



January 28, 2026

Memorandum: Consideration of joining the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations.

Overview: Light of Christ Fellowship was founded in 2020 with the intention of providing a confessional body of faith where worship and community engagement can expand the Gospel of Christ. Our mission has remained unchanged as we have sought discernment and discipleship of where God is leading us. Our new facility and social media initiatives are in place. Our next objective is to discern if there are ways we can better connect with the Body in our community and abroad. To that end, our leadership team has revisited affiliation opportunities that were not fruitful a few years past. One unexplored affiliation was with the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC). Our leadership team has initiated exploratory dialog with the AFLC. This memorandum provides a summary oversight of the AFLC, the communications thus far, and potential steps moving forward.

What is the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations? The AFLC is not a synod, but a fellowship of independent Lutheran congregations bound in model of the early biblical church, where the congregation is where God works. It rejects superior authority of a heavy ecclesiastical organization above the congregation. The AFLC is therefore congregations wishing to work together as God enables and empowers them, allowing the congregations to discern where God is calling them to serve in their communities.

The AFLC has roots dating to early 1800's in Germany with a Norwegian farmer's son preaching a message of repentance and personal salvation through Pietism, a powerful movement of the time with emphasis on personal faith, godly living and study of Scripture. These concepts caught fire and were adopted in the Augsburg College in Minneapolis in the 1870s. The founders modeled their association through a fresh look at the New Testament church and came to the strong conclusion that "there is no talk about any bishopric, nor any church council, or synod. There is congregation in each place where there are Christians, and this congregation has its elders but no church ruler-ship of any sort".

In 1897 a group of like-minded congregations committed to the tenants of the Association and established the Lutheran Free Church. Growth was slow, and mostly centered in the Dakotas, Minnesota 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 and sought merger with

the American Lutheran Church in 1962. This caused a split with about 300 people from seven states and Canada resisting the merger and forming the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. Today, the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is a partnership of 256 independent Lutheran congregations. Each congregation is a separate Body, but working together with the others to further God's kingdom as God enables.

The AFLC has several supporting committees (corporations) that are sponsored by the independent congregations as they deem appropriate. These supporting committees help facilitate cooperation among the member congregations.

- Coordinating Committee: seven members chosen from the congregations maintain the clergy roster, pastors and candidates for ordination, and congregational roster. This committee also support youth, evangelism, parish education, publications and other responsibilities not covered by other committees.
- Schools Corporation: consists of 50 members from congregations, whose Board of Trustees manage the theological seminary and Bible College located in suburban Minneapolis MN.
- World Missions Corporation: consists of 50 members from the, whose Board of Directors oversee ministry operations in Brazil, Mexico, Uganda, India, Paraguay and Switzerland. The Ambassador Institute and Journey Missions are also outreach programs.
- Home Missions Corporation: consists of 50 members from the congregations, whose Board of Directors manage new church plants and partners with congregations and groups interested in planting a church.
- The Association Retreat Center (ARC) is a bible camp facility owned and managed by the AFLC for congregational use. The facility hosts youth camps, adult retreats, and association gatherings.

The above is but a summary of what the AFLC. Much more can be reviewed at their web site:

AFLC Webpage: <https://www.aflc.org/>

Overview of AFLC: <https://www.aflc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/What-is-the-AFLC.pdf>

History of AFLC: <https://www.aflc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Standing-Fast-in-Freedom.pdf>

What would change if Light of Christ Fellowship were to join the association?

1. LoCF would remain operationally unchanged. We remain “independent” yet have new resources and relationships with the other member congregations as well as the AFLC boards noted above. Our governing documents would need to be reviewed by the AFLC, but it is extremely unlikely any change would be necessary as we have been careful to model those documents for future affiliation options.
2. We have the option to support the AFLC ministries through people willing to join the various boards, and also financially as we deem appropriate. There is no heavy handed requirement by the AFLC for either, though the opportunity to expand our impact of the Gospel is exciting.
3. We have access to the Pastor Roster with the opportunity to call a pastor for part-time, or full-time as we are able.
4. We have access to worship resources and partnering congregations to network our congregations through the association.
5. AFLC maintains a “Licensed Lay Pastor Roster”, whereby their pastors provide instruction and guidance to enable small churches like us to educate and train lay members to administer sacraments. This is similar to what we have been doing, but provides access to a formal program within the AFLC to link pastors to our lay leaders.

What are the next steps? Provided we wish to explore further, the president of the AFLC wishes to visit us a weekend in April. He will worship with us and provide a presentation of the AFLC during the education hour. We will then call a congregational meeting to discuss and decide if we wish to move forward. If so, we will begin the process of joining the Association.

What can I do? Review the AFLC on their website. The referenced documents above are a good place to start. Call an Elder to discuss concerns you may have. Most of all, pray for discernment where God is leading us.