitality seemed at lower ebb. It was launched under a great and inspiring leadership in a period of intense struggle; yet it has not perished when led through calmer seas and by spirits less flaming. It has been ridiculed as small, impractical, and visionary; yet those who know it best know that none of these words is a fatal indictment. It has been accused of "separatism," yet it has throughout all of its history been earnestly in favor of full spiritual cooperation. Its dissolution has long and often been foretold; but it still lives. The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is an attempt to translate a high spiritual vision into reality, even at the cost of being suspected of turning reality into a dream.

VI

The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is sincerely grateful for the work of other Lutherans; yet it desires to have its own peculiar share in the mighty work and witness of the Lutheran Church. It does not seek to pass judgment on the relative contribution to Lutheranism of groups small or large; it earnestly seeks to be kept truly humble because of the imperfection of its achievements, and rightly proud because of the greatness of its heritage. Limited in numbers so that not even its name is known in many Lutheran circles of our country, and conscious that it will probably never be regarded as "successful" in the eyes of the world, it still believes in the continuing urgency of its message. Willing if necessary to find its success in seeming failure, the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is committed, together with others of like mind, to the struggle for true congregational life in the Lutheran Church in America.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

Guiding Principles of the Lutheran Free Church and 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.

"The independence of each corporation and of each congregation must be guarded fiercely. If the corporation or the board can be bound by conference action, attempts can be made to bind the congregations. This is completely contrary to the Fundamental Principles."

Rev. John Strand
AFLC president, 1962-1978

RULES FOR WORK

As adopted at the AFLC Annual Conference in 1967

1. The name of this association shall be "The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations."
2. Its aim shall be to work toward making Lutheran congregations free and living, so that, according to their calling and ability, they may work in spiritual freedom and autonomy for the cause of the Kingdom of God at home and abroad through such agencies and institutions as the congregations themselves may designate.
3. It endeavors to realize this aim in particular by training men and women for Christian work in and for the congregations, by conducting larger and smaller conferences, by distributing suitable literature, by sending out evangelists, and by any other means which from time to time will be found necessary or advisable.
4. The AFLC consists of congregations which, in their constitutions, unreservedly subscribe to the ancient ecumenical symbols, Luther's Small Catechism, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, Fundamental Principles and Rules for Work of the AFLC, and report the same to the secretary of the Coordinating Committee.
5. The AFLC shall hold an Annual Conference which usually opens the evening of the second Wednesday in June and which shall elect the necessary committees and officers and determine what church activities in particular it shall recommend to the congregations.
6. The right to vote in the Annual Conference of the AFLC shall be held by all ordained pastors and lay pastors in regular standing in the AFLC and by all voting members of congregations affiliated with the AFLC. Individual Lutherans who are not members of a Lutheran congregation, but who are interested in supporting the work of the AFLC, may be granted speaking and voting privileges by the Coordinating Committee after said committee has received and approved their credentials.

Voting members of other Lutheran congregations may be granted the right to vote in the Annual Conference providing they have at least two (2) weeks previously signed and sent to the secretary of the Annual Conference the special blank provided for that purpose, signifying that they approve the Fundamental Principles and Rules for Work of the AFLC and will work for the aim set forth in paragraph 2 of the Rules for Work.

7. The officers of the AFLC shall be a president, a vice-president, and a secretary, who shall be chosen from the membership of the AFLC and elected by the Annual Conference. Voting shall be by ballot.

a. The president shall be elected for a term of three years and shall devote all of his time to the service of the AFLC. He shall preside at the Annual Conference and shall report to it on the work of the AFLC in general, on church dedications, installations, celebrations, etc. He shall be an advisory member of all boards and committees. He shall assist congregations and pastors by giving counsel and guidance when this is desired, and he shall also, as ordainer, assist the congregations in ordaining men with the proper and adequate training who have been duly called as pastors. His salary shall be determined by the Coordinating Committee and shall be paid out of the AFLC General Fund.

b. The vice-president shall be elected for a term of one year and performs the duties of the president in the latter's absence.

c. The secretary shall be elected for a term of one year. He shall keep the minutes of the Annual Conference and is the custodian of the archives.

d. The term of office of the officers of the AFLC shall begin October 1 and shall expire September 30.

e. The executive officers after having served three (3) consecutive terms can be elected for additional terms only by a three-fourths majority vote.

8. The Annual Conference shall nominate members of the Coordinating Committee. This committee shall consist of seven members: three (3) pastors and four (4) laymen chosen from the membership of the AFLC. The number of those whose terms expire shall determine the number to be nominated by the Annual Conference each year. No member can serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.

9. Duties of the Coordinating Committee.

- a. The Coordinating Committee shall seek to make known the Fundamental Principles and Rules for Work of the AFLC and further the discussions of the same throughout the congregations, so that the task of the AFLC, in an ever increasing degree, may be more clearly understood and more generally put into practice.
- b. It shall seek to have the congregations as fully and as generally represented at the Annual Conference of the AFLC as possible.
- c. When desired, it shall assist congregations and pastors by giving counsel and guidance.
- d. It shall compile parochial statistics and report thereon to the Annual Conference. It shall maintain the clergy and congregational rosters of the AFLC.
- e. It shall have charge of the AFLC General Fund, from which shall be paid the salaries of the president, secretary, transportation secretary, traveling expenses, and expenses incurred in connection with the Annual Conference.
- f. It shall elect the editor of the church organ.
- g. Any duty not assigned to any other committee shall be the responsibility of the Coordinating Committee.

10. The Annual Conference shall nominate members for the following boards and corporations of the AFLC: Coordinating Committee, Board of Trustees and Corporation of the Free Lutheran Theological Seminary, Board and Corporation of Missions, Board of Publications and Parish Education, Youth Board, Stewardship Board, and Benefits Board. The editor of the church organ shall be nominated by the Annual Conference.

- a. No member can serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms.

11. Reports shall be given by the following at the Annual Conference of the AFLC: The President, the Coordinating Committee, Board of Missions, Schools, Benefits Board, Board of Publications and Parish Education, Youth Board, Free Lutheran Youth (FLY), special committees elected by the Annual Conference, and by such institutions and activities within the church as may be given permission to report to the Annual Conference.

12. The president and secretary shall constitute the Annual Conference Committee, whose duties shall be: To fix time and place of the Annual Conference in the event that the Annual Conference did not do so at least two years in advance, arrange the program for the Conference, prepare the calendar for the business sessions, and to make any other arrangements that are necessary for the conduct of the Conference. The Conference Committee shall announce the Annual Conference at least two (2) months previous to the date of the meeting. It shall publish an Annual Report of the AFLC.
13. The manuscript for the Annual Report shall be kept on file by the 24 secretary at least two (2) years after the publication of the report. The president and secretary shall determine how much of the manuscript of the Annual Report shall be kept on permanent file.
14. The secretary shall send notices to all concerned as to resolutions passed by the Annual Conference, election of committees, etc., by September 1.
15. These Rules for Work may be amended in the following manner: A motion to make an amendment shall be presented in writing to the Annual Conference and shall be voted upon at the following Annual Conference. For the adoption of the motion, a two-thirds majority of the ballots cast is required. All amendments must be in agreement with the Fundamental Principles, especially 5 and 10.
16. The Rules for Work of the AFLC shall take precedence over all other orders and decisions in effect.

"... We speak out of the world view which we have and in the light of the Scriptures as we have read them. We are subject to error and human failing, and our work must be exposed to the test of time... "We have tried to speak in Christian love ... we have not wanted to charge others with sinning against their consciences in taking a course unlike ours. We have said, 'This is what we believe we must do and for these reasons, in the sight of God.' "We have not cut ourselves off from the Lutheran faith or the Lutheran family. We are ready to work together with our fellow Lutherans when we can do so without compromising the principles mentioned in this statement ... We realize that we have no claim to the right of this fellowship from those from whom we outwardly separate now, but for our part will stand ready to act in common witness wherever we can. "... Let us now confess our sins, let us do what we can to heal the wounds, let us be willing to forgive; where we must differ from others, let it be done in love. And if we can go on to think positively about the work we would like to do together in God's Kingdom, we have the chance of doing something which can have real value in the world and which would carry God's blessing."

A Statement on the Historical Situation

*Presented at the special Conference at Thief river Falls,
Minnesota, October 1962*

"It is the duty both of preachers and of hearers first of all and above all things to see to it that they have a clear and sure evidence that their doctrine is really the true word of God, revealed from heaven to the holy, original fathers, the prophets and apostles, and confirmed and commanded to be taught by Christ Himself. For we should by no means ever let doctrine be manhandled according to the pleasure and fancy of the individual who adapts it to human reason and understanding. Nor should we let men toy with Scripture, juggle the Word of God, and make it submit to being explained, twisted, stretched, and revised to suit people or to achieve peace and union; for then there could be no secure or stable foundation on which consciences might rely.

On John 7:40-44

"... For the church is an organism, like the union of body and soul, and has members. A hand that has been cut off does not live, does not adhere to the body. Just so a heretic is also cut off from the Christian Church through false doctrine and unbelief and is dead. "The Christian Church does not consist of a pile of bishops' or cardinals' hats. These may be called a council or may become one, but they are not the Christian Church. It is impossible to bring the Christian Church together at one place; rather it is scattered throughout the world."

Martin Luther

It is also taught among us that one holy Christian church will be and remain forever. This is the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel. For it is sufficient for the true unity of the Christian church that the Gospel be preached in conformity with a pure understanding of it and that the sacraments be administered in accordance with the divine Word. It is not necessary for the true unity of the Christian church that ceremonies, instituted by men, should be observed uniformly in all places. It is as Paul says in Ephesians 4:4-5, "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism."

The Church
The Augsburg Confession

For more information, contact:
The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, MN 55441-3008
Phone: (763) 545-5631
Email: president@aflc.org
Web: www.aflc.org



"...Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is *freedom*."
II Corinthians 3:17