

Draft Constitution for _____ Lutheran Church

Article I Name

The legal name of this congregation shall be “_____ Lutheran Church”. The congregation is located in _____, _____.

Article II Purpose

The purposes for which this congregation is formed are:

1. To facilitate spreading the Christian faith in our community and around the world.
2. To foster Christian fellowship and charity.

Article III Confession of Faith

This congregation accepts without reservation:

1. The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice;
2. All the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God as contained in *The Book of Concord* of 1580.

Article IV Denominational Affiliation

This congregation shall be with a member congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (henceforth, LCMS) as long as the confessions and constitution of the Synod are in accord with the confessions and constitution of this congregation as laid down in Article III.

Article V Membership

The membership of this congregation includes Members as defined in the Bylaws.

Article VI Organization

This congregation shall elect by majority vote from among its members a president, secretary and treasurer, whose duties shall be as specified in the Bylaws. Only the congregation as a whole may:

1. Encumber, purchase or sell real property, including buildings.
2. Incur a non-budgeted expense, including emergency expenses, of over 5% of the annual expense budget of the congregation.
3. Adopt the congregation's budget.
4. Dissolve the congregation or terminating the congregation's membership in the LCMS.

Article VII Property Rights

A. Division within the congregation

If, at any time, a separation shall take place within this congregation, efforts shall be made to resolve differences in a God-pleasing manner. If, despite all efforts to resolve differences in peace and love, a division into factions of the congregation shall occur, the advice of the President of the Southeastern District shall be sought and the property of the congregation and all benefits connected

shall remain with that faction designated by a three person panel chosen by the SED Board of Directors.

B. Dissolution of the congregation

If the congregation is dissolved, after settling all debts, the remaining assets shall be transferred to the Southeastern District -- LCMS.

Article IX Amendments

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority of the votes. The Bylaws may be amended by a majority of the votes cast. The wording of the amended Constitution and Bylaws shall be distributed to all members in a mailing as far in advance as possible, but no fewer than two Sundays in advance. In addition, the revisions will be distributed to the congregation assembled for worship on two different Sundays prior to the date upon which the amendment is presented for action.

Bylaws of Lutheran Church

Article 1 Baptized Membership

Baptized Members are all persons within the congregation who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and come under the pastoral care of this congregation. It is expected that all baptized members will:

1. Attend worship services faithfully and regularly.
2. Lead a Christian life as taught in Galatians 5:19-26.
3. Out of Christian love, submit to brotherly admonition, according to Matthew 18, when having erred or offended.
4. Contribute, as God has blessed them, of their time, talents and treasure toward the maintenance of the congregation and the extension of the church at large.
5. In due time, take a course of instruction in preparation for confirmed membership in this congregation.

Article 2 Confirmed Membership

Confirmed Members are all baptized persons within the congregation who have completed a course of instruction in Christian doctrine that meets with the approval of the Officers. Persons seeking to attain confirmed membership shall make that fact known to the President. The pastor supervising the congregation shall ascertain the understanding and commitment to the purpose and theological commitment contained in Article III. The pastor will determine if additional instruction is needed and the appropriate method for that instruction. The pastor is authorized to extend confirmed membership to the person and shall announce that in a public service.

In addition to the duties of Baptized Members, it is expected of all Confirmed Members that they:

1. Accept the confessions of faith listed in Article III of the constitution.
2. Familiarize themselves with the doctrines of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod
3. Partake of the Lord's Supper.
4. Participate in continuing Christian education.
5. Provide for the Christian training of their children by making use of the educational agencies of the congregation to equip parents to be the spiritual teachers of their children and to nurture faith in children.

Article 3 Voting Membership

Voting Members are Communicant Members who have reached the age of majority, attend a Voters' meeting, and sign the Constitution.

Article 4 Termination of Membership

- A. Transfers
A member desiring transfer to another congregation shall make that fact known to the President. The President shall cause the creating and mailing of a letter of transfer to the receiving congregation.
- B. Whereabouts unknown or moved
The names of members whose whereabouts are unknown or who have moved from the area may be removed from membership after a period of one year.
- C. Discipline

All discipline in this congregation shall be administered in accordance with Matthew 18:15-20. The purpose of any disciplinary action is to renew a member's relationship with the Lord and with the church. A member shall be considered self-excluded when unresponsive to the witness and ministry of the church.

Article 5 Officers

- A. President:
 - 1. Preside at all meetings of the Congregation.
 - 2. Enforce the Constitution and Bylaws.
 - 3. Perform the general duties as are common for the office, including such additional duties as may be directed by the Congregation from time to time.
- B. Secretary:
 - 1. The duties shall be those commonly required of that office, especially the keeping and preserving of accurate records of the Congregation, and handling such correspondence as the congregation may require.
 - 2. Keep and make available minutes of Congregation meetings.
- C. Treasurer:
 - 1. Keep and preserve the accurate records of all receipts and disbursements, and submit a written report of them at all regular meetings of the Congregation.
 - 2. Assure accuracy and propriety of all financial transactions of the congregation.
- D. Term of Office
Each officer shall serve for a term of two years and shall serve no more than two full successive terms in that position without a break of at least one year.

Article 6 Election, Removal from Office, and Vacancies

- A. Nomination
Individuals may be nominated by members of the congregation at an annual election meeting. All nominees shall be Voting Members noted for their Christian knowledge, zeal, and experience in the spiritual work in the Kingdom. Those elected by the Voters may not receive compensation from the Congregation.
- B. Election
Nominees who receive a majority of the ballots cast at the meeting shall be the elected.
- C. Taking office
All elected officials will begin their term of office on the second Sunday of the month following election.
- D. Vacancy
In the event of a vacancy, an election shall be held to fill the vacant office.