

CONSTITUTION
CHRIST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CONGREGATION
August 2017

Preamble

Whereas, the history of the Christian Church of all times proves that certain rules and regulations are necessary to properly attain the purposes and fulfill the obligations of congregations; and whereas, the Apostle Paul sets forth, I Cor. 14:40, that all things in the Church should be done “decently and in order” therefore be it RESOLVED, that we, a congregation of Lutherans in the City of Marshfield, Wisconsin, do herewith, in the name of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, adopt the following CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS.

Article I: Name

The name of the congregation shall be the “Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church” of Marshfield, Wisconsin.

Article II: Affiliation

This congregation shall be affiliated with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

Article III: Purpose

The purpose of this congregation shall be:

- A. To serve its members and to build the Kingdom of God by the preaching of the Word of God, by the administration of the Sacraments, by the religious instruction of youth and adults, according to the confessional standard of the Lutheran Church (Article IV), and by due application of church discipline according to Matthew 18:
- B. To share the Gospel with the unchurched of the community by an active program of local evangelism;
- C. To spread the Kingdom of God in all the world by adequately supporting the work of District and Synod (Matthew 28: 19-20).
- D. To foster Christian fellowship and charity

Article IV: Confessional Standard

This congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God, verbally inspired, and acknowledges and accepts all the Confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the book of Concord of the year 1580, to be the true and genuine exposition of the doctrine of the Bible. These Confessional Writings are the three Ecumenical Creeds (Apostles, Nicene, and Athanasian) and Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, Luther’s Large and Small Catechisms, and the Formula of Concord.

Article V: Membership

The membership of this congregation consists of the following:

A. Baptized Membership

The baptized membership includes all members who have been baptized.

B. Communicant Membership

Communicant membership in this congregation shall be restricted to such as:

1. Are baptized, have been instructed in the doctrines of the Holy Scripture and declare their adherence to the teachings of the Lutheran Church;
2. Diligently attend divine services and frequently partake of Holy Communion;
3. Willingly contribute towards the promotion of Christ's Kingdom at home and abroad according to ability;
4. Do not live in open works of flesh, but lead a Christian life;
5. Do not hold membership in anti-Christian societies, secret or otherwise;
6. Will readily submit to the rules and regulations of the congregation provided these are not contrary to the Holy Writ and the confessions mentioned in Article IV.

C. Voting membership

The voting membership consists of communicant members:

1. Who have reached the age of 18 years;
2. Who have been accepted by the Church Council or at the Congregational Meeting.

Article VI: Duties of Members

It shall be the duty of every member of this congregation:

A. To make faithful and diligent use of the Word of God and the Sacraments:

1. By attending divine services;
2. By partaking of the Lord's Supper frequently;
3. By Bible Study
4. By the use of such educational agencies as are provided by the congregation.

- B. To lead a Christian life and not to live in manifest works of the flesh.
- C. To contribute regularly and faithfully as God has prospered each, toward all that the congregation has made its concern, and in general assist in bearing all its burdens.
- D. To devote time and talent to the extension of the Kingdom of God.
- E. To attend the Congregational Meetings

Article VII: Powers of the Congregation

A. General

The congregation as a body, through the Congregational Meetings, shall have supreme power to administer and manage all its external and internal affairs. The establishment and conduct of all institutions and organizations within the congregation shall at all times be subject to the approval and supervision of the congregation. The congregation, however, shall not be empowered to decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church (Article IV) and such decision shall be null and void.

B. Right of Calling

The congregation as a whole has the exclusive right to call and elect pastors, teachers, and other officers. The pastorate of the congregation shall be conferred only upon such minister or ministerial candidate as unqualifiedly and publicly profess their acceptance of and adherence to Article IV of this call or vocation extended by the congregation.

C. Decisions

Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided by the Word of God; other matters shall be decided by a majority vote of those present at a Congregational Meeting unless otherwise specified by the Constitution or Bylaws.

D. Property Rights

All rights to the property of the congregation are vested in the congregation. Should dissension and strife arise which the congregation cannot bring to a peaceful conclusion, it shall seek the advice of proper Synodical officials. If even then a separation or division can not be avoided (which God may graciously prevent), the property rights of the congregation and all of its benefits shall remain with those members who adhere to this Constitution and Confessions mentioned in Article IV. In the event the congregation should totally disband, the property and all rights therewith shall be transferred to the North Wisconsin District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.

Article VIII: Officers

A. General

1. The officers of this congregation shall be such officers, boards or committees as the Bylaws of this congregation may prescribe.
2. Women may serve as officers and as members of boards and committees as long as these positions are not directly involved in the specific function of the pastoral office.

B. Power of Officers

Congregational officers or committees, whether elected or appointed by the voters, shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them, and whatever power may have been delegated to them may at any time be altered or revoked by the voters.

C. Removal from Office

Any officer, pastor or teacher may be removed from office by the congregation in Christian and lawful order. Sufficient and urgent causes for removal from office are persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life and/or willful neglect of duty.

Article IX: Doctrinal Literature

Only such hymns, prayers and liturgies shall be used in the services of the congregation and in all ministerial acts as conform to the confessional standard of Article IV. Likewise, in all classes for instruction in Christian doctrine, only such books shall be used as conform to this standard.

Article X: Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution and the Bylaws and changes in the Articles of incorporation may be adopted at a regular or special Congregational meeting providing:

- A. That they do not conflict with the provisions laid down in Article IV or with any section of any other article that pertains to scriptural doctrine and practice and:
- B. That the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at a previous meeting of the Voters' Assembly. The Affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the voting membership present at the Congregational meeting shall be required for the adoption of the amendment.

Article XI: Bylaws

This congregation shall adopt such Bylaws as may be required for the accomplishment of its purpose.

BYLAWS

Article I: Membership

Admission into Membership

A. Baptized Membership

- a. By Baptism - Persons received by the Sacrament of Baptism in this congregation become Baptized members
- b. By Transfer - Baptized persons coming with a letter of transfer from a Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod Congregation may be received into baptized membership by the Pastor.
- c. By Request - Other baptized persons who have no church affiliations and who have come under the spiritual care of this congregation may be received into baptized membership by the pastor.

B. Communicant Membership

- a. By Confirmation – Persons received by the sacred act of confirmation in this congregation become communicant members.
- b. By Transfer – Persons coming with a communicant letter or transfer from a Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod Congregation may be received by the pastor, whose action is to be approved in a subsequent meeting of the Church Council.
- c. By Profession of Faith – Other persons shall submit their application to the pastor and having given satisfactory evidence of qualifications for communicant membership to the pastor shall be received by them as communicant members. This action is to be approved in a subsequent meeting of the Church Council.

C. Voting Membership

- a. Reception – All members of the congregation who have reached their 18th birthday are voting members of the congregation.
- b. Duties – It shall be the duty of every member to attend the Congregational Meetings. By failing to attend a meeting a member waives the right to cast his/her vote during the meeting.

Termination of Membership

A. Baptized and Communicant Membership

- a. Transfer to Other Congregations – Members desiring to join a congregation within the Missouri Synod shall present their request for transfer to the pastor, to whom authorization is given to consider such requests and to issue a transfer. Such transfer of membership shall be reported to the Church Council in a subsequent meeting.

- b. **Joining Other Churches** - In cases where members have joined another congregation outside the Missouri Synod they shall, upon the recommendation of the pastor be considered as such as having terminated their membership, and their names shall be removed from the membership list by a resolution of the Church Council.
 - c. **Excommunication and Self-Exclusion** - Any member who conducts himself in an unchristian like manner shall be admonished according to Matt 18: 15-20. If after proper admonition he refuses to amend his sinful life, he shall be excommunicated. If the member refuses to appear at the Voters' Meeting or to meet with a smaller group officially acting for the voters, to discuss his case he has hereby excluded himself. A unanimous vote shall be required for every resolution by the Voters' Assembly for excommunication or self-exclusion. Excommunication or self-exclusion terminates membership. When such excommunicated or self-excluded person repents of his sins and seeks forgiveness from God and the congregation, he shall be reinstated.
 - d. **Whereabouts Unknown** – If members move away or leave this congregation without applying for release or transfer and no contact with them can be established within two years, their names shall be removed from the membership list by the Church Council, and forthwith such membership is terminated.
 - e. **Status** – A person whose membership has been terminated has forfeited all rights of a member of this congregation and all claims upon the property of the congregation as such, or upon any part thereof, so long as he is not reinstated into membership.
- B. **Voting Membership** - Voting membership is terminated by termination of communicant membership.

Article II: Meetings

- A. A council Meeting shall be held each month. Each board and committee shall meet as needed at the discretion of the board members. Board representatives on Council are required to attend their board meetings.
- B. A regular meeting of the congregation (Voter's Meeting) shall be held in the months of January and July.
 - a. It shall be announced in all church services on the preceding two Sundays.
 - b. The voting members present at this meeting shall constitute a quorum.
 - c. In all matters not already decided by the Word of God the majority rules, except in the case of amendments and changes as specified in Article X of the Constitution and removal of an officer or a called staff member from their position, for which a 2/3 majority is required.
 - d. In case of a paper ballot, a majority will be determined by the number of votes cast.

- C. The following shall be the order of business for the regular Council and Congregational Meetings.
- a. Call to Order
 - b. Opening Devotion
 - c. Congregational Comments
 - d. Reading and approval of minutes of previous meeting
 - e. Presentation and approval of Financial Reports
 - i. Council Meetings - Prior Month's Report and Year-to-Date
 - ii. January Voter's Meeting - Prior Year's Report
 - iii. July Voter's Meeting - January through June Report
 - f. Presentation and approval of the new budget (January Congregational Meeting)
 - g. Reports of officers and boards (Council Meetings Only) OR Election of New Officers (Voter's Meetings)
 - h. Old business
 - i. Recommendations of the Church Council/Voting Members and New Business
 - j. Items to be added to future agendas
 - k. Adjournment
 - l. Closing Devotion
- D. Special meetings of the congregation as well as special meetings of the Church Council may be called by the pastor(s) or by the President of the congregation, as the need arises. Special Voter's Meetings and their purpose shall be announced in at least two public services or by a mailing to the membership.
- E. The annual budget must be presented and recommended for approval at the January Voter's Meeting.
- a. The budget will be finalized and approved by the Council at their December meeting. It will then be made available to the congregation a minimum of three weeks prior to the January Voter's Meeting. Changes to the budget can be suggested to the Council and may be approved at the January Voter's Meeting or referred to the Council for review.
 - b. Changes to the budget may be approved by the majority at the January Voter's Meeting and require a paper ballot. It shall be recommended that budget changes regarding salaries and increases/decreases of more than \$1000 be brought back to Council and approved at a Special

Voter's Meeting as soon as possible after the next Council Meeting.

- F. Disputes and other issues regarding individual members of the congregation and/or staff shall be handled in a Biblical matter as laid out in Matthew 18: 15-17. Problems should first be addressed to the Pastor or Council President, who may bring it to the Council and, if appropriate, to the congregation.
- G. In addition to principles laid down in Scripture and in the Constitution and Bylaws of this congregation, accepted parliamentary procedures such as Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed.

Article III: Divine Call Procedure

- A. The procedures of calling as indicated in Article VII of the constitution is to be followed.
- B. In the event of a vacancy of the Senior Pastor position, the Assistant/Associate Pastor may be extended a call to become Senior Pastor if approved by a majority at a Voter's Meeting. The election shall be held by ballot.
- C. A Call Committee consisting of lay members may be convened.
 - a. Members of the Committee must be approved at a Voter's Meeting. The Committee will be given authority to complete the steps necessary to call a Pastor or Director of Christian Education, in accordance with Synod and District regulations and review candidates submitted by the District Officials. Any voter is also entitled to make additional nominations of qualified candidates.
 - b. A Pastor may also be called in accordance with Synod and District regulations regarding recent Seminary graduate candidates if approval is given by the voters at a Voter's Meeting.
 - c. At a Voter's Meeting properly convened, the Call Committee shall submit their recommendation to the congregation for approval. Information on the candidate(s) must be available for review by any member of the congregation at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.
 - d. The election of a pastor shall be a simple majority vote of those present at the meeting and retroactively declared a unanimous result by consensus of the voters present. The election shall be held by ballot. The call shall be sent to the pastor once elected.
- D. At a Voter's Meeting the Church Council shall obtain authorization for additional pastoral and staff positions.
 - a. Christ Lutheran Church may have a Senior Pastor and may have one or more Associate Pastors. The Senior Pastor shall be the Pastor with the most years of service at Christ Lutheran Church unless otherwise determined by the congregation at a Voter's Meeting.
 - b. Christ Lutheran Church may have a ministry of Associate Pastors if authorized by the congregation at a Voter's Meeting.

- c. Duties of called and non-called staff will be determined by the Church Council or its designated committee(s) and laid out in the Employee Handbook.

Article IV: Election of Congregational Officers

- A. In November of each year, the Council shall request nominations from the congregation for open Council positions. Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the January Voter's Meeting.
 - a. Nominees must be Communicant members (See Article V of the Constitution)
 - b. Board chairpersons must be nominated by the board they are representing on Council and approved at a Congregational Meeting.
 - c. If no nomination is put forth by the January Voter's Meeting, any qualified voting member may put their name forth for consideration by the voters.
- B. Prior to the vote, each candidate, whether their position is contested or not, shall be required to state why they are willing to serve on Council.
- C. If there is more than one candidate for a position, the voting shall be by written ballot. A name of a candidate may appear only once on any ballot.
- D. An individual may only occupy one elected office at a time.
- E. The newly elected members of the Church Council shall assume their respective duties on the Sunday following the January Voter's Meeting. Officers shall be elected for terms specified in these Bylaws and shall hold office until their successors have assumed their office.
- F. If a vacancy occurs, it will remain until the next Voter's Meeting.

Article V: Officers

- A. The officers of this congregation shall be:
 - a. President
 - b. Vice-President
 - c. Secretary
 - d. Financial Secretary
 - e. Treasurer
 - f. Chairpersons representing each board
- B. Additional officers and boards must be approved at a Voter's Meeting

Article VI: The Church Council

- A. Role
 - a. Maintain fiduciary oversight
 - b. Ensure the Church is strong and vibrant in the community
 - c. Strategically plan for the future
 - d. Refrain from the ordinary day-to-day operations of the Church, unless decisions are needed in an emergency.

- B. The voting members of Church Council shall consist of the officers of the congregation. (See Article V)
- C. It shall be the duty of the Church Council to meet monthly to consider all matters pertaining to the spiritual and material welfare of the congregation. The Church Council shall act in matters committed to it by the congregation and in cases of emergency.
- D. In order for a motion to pass, a quorum (two-thirds of voting members) must be present for the vote.
- E. The Church Council shall be the legal representatives of the congregation and the custodians of its property including all valuable papers and records. They shall make loans for the congregation when authorized by the congregation to do so. The congregation is to be directly responsible for its property and whatever the Council does in conformity with its resolutions and instructions and is in no case to permit any Council member to suffer any personal loss whatever.
- F. The Church Council shall not convene to transact business without the Senior Pastor's knowledge.
- G. The Pastors and called staff shall be ex-officio members of the Church Council. Other staff members may be asked to attend.

Article VII: Terms of Officers

- A. Members of the Church Council shall be elected for a term of two years, with a three-term limit (for a maximum of six years). No Council member may be elected for a fourth consecutive term without waiting one year between terms. The Church Council may adjust terms of Council members if necessary to ensure a balance of experienced and new members.
- B. If a vacancy occurs on the Church Council, the vacancy will continue until the next Voter's Meeting.
- C. Terms run from January to January. Any officer voted onto Council at any time other than the January Voter's Meeting will be up for re-election at the same time they would have been had they been elected in January.

Article VIII: Duties of Officers

- A. President

Shall preside at all Voter's Meetings and meetings of the Church Council and see to it that all meetings are conducted in an orderly and Christian manner. They shall also discern emergent funding needs for the Church when necessary, in order to carry out the mission and service of the Church. This position is filled by the Vice-President upon the current President completing their regular term unless decided otherwise at a Voter's Meeting. An individual may not serve two consecutive regular terms as President.

B. Vice-President

Shall perform the duties of the office of President if the President is absent. Candidates must have prior experience on Council. In the event of a vacancy in the office of the President, the Vice-President shall succeed to the office of President for the remainder of President's term.

C. Secretary

Shall keep accurate minutes of the meeting of the Church Council and Voter's Meetings for the permanent records of the congregation. Minutes shall be submitted for approval at the next meeting.

D. Financial Secretary

Shall, in conjunction with the Office Manager, inform Council and the congregation of the financial state of the Church and make recommendations to the Council about management of resources. The Financial Secretary shall also chair the Budget Committee.

E. Treasurer

Shall, with a committee of at least two members of the congregation, count and record the weekly offerings and deposit them in the bank. The Treasurer shall submit the accounting records to an auditor every two years or when so designated by the Church Council. The Church Council may appoint as many assistants for the Treasurer as necessary.

Article IX: Duties of Boards and Committees

A. Board of Education

The Board of Education prayerfully plans and oversees opportunities for the members of Christ Lutheran Church and our community to grow in faith and in deeper knowledge of God's Word. Board members work together with church staff, current ministry leaders, and potential new ministry leaders to plan, implement, and evaluate events, Bible studies, Sunday School, Confirmation and Early Communion classes, and other ministries that are a part of the overall Christian Education Ministries at Christ Lutheran Church. As necessary, Board of Education members may also assist in identifying, training, and evaluating volunteers for various Christian Education ministries. Board members, together with called staff continually seek the Lord's guidance as they strive to find new opportunities to help others grow in their understanding of God's Word.

B. Board of Elders

The Board of Elders shall have authority and responsibility for the spiritual welfare and activities of the congregation. They will assist the pastor in assuming the general spiritual welfare of the congregation and shall assist the pastor in difficult problems of the ministry and see to it that congregational discipline is carried out according to Matthew 18:15-20.

C. Board of Evangelism

The Board of Evangelism strives to encourage and support our congregation to reach out to others with...tell others about...and invite others to hear...The Good News of Jesus. We pray that this may happen in our midst through the work of the Holy Spirit, for the growth of God's Kingdom, and for the sake of those who have yet to come to faith in Christ.

D. Board of Property

The Board of Property will administer and supervise the proper maintenance of all Church property, including buildings, grounds, and any equipment and contents. They shall seek bids for projects and recommend for approval by Council.

E. Board of Social Ministry

The Board of Social Ministry's objectives are to place before the congregation social ministry needs and seek to move the congregation to increase its response to those needs, coordinate congregational support for local service organizations, and coordinate congregational participation in church-wide ministry programs.

F. Board of Stewardship

The Board of Stewardship shall be responsible for the planning and management of the money, time, and talents of the Church and its members. It will also focus on the promoting and fulfilling of the mission of the Church. Duties may include: participation in the Budget Committee, reviewing how money is handled, educating members on the Biblical guidelines for stewardship, encouraging Church participation in local missions and community events, reviewing the Bylaws on a biannual basis, and assisting with the management of the Memorial Fund.

G. Board of Worship

The Board of Worship strives to promote and facilitate worship services at CLC. They do this by scheduling and planning worship services and special music in connection with our pastors to encourage regular attendance at church. Its mission is to lead congregational members to thankfully hear God's Word preached and receive His gifts through the Sacraments on a consistent basis and for the strengthening of their faith.

H. Board of Youth

The Board of Youth prayerfully plans and oversees opportunities for children and youth of Christ Lutheran Church and our community to grow in faith and in a deeper relationship with our Savior, Jesus Christ. Board members work together with church staff, current ministry leaders, and potential new ministry leaders to plan, implement, and evaluate youth events, trips, Bible studies, PUPPETS ministry, service projects, fund raisers, and other miscellaneous youth activities. Board members, together with called staff and youth leaders continually seek the Lord's guidance in identifying new and effective ways to reach our young people, help them in their walk with the Lord, and identify ways for them to share their God-given talents with our congregation, community, and world.

I. Budget Committee –

- a. Members shall be appointed by the President and approved by Council at the September meeting.
- b. Shall be chaired by the Financial Secretary and consist of at least two other members of Council. Other members of the Congregation with financial and budgeting experience may also be appointed. The Senior Pastor and Office Manager shall be advisory members.
- c. Shall convene in October to review the current year's budget expenditures and plan the following year's budget.
- d. The recommended budget must be presented for approval by Council no later than the December meeting.

J. The Auditing Committee

- a. Shall consist of at least two members of the congregation with accounting and financial experience as appointed by the Council.
- b. Shall conduct an audit of congregational funds, including general operating funds, building and memorial funds every two years or more often as the need is determined by the Council.
- c. At request of individual programs, ministries and agencies, or at the discretion of the Church Council, conduct financial audits of said programs, ministries and agencies (e.g. an internal audit of the Sunday School finances).
- d. They shall report results of financial audits to the Church Council.

K. Ad-Hoc Committees

- a. The Council, Council President, or boards may form Ad-Hoc Committees as needed and approved by members of the Church Council.
- b. Decisions made by Ad-Hoc Committees must be approved by the Church Council and/or voters as necessary prior to commencement of action.

L. External Committees or Groups Not Approved or Authorized

- a. Decisions or recommendations made by external groups that have not been vetted or approved by the Church council or voters of the congregation will not be recognized or endorsed.
- b. External committees or groups may present recommendations to the Church Council or Voters only after approval by the Church Council.

Approved and sent to District
August 27th, 2017