

CONSTITUTION

Living Word Lutheran Church • Rochester, Michigan

1.0 NAME

The name of this congregation shall be Living Word Lutheran Church.

2.0 MISSION

Empowered by God's Word and Sacraments, the mission of Living Word Lutheran Church, through both its church and school ministries, is to make known the love of Jesus Christ by word and deed within church and school, community and world.

3.0 CONFSSIONAL STANDARD

This congregation accepts without reservation:

3.1 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. Our beliefs and teachings are drawn from the Scriptures which we believe to be God's Living Word to people of this world, past, present, and future.

3.2 All the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as the true exposition of the Word of God. The Symbolical Books are these: the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord. These documents are available in the Church Office at your request.

4.0 MEMBERSHIP

4.1 DEFINITION OF MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this congregation includes the following:

4.1.1 We will differentiate between attenders and members. Attenders are those who wish to worship in our congregation and participate in the various ministries of the congregation. Membership, on the other hand, is defined as follows:

4.1.2 Baptized members are all who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and who are under the spiritual care of the pastor and this congregation, including the children who have not yet reaffirmed their faith.

4.1.3 Confirmed members are those baptized members who have reaffirmed the Lutheran faith, accept the confessional standard of section 3.0 of this constitution, share our vision, attend worship on a regular basis, who participate regularly in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and who participate actively in one of the church's ministries, and are not members of organizations whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God.

4.1.4 Voting members are confirmed members who meet the standard of sections 4.1.3 and 4.3, and 4.4.

4.1.5 Non-members are welcome to attend (but not vote at) any of Living Word's congregation or voters meetings providing they identify themselves to the chairman of the congregation as a visitor at the meeting. They may listen to any discussion, but may address the assembly or comment only with notification and permission of the chairman of the congregation prior to the meeting.

4.2 RECEPTION INTO MEMBERSHIP

Baptized and confirmed members are received through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, through the consent of one or both parents in the case of children who have been baptized in another Christian congregation, through the rite of Confirmation, through transfer from a sister congregation, through profession of faith or through reaffirmation of faith, after a period of appropriate orientation or instruction.

4.3 DUTIES OF MEMBERSHIP

Members of the congregation shall conform their entire lives to the rule of God's Word, and to that end make diligent use of the means of grace, exercise faithful stewardship of the many gifts and talents God has given them, impart and accept fraternal admonition as the need of such admonition becomes apparent, and be readily available for service in the kingdom of Christ within and beyond the congregation.

4.4 TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

4.4.1 Membership shall be terminated by transfer to a sister congregation, by death, by joining a congregation outside the fellowship of this congregation, or by excommunication (see 4.4.2 below).

4.4.2 Confirmed members who conduct themselves in an un-Christian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18; if they remain impenitent after proper admonition, they shall be excommunicated. Each case shall be presented individually to the voting congregation for a decision. If such members deliberately absent themselves from the meeting(s) at which their case is to be discussed, they shall be regarded as having excluded themselves from the membership of the congregation.

4.5 PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP

It is understood that all worship services, ministries and activities are open to both attenders and members, but only members have the right and privilege of holding leadership positions in the congregation.

5.0 CALLED WORKERS

5.1 This congregation shall establish the pastoral office, which shall be conferred only on such a pastor or candidate who professes and adheres to the confessional standard set forth in section 3 of this constitution, who is qualified for his work, and who has been endorsed by the Synod.

5.2 This congregation shall call to the position of teacher or other position only those individuals who profess and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in section 3 of this constitution, who is qualified for his/her work, and who has been endorsed by the Synod.

5.3 Any pastor, called worker or officer/director may be removed from office by the voting members by a two-thirds majority ballot vote, in Christian and lawful order, for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect, or inability to perform the duties of the office.

5.4 The congregation may request the resignation of any pastor, called worker or officer from his/her position in the congregation in the case of prolonged incapacity or general incompetence.

6.0 AUTHORITY OF THE CONGREGATION

6.1 The voting members shall be the governing body of this congregation and shall be empowered to administer and manage all its affairs. The establishment and conduct of all organizations, ministries, boards, committees, task forces and societies within the congregation or related directly to it shall be subject to the approval and supervision of the voting members.

6.2 All matters shall be decided by a majority vote of the voting members unless otherwise specified by this constitution or bylaws, excluding matters of doctrine and conscience, which shall be decided only on the basis of the Word of God.

6.3 The right of calling pastors or other called workers shall be vested in the voting members and shall not be delegated otherwise.

7.0 OFFICERS AND BOARDS

This congregation shall have a board of directors, a board of spiritual life, and a board of education. All of these boards shall periodically review their needs for further officers and boards every five years or when the obvious need arises. The purpose of the board of directors is to manage the temporal affairs of the congregation. The purpose of the board of spiritual life is to oversee the spiritual life of the congregation and minister to the needs of members of the congregation as well as workers and their families and to provide guidance to the pastor in leading the congregation. The purpose of the board of education is to oversee the school ministries of the congregation and provide guidance to the principal in directing the schools. The following shall serve as officers/directors/members of these boards:

7.1 THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND ITS OFFICERS/DIRECTORS

7.1.1 A chairman, who shall conduct the meetings of the voting members as well as the meetings of the directors.

7.1.2 A recording secretary, who shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the voting members as well as the meetings of the directors.

7.1.3 A treasurer, who shall be responsible for the financial records of the congregation, the paying of all bills and financial obligations of the congregation, and for the making of timely reports to the voting members and directors of the congregation.

7.1.4 A financial secretary, who shall be responsible for receiving and counting the congregations offerings, depositing the offerings, giving timely reports to the voting members, the directors, and individuals who have given offering to the congregation.

7.1.5 A director of friendship activities who shall be responsible for the development of regularly scheduled fellowship and friendship activities for members and attenders with the goal of strengthening the bond between members of the congregation as well as inviting unchurched friends and acquaintances to these events.

7.1.6 The chairman of the board of spiritual life shall be a director of the congregation and shall be responsible for the board of spiritual life's oversight of the spiritual life of the congregation.

7.1.7 A director of property and facility shall be responsible or working with the building manager and the coordinating of volunteer workers toward the goal of keeping the facility and surrounding land in good condition.

7.1.8 The chairman of the board of education shall be a director of the congregation and shall be responsible for the board of education's oversight of the school ministries of the congregation.

7.1.9 In the absence or inability to act of any of the officers/directors an individual shall be nominated and elected from the group present to fill that capacity until the officer/director is able to resume his/her responsibilities or his/her term expires.

7.2 THE BOARD OF SPIRITUAL LIFE AND ITS MEMBERS

7.2.1 A chairman, who shall conduct the meetings of the board of spiritual life, shall consult periodically with the pastor of the congregation, oversee the ministry of the other members of the board of spiritual life, and report to the board of directors and the congregation with recommendations pertinent to the spiritual life of the congregation.

7.2.2 All called or contracted members of the congregation's ministry staff shall meet regularly with the chairman of the board of spiritual life. This shall include the Pastor—and others who engage in the ministry of the congregation.

7.2.3 Five appointed members of Living Word who have demonstrated their commitment to Christ and their loyalty to Living Word by their participation in worship, Bible study, and the congregation's ministry. Such appointees may be referred to as elders by members of the congregation.

7.2.3.1 The role of the appointed members of the Board of Spiritual Life in conjunction with the chairman of the board and the pastor of the congregation would be to

- provide spiritual guidance and support to the pastor and other church workers in their ministry at Living Word
- pray for the congregation and the workers at Living Word
- encourage proper financial support of all workers at Living Word, including recommendations to the board of directors for salaries, wages and benefits
- support members of the congregation in their jurisdiction by phone contact or visitation as needed
- welcome new families into their jurisdiction by phone contact or visitation
- pray for the families in their jurisdiction

7.2.3.2 The duties of the appointed members of the Board of Spiritual Life are to meet regularly with the pastor for Bible study and prayer and to advise the pastor in matters related to the spiritual life of the congregation. They shall assume any other duties deemed appropriate by the pastor or chairman of the Board of Spiritual Life.

7.3 THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

7.3.1 A chairman, who shall conduct the meetings of the board of education, shall consult with the director of school ministries, oversee the ministry of the members of the board of education, and report to the board of directors and congregation with recommendations pertinent to the school ministries of the congregation.

7.3.2 Five appointed members of Living Word who have demonstrated their commitment to Christ and their loyalty to Living Word by their participation in worship, Bible study, and the congregation's ministry.

7.3.2.1 The role of the appointed members of the board of education, in conjunction with the chairman of the board, the director of school ministries would be to

- pray for the church, the school, the early childhood center, the students and staff, and the director of school ministries.
- recommend policy for the school and the early childhood center to be implemented by the director of school ministries.
- advise the director of school ministries in difficult and uncertain matters.
- advise the congregation in matters relating to the calling of teachers.
- advise the board of directors in matters related to the hiring or contracting of non-called teachers and staff.
- work with the board of spiritual life in personnel matters as they affect the ministry of the congregation.

7.4 BOARDS

The board of directors, the board of spiritual life and the board of education are the only boards established at this time. They shall meet as often as the pastor and chairman of these boards feel is necessary.

8.0 SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

This congregation shall be a member of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod as long as the Synod conforms to the congregation's confessional standards in section 3 of this constitution as determined by a majority vote of the congregation at a meeting called for that purpose.

9.0 DIVISION

9.1 If at any time a division should take place on account of doctrine, the property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those confirmed members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to section 3 of this constitution, as determined by the adjudication procedures of the Synod.

9.2 If division takes place for any other reason, the property shall remain with the majority of the confirmed members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to section 3 of this constitution, as determined by the adjudication procedures of the Synod.

9.3 In the event the congregation should dissolve, the property and all rights connected therewith shall be transferred to that District of the Synod in which the congregation held membership at the time of dissolution.

10.0 MEETINGS

Regular meetings of the voting members shall be held as determined in the bylaws. Announcement of the meeting shall be made in the services of the two previous Sundays or notification by mail or phone and the announcement of the meeting in the services of one previous Sunday. Such special meetings may be called at the request of three officers/directors or ten voting members, or the pastor and two officers.

11.0 QUORUM

All members present at a validly called meeting shall constitute a quorum.

12.0 LIMITATIONS ON HOLDING OFFICE

The following limitations on holding offices shall be in effect:

12.1.1 In conformity with the position of the Synod, women may hold all offices in the congregation with the exception of the pastoral office and the offices which are directly involved in the specific functions of the pastoral office.

12.1.2 In recognition of the right of all confirmed members to vote, the age at which a voting member may hold an office in the congregation shall be the majority age established by the laws in the state of Michigan. However, any confirmed member, duly chosen or elected, may have membership on any board, committee, task force, or society which the congregation shall establish.

13.0 AMENDMENTS

13.1 Amendments to provisions of this constitution except sections 2.0, 3.0, 5.0, 8.0, 13.0 may be adopted at regular voters' meetings, except as hereinafter otherwise provided:

1. That the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at a previous meeting of the voters assembly and published by posting in a conspicuous place in the church or by mail prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon;

2. That an affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the voters present is secured.

13.2 In addition to the above requirements, proposals to amend sections 2.0, 3.0, 5.0, 8.0, 13.0 shall require that previous notice of such amendment and discussion of the same shall be presented at two regular meetings of the voters before the meeting at which the proposed amendment is to receive action. Due notice of the fact that a vote will be taken shall be given to all voting members of the congregation. Any changes in these articles shall not destroy the essential meaning of the same. Whether or not this has occurred shall be decided, if challenged, by a decision of the Commission on Adjudication of the synodical District in which the congregation holds its synodical membership.

BYLAWS

14.0 PROCEDURES FOR CALLING PASTORS AND OTHER WORKERS

14.1 When a pastor or other worker is to be called, every member of the congregation shall have the privilege of making one or more nominations. The congregation shall also ask the President of the synodical District for recommendations. A special

committee, board, or task force shall be appointed by the voters or by the chairman of the congregation acting on behalf of the voters for the purpose of proposing nominees and bringing information about nominees to the voters.

14.2 In the nomination process the respective board, committee, task force shall submit names to the respective District President for information and evaluation. After receiving information, recommendations, and further nominations from the District President, the respective board, committee, task force shall present to the congregation, by means of a public announcement, more than one candidate, together with a biographical sketch of each.

14.3 At a regular voters' meeting, or a special meeting called for the purpose of electing a new pastor or other called worker, the preferred list resulting from the procedures in 14.2 above will be presented by the call committee as the election slate to the voters. This slate may be amended by means of a two-thirds vote of those present.

14.4 Balloting shall proceed by means of a secret ballot vote. A majority is needed in order to determine the disposition of a call.

14.5 After a candidate has been elected, the voters shall be asked to agree to be satisfied with the individual selected by the voters and will be asked to declare the election of the pastor or called worker to be unanimous.

14.6 The congregation may opt to prioritize the candidates to the extent that if the first candidate chosen for a call declines, the second candidate chosen may be issued the call without reconvening in official meeting. This may not be done for a third, fourth or other successive candidate.

14.7 In an urgent situation, the board of directors in conjunction with the appropriate call committee and the pastor may convene an emergency call meeting following one of the congregation's weekend worship services providing suitable written, voice or electronic notification has been given during the preceding week.

14.8 The congregation shall not treat the calling of teachers or other workers different from the calling of a pastor.

15.0 CHURCH COUNCIL/BOARD OF DIRECTORS

5.1 MEMBERSHIP

The church council shall be the board of directors and shall consist of the chairman, the recording secretary, the director of friendship activities, the treasurer, the financial secretary, the pastor and the elected chairperson of any board which the voters choose to establish. The chairman and recording secretary of the congregation shall serve as chairman and recording secretary of the board of directors. The chairman, in consultation with the other members of the board, may invite any other workers or members of the congregation to attend the directors meetings as is deemed necessary. Such other individuals are advisory to the board and have no vote.

15.2 MEETINGS

The board of directors, the board of spiritual life and the board of education shall meet at least two times per year and then other times as needed. Meetings may be called by the chairman and one member of the board of directors, by the pastor and one member of the board, or by any two members of the board. Notification of meeting may be by mail, by personal contact, or by phone at least 48 hours in advance. A majority of the voting members of the board shall constitute a quorum.

15.3 DUTIES

It shall be the principal duty of the board of directors to coordinate the program and activities of the various ministries of the congregation between meetings of the voters and will serve as legal representative on behalf of the congregation.

16.0 NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

16.1 A nominating committee or task force may be established by the board of directors to facilitate the election of officers/directors. The slate may consist of one or two names for each office. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. No person shall be nominated without his/her consent.

16.2 All officers/directors shall be elected by a majority ballot vote and voting shall continue until a clear majority has been established after candidates receiving the lowest number of votes have been eliminated in each succeeding ballot.

16.3 The officers/directors are elected for a term of one year, and may be reelected to serve a maximum of three consecutive years.

16.4 The chairpersons of all other boards, committees, and task forces shall be elected or appointed for a term of one year, and may be reelected to serve a maximum of three consecutive years without review of the person and position by the Pastor and board of directors. If mutually agreeable the chairperson may be elected/appointed for another term of one year to be reviewed annually.

16.5 The members of all boards, committees, and task forces shall be appointed by the respective chairperson or by the board of directors for a term of one year, and may be reappointed to serve a maximum of three consecutive years without review of the person and position by the Pastor and chairman of said board, committee, or task force. If mutually agreeable the person may be elected/appointed for another term of one year to be reviewed annually.

16.6 In case of a vacancy in an elective office, the board of directors shall appoint an individual to fill the term of office. At the next scheduled meeting for the purpose of electing officers/directors the voters shall elect the appointee or another individual according to the procedures set forth in 16.1, 16.2 and 16.3 above.

17.0 OFFICIAL DUTIES

17.1 GUIDELINES FOR OFFICERS AND BOARD CHAIRPERSONS AND MEMBERS

Officers, chairpersons and members of boards, committees, and task forces shall perform the duties prescribed in the constitution. The congregation shall also have the privilege from time to time of detailing and enlarging these responsibilities by majority vote of the voters at a properly called meeting. It may also call such other boards, committees and task forces into being as it may need from time to time.

17.2 GUIDELINES FOR BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

17.2.1 All committees shall be established for a period of one year at the end of which time it shall go out of business. The voters will need to reevaluate and reestablish the committee at the end of one year if it deems appropriate.

17.2.2 All task forces shall be established for a period of 6 months at the end of which time it shall go out of business. The voters will need to reevaluate and reestablish the task force at the end of 6 months if it deems appropriate.

18.0 MEETINGS

18.1 The voters shall meet once each year or as needed. Meetings shall be called according to the guidelines detailed in section 10.0.

18.2 All boards, committees, and task forces shall meet as needed. Minutes shall be kept of all meetings by a recording secretary appointed at the time of the meeting. Such minutes will be made available to any member of the congregation who requests them.

19.0 RULES OF ORDER

Generally, decisions made by the board of directors and other boards of the congregation may be made by common consensus according to the principles laid down in Scripture. If it becomes necessary, the chairman may request that the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order be followed.

20.0 AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the voters by a majority of all voting members present, provided the proposed change has been announced in a previous meeting or has been submitted in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting to all voting members.

Adopted 10/18/92.

Name amended 7/11/93

Revised and amended 10/8/95

Revised and amended 2/23/97

Revised and amended 10/24/99

Revised and amended 4/13/2003