



## COMPANION CONGREGATION PARTNERSHIP COVENANT

What is a partnership?

The partnership is made by two churches, one church from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (**ELCA**) in the United States and one church from the Iglesia Luterana Agustina de Guatemala. In this case, the Iglesia Luterana Agustina Virgen de Santa Elena of the ILAG is starting a partnership with Grace Lutheran Church **of Apple Valley, MN, a member congregation of the ELCA.**

The partnership is a relationship subject to subject. It is a relationship based in the love of Christ. Communication and understanding of each other are important parts of the relationship.

The most important part of the partnership between the two churches is Christ, who calls us into relationships of mutual love and respect. The members of the two churches must love each other. “For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.” (Galatians 5:14-15)

*This means that the members of the two churches should:*

- *Have mutual respect: Grace Lutheran Church cannot ask or obligate the Iglesia Luterana Agustina Virgen de Santa Elena to do something that the members of the church cannot do or do not wish to do. And the Iglesia Luterana Agustina Virgen de Santa Elena cannot ask or obligate Grace Lutheran Church to do something that the members of the church cannot do or do not wish to do.*
- *Strive for mutual understanding: Both congregations need to recognize that their partners are from different countries and, have different cultures and customs.*
- *Communicate frequently: Both congregations should strive to get to know each other and develop a relationship based in God, sharing their joys, their sorrows, and the activities of each church.*
- *Be willing to understand one another in order to create a relationship of friendship in Christ that is long lasting.*

The partnership is a relationship of commitment that both churches involved in the partnership make.

Grace Lutheran Church commits to:

- Accompany the Iglesia Luterana Agustina Virgen de Santa Elena in the walk of Christ. This means that:
  - ✘ The members of Grace Lutheran Church will pray for all the members of the ILA Virgen de Santa Elena every Sunday.
  - ✘ The members of Grace Lutheran Church will visit every year/18 months, if possible, the members of the church in their community
  - ✘ The members of Grace Lutheran Church will support the members of the church and the church in a material way to the best of their ability, with the condition that the aid will be for the common benefit.
  - ✘ The members of Grace Lutheran Church will write to the members of the ILA Virgen de Santa Elena a letter at least every three months.
- This commitment of the partnership is realized for a period of three (3) years
  - ✘ The partnership can be renewed after three (3) years depending on the capability of Grace Lutheran Church of sending people in order to visit the members of the Iglesia Luterana Agustina Virgen de Santa Elena.
  - ✘ The partnership can be terminated before the three (3) years have been completed depending **on** the behavior of the members of the ILA Virgen de Santa Elena.
  - ✘ The partnership can be terminated by Grace Lutheran Church after the three years of commitment have been accomplished.

The Iglesia Luterana Agustina Virgen de Santa Elena commits to:

- Accompany Grace Lutheran Church in the walk of Christ. This means that:
  - ✘ They will pray for all the members of Grace Lutheran Church every Sunday
  - ✘ They will attend to the members of Grace Lutheran Church to the best of their ability when they visit their community
  - ✘ They will write to the members of Grace Lutheran Church at least one letter every three months
  - ✘ They will not think of the members of Grace Lutheran Church or the church itself as a bank, **a** loan institution or a beneficiary institution because this is a partnership of relationship based in Christ
- This commitment of partnership is made for a period of three (3) years
  - ✘ The partnership can be renewed after three (3) years
  - ✘ The partnership can be also terminated before the three years depending on the behavior of the members of Grace Lutheran Church
  - ✘ The partnership can be terminated when the three-year commitment is ended at **the** church's discretion

Both churches, Iglesia Luterana Agustina Virgen de Santa Elena and Grace Lutheran Church commit to:

- ✘ Send their communications through the members of the Pastoral Team of the Iglesia Luterana Agustina de Guatemala. This will insure that the communication and translation of the communication is delivered to both churches in an exact and clear way. This is also in order to keep a file of the communications and to have a

history of the partnership from its beginning and a documentation of how the relationship has grown with the help of God.

- ✘ The members of both Lutheran Churches commit to treat the members of the Lutheran Churches as equals, as their brothers and sisters in Christ and to not denigrate them or treat them poorly.
- ✘ The members of Grace Lutheran Church cannot force the community in need to accept a project they do not need. Grace Lutheran Church needs to respect the needs of the community. But if the community has a need for a project that Grace Lutheran Church supports, Grace Lutheran Church can ask that the project **be** completed within a certain period of time.
- ✘ In the same way, if the Iglesia Luterana Agustina Virgen de Santa Elena takes on any project, it cannot obligate or demand more resources than what they have been given, instead they have to respect and accept the help that is provided to them.
- ✘ In the management of funds, the Iglesia Luterana Agustina Virgen de Santa Elena commits to be transparent and to turn in a report of how funds have been managed and to use the provided resources correctly. They commit to use the funds for the purpose for which the funds have been designated.

WE SIGN THIS COVENANT AS A COMMITMENT TO THIS PARTNERSHIP, TRUSTING THAT GOD WILL GUIDE US IN THIS MINISTRY AND THIS JOURNEY IN CHRIST WHICH HE HAS COMMENDED INTO OUR HANDS.

SIGNATURES OF THE OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVES OF EACH LUTHERAN CHURCH (Iglesia Luterana Agustina Virgen de Santa Elena and Grace Lutheran Church) AND ANY OTHER MEMBERS WHO WISH TO SIGN.