

1  
2 **THE AUGUSTANA MINISTERIUM**

3  
4 **Constitution**

5  
6 **Article I — Name**

7 The name of this association shall be *The Augustana Ministerium*. It shall be a religious,  
8 not-for-profit organization incorporated in the State of Illinois in the United States of America  
9 and is governed by the laws thereof.

10  
11 **Article II — Confession of Faith**

12 We believe, teach, and confess that the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testaments are the  
13 Written Word of God, infallible and inerrant, and the only rule and norm for all Christian  
14 doctrine and the life of the Church.

15  
16 We unconditionally subscribe to The Book of Concord of 1580, which contains The Three  
17 Ecumenical Creeds, The Unaltered Augsburg Confession of 1530 (AC), The Apology to the  
18 Augsburg Confession (Apol), The Large Catechism, The Small Catechism, The Smalcald  
19 Articles, The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope (Tr), and The Formula of Concord  
20 (Epitome and Solid Declaration) as a true exposition of the doctrine of Holy Scripture and the  
21 Articles of Faith contained therein, which constitute the true evangelical faith of Jesus Christ.  
22 Our insistence upon unconditional subscription to these Lutheran Confessions precludes any  
23 understanding by which one may claim subscription to them only insofar as they are in  
24 agreement with the Sacred Scriptures. Rather, we subscribe to them because of our conviction  
25 that they are in agreement with the same.

26  
27 We require acceptance of the Augustana Ministerium’s “Statement on the Holy Ministry” as a  
28 condition of membership. This statement is not a new confession, but a summary of the teaching  
29 of the Lutheran Confessions concerning the Office of the Holy Ministry and our reason for  
30 existence.

31  
32 **Article III — Purpose**

33 The Augustana Ministerium exists to defend, encourage, and admonish its members; to uphold  
34 the Office of the Holy Ministry, to foster missionary activity; and to promote the raising up of  
35 qualified men into this holy office.

36  
37 **Article IV — Membership**

38 We, the members of the Augustana Ministerium, are a league of Evangelical-Lutheran pastors  
39 who accept Article II of this constitution, who, through the grace of God, desire to continue  
40 steadfast in this confession and discharge our duties according to it, and who pay our annual dues  
41 as determined by the Ministerium. Each member of the association is entitled to vote for the  
42 officers of the Augustana Ministerium as per Article V.

1 **Article V — Officers**

2 The Ministerium shall be governed by an Administrative Council elected by the membership and  
3 shall consist of those offices as prescribed in the bylaws.

4  
5 **Article VI — By-Laws**

6 The Ministerium may adopt such by-laws as the accomplishment of the purpose of its  
7 organization requires.

8  
9 **Article VII — Amendments**

10 Amendments to the Constitution may be adopted at any Plenary Session of the Ministerium,  
11 provided that all members are notified of the proposed change at least 90 days prior to the  
12 meeting. Of those in attendance at the meeting, a two-thirds vote is required to amend the  
13 constitution and a simple majority is required to amend the bylaws.

14  
15 **Article VIII — Dissolution**

16 In the event that the Augustana Ministerium dissolves, the Administrative Council shall be  
17 charged with the task of dispersing any assets in compliance with the laws of the State of Illinois  
18 and of the United States of America.

19  
20  
21 **Bylaws**

22  
23 **Article 1 — Membership**

24 1.1 *Conditions of Membership*: Only those can become, be, or remain members of the  
25 Ministerium who:

- 26 a. Are ordained Lutheran Pastors and  
27 b. Accept by signature the Augustana Ministerium’s “Statement on the Holy Ministry”  
28 and Constitution and Bylaws.

29 1.2 *Action on Application*: The application is acted on by the Administrative Council. Admission  
30 by the council requires a unanimous vote of those cast. If the applicant fails to receive a  
31 majority of the votes cast, the application is rejected. If the applicant receives a majority of  
32 the council’s vote, but not a unanimous vote, the application is referred to the next Plenary  
33 Session of the Ministerium. The applicant is admitted at the Plenary Session by receiving a  
34 three-fourths affirmative vote.

35  
36 **Article 2 — Terms of Officers**

37 2.1 The Ministerium shall be governed by the Administrative Council which shall consist of the  
38 Superintendent, Legate, Recording Secretary, Bursar, and Deans of Communications,  
39 Education, Missions, Pastoral Care, and Pastoral Recruitment.

40 2.2 Each officer of the Administrative Council shall be elected for an initial three-year term.

41 2.3 Upon completion of the officer’s first elected three-year term, the officer may be nominated  
42 by a member for re-election. If the officer accepts the nomination, he may stand for  
43 reelection for a second term which shall be in perpetuity.

- 1 2.4 An officer's tenure may be terminated by  
2 a. his own resignation from the office he holds,  
3 b. his resignation from the membership of the Augustana Ministerium,  
4 c. a vote for termination by the majority of the Administrative Council, or  
5 d. a two-thirds majority of the votes cast at a Plenary Session of Ministerium.  
6 2.5 In the event of a vacancy on the Administrative Council, the Deans shall submit a  
7 nomination list of two or more possible replacements to fulfill the balance of the term and the  
8 Superintendent shall appoint one of the nominees from the list.  
9 2.6 In the case of a vacancy in the office of Superintendent, the Legate will also serve as Acting  
10 Superintendent until the next Plenary Session of the Ministerium.

11  
12 **Article 3 — Adjudication**

- 13 3.1 The purpose of adjudication is to insure the theological and pastoral integrity of the  
14 membership.  
15 3.2 Second to brotherly admonition (Rom. 15:14, 1 Thess. 5:14), the Ministerium's only option  
16 for the discipline of its membership is the termination of membership. Membership in the  
17 Augustana Ministerium may be terminated through the Ministerium's adjudication process.  
18 3.3 The Administrative Council is the adjudicatory panel of the Ministerium and shall hear all  
19 cases brought before it. Cases can only be brought against a member by another member.  
20 3.4 *Procedures:*  
21 a. If a member wishes to bring a case against a fellow member of the Ministerium, he is  
22 to provide the Administrative Council with  
23 1. A statement of the matter in dispute, that is, the charges;  
24 2. A statement as to the efforts undertaken to resolve the matter; and  
25 3. Any reply by the member against whom the charges have been brought.  
26 b. No formal hearing shall be held until at least 20 days have passed following the  
27 submission of the charging member's statement of the case with any supporting  
28 evidence to the panel and to the member against whom the charges have been  
29 brought.  
30 c. The panel shall be governed in its acts, procedures, and judgments by the Holy  
31 Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and Christian charity.  
32 d. Each party to a case shall be afforded due process and full disclosure. The federal rules  
33 of evidence shall govern the proceedings. Each party shall receive from the panel a  
34 written statement of the case and all supporting documents at least 15 days prior to  
35 any formal hearing.  
36 e. Each party to the case may choose one or two advocates to speak on his behalf.  
37 f. Each party shall bear his own costs related to the matter in dispute.  
38 g. If a party to the case is a sitting Administrative Council member, he shall be recused  
39 from the panel.  
40 3.5 The decision of the Administrative Panel shall be final. In the event that a member has been  
41 removed from the Ministerium through adjudication, he may petition a Plenary Session of  
42 the Ministerium to reinstate him.

43  
44 **Adopted:** 21 September 2005

# THE AUGUSTANA MINISTERIUM

## *STATEMENT ON THE HOLY MINISTRY*

21 September 2005

[This statement is not a new confession, but a summary of the teaching of the Lutheran Confessions concerning the Office of the Holy Ministry and our reason for existence (Constitution, Article II).]

For the purposes of mutual edification and support, the undersigned hereby join together in the formation of a Lutheran ministerium. This ministerium is to be understood as a professional association of ordained Lutheran pastors. We are dedicated to promoting and preserving a Lutheran understanding of the Holy Office of the Ministry which was instituted for the preaching and teaching of the pure Gospel and a right administration of the Sacraments as confessed in the Symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. In an age when the Office is being attacked and compromised by hostile elements within Lutheranism, we joyfully and unanimously affirm the scriptural and confessional understanding of it which we, by our ordination vows, have sworn to uphold and practice.

In accordance with the Lutheran Confessions, we confess that the Office of the Ministry (the Preaching Office) has been established and mandated by Christ in His Word. As a unique servant office, it entails both a position of spiritual oversight in the Church and authorized tasks and duties which are sacramental in nature. The Lord governs and serves his Church through the preaching of His Gospel and the administration of His sacraments. Pastors exercise spiritual power in the Church—the power of order and the power of jurisdiction—only through their faithful preaching and teaching of the Gospel, the right administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of Church discipline through the binding and loosing of sins (the jurisdiction of the Keys, AC XXVIII 20-22, Apol XXVIII 13, Tr 31, 60-61). Those who hold the Office hold it equally by divine right, regardless of what human distinctions may be made among them (Tr 63). The Church has the responsibility to submit to pastors who properly administer their office. Obedience is prohibited when their ministry is contrary to the Gospel (Heb. 13:17, Gal. 1:8, Apol VII & VIII 47, XXVIII 20-21).

The Church in every place has both the divine right and the responsibility to see that qualified men are placed into the Office of the Ministry (Tr 66-67, 72). Nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the Church unless he has been placed into the Office. “Lay Ministry” is thus contrary to Holy Scripture and the Confessions of Christ’s Church. Instead, that saving faith may be established (AC V), Christ confers the Office of the Ministry upon qualified men through His Church, involving an established order of examination, call, and ordination (*rite vocatus*, lit., “called according to the rite,” AC XIV). The traditional forms, while not specifically mandated (Apol XV 1), ought to be maintained (AC Conclusion 5, Apol XXIV 1).

1 On the basis of this Statement, the undersigned do hereby join themselves to this Augustana  
2 Ministerium. We do so as servants of Christ duly ordained to proclaim the Holy Gospel of our  
3 Lord and to administer His blessed Sacraments. Since it is only by this Gospel that eternal  
4 salvation is gained, we understand that the ministry, that is, the preaching office to which our  
5 Lord has called us, is of critical necessity to the salvation of mankind. Therefore, the Office of  
6 the Ministry is not ours to tamper with or alter according to human whim or changing cultural  
7 circumstance. As such, we cannot recognize as ministers of the Gospel those who are not  
8 ordained, nor again, those women who would claim ordination, since according to the Scriptures  
9 any setting of a woman into this office is illegitimate and void (1 Tim. 2:12), and we consider it a  
10 confusion of terms when others so misapply the terms “minister,” “ministry,” and the like,  
11 betraying a secular understanding of such terms in place of the understanding of the Lutheran  
12 Symbols.

13  
14 Nor do we take lightly our own ordination vows. It is indeed for this reason that we have  
15 determined to enter this ministerium, with the sad acknowledgment that faithful ministers who  
16 have taken their stand against sacrilege and heresy have been subjected to repeated and continual  
17 diabolical attacks on their ministry, attacks which have gone unchecked, even in our own midst.  
18 The integrity of men of God is assaulted day after day and year after year, and although Christian  
19 history is replete with such assaults, we lament in particular the failure to defend them by the  
20 very men charged with their defense. We do not refer here to that occasional scoundrel whose  
21 ungodly behavior has earned him rebuke, but to the many men of integrity who are routinely  
22 assailed with the charge of stubbornness for not yielding to falsehood; of lacking ‘people skills’  
23 because they persistently adhere to the truth; of being loveless when their actions demonstrate  
24 that they are bound in love to the charge of their Lord truly to shepherd the flock over which He  
25 has made them overseers rather than bound to serve their own bellies or itching ears or those of  
26 their hearers. Indeed we count such pastors who rule well to be worthy of double honor, who  
27 labor in the word and doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we are therefore compelled to bind  
28 ourselves to their support.

29  
30 Some of these men have seen their flocks wrongfully removed from them, leaving them without  
31 wages and their families without support. Some have ecclesiastical supervisors who, rather than  
32 coming to their aid, prefer to join with those who slander and defame them, joining the company  
33 of those who muzzle them while they tread out the grain of God’s harvest. But God is not  
34 mocked. So, we have mourned with them. We have prayed for them. And herewith we have  
35 chosen to band with them. If the duty of defending these innocent men will not be carried out by  
36 those to whom the task is expressly assigned by existing polities, synodical organizations, or  
37 other churchly apparatus, then let us defend them—as indeed, God’s Word teaches that we must,  
38 in the Seventh and Eighth Commandments. Let it be known that we choose now to defend them  
39 with our names, our reputations, and our honor. If our neighbor must stand trial before unjust  
40 judges, we choose to stand at his side, to defend him and to speak well of him. For indeed this  
41 task is always assigned to Christian people, and made incumbent upon us by our Lord’s words, I  
42 was hungry and you fed me, etc.

1 We are Lutheran pastors only because we believe, and claim as our own, the Lutheran  
2 Confessions. But for too long, these Confessions have been given no more than lip service by  
3 others who claim the same faith as we; others, that is, whose practice belies their confession,  
4 whose disdain for faithful ministers is evident in their eagerness to destroy the reputations of  
5 those ministers, whose worship is marked by a blasphemous replacement of the holy liturgy with  
6 popular song, whose Christianity is soiled by emotion-centered, market-driven, self-oriented  
7 leadership. Therefore we wish to be marked, over against such folly, as an Evangelical-Lutheran  
8 ministerium. We do not presume hereby to condemn anyone who is not part of the Augustana  
9 Ministerium; we only wish that our own stance be known among all.

10  
11 To these purposes we add our constant prayers for the mercy of Almighty God, that all people  
12 may benefit from vibrant and faithful servants of God in the Office of the Holy Ministry.

13  
14 Desiring to be obedient in service to our Lord, for the benefit of those who are also under these  
15 most holy orders and, thereby, for the benefit of God’s flock among whom they serve Christ, we  
16 establish the Augustana Ministerium and by our signatures subject our membership and  
17 participation herein to the Constitution and Bylaws thereof.

18  
19 **Adopted:** 21 September 2005

20  
21

22 [The following statement was unanimously adopted at the 2006 Plenary Session  
23 of The Augustana Ministerium to be appended to this document]

24

25 It has been asserted by some that the third paragraph of our Statement on the Holy Ministry  
26 teaches “that saving faith comes by means of rightly putting a man into the office rather than by  
27 means of the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments,” thereby erasing  
28 the distinction between the office itself and its transmission.

29

30 We do not believe that such a reading is in accord with the grammar of the statement, but  
31 understand the concern of those who have so read, so that we wish to state clearly that our  
32 unanimous understanding of this paragraph, and of the particular portion thereof that has been  
33 questioned (lines 38-40), is that it is not the right putting of a man into the Office that brings  
34 about faith unto salvation, but the Gospel and Sacraments. The final clause of the sentence  
35 simply states the way in which Christ confers the Office through His Church, with no indication  
36 that salvation is conditioned upon this, and the final sentence of the paragraph makes this even  
37 clearer by its assertion that, while we ought to maintain the traditional forms, this is not by  
38 divine mandate—which, of course, it would be were the keeping of these forms the means of our  
39 obtaining saving faith.