

**CONSTITUTION**  
**of**  
**NATIONAL LUTHERAN SECRETARIAT**

**PREAMBLE**

The purpose of National Lutheran Secretariat is to foster and encourage renewal in the Christian faith in the Lutheran Church and in the larger world community by presenting the fullness of Christ's ministry by both laity and clergy. National Lutheran Secretariat aims to bring Christians to a fuller personal knowledge of, a fuller relationship with, and a deeper level of commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ and the spreading of his word.

Via de Cristo provides a method that develops leaders and community in the Christian Church. This method uses meetings and groups of Christians who share their common life in Christ and their efforts to bring others to Him in order to make the world more Christ-like. Via de Cristo asks exactly what baptism and confirmation ask of us and provides a method to live out that commitment within the Church.

Via de Cristo grew out of the Cursillo® movement. National Lutheran Secretariat accepts as its norm the content and method of the Cursillo® movement as developed by Bishop Juan Jervas, Eduardo Bonnin and their friends. These developers provided a method by which Christians transform the world for Christ our King. This method calls Christians to live their lives in union with Christ supported by regular reunion with other Christians. We accept as normative the call to be Christ's witnesses in the world, the three-day weekend of fifteen talks, and the method of group reunion and ultreya.

While our Constitution and Bylaws intend to safeguard these, we recognize that various customs and practices have grown up around the fifteen talks, the meditations and the worship during the three days. We also recognize that the three-day weekend often overshadows the apostleship activities of the Fourth Day. Therefore we need to improve our ability to evaluate these customs, practices and emphases. All affiliated secretariats are urged to examine these to guarantee that they support the basic aims.

National Lutheran Secretariat shall be the means by which the many Via de Cristo communities may be represented on Via de Cristo matters of national interest and the means by which National Lutheran Secretariat can effectively communicate with other structures within the Lutheran Church and with other organized bodies.

## **Article 1 - Name**

1. The name of this organization shall be: National Lutheran Secretariat.
2. National Lutheran Secretariat shall be incorporated in Minnesota.
3. The Executive Committee shall appoint a registered agent and may change the registered agent as appropriate.

## **Article 2 - Purpose**

National Lutheran Secretariat is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, and scientific purposes, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as they now exist or as they may be hereafter amended.

National Lutheran Secretariat is organized for the purposes of:

1. Supporting, strengthening and guiding the autonomous secretariats affiliated with it so that the Church may more effectively Christianize its community;
2. Assisting the affiliated secretariats in developing Christian leaders and their awareness of their responsibility to Christ, the local church, and the environment in which they live;
3. Coordinating the flow of information and resources among the various affiliated secretariats;
4. Encouraging the use of liturgy and rollo outlines which are in keeping with general Lutheran practice;
5. Providing organization and direction for affiliated secretariats; and
6. Expanding the Via de Cristo movement in the United States and throughout the world.

The Corporation considers itself to be united by a common faith in God, in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and in the Holy Spirit, and by a common love for all people. The Corporation shall receive and maintain a fund or funds of real or personal property, or both, subject to the restrictions hereinafter set forth, to use and apply the whole or any part of the income therefrom, and the principal thereof, exclusively for religious, educational and charitable purposes, either directly or by contributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and its regulations as they now exist or as they may hereafter be amended.

### **Article 3 - Meetings**

1. National Lutheran Secretariat shall have one annual meeting, the date being set according to the Bylaws.
2. Special meetings may be set according to the Bylaws of National Lutheran Secretariat.
3. Member secretariats shall send at least one delegate to the annual and any special meeting as stated in the Bylaws.
4. A quorum of the delegates shall be as stated in the Bylaws.
5. All member secretariats shall be notified of the annual meeting at least 90 days in advance of the annual meeting.

### **Article 4 - Membership**

1. Membership in the corporation National Lutheran Secretariat shall be open to any autonomous secretariat that wishes to be affiliated with the corporation and expresses its concurrence with the Constitution through formal ratification, whether or not the secretariat uses Via de Cristo in its name.
2. Delegates to the annual and to special meetings of National Lutheran Secretariat shall be elected or appointed by the governing body or membership of the affiliated secretariats.

### **Article 5 - Officers and Executive Committee**

1. The officers of National Lutheran Secretariat shall be President, Vice-President(s), Secretary, Treasurer and Spiritual Director. They shall be elected from among the delegates in attendance at an annual meeting, persons who have attended an Annual Meeting as a delegate within five years of the year of the election, persons then serving on the Executive Committee, or persons who have served on the Executive Committee within five years of the year of the election. In order to be eligible to be elected, the person must attend the meeting at which the election is conducted.
2. The officers, acting together, shall constitute the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall be the Board of Directors of National Lutheran Secretariat corporation.

### **Article 6 - Committees**

Standing or special committees may be designated by the president as necessary to assist the corporation to further its purposes. Their organization and purpose shall be as stated in the appointment.

### **Article 7 - Records**

The corporation shall keep correct and complete books and records of account and shall keep minutes of any and all meetings of its delegates or Executive Committee or

committees. Such records shall be kept at the principal office of the corporation or place designated by the Executive Committee and shall be available for inspection by any person connected with National Lutheran Secretariat. Such records are to be retained in perpetuity. A yearly reconciliation of the financial records shall be conducted and submitted at the annual meeting. Additional guidelines may be stated in the Bylaws.

#### **Article 8 - Bylaws**

National Lutheran Secretariat shall adopt such Bylaws as may from time to time be necessary. No Bylaw may conflict with this Constitution.

#### **Article 9 - Dissolution**

Upon dissolution of the corporation, whether voluntary, involuntary or by operation of law, the Executive Committee shall, after paying all liabilities of the corporation, distribute all remaining assets, in equal portions, to Secretariats affiliated with National Lutheran Secretariat at the time of dissolution and are exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction in the county in which the principal office of the organization is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

#### **Article 10 - Amendments**

1. Except as otherwise provided by law, the Constitution of National Lutheran Secretariat may be amended by the delegates at any meeting thereof.
2. A proposed amendment of this Constitution shall be submitted in writing to the Executive Committee at least 120 days prior to the date of the annual meeting or any other legally called meeting to ensure time for review by the affiliated secretariats.
3. Any such amendment must be passed by two-thirds of the delegates at a legally constituted meeting. The approved amendment must then be sent to all affiliated secretariats for formal ratification.
4. Formal ratification by two-thirds of all the recognized affiliated secretariats is required for the adoption of any amendment to the constitution. The time frame for such ratification shall be set by the members of National Lutheran Secretariat.
5. Except as otherwise provided by law, the Bylaws of National Lutheran Secretariat may be amended or adopted at any legally called and conducted meeting of National Lutheran Secretariat by a two-thirds majority of the delegates present.

### Article 11 - Formal Ratification

1. To express acceptance of this Constitution and Bylaws and to become an affiliated secretariat, or to express ratification of an amendment to the Constitution, affiliated or affiliating secretariats must bring the Constitution and Bylaws or amendment to a vote and then have both the lay director, president, convenor or chairman, and the spiritual director sign below for that affiliated or affiliating secretariat.
2. The Secretary shall provide two (2) copies of the Constitution and Bylaws, or amendment to the Constitution, to each affiliated secretariat for formal ratification; both are to be signed as in the paragraph above. Then one is to be sent back to the Secretary of National Lutheran Secretariat, and the other is retained by the ratifying secretariat.

We, the undersigned, ratify the Constitution and Bylaws, or amendment to the Constitution, in order to:

\_\_\_\_\_ affiliate with National Lutheran Secretariat

\_\_\_\_\_ ratify amendments made to the Constitution.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Official Name of Movement

\_\_\_\_\_  
Official Name of Secretariat (if different)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lay Director, President, Convenor or Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Spiritual Director

Date: \_\_\_\_\_