

Interim Ministry Resources

Chapter 10 Constitution

Progression in the Development of a Congregation Constitution (4)

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Progression in the Development of a Congregation Constitution

Introduction

A constitution changes to address the context. This progression can be seen in the development of the model constitution for congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church since its beginning in 1987

Office of the Secretary - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Constitutions

Select archived Congregation Constitutional Amendments from the list below.

<https://www.elca.org/constitution> [2019 Model Constitution for Congregations](#)

<http://www.elca.org/en/Resources/Office-of-the-Secretary>

<https://www.elca.org/About/Churchwide/Office-of-the-Secretary/Constitutions>

[Images for Office of the Secretary – Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#)

View Synod Constitution - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

http://www.nwswi.org/webfiles/fnitoools/documents/synod_constitution_2013_required_provisions_added.pdf

[Images for Synod Constitution - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin](#)

and its predecessors:

- In 1762, 26 years before the U.S. Constitution was ratified, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg prepared a constitution for [St. Michael Lutheran Church](#), Philadelphia.
- Constitution adapted from one originally adopted in 1870 by Scandinavian Lutherans at West Immanuel Lutheran Church, Town of Alden, Polk County, Wisconsin.
- Provisions from a Norwegian Lutheran Church in America congregation constitution of 1886 in Rice Lake, Wisconsin.
- Constitution for Lyster Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Buffalo County, Wisconsin adopted at the annual meeting held on January 14 and February 4, 1904. Translation made from the Norwegian in 1937.
- The Constitution of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ripplinger, WI is of uncertain origin. The early notes referred to the church name as Friedens Gemeinde. The German language was used. The congregation was served by the pastor from Trinity Lutheran in Loyal for a while and was yoked for at least 20 years with a church in Vefikind that no longer exists. A note in the history relates that a Rev. Eske drew up a constitution in English in 1927 but there is no reference to a church body. It is not known if that document was the constitution in use for years. The church was on its own for about 20 years in the 1940s and 1950s. The pastor from Faith Lutheran in Marshfield came out to lead worship for 3-4 years. The congregation joined the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS) when the St. John's Lutheran Church - Spencer pastor started serving them in 1963, and in 1984 they left LCMS to join the American Lutheran Church. The congregation is currently yoked with St. John's Lutheran Church – Spencer as a part of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The congregation dropped the old constitution and adopted the ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations 2016.
- Evangelical Lutheran Church (1946-1959) from Constitution for Holway Evangelical Lutheran Church, Holway Township, Polk County, Wisconsin adopted in 1957.

Evangelical Lutheran Church (United States) - Wikipedia

The Norwegian Lutheran Church of America was formed by merger of the [Hauge Synod](#) (est. 1876), the [Norwegian Synod](#) (est. 1853), and the [United Norwegian Lutheran Church of America](#) (est. 1890). The NLCA changed its name to The Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC) in 1946. In 1960, the ELC joined with other Lutheran churches to form the [American Lutheran Church](#). This coalescence of Lutheran churches continued into recent times, with the ALC joining others to form the [Evangelical Lutheran Church in America \(ELCA\)](#) in 1988.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelical_Lutheran_Church_\(United_States\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelical_Lutheran_Church_(United_States))

[Images for Evangelical Lutheran Church \(United States\)](#)

- American Lutheran Church (1960-1986)

American Lutheran Church - Wikipedia

The American Lutheran Church (ALC or sometimes TALC) was a [Christian Protestant denomination](#) in the [United States](#) that existed from 1960 to 1987. Its headquarters was in [Minneapolis, Minnesota](#). Upon its formation in 1960, the ALC designated [Augsburg Publishing House](#) (est. 1891), also located in Minneapolis, as the church publisher. The *Lutheran Standard* was the official magazine of the ALC.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Lutheran_Church

[Images for American Lutheran Church \(ALC\)](#)

- An older constitution of unknown origin and date from St. Luke Congregation in Foster, Wisconsin.

Constitution for St. Michael Lutheran Church of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1762

Godly governance - The Lutheran Magazine

It recognizes that the church's power belongs to Christ

In 1762, 26 years before the U.S. Constitution was ratified, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg prepared a constitution for **St. Michael Lutheran Church**, Philadelphia. Overcoming some of his personal tendencies toward authoritarian systems, he put in place governing principles “suitable to the needs of this land,” such as “approved by at least two-thirds,” “not decided by the Pastors alone” and “must be carefully and well considered by the whole Church Council” (Faith E. Rohrbough, **Lutheran Quarterly**, 1996). Muhlenberg was ahead of his time—it’s likely the constitution of your congregation or church-related organization contains some of these phrases. Governance has to do with the ways a collection of people decide about their common life and mission. “Important and weighty matters,” as Muhlenberg called them, are shared responsibilities. Definitions of governance emphasize the use of power to control or rule. The **ELCA Constitution** clarifies whose power is at work: “All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this church are to be carried out under his rule and authority.”

http://www.thelutheran.org/article/article.cfm?article_id=7619

Images for Godly governance - The Lutheran Magazine

<https://www.livinglutheran.org/contact-us/>

<https://www.livinglutheran.org/issues/>

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS
Of
WEST IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Town of Alden, Polk County, Wisconsin**

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering: And let us consider one another to provoke onto love – and good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more as we see the day approaching. Heb. 10:24-25.

Paragraph I. In Jesus Name: - Inasmuch as the Word of God, 1Cor. 14:40, 1Cor. 2:5 teaches that in every congregation all things shall be done decently and in order, - we, the Scandinavian Lutherans in this community, organized into a congregation in 1870, have adapted the following constitution in accordance with which the internal and external affairs of the congregation shall be administered and decided. Today, 143 years later, we of this age, seeking to maintain the spirit of the Fathers, have sought to revise certain parts of this constitution so as to adapt it to a new age.

Paragraph II. The name of this congregation shall be: West Immanuel Lutheran Congregation in Polk County, Wisconsin.

Paragraph III. This congregation believes and confesses that the Holy Word of God as revealed in the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments is the only source and rule of faith, doctrine, and life.

Paragraph IV. This congregation accepts and holds the Apostolic, the Nicene and the Athanasian creeds and the unaltered Augsburg Confession together with Luther's Small Catechism; and that nothing contrary to these confessions shall be taught in the congregation either in sermons or in the instruction of the young.

Paragraph V. This congregation will not call or use anyone as a pastor, unless he has been duly examined, rightly called, and ordained by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the holy office, and who adheres to the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments and the confessions named in Paragraph IV.

Paragraph VI.

- a. The public worship of the congregation shall be conducted in conformity with the ritual contained in the Lutheran Book of Worship, modified, however, according to circumstances as the congregation may deem advisable.
- b. While the buildings of the congregation shall be open to all people to share in its worship, instruction, pastoral care, and fellowship, the congregation rejects all fellowship with organizations, secret or open, which are avowedly religious or which practice forms of religion without confessing faith in the Triune God and in Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God incarnate to be our only Savior from sin, and which thus teach salvation by works.
- c. Ceremonies of lodges or other such organizations shall not be permitted in the buildings, or premises, of the congregation; nor shall its pastor(s) or lay assistant(s) take part in such ceremonies wherever they are conducted.

Paragraph VII.

- a. Members of this congregation shall be those who have been legally received into the congregation and who have not withdrawn or been expelled.
- b. All children of parents belonging to the congregation became members through Baptism.
- c. In order to become a member of the congregation an adult must:
 1. Be baptized with Christian baptism.
 2. Accept the canonical books of the Bible and the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 3. Have at least as much knowledge of Christianity as is required for confirmation. (The congregation, of course, desires that all its members be confirmed.)
 4. Not live an openly un-Christian life. (Gal. 5:19-21).
 5. Not be a member of any association or society which has religious exercises from which the name of Jesus as a matter of principle is excluded at funerals or other occasions. Such denial of the name of Jesus makes the society anti-Christian according to the Word of God. Matthew 10:32-42; 12:30; Romans 10:9-10; Col. 3:17; 2John 7.
 6. Declare that he accepts this constitution and is willing in every respect to abide by it.

Paragraph VIII. Anyone who desires to become a member of the congregation shall report to the pastor who shall, together with the Board of Deacons, investigate whether the applicant meets the above requirements and when these have been satisfactorily complied with, new members shall be received into the fellowship of the congregation at a service of public worship.

Paragraph IX.

- a. The power and authority of the congregation shall be exercised through the congregational meeting which shall be called and conducted in conformity with the civil laws and provisions of the constitution and bylaws of the congregation.
- b. The annual meeting of the congregation shall be held the first Sunday of February.
- c. A quorum for any regular or special meeting of the congregation shall be at least 25 voting members.

Paragraph X.

- a. All special congregational meetings shall be announced and called by the president in conformity with Paragraph IX, or if this cannot be done, by private notices or public announcements signed by the president. If a majority of the Board of Trustees, or ten voting members, in writing, request the pastor or president to call a meeting for a specified purpose – (the purpose must be announced) – it shall be the duty of the pastor or president to call such a meeting. If the pastor or the president neglects, or refuses to call a meeting, then one of the trustees may call a meeting on such a written request.
- b. The pastor shall be notified of the time, place, and purpose for which a special meeting of the congregation or church council has been called.
- c. The congregation has supreme power and authority in its own affairs. Such power and authority shall be exercised in the congregational meetings which shall consist of voting members whose resolutions shall be valid when the meeting has been legally called, providing that the resolutions are not contrary to the Word of God, the Lutheran Confessions, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and this constitution. All contrary resolutions are void.

Paragraph XI. The congregation shall elect five deacons, five trustees, a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and financial secretary and may, if found necessary, other officers from time to time for special services. Specific duties and responsibilities shall be found in the Position Duties and Responsibilities book (herein called PDR), which is updated annually by the church council.

- a. Duties of the Deacons:
 1. Provide speakers for services during a vacancy or other emergencies.
 2. Act as religious advisors, or instructors, for the congregation and serve as advisors to the Board of Education.
 3. Encourage the members to live a Christian life and where disciplinary action is required, it shall be their duty, together with the pastor, to see to it that the constitution is upheld.
 4. To make sure that no preacher or evangelist receives permission to conduct services unless recommended by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the pastor, or the Board of Deacons.
- b. Duties of the Trustees:
 1. To have charge of the financial and material affairs of the congregation.
 2. Miscellaneous expenditures which exceed \$5,000 over and above the normal operating cost of the congregation must have congregational approval.
 3. They shall have no other authority than that which is conferred upon them by the congregation, and these instructions may be changed, or annulled, at any legal meeting of the congregation.
- c. Duties of the President:

The president's duty shall be to lead the regular congregational and council meetings. In his absence, it becomes the vice president's duty. If the vice president is absent, one of the trustees shall take charge in order to elect a temporary chairman. If the president refuses, or neglects to bring a motion to the floor that has been properly made and seconded, the congregation may ask for his resignation providing the motion is not contrary to this constitution. This decision rests with the Board of Deacons.
- d. Duties of the Secretary:

The secretary shall keep all records of the congregational and church council meetings. Such records are to be presented on call of the president at the following meeting when they shall be read, approved and entered into the official records of the congregation.
- e. Duties of the Treasurer:

The treasurer shall keep a record of all monies, present monthly financial statements to the church council and prepare an annual financial statement. The obligations shall be approved by the church or church council.
- f. Duties of the Financial Secretary:

The financial secretary shall keep all records of individual contributions and prepare a final statement at the end of the calendar year, showing the total contributions of each member. However, quarterly statements are available upon request.
- g. Term of Office:

All church council members shall serve a three-year term with voluntary succession thereafter.

Paragraph XII. The church council, together with the pastor, shall present a roster of voting members in good standing annually, in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and bylaws for approval by the congregation. The term "in good standing" should be defined as follows:

- a. Those who participate regularly in the life and worship of the congregation.
- b. Those partake regularly of Holy Communion.
- c. Those who contribute to the congregational treasury regularly.
- d. Those who have attained the legal voting age.
- e. Those who are not under church discipline and who are not guilty of conduct that is grossly unbecoming a member of the Body of Christ.

Paragraph XIII. A person who is not eligible to vote, may by majority vote of the congregation, be granted the right to speak at any congregational meeting.

Paragraph XIV. It shall be the duty of all members to attend the business meetings of the congregation. If they do not attend, they are bound to abide by the decisions made by the members present.

Paragraph XV. Questions of doctrine and conscience cannot be decided by majority vote but only according to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions of the church.

Paragraph XVI. A two-thirds majority shall be required:

- a. To call a pastor.
- b. To deny a member the privilege of voting.
- c. To change this constitution.

In difficult matters the congregation shall seek the advice of experienced and just men.

Paragraph XVII. A simple majority shall be sufficient to elect officers, change the bylaws, and other matters of business that may properly come before the congregation. In case of a tie vote, the president shall cast the deciding vote.

Paragraph XVIII. To the office of deacons, trustee, assistant, other positions of trust shall be elected only voting members who, besides having the necessary practical ability and Christian knowledge, have a reputation of being members who show love and zeal for the Word of God by living a Christian life and diligently hearing the public preaching of the Word and partaking of the Lord's Supper.

Paragraph SIS. When a two-thirds majority of the voting members present at a congregational meeting find that the pastor cannot work for the welfare of the congregation he can be asked to resign and his resignation shall be effective after 30 days. If the Board of Deacons should determine that the pastor is guilty of false doctrine, or ungodly living, he can be asked to leave immediately. When a pastor decides to resign, or accept another call, he shall terminate his ministry as soon as possible, normally within a month's time.

Paragraph XX. As a general rule, no child shall begin confirmation instruction until he has completed the sixth grade in public school and shall be instructed for a period of two years before being confirmed. Exceptions to this rule may be granted at the discretion of the Board of Deacons upon recommendation by the pastor.

Paragraph XXI. In case of a division in the congregation, which God in his mercy forbid, all property of the congregation shall belong to that part of the congregation which remains faithful to this constitution.

Paragraph XXII. Should the congregation by operation of law, or otherwise cease to exist, all property and funds remaining after the payment of all obligations shall be deeded to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and/or its successor, or such other corporation existing for religious or charitable purposes.

Paragraph XXIII. Paragraphs 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and this article shall be unalterable, and not amendment to this constitution shall conflict therewith. Other paragraphs can be changed at a legally called business meeting in accord with the provisions of the constitution. A proposed amendment to this constitution must be presented in writing at a legally called business meeting. If the amendment is accepted by a majority vote, it shall be referred to a subsequent legally called business meeting held at least six months later when a two-thirds majority vote of those present and become effective immediately.

May God, the head and Lord of the church, who purchased us with his blood, bless us and grant us salvation for his name's sake.

BYLAWS

Part I. Communion Participation

- A. Participation in Holy Communion shall be open to confirmed members of this congregation, youth who have received instruction in the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and to individual members of other congregations who accept the Lutheran teaching in regard to Holy Communion as set forth in Paragraph IV.
- B. Holy Communion requires sincere repentance, faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, an earnest desire to amend one's sinful life as well as acceptance of the scriptural teaching of the Real Presence of Christ with his body and blood in the sacrament. Such registration forms, or oral announcements, shall be used as will make prospective participants aware of these requirements.
- C. A record of participation in Holy Communion shall be maintained. If a member of another congregation communes, notice shall be sent to his pastor.

Part II. Membership

A. Confirmed individuals

1. Applicants for membership shall be received into the congregation at any regular worship service, and the following order shall be used:

Dear friends in Christ: Inasmuch as you have asked to join the congregation of West Immanuel Lutheran Church and your application for membership has been duly approved, I ask you now, on behalf of the congregation.

Do you accept and support the teaching of the Lutheran churchy as set forth in its historic confessions? If so, answer I do.

Do you accept and will abide by the constitution and bylaws of this congregation? If so, answer I do.

Do you promise to live in a manner that brings honor to our Lord Jesus Christ, and will you faithfully participate in the public worship of the congregation? If so, answer I do, and I will.

Do you promise to use your spiritual gifts for the benefit of this fellowship and the wider church, and to support, to the best of your ability, the ministry of this congregation, both locally and in its world-wide mission? If so, answer I do.

On behalf of these candidates for church membership, I now ask you, the congregation of West Immanuel Lutheran Church, will you receive these individuals in Christian love and support them with your prayers and concern? If so, answer we will.

B. Discontinuance of Membership

1. A confirmed member in good standing who desires to change his membership to another Lutheran congregation shall, upon request, receive a letter of transfer signed by the pastor.
2. A confirmed member who does not, for a period of one year, partake of Holy Communion, support the church with his offerings, and who does not appear to participate in the life and worship of the congregation, shall be visited by the pastor and the congregation's officers and encouraged by them to activate his membership. If, during the second year, the confirmed member does not actively participate, his name shall be removed from the membership roster of the congregation but be retained on a responsibility list as one who is in special need of the congregation's prayer and concern.

C. Discipline

In exercising discipline as provided in the constitution, the following shall be the procedure:

1. A person who is requested to appear before the Board of Deacons for possible discipline shall be advised in writing no less than ten days prior to the hearing. The written notice shall include the time and place of the hearing and shall specify the exact reason for the possible discipline. If such a person fails to appear at the time and place and hearing without a valid excuse, the Board of Deacons may proceed with the hearing and may reach its conclusion in his absence.
2. Should the person be found guilty by a four out of five vote of the Board of Deacons, the Board shall propose one of the following:
 - a. Censure before the Board of Deacons or the congregation.
 - b. Suspension of membership until proof is given of sufficient repentance and amendment.
 - c. Exclusion from membership and denial of the Sacrament. In event of the imposition of (b) or (c) above, the action of the Board of Deacons shall be in writing.

Part III. The Pastor

When the congregation has voted to call a pastor, it shall issue a letter of call to the pastor-elect in a form approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It shall be signed by the chairman and secretary of the meeting at which the call was voted and shall be attested by the signature of the president of the district. The call shall normally be for an indefinite time.

Part IV. Meetings of the Congregation

- A. The annual meeting shall receive reports from all organizations of the congregation. Such reports, including a financial statement, shall be submitted to the church office for the inclusion in the annual report not later than January 10.
- B. Unless otherwise ordered, parliamentary procedures shall be in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

Part V. Officers and Boards

A. Membership and Meetings of the Church Council

1. If a vacancy occurs on the church council, the council shall fill the vacancy until the next meeting of the congregation. Filling the unexpired term of another shall not prevent a council member from serving two successive terms.
2. A member of the church council who is absent from two consecutive regular meetings shall be consulted by the president of the congregation. If he is absent from three consecutive regular meetings without valid excuse, the council may declare the office vacant.
3. A quorum for any regular or special meeting of the church council shall be one-half of its membership.
4. A special meeting may be called by the pastor, the president, or any three members of the church council. Notice of such meeting shall be given not less than five days prior to the meeting and shall be announced at the public service if one is held during that period. If this is not possible, an emergency meeting may be called, providing three-fourths of the council members are present. A two-third majority vote shall be necessary to pass any motion at such a meeting.

Part VI. Nominating Committee

The annual meeting of the congregation shall elect a nominating committee of three voting members whose duty it shall be to present in nomination candidates who have given their consent to fill the elective offices being vacated at the next annual meeting.

Part VII. Church Council

It shall be the duty of the church council to present to the annual meeting a proposed budget for the ensuing year. This shall include their recommendations on pastor's salary, synodical obligations, and various other expenditures that can be anticipated.

Drafting a Constitution for a Congregation of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America in 1886

A second organizational meeting was held on Wednesday, January 20, 1886, at the home of Arnt Hanson, with Reverend Johannes E. Nord of Rice Lake serving as chairman. The drafting of a constitution was undertaken, and the following articles approved:

1. The name of the congregation was to be the Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Church.
2. Public worship was to follow the form prescribed by the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America.
3. To be accepted for membership, a person was required to be
 - a) Baptized into the Christian faith;
 - b) Not guilty of unchristian behavior;
 - c) Willing to support the constitution of the church and to give financial support according to his ability;
 - d) Twenty-one years of age and confirmed in order to vote.
4. The pastor was to be the shepherd of the flock, and three members were to be chosen as his assistants, to “work with him spiritually wherever and whenever he needs them, always be aware of any religious help needed in the congregation, seek new members and interest people in the work of the church.”

Seventeen men signed the constitution that day: John K. Swenson, Peter Johnson, Gabriel Nilson, Ole Hanson, Einar Olson, Ole Olson (No. 2), Olaus Brathen, Arnt Hanson, John Lee, John Martenson, Charley Hagen, Theodore Thompson, Peter Olson, Ole Gunderson, Edward Britten, John P. Joseph and Erick Olson Rud.

Article I

Name of Congregation

The name of this congregation shall be Lyster Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Buffalo County, Wisconsin.

Article II

Confession

1. This congregation believes and confesses that the Holy Scriptures, the Canonical books of the Old and the New Testaments, are the Word of God, revealed for the salvation of men, and therefore the only source and rule for faith, doctrine, and life.
2. This congregation accepts the Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds, as well as the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism. All preaching and teaching in the congregation shall conform to these confessions.

Article III

Membership

1. Members of this congregation shall be such as have been lawfully admitted and have not since their admission withdrawn or been expelled.
2. Children of parents who hold membership in the congregation become members through baptism.
3. Adults who are to be admitted to membership must
 - a) Have been baptized and confirmed
 - b) Declare that they accept this constitution and are willing to abide by it in all matters
 - c) Express willingness to share in the financial obligations of the congregation
 - d) Lead a Christian life
4. The right to vote shall be extended to all confirmed members, men and women, who have attained eighteen years of age and who contribute toward the financial support of the congregation.

Article IV

Purpose and Aim

1. The purpose of this congregation shall be to work for the preservation and extension of the kingdom of God through Word and Sacrament.
2. The congregation seeks to attain this aim through divine services, congregational meetings, and the instruction of the young in the Word of God, as well as through the private use of the Word of God on the part of its members.

Article V

Services and Congregational Meetings

1. Divine services shall be conducted according to the Ritual and Altar Book of the Church of Norway, with only such alterations as may be deemed advisable by the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America.
2. The congregation shall have the supreme power and authority in all of its own affairs. Such power and authority shall be exercised at the congregational meeting composed of voting members. Its resolutions shall be valid if the meeting has been called in a legal manner, and if they are not in conflict with the Word of God and this constitution.
 - a) The congregational meeting shall be called by the Pastor according to state laws. It shall be announced at three successive public services, and the principal matters to be discussed shall be made known.
 - b) In case a congregational meeting is to be held at a time when the congregation is without a pastor, written notices shall be posted at least three weeks in advance in at least six convenient locations within the boundaries of the congregation.
 - c) The Pastor shall call a special meeting at the written request of a majority of the Board of Trustees or of ten members of the congregation. Such petition and call must state definitely the time and purpose of such a meeting. If the pastor neglects or refuses to call the meeting, one of the trustees shall upon such written request call it.
 - d) If, in the absence of the pastor, a matter which cannot be postponed requires the calling of a meeting, such meeting shall be called by a majority of the Board of Trustees.
 - e) The congregation shall elect the chairman of the congregational meeting.
 - f) The annual congregational meeting shall be held in the month of December.

Article VI

Officers

1. The officers of the congregation shall be
 - a) *Pastor.* He must be properly tested and ordained by the Church to his sacred office. The calling of a pastor requires a two-thirds majority of the votes cast at a congregational meeting.
 - b) *Deacons.* They shall assist the pastor in the spiritual care of the congregation. Together with the pastor (or alone, in case of vacancy in the pastoral office) they shall constitute the Congregational Council, whose duty it is to watch over the

spiritual welfare of the congregation. They shall be elected at the annual meeting, and their term of office shall be three years, one member being elected each year.

- c) *Trustees*. They shall have charge of the secular affairs of the congregation. They shall be elected in the same way as the Deacons.
 - d) *Treasurer*. He shall keep the accounts of the congregation, receive all contributions for the maintenance of the congregation and disburse all such monies in accordance with resolutions of the congregation.
 - e) *Auditors*. They shall audit the accounts of the congregation and make a report at the annual meeting.
 - f) *Secretary*. He shall keep a record of the proceedings at the meetings of the congregation and preserve its archives. The Treasurer, the Auditors, and the Secretary shall be elected at the annual meeting, and their terms of office shall be one year.
2. All the officers shall be responsible to the congregation for the conduct of their office. They may be discharged from their office if need be. The following shall be valid reasons for deposing the Pastor or the Teacher: obstinate adherence to false doctrine in spite of admonition, offensive life, and continued unfaithfulness in the conduct of the office. For the deposing of Pastor or Teacher a vote must be taken as in the calling of a Pastor.

Article VII *Church Discipline*

Discipline in the congregation shall be exercised in accordance with Matthew 18:15-18.

Article VIII *Property*

The real and personal property of the congregation shall not be disposed of or mortgaged except according to resolution adopted by a two-thirds majority at a legally called congregational meeting. Should there be a schism in this congregation – which may God in His mercy forbid! – the property shall belong to that group which remains faithful to this Constitution and its By-Laws. If neither group can be accused of unfaithfulness to the Constitution and its By-Laws, the property shall belong to the majority.

Article IX *Synodical Affiliation*

This congregation shall be affiliated with the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America.

Article X *Amendments*

1. An amendment to this Constitution must be presented at the annual meeting of the congregation and cannot be adopted until at the following meeting. A two-thirds majority of the votes cast shall be required for adoption.
2. Article II and this present Article (X) cannot be altered or amended.

AMENDMENTS Section I (Constitution, Article III)

1. Anyone who wishes to become a member of this congregation shall make application to the Pastor or one of the Deacons, who together with the Congregational Council shall investigate whether the applicant has the qualifications listed in Article III of the Constitution. If the Congregational Council favors the applicant's admission, the matter shall be presented at the next congregational meeting for final decision.
2. The congregation desires that all of its members shall in all earnestness strive for their own salvation as well as that of the brethren, and that they shall assist the congregation in its struggle with the world and the devil and in its work for the extension of the kingdom of God.
3. All members shall see to it that the children of the congregation are brought up and instructed in the Christian faith.
4. All self-supporting members shall, according to their ability, contribute toward the financial support of the congregation.
5. All voting members shall be in duty bound to attend all legally held congregational meetings. Those who do not attend shall submit to the resolutions adopted.
6. No saloon- or tavern-keeper shall be admitted to membership.

Eligibility to Vote

1. All who for one year been in arrears with their dues without a legitimate reason acceptable to the congregation shall not be eligible to vote until such neglect has been rectified.
2. Members who are subjected to church discipline shall be deprived of the right to vote from the time their case is presented to the congregation until it has been dismissed.

Section II
(Constitution, Article V)
Congregational Meetings

1. The congregational meeting shall be called to order by the Pastor or, in his absence, by one of the Deacons. All congregational meetings are opened with the singing of a hymn, Scripture reading and prayer, and closed with prayer.
2. The order of business at the annual meeting shall be:
 - a) Reports
 - 1) Secretary
 - 2) Pastor and Board of Deacons
 - 3) Parochial school teacher
 - 4) Treasurer
 - 5) Board of Trustees
 - 6) Special committees
 - b) Action on applications for membership
 - c) Election of officers and committees
 - d) Unfinished business
 - e) Other business
3. In elections and other resolutions, a majority vote shall rule, unless otherwise decided. The meeting may decide as to method of voting.
4. The office of Deacon and Trustee cannot be held by one person at the same time.

Section III
(Constitution, Article VI)
A. Calling a Pastor. His Duties

1. When a Pastor is called a congregational meeting is announced in the customary manner.
2. In calling a Pastor the vote shall be cast by ballot.
3. The Congregation Council and the Board of Trustees shall send a letter of call using the form adopted by the congregation.

The Letter of Call

According to resolution adopted at a congregational meeting of Lyster Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Buffalo County, Wisconsin, on the day of,, we, the undersigned, extend to you a call to become Pastor of aforesaid congregation.

As our congregation we demand of you:

- a) That you publicly and privately teach the Word of God in its truth and purity in accordance with the holy Scriptures and our Lutheran creeds and that you administer the holy sacraments as instituted by our Lord.
- b) That you publicly and privately lead a life worthy of your office as a servant of the Word.
- c) That you make frequent calls upon the sick, the poor, and the needy in the congregation and, as far as your other pastoral duties permit, look after the instruction of the young in the Christian faith.
- d) That you in all matters abide by the Constitution, By-Laws, and resolutions of this congregation.
- e) That you are a member of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America as long as the congregation does not alter its synodical affiliation.

On behalf of the congregation we in turn pledge and promise

- a) That we as a Christian congregation will respect you as the depositary of the office of public instruction in the congregation and, as such, we will be dutiful and obedient to you in accordance with the Word of God and the Constitution, By-Laws, and resolutions of this congregation.
- b) That we, whenever called upon and according to our ability and opportunity, will assist you in word and deed in the conduct of your office, in the maintenance of churchly order, and in the exercise of church discipline in the congregation.
- c) That we, as becomes a Christian congregation, will share all good things with you as our teacher. In addition to free dwelling (also garage, barn, chicken house, pasture for one or two cows), a yearly salary of \$....., three festival offerings, and incidental surplice fees.

On behalf of the congregation we make these demands of you and pledge ourselves to fulfill these promises, while we beseech the Chief Shepherd and Overseer to guide you and us by His Holy Spirit to build upon the everlasting foundation and cornerstone in Zion, Jesus Christ.

4. If the pastor accepts the call, he shall be installed at a public service by another pastor selected by the congregation. At this time, he shall promise to abide by the Letter of Call, whereupon he is declared to be the pastor and shepherd of the congregation.

B. The Board of Deacons and the Congregational Council

1. The Board of Deacons shall consist of three members, one member being elected each year. Their term of office shall be three years.
2. A vacancy in the Board of Deacons shall be filled by election at a congregational meeting.
3. The Deacons shall set a good example by their conduct within the congregation. They shall visit the poor and the needy, bringing them comfort and help as God grants them grace.
4. In the absence of the Pastor and in case of a vacancy in the pastoral office, the Deacons shall make temporary arrangements so that the spiritual care of the congregation is not neglected.
5. They shall elect from among their number a secretary who shall keep a record of all the resolutions adopted by the Congregation Council.
6. The Congregational Council meets at least once every three months to discuss the spiritual status of the congregation. At such meetings the Council considers attendance at church services and the needs of the poor as well as what measures should be adopted to promote the spiritual growth of the congregation and the alleviation of suffering wherever it may be found.
7. When parochial school is held it shall be the duty of the Congregation Council to supervise the school, its teacher, and the pupils, as well as to remind the parents of their duty toward their children in cases where there is negligence in this respect.
8. The Pastor shall serve as the chairman of the Congregational Council. In the case of a pastoral vacancy, the Council shall elect one of its members to the chairmanship.

C. Board of Trustees

1. The Board of Trustees shall consist of three members elected in the same manner as the Deacons.
2. The Trustees shall be the custodians of the congregation's property, preserve its legal documents, and see to it that the church and other congregational properties are in good condition. The Trustees have no right or authority over this property other than what has been delegated to them by a congregational meeting.
3. It shall be the duty of the Board of Trustees:
 - a) To collect contributions for the expenditures voted by the congregation, delivering such money to the Treasurer, who shall issue a receipt for same.
 - b) To watch over the treasury, with the right to summon the Treasurer to meet with them if necessary.
 - c) To dispose of sums of money not exceeding \$59 – with the consent of the Treasurer – without an order from the congregation, provided such money is used for the needs of the congregation.
 - d) To elect, from their number, a chairman, who shall call and conduct the meetings; also, a secretary to keep a record of their decisions.

D. Treasurer

1. The Treasurer shall have charge of the treasury of the congregation, receiving and giving receipts for all contributions made toward the expenses of the congregation, and disbursing funds in accordance with resolutions by the congregation and at the order of the Trustees.
2. At the request of the Board of Trustees, the Treasurer shall attend their meetings and if so ordered, he shall present his books for inspection.
3. At the annual congregational meeting the Treasurer shall present an audited report of the condition of the treasury, to be accepted or rejected by the congregation.

Section IV (Constitution, Article VII) Church Discipline

1. If brotherly admonition given in accord with Matthew 18:15-16 does not avail, the matter may be presented to the Congregation Council which shall, through admonition and persuasion from the Word of God, endeavor to bring the transgressor to confess his sin and repent.
2. If the Congregation Council is unsuccessful in bringing the erring one to repentance, it shall present the case to the congregation together with its recommendations.

Section V (Constitution, Article VII) Amending the By-Laws

A resolution to amend these By-Laws may be presented to the annual meeting of the congregation and can be passed by a two-thirds majority.

(Signed) Botolf Synstad, Erik C. Hustad, Gjert Johnson – Deacons. Christ O. Serum, Ole T. Sveen, Christ C. Serum – Trustees.

This constitution was adopted at the annual meeting held on January 14 and February 4, 1904. Translation made from the Norwegian in 1937.

Additional Resolutions

1. Ex-members are not entitled to the services of the church. (Passed at the annual meeting, January 6, 1927.)
2. New members shall pay an admittance fee of five dollars (\$5.00),
3. Non-members wishing to use Lyster Cemetery for burial shall pay twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) per grave.

CONSTITUTION OF THE
ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CONGREGATION
OF
RIPLINGER, WISCONSIN

PREAMBLE

Since it is God's will according to I Corinthians 14:40 and Galatians 2:5 that in a Christian Church everything be done decently and in order, we, the undersigned members of the St. John's Evangelical Congregation, sensible to our spiritual needs, and mindful of our Christian duties in Jesus' name, and with the hope of His blessing, adopt the following constitution:

ARTICLE I. - NAME

This congregation bears the name: St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Riplinger, Wisconsin, Town of Unity.

ARTICLE II. - CONFESSION

We, the members of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, acknowledge and accept all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments to be the revealed Word of God, inspired by the Holy Ghost, the only infallible authority, source, rule and guide in all matters of faith and life. We furthermore acknowledge and accept the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, namely, The Three Ecumenical Creeds - The Apostolic, the Nicene, the Athanasian; The Unaltered Augsburg Confession; The Apology of the same; The Smalcald Articles; Luther's Catechism, the Large and the Small; the Formula of Concord.

And we set forth that according to this norm of doctrine and faith all controversies which may arise in this congregation shall be decided and adjusted.

ARTICLE III. - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1

All persons desiring to become members of this congregation, must announce their desires to the pastor, who makes it known to the congregation. If no objections are made, their acceptance is in order and the congregation shall vote upon the application. The newly received members shall read the constitution and sign said constitution.

Section 2

Members of the Congregation can only be those:

- a: Who are baptized;
- b: Declare (if of proper age) their adherence to all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, without qualification, as the only rule and norm of faith and life;
- c: Are familiar (if of proper age) at least with Luther's Small Catechism, and declare their acceptance of the same;
- d: Do not live in manifest works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21), but lead Christian lives;
- e: Together with the congregation partake of the Lord's Supper frequently, if of mature age;
- f: Who submit themselves to all the regulations of the congregation, provided these are not in conflict with the Word of God, and who, whenever they have failed, submit to brotherly love and in meekness to the correction to be applied according to the Scriptural rule as found in St. Matthew 18:15-19.
- g. The church is earnestly opposed to all organizations or societies, secret or open, which, without confessing faith in the Triune God and in Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of the eternal God, incarnate in order to be our savior from sin, are avowedly religion, teaching salvation by works. It declares such organizations and societies to be anti-Christian and rejects any fellowship with them.

Note 1

In regard to the children given them by God it is the duty of Christian parents to have them baptized as soon as possible. Only such who agree with and accept the Christian faith may serve as sponsors. It is Furthermore required of parents to have their children instructed in God's Word and in the teachings of the church, and to have them confirmed.

Note 2, Section 2, f.

Every member is in duty bound to help support the church according to his ability. Should a member without reason neglect to do this after one year, he should be admonished. If however, all admonition is left unheeded he shall lose all rights of membership after two years. I Corinthians 16:2, Mark 16:15, I Corinthians 9:14.

ARTICLE IV. - CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Church discipline shall be affected upon all those who live in open sins such as adultery, theft, bearing false witness, slandering, drunkenness and the like, who carelessly and persistently neglect public worship and the Lord's

Supper. Such discipline shall be applied according to Matthew 18:15-19. If, however, all admonition remain unheeded, they shall be excommunicated and lose all rights to the congregation, barred from the Lord's Supper and from serving as sponsors at Baptism. Together with the right to vote they lose all claim to the property of the congregation until they have truly and publicly repented and until they have been received again into the congregation.

ARTICLE V. - DISCONTINUING MEMBERSHIP

If a member desires to leave the congregation without a sufficient reason he can, of course, not be forced to stay, but the congregation cannot justify such an act, neither can it give an honorable dismissal or recommendation for his application to another congregation. To all others however, who have been honest and faithful members, and who have for good reasons left the congregation, a written dismissal shall be given.

ARTICLE VI. - POWER OF THE CONGREGATION

The highest power of the congregation lies in itself and is expressed by the decisions of her voting members. In all matters of faith, however, God's Word and the confessions of the church alone can decide. Should the congregation decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the Confession of the Church, such decisions shall be recalled.

ARTICLE VII. - SUFFRAGE

Entitled to vote are all communicant members, not less than 18 years of age. Eligible to hold office are all those who have been members of this congregation for one year or more, and who have signed the constitution.

ARTICLE VIII - CALLING OF A PASTOR AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Section 1

The right to call a pastor shall belong to the congregation as a whole and shall never be entrusted to one or a few representatives of the congregation.

Section 2

The election of congregational officers shall belong to the congregation as a whole and shall never be entrusted to one or a few representatives of the congregation.

ARTICLE IX. - REGARDING THE MINISTRY

Section 1

The ministry of this congregation shall be entrusted to such persons, who like the congregation, accept the whole Bible, Old and New Testaments, as the only divine guide and rule in matters of faith and life, who accepts the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and who is qualified to fulfill the office of the ministry.

Section 2 - The duties of the pastor:

His duties are: on Sundays and on festival days to proclaim the Word of God to baptize and to instruct children in Luther's Small Catechism; to confirm those taught; to administer the Lord's Supper to all those members who announce their desire to receive it to the pastor, and who according to human judgments are worthy and well-prepared to partake thereof; to visit the sick; to perform marriages; to guide all affairs of the congregation in such a manner that all things are done decently and in order; to lead a Christian life and possess the qualifications which the Apostle requires of a bishop. I Timothy 3:2-7, Titus 1:7-9.

If a pastor lives up to his duties, no complaining, unkind judging or spiteful slander should be heard against him, which is a disgrace to his office. Love and honor from all members is due him, because of his difficult and highly responsive calling.

Section 3 - The dismissal of a Pastor:

Valid reasons for removing a pastor are: persistent clinging to false doctrine; offense given by him in daily life; the willful neglect of his office and duties.

The pastor is not of his own free choice to leave or desert the congregation. In case of a vacancy in the position of the pastor the congregation shall notify the president of the local district of the Synod for the purpose that the latter may assist in temporarily filling the vacancy and in giving his good counsel in regard to the calling of a new pastor.

ARTICLE X. - THE CHURCH COUNCIL

The officers of the congregation shall be a president, a secretary, a treasurer, trustees, elders, and such other officers as are elected by the congregation. These together with the pastor shall constitute the Church Council. An officer of the congregation cannot succeed himself for more than two consecutive terms to that respective office.

Section 2 - The duties of the Church Council:

All church officers are to adorn their office with a Christian life, and to assist the pastor in his work (I Timothy 3:8-12). They are to see that the Word of God is preached in its truth and purity, that all the laws and regulations of the congregation are rightfully executed and that discipline is properly exercised in all cases in which offense is given to the congregation or its members. A majority of the council shall be required to form a quorum. If an officer willfully neglects his office or finds it impossible to carry out his duties, someone else shall be elected in his place.

Section 3 - The special duties of church officers:

The President: To preside at all council and congregational meetings.

The Secretary: To carefully record all decisions of the congregation and of the council and take care of all official correspondence.

The Financial Secretary:

He shall be elected by ballot for a period of one year. He shall receive all money of the congregation, loose change, and envelope money. After each service it is his duty to count, wrap and credit each account in the book used for this system. He must send out quarterly statements to all delinquent members and prepare an annual report which shall be handed out to the congregational members. He is to issue orders for all payment of statements or bills sent to the congregation. No money is to be paid in the current fund without an order issued by the Financial Secretary. He is to send benevolent money to the various places at the beginning of each month. His books shall be open to inspection for every member of the congregation at all times. He is to notify all members when they are behind in their payments, and that if not paid within two years their names shall be stricken from the membership list.

The Trustees:

To contract buying and selling in the name of the congregation and to collect the money as ordered by the congregation.

The Elders:

Shall assist the pastor in all matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the congregation. They shall watch over the spiritual life of the members and shall admonish such as fail in their duty as Christians and church members. They should also at all times be interested in the work of the various organizations within the congregation and stand ready to give advice and counsel.

ARTICLE XI. - MEETINGS AND DECISIONS

Every meeting should be announced by the pastor on the preceding Sunday. One half of the voting members must be present. If, however, after

due announcement such a number cannot be present, then those present are authorized to pass business decisions. In all matters not related to doctrine and faith, the majority decides. No member without good reasons should be absent. By staying away he forfeits his right to vote.

Section 2

The annual business meeting takes place in the beginning of the month of January. The quarterly meetings are held in the beginning of the months of April, July and October. Whenever necessary, special meetings may be called by request of the church council.

Section 3

The meetings are opened and closed with a prayer by the pastor. In his absence the president takes his place. The president then leads the meeting in the following order:

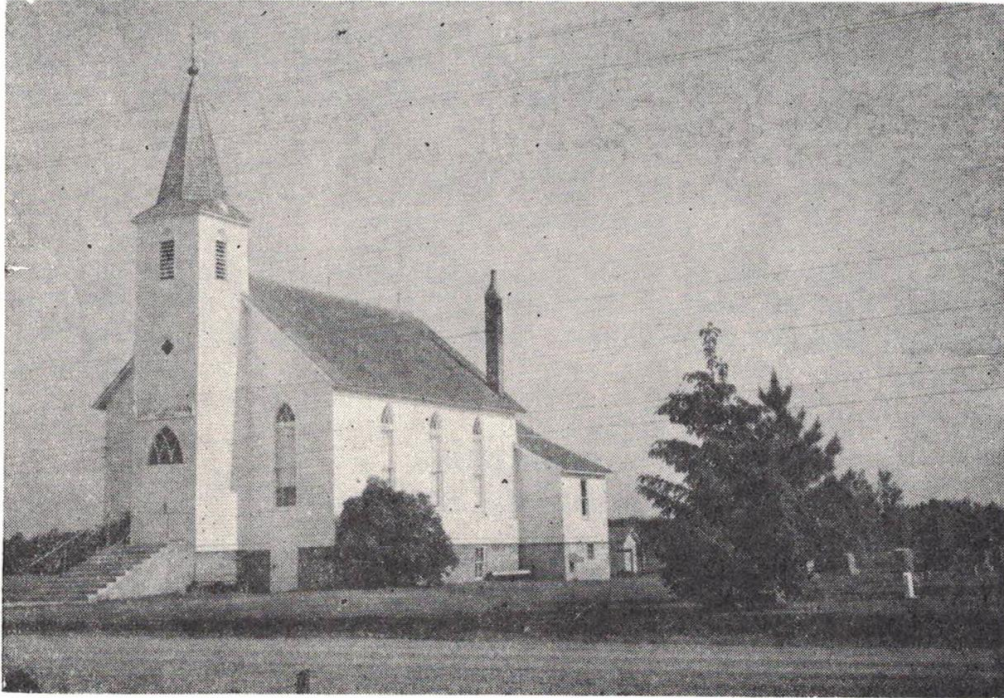
- a. Opening with a short service;
- b. Reading and approval of minutes of previous meeting;
- c. Reception and dismissal of members;
- d. Election of officers;
- e. Unfinished business;
- f. Recommendations of the church council;
- g. Checking of attendance record;
- h. Adjournment with prayer.

ARTICLE XII. - SEPARATION

If at any time a separation should occur in this congregation on account of doctrine or for any other cause (which God may graciously prevent), the property of this congregation and all its benefits shall remain with those who adhere to this constitution even if they be only three in number.

ARTICLE XIII. - UNCHANGEABLE ARTICLES

This constitution may be changed by the vote of the congregation as need and conditions require it. But this change dare not come in conflict with the unchangeable articles. The following are considered unchangeable articles: II, III, IV, IX, XII, XIII.



CONSTITUTION

For

HOLWAY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Holway Township, Taylor County, Wisconsin

ORGANIZED 1888

CONSTITUTION ADOPTED 1957

DATE EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 1958

MAILING ADDRESS:

BOX 16

CURTISS, WISCONSIN

CONSTITUTION

for

Holway Evangelical Lutheran Church

PREAMBLE

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.
We, the members of the Holway Evangelical Lutheran Church of Holway Township, Taylor County, Wisconsin, adopt the following Constitution and do solemnly pledge ourselves before God and before one another to be governed by its provisions.

ARTICLE I

Name of Congregation

The name of this congregation shall be Holway Evangelical Lutheran Church of Holway Township, Taylor County, Wisconsin.

ARTICLE II

Confession

1. This congregation believes and confesses that the Holy Scriptures, the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, are the Word of God, revealed for the salvation of man, and therefore the only source and rule of faith, doctrine and life.

2. This congregation accepts the Apostolic, the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds, and also the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism as a correct exposition of the teachings of the Word of God, and all preaching and teaching in this congregation shall conform to these confessions.

ARTICLE III

Synodical Membership

This congregation shall be a member of The Evangelical Lutheran Church (and/or its successor) and together with its pastor be subject to its polity and discipline as expressed in its synodical and district constitutions, its confessions, documents, and the decisions of its conventions.

If the pastor resigns from The Evangelical Lutheran Church his pastorate in this congregation shall immediately cease.

ARTICLE IV

Liturgy, Ritual, Hymnbook

The public services of this congregation shall conform to the Authorized Liturgies and Rituals of The Evangelical Lutheran Church, and the authorized hymnbooks of the Church and such materials as shall be approved by the Congregation for use in its worship and schools.

ARTICLE V

Purpose and Aim

The purpose of this congregation shall be to provide for the Divine Word and Sacraments free course to the souls of men, that the Kingdom of God may come.

a) It shall seek this end by diligent use of the Means of Grace in public teaching and worship.

b) To this end it also exhorts its members to cultivate individual and family worship that the Word of God may dwell richly among them, and to be diligent in good works that the life of faith may be strengthened and the Kingdom extended.

ARTICLE VI

Membership

Members of this congregation shall be such persons as have been admitted in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and have not withdrawn or been expelled.

1. Child Membership

a) A child becomes a member by baptism; or, if formerly baptized, by the admission of one or both of the child's parents.

b) Baptized children of non-members shall upon the consent of one or both parents or guardians be admitted into membership.

2. Communicant Membership

a) Admission to communicant membership shall require that the applicant has been baptized with the Christian baptism and confirmed in the Lutheran faith.

b) An adult who has not been previously baptized, upon receiving instruction and giving evidence of having an adequate understanding and acceptance of the teachings of the Word of God as confessed by the Lutheran Church, shall, through baptism, become a communicant member of the congregation.

c) Persons who have not been members of any church or are members of a non-Lutheran Church shall after due instruction be received by the rite of confirmation, or, if not baptized, by baptism.

3. Voting Membership

Members shall have the right to vote when they have attained the age of twenty-one years, are in good standing, and have accepted this constitution.

4. Conduct of Members

It is urged that a member of this congregation shall:

a) Make diligent use of the Means of Grace;

b) Live a Christian life, endeavoring in his conduct to manifest the fruits of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal 5:22-23);

c) Support regularly the work of the congregation in its local and synodical activities;

d) Refrain from association with such enterprises as become a cause of offense and stumbling and thus conflict with the principles of the congregation.

5. Loss of Membership

Members who resign, or who are dismissed at their own request, or excommunicated, and members who are transferred to other Lutheran Churches, or are definitely known to have joined other churches without transfer shall thereupon lose their membership in this congregation. Any member withdrawing voluntarily from the congregation shall notify the Pastor and request a certificate of transfer or release. Upon failure to do this, a member, after one years time, will be regarded as having withdrawn from the congregation.

ARTICLE VII

The Congregational Meeting

1. The power and authority of this congregation shall be exercised by the congregational meeting.

2. The annual congregational meetings shall be held during January and June and the congregation shall also hold special meetings as it may decide.

3. The pastor may call a special meeting when he deems it advisable. He shall call a special meeting on the written request of a majority of the Board of Trustees or of a majority of the Board of Deacons or of ten members of the congregation. Such petition and call must state definitely the time and purpose of the meeting. If the pastor neglects or refuses to call the meeting the Board of Trustees shall upon such request call it. Should the majority of the Board of Trustees or Board of Deacons also refuse to call a meeting, the signers of the petition, in conference assembled, may elect one of their number to call the meeting. If, in the absence of the pastor it is necessary to call a meeting, such meeting may be called by the Board of Trustees or by the Board of Deacons. All meetings provided for in this paragraph shall be called by announcement at a public service at least ten days in advance or by written notice to the voting members at least five days in advance.

ARTICLE VIII

The Pastor

1. Calling a Pastor

The calling of a pastor shall take place at a congregational meeting convened for that purpose after notice has been given as prescribed in Article VII, paragraph 3. Calling a pastor requires a two-thirds majority of the votes cast. Vote shall be by written ballot. He must be a pastor in good standing in the ministry of The Evangelical Lutheran Church, and be installed by the District President, or someone authorized by him.

2. Resignation

If the pastor resigns, his resignation shall not go into effect until three months after its presentation, unless the congregation consents to release him at an earlier date.

3. If in the judgment of the congregation the pastor is not able to work in this field effectively, he may be requested to resign. However, before the resignation is requested the matter shall first be carefully considered at a meeting of the Church Council in consultation with the District President. In the event that the Pastor's resignation is requested, the District President shall be consulted before final action is taken. A request for the Pastor's resignation shall require a two-thirds majority vote of a special meeting of the congregation called at least ten days in advance for the consideration of a resolution in this matter. If the pastor's resignation has been requested in the manner here specified, he shall vacate office within three months from

the date of such meeting. If he does not resign upon such request, the resolution shall constitute a notice of dismissal to be effective at the end of three months after its adoption.

4. Deposal

The following shall be valid reasons for deposing the pastor: Offensive life; continuance in spite of admonition in false doctrine or unfaithfulness in the conduct of his office. For deposal the procedure prescribed in Article VII, paragraph 3 shall be followed.

ARTICLE IX

Officers and Boards

This congregation shall have the following officers and boards:

1. The President

The President shall be elected annually.

2. The Vice-President

The Vice-President shall be elected annually.

3. The Secretary

The Secretary shall be elected annually.

4. The Treasurer

5. The Financial Secretaries

To be elected annually, but

limited to 3 consecutive years.

6. The Sunday School Superintendent

7. The Board of Deacons

This Board shall consist of the pastor and 3 members to be elected by the annual meeting for a period of three years, but in such a manner that, after the first election, one-third of the members is elected each year. The pastor shall be chairman of the Board.

8. The Board of Trustees

This Board shall consist of 3 members elected each for a period of three years, but in such manner that, after the first election, one-third is elected each year.

9. The Board of Education

This Board shall consist of 3 members and the pastor, who shall be a member ex-officio. The other members shall be elected for a period of three years and in the manner prescribed for the election of deacons and trustees.

10. The Congregational Council

The Pastor, the President, and Vice-President, the Board of Deacons, the Board of Trustees, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, and the chairman of the Board of Education shall constitute the Congregational Council.

ARTICLE X

Discipline

Discipline in the congregation shall be exercised in accordance with Matthew 18:15-18.

ARTICLE XI

Dissolution of Congregation

In the event the congregation disbands, all material assets belonging to the congregation, both real and personal, shall become the property of The Evangelical Lutheran Church.

ARTICLE XII

Amendments

1. In order to be effective, an amendment to this Constitution must be presented in writing and received by a majority vote in a meeting held at least three months before the annual meeting, and be adopted at the following annual meeting. A two-thirds majority of the votes cast is required for adoption.

2. Articles II, XI, and this present article may not be altered.

BY-LAWS

SECTION I

(Constitution, Article II)

Conflicting Loyalties

1. This congregation rejects all fellowship of worship with organizations, secret or open, which are avowedly religious or practice forms of religion without confessing faith in the Triune God and in Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God incarnate to be our only Savior from sin, and thus teach salvation by works.

2. No lodge ceremonies are to be permitted in the church or on the church premises of this congregation.

3. The pastor of this congregation shall take no part in any such services even if conducted outside of the church premises.

SECTION II

(Constitution, Article VII)

The Congregational Meeting

1. All Congregational meetings shall open with the Word of God and prayer and shall close with prayer.

2. The President of the congregation shall preside at the congregational meeting unless the meeting otherwise decides.

3. 10% of voting members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

4. In the following cases the vote shall be by ballot:

a) To elect officers and members of all boards.

b) To adopt or amend the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution, or By-Laws of this congregation.

c) To call a pastor or to sever official connections with him.

d) To suspend or dismiss any other officer of the congregation.

e). To authorize an expenditure above the accepted budget of more than three hundred dollars (\$300.00).

5. The order of business at the annual meeting shall be:

a) The Minutes

b) The reports of:

The Pastor and Board of Deacons

The Board of Trustees including presentation of budget

The Treasurer and the Auditing Committee

The Board of Education

Other Reports

c) Action on applications for membership not previously accepted

d) Elections

e) Unfinished business

f) New business

6. A voting member who has not been excused by the Board of Trustees or the congregation, and is not shown by the treasurer's record to have contributed for a period of two years, shall through such failure forfeit his right to vote until the Board of Trustees reports that he has fulfilled his reasonable obligation.

The secretary of the congregation shall at each annual meeting provide the chairman with a correct alphabetical list of the voting members.

7. In all matters not specifically provided for herein, procedure shall be according to Robert's "Rules of Order."

SECTION III

(Constitution, Article VI)

Applications for Membership

1. Applicants presenting Letters of Transfer showing them to be members in good standing in other Lutheran churches, shall become members of this congregation as soon as their Letters have been accepted by the Pastor and Board of Deacons. Their names shall be reported to the congregation.

2. Other applicants shall present their applications to the pastor, who together with the Board of Deacons shall ascertain whether or not the applicants meet the requirements of the constitution. If found to have met these requirements such applicants shall be admitted into membership and their names reported at a subsequent congregational meeting.

SECTION IV

(Constitution, Article X)

Duties of Officers and Boards

1. The Board of Deacons

It shall be the duty of this Board to assist the pastor in the spiritual care of the congregation, look after the sick and needy, and to examine and pass upon the qualifications of applicants for membership in the congregation.

It shall be the duty of the Board of Deacons to promote a Christian sense of stewardship among all the members of the congregation.

In case of a vacancy in the pastoral office, this Board shall make temporary arrangements for the usual functions of this office.

It shall be its duty to see to it that the House of God is not diverted to any uses contrary to its character.

2. The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees shall be the custodian of the congregation's property, have charge of the finances pertaining to the maintenance of the local congregation and shall care for these in conformity with the Constitution and the regularly adopted resolutions of the congregation.

The Board shall prepare and present to the annual meeting, a proposed budget for the ensuing year including such items as:

Salaries	Light
Pensions	Repairs and Maintenance
Synodical Budget	Insurance
Other Benevolences	Postage and Printing, etc.
Fuel	Contingent Items
Pastor's Travel Expenses	Interest and Debt Reduction

The Board shall not buy, sell, lease or mortgage any of the congregation's property without proper authorization by the congregation.

The treasurer shall make payments only on the order of the Board of Trustees or congregation.

The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the raising of funds for local and synodical budgets.

3. The Board of Education

It shall be the duty of this Board to supervise the educational work in the congregation, including the Sunday school, weekday school, and such other agencies as the congregation may have or establish for the purpose of Christian education.

This Board shall nominate the Superintendent of the Sunday school, and appoint the teachers and officers of the Sunday school and weekday school.

4. The Secretary

It shall be the duty of the secretary to keep minutes of the meetings of the congregation and to preserve its archives.

5. The Treasurer*

The treasurer shall be the custodian of all funds of the congregation, local and synodical, and disburse all such funds in accordance with the resolutions of the congregation. He shall present a duly audited account of the financial status of the congregation to the annual meeting.

6. The Financial Secretary

He shall keep a record of all pledges of the Congregation and shall receive all collections, individual contributions and special offerings for current expenses, Missions, and other purposes.

He shall send out statements to all members showing their record of contributions, and additional statements when so directed by the Board of Trustees.

He shall prepare a complete annual statement of collections and individual contributions.

He shall attend the meetings of the Board of Trustees when requested by said Board.

*It is recommended that the Treasurer be bonded.

7. The Congregational Council

This body shall be for the purpose of conference among its constituent officers and boards, in order to promote unity, coordination and cooperation in the whole program of the congregation including the auxiliary organizations and may make recommendations to the congregation relative to its welfare. The council shall elect its own secretary and shall meet when necessary. The pastor shall be the chairman of the council.

SECTION V

Reports of Organizations

All committees and organizations handling funds within the congregation shall submit accounts to the treasurer at least 10 days prior to the annual meeting, and the treasurer shall include such accounts in his report to the meeting.

SECTION VI

Organist and Director of Choir

The congregation council shall elect the organist and the director of the choir. Their remuneration shall be fixed by the Board of Trustees.

SECTION VII

The Auditing Committee

The chairman of the annual meeting shall appoint an auditing committee to function for the ensuing year. It shall audit all accounts and report to the annual meeting.

SECTION VIII

The Nominating Committee

A nominating committee of 3 members shall be appointed by the chairman of the annual meeting at the annual meeting to serve for the ensuing year.

SECTION IX

Ministerial Records

The pastor is required to keep accurate record of his ministerial acts in a book provided by the congregation and which shall remain the property of the congregation. He shall report these statistics to the congregation annually and, when required, to the Secretary of The Evangelical Lutheran Church.

SECTION X

Amendments to the By-Laws

A proposed amendment to these By-Laws must be presented at a regularly called meeting. If the amendment is approved at this meeting by a majority, it shall be referred to a subsequent regularly called meeting, when a majority vote shall be required for adoption.

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS
FOR
CONGREGATIONS
OF THE
AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

CONSTITUTION

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

PREAMBLE

Recognizing our unity in Christ and our common practice in the Christian faith; desiring to express our fellowship in worship and work; knowing our spiritual needs; mindful of our Christian privileges and duties; and wishing to observe orderly cooperation, we adopt the following constitution:

Article I – NAME AND INCORPORATION

The name of the congregation shall be_____.

The congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the state of _____.

Article II – CONFESSION OF FAITH

The congregation accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as a whole and in all their parts as the divinely, inspired, revealed, and inerrant Word of God and submits to this as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life.

As brief and true statements of the doctrines of the Word of God, the congregation accepts and confesses the following Symbols, subscription to which shall be required of all its members: (1) the ancient ecumenical Creeds: the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian; (2) the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism.

As further elaboration of and in accord with these Lutheran Symbols, the congregation also receives the other documents in the Book of Concord of 1580; the Apology, Luther's Large Catechism, the Smalcald Articles, and the Formula of Concord; and recognizes them as normative for its theology.

The congregation accepts without reservation the symbolic books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, not insofar as, but because they are the presentation and explanation of the pure doctrine of the Word of God and a summary of the faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Article III – PURPOSE

The purpose of the congregation shall be to proclaim and propagate the Christian faith through the Means of Grace, and to cooperate in the program approved by the American Lutheran Church.

Article IV – POWERS

1. All power in the congregation has its source in the Word of God, which is the norm of its faith and life. All individuals and groups within the congregation shall submit to the authority of the Word; and the life and activity of the congregation and its organizations shall conform to it.
2. The powers of the congregation shall be those necessary to fulfill its purpose, as set forth in the constitution.
3. The powers of the congregation shall be vested in the congregation meeting, called and conducted in such a manner as is provided in this constitution, and, to the extent conveyed by this constitution or as assigned from time to time by the congregational meeting, in the boards elected by the congregation.
4. In the fulfillment of its purpose, the congregation is empowered to:
 - (a) acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, bequest, purchase or other lawful means;
 - (b) hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
 - (c) sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
 - (d) enter into contract;

- (e) sue and be sued;
 - (f) elect officers and boards for the exercise of their powers and authority and require them to conduct their affairs in accordance with this constitution and its bylaws, and the resolutions of the congregation.
5. Real property shall not be purchased, disposed of, or encumbered in any manner except by resolution adopted by not less than a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at a legally called meeting of the congregation.
 6. Should the congregation by operation of law or otherwise cease to exist, all property and funds remaining after the payment of its obligations shall be distributed to the American Lutheran Church or such other corporation existing for religious or charitable purposes.

ARTICLE V – RELATIONSHIP TO THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

1. For the better attainment of its purpose, the congregation shall be a member of The American Lutheran Church or its successor and shall be on the roster of the name District or its successor. It shall be subject to the polity and discipline of the American Lutheran Church.
2. The congregation claims for itself all the rights and privileges and accepts all the duties and obligations connected with such membership.
3. The congregation covenants to support with prayer, personal service, and offerings, the common work of the Church.
4. Severance of membership in the American Lutheran Church shall require a two-thirds majority vote of all voting members present and voting at a legally called and conducted meeting. Such a decision shall not be effective until at least ninety days after the district president has been notified and until the initial action has been ratified by a two-thirds majority at a subsequently legally called and conducted meeting.

Article VI – MEMBERSHIP IN THE CONGREGATION

1. Members of the congregation shall be those who are designated as such at the time that this constitution is adopted, and those who are admitted thereafter; and who maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws. There shall be no membership restrictions with respect to race or color.
2. Members shall be classified as (a) baptized; (b) confirmed; (c) voting.
 - (a) Baptized members shall be those who as provided in the bylaws, have been baptized in the name of the Triune God.
 - (b) Confirmed members shall be those baptized members who have been admitted to confirmed membership as provided in the bylaws.
 - (c) Voting members shall be those who are members in good standing, as provided in the bylaws, and who have attained the age of 18 years.
3. It shall be the privilege and duty of members of the congregation to:
 - (a) Make diligent use of the Means of Grace, both Word and Sacraments;
 - (b) Live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran Church;
 - (c) Support the word of the congregation and of the American Lutheran Church.

Article VII – DISCIPLINE

1. A member who advocates doctrines which are contrary to Holy Scripture and the Confessions of the Church, or who is guilty of conduct that is grossly unbecoming a member of the Body of Christ, shall be subject to discipline.
2. Discipline shall be administered by the Church Council in behalf of the congregation, with the right of appeal to the congregation. Right of further appeal from a decision of the congregation shall be as provided in the Constitution and Bylaws of the American Lutheran Church.
3. Discipline in the congregation shall be exercised in accordance with Matthew 18:15-18.
4. Procedures for the exercise of discipline shall be those provided in the bylaws.

Article VIII – WORSHIP

As an expression of the unity of the church in Christ the congregation recognizes the desirability of conforming to the practices of other member congregations in using such forms of worship, including liturgies and hymn books, as are recommended by The American Lutheran Church. Only such variations as are authorized by the congregation shall be permitted.

Article IX – THE PASTOR

2. A pastor of the congregation shall be a man whose soundness in the faith, aptness to teach, and educational qualifications have been examined and approved by the Church, and who has been properly ordained, who accepts and adheres to the Confession of Faith of The American Lutheran Church and of the congregation; and who strives in life and conduct to be above reproach.
3. Authority to call a pastor shall rest in the congregation. Such authority to call shall be exercised by not less than a two-thirds majority vote of members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a Call is issued, the officers, or a committee authorized by the congregation, shall seek the advice and help of the president of the district.

4. Only a clergyman of The American Lutheran Church in good standing or one who is recommended for Call by the Church Council of The American Lutheran Church may be called as a pastor of the congregation.
5. In the event of a vacancy in the pastoral office, the Church Council shall, in consultation with the district president, provide for interim pastoral service.
6. If in the judgment of the congregation the pastor is no longer able to serve it satisfactorily, he may be requested to resign. Before the resignation is requested, all parties, including the pastor, shall have the opportunity of being heard at a specially called meeting of the Church Council at which the district president or his representative shall be present. After the hearing before the Church Council a special meeting of the congregation may be called to consider a request for the pastor's resignation. A resolution requesting a pastor's resignation must be adopted by a majority of those present and voting. Not less than ten days notice of such meeting of a congregation must be given. If the pastor's resignation has been requested in the manner here provided, he shall vacate the office at the time the congregation specifies. Should he fail to do so the Church Council shall declare the pastoral office vacant.
7. In the event of alleged defection in doctrine or alleged conduct unbecoming a pastor, the matter shall be referred by the Church Council to the district president for disciplinary action as provided in the Constitution and Bylaws of The American Lutheran Church.

Article X – MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION

2. The power and authority of the congregation shall be exercised through the congregational meeting, which shall be called and conducted in conformity with civil laws and the provisions of the constitution and bylaws of the congregation.
3. The annual meeting of the congregation shall be held in January. Notice of the meeting shall be given as provided in the bylaws.
4. A quorum for any regular or special meeting of the congregation shall be __ of the voting members.
5. A special meeting of the congregation may be called by action of the congregation by petition of at least __ percent of the voting members, or by any one of the following: the Church Council, the president of the congregation, or the pastor. The president or Church Council shall call a special meeting upon the request of the district president. Official notice of a special meeting of the congregation shall be in writing and shall be posted conspicuously in the place where the congregation customarily worships. Such notice shall state the time, the place, and the purpose of the meeting. It shall be signed by the president and the secretary of the congregation, or by the person or persons who have called the meeting, as authorized by this paragraph. The notice of a special meeting shall also be read at all public services of the congregation held during the ten days preceding the date of the meeting. If no services are held during the stipulated time, not less than five days' written notice of such meeting shall be given; provided, however, that no less than ten days' written notice of a meeting called to consider a resolution requesting the pastor to resign shall be given; and provided further that a meeting called to consider the disposition or encumbrance of real property must be called and held in conformity with such provisions of civil law as may be applicable.
6. The pastor shall be notified of the time and place at which a special meeting of the congregation is to be held.
7. Only the business for which a special meeting has been called shall be transacted at the meeting.
8. A meeting of the congregation may by majority vote recess to reconvene at a specified time and place. A meeting may also recess to reconvene upon call; provided, however, that the time and place of such a reconvened meeting must be announced at a public service of the congregation, and not less than three days' written notice be given of the reconvened meeting.

Article XI – OFFICERS AND BOARDS

1. At its annual meeting the congregation shall elect the following officers, each for a term of two years:
 - (a) President
 - (b) Vice-president
 - (c) Secretary
 - (d) Treasurer
 - (e) Financial Secretary

The duties of the officers of the congregation shall be those provided in the bylaws.
2. The Board of Deacons
 - (a) There shall be a Board of Deacons of three members elected at the annual meeting of the congregation, each for a term of three years. One-third of the members of the board shall be elected at each annual meeting of the congregation. The pastor shall be an advisory member by virtue of his office, without vote.
 - (b) The duties and responsibilities of the Board of Deacons shall be to provide spiritual leadership in the congregation, working with the pastor, to guide the work, witness, worship, and service of the congregation in the world.
3. The Board of Trustees
 - (a) There shall be a Board of Trustees of three members elected at the annual meeting of the congregation, each for a term of three years. One-third of the members of the board shall be elected at each annual meeting of the congregation. The pastor shall be an advisory member by virtue of his office, without vote.
 - (b) The duties and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees shall be to have charge of the general management of all matters relating to legal and corporate affairs and to supervise the maintenance of the properties of the congregation.

4. The Board of Education
 - (a) There shall be a Board of Education consisting of the Sunday School Superintendent, one member of the Board of Deacons, and three members elected at the annual meeting of the congregation, each for a term of three years. One-third of the members of the board shall be elected at each annual meeting of the congregation. The pastor shall be an advisory member by virtue of his office, without vote.
 - (b) The duties and responsibilities of the Board of Education shall be to provide leadership and supervision of the educational program of the congregation.
5. The Church Council
 - (a) The officers of the congregation and the members of the boards together with the pastor serving as an advisory member by virtue of his office, but without vote, shall constitute the Church Council. The President, the Vice-president, and the Secretary of the congregation shall serve as President, Vice-president, and Secretary of the Church Council respectively.
 - (b) The duties and responsibilities of the Church Council shall be to:
 - (1) Have general oversight of the life and work of the congregation and to coordinate the activities of the boards and committees of the congregation.
 - (2) Determine the rosters of the baptized, the confirmed, and the voting members of the congregation.
 - (3) Perform such other duties and responsibilities as are provided in this constitution and its bylaws.

Article XII – BYLAWS

2. The congregation shall adopt such bylaws as may from time to time be necessary. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.
3. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called and conducted meeting of the congregation by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting.

Article XIII – Amendments

2. The doctrinal basis and the confessional subscription contained in Article II, and this paragraph of Article XIII shall be unalterable; and no amendment shall conflict therewith.
3. A proposed amendment to this constitution shall be:
 - (a) read at a public service of the congregation or mailed to the voting members, not less than thirty days before the annual meeting at which it is to be considered;
 - (b) approved without change at the annual meeting following its announcement, by a majority vote of those present and voting.
 - (c) ratified without further change at the next annual meeting, by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting.
4. If a proposed amendment fails of adoption, it may be amended by majority vote of those present and voting; and adopted without change by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting at the next following annual meeting.

* * * * *

BYLAWS

Part I – COMMUNION PARTICIPATION

(Cf. Article II of Constitution)

Article XIII – Amendments

2. Participation in Holy Communion shall be open to members of this congregation and to individual members of other congregations who accept the Lutheran teaching in regards to Holy Communion as set forth in paragraph 2.
3. Holy Communion requires sincere repentance, faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, and an earnest desire to amend one's sinful life, as well as acceptance of the scriptural teaching of the Real Presence of Christ with his body and blood in the Sacrament. Such registration terms or oral announcements shall be used as will make prospective participants aware of these requirements.
4. Record of participation in Holy Communion shall be maintained. If a member of another congregation communes, notice shall be sent to his pastor.

Part II – CONFLICTING LOYALTIES

(Cf. Article II of the Constitution and Article V of the Minneapolis Theses
as quoted in the United Testimony on Faith and Life)

1. While the buildings of the congregation shall be open to all people to share in its worship, instruction, pastoral care, and fellowship, the congregation rejects all fellowship with organizations, secret or open, which are avowedly religious or which practice forms of religion without confessing faith in the Triune God and in Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God incarnate to be our only Savior from sin, and which thus teach salvation by works.
2. Ceremonies of lodges or other such organizations shall not be permitted in the buildings nor shall its pastor(s) or lay assistant(s) take part in any such ceremonies wherever they are conducted.

Part III – MEMBERSHIP
(Cf. Article VI of Constitution)

A. BAPTIZED MEMBERS

1. A child, one or both of whose parents or guardians are members of the congregation, shall, upon receiving Baptism, become a baptized member.
2. A child, neither of whose parents or guardians is a member of the congregation, shall, upon receiving Baptism, become a baptized member of another congregation, in which case his membership shall be transferred to that congregation.
3. A child baptized in another congregation shall be received as a baptized member in the congregation when a transfer has been received.
4. An unbaptized adult who has received instruction and has given evidence of an adequate understanding and acceptance of the teachings of the Word of God as confessed by the Lutheran Church, shall, upon confession of faith and Baptism, become a baptized member of the congregation.

B. CONFIRMED MEMBERS

1. A baptized adult, not previously a confirmed member of a Lutheran congregation, shall become a confirmed member of the congregation through the rite of confirmation after having received instruction and having given evidence of an adequate understanding and acceptance of the teachings of the Word of God as confessed by the Lutheran Church.
2. A baptized member of the congregation shall become a confirmed member through the rite of confirmation; except that an adult who has become a baptized member in accordance with the provisions of Section A, 4 of the bylaws shall be considered a confirmed member without participation in the rite of confirmation.
3. An applicant for membership who presents a Letter of Transfer which certifies that he is a confirmed member in good standing of a Lutheran congregation shall become a confirmed member of the congregation upon approval by the Church Council. The acceptance of the applicant shall be reported to the congregation.
4. An applicant for membership who presents evidence of confirmation in a Lutheran congregation but does not have a Letter of Transfer shall be admitted to confirmed membership when the Church Council has determined that he meets the standards of Christian faith and life indicated in the constitution and bylaws and when he has reaffirmed his faith before the congregation.

C. VOTING MEMBERS

The Church Council shall determine the roster of voting members of the congregation in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and bylaws. The term “in good standing” shall be defined to include:

1. Those who partake of Holy Communion: A baptized member of the congregation shall become a confirmed member through the rite of confirmation; except that an adult who has become a baptized member in accordance with the provisions of Section A, 4 of the bylaws shall be considered a confirmed member without participation in the rite of confirmation.
2. Those who contribute to the congregational treasury according to the congregation’s records.
3. Those who participate in the life and worship of the congregation.

D. DISCONTINUANCE OF MEMBERSHIP

1. The congregation shall, in the event of the removal of a member from the community it serves, encourage the member to request a transfer to a Lutheran congregation which can serve him effectively. Should the member fail to request a transfer, a Lutheran congregation in the community of his residence shall be notified.
2. A confirmed member in good standing desiring to change his membership to another Lutheran congregation shall, upon request, receive a Letter of Transfer.
3. A confirmed member who does not, for a period of one year, partake of Holy Communion, support the church with his offerings, and does not appear to desire to participate in the life and worship of the congregation shall be visited by the pastor and the congregation’s officers and encouraged by them to active membership. If, during the second year, the confirmed member does not actively participate, his name shall be removed from the membership roster of the congregation but be retained on a responsibility list as one who is in special need of the congregation’s prayer and concern.
4. A child, neither of whose parents or guardian is a member of the congregation, may be removed from the roster of baptized members if he fails to participate in the life and the worship of the congregation.

Part IV – THE PASTOR
(Cf. Article IX of the Constitution)

1. When the congregation has voted to call a pastor, it shall issue a Letter of Call to the pastor-elect, in a form approved by The American Lutheran Church. It shall be signed by the chairman and the secretary of the meeting at which the Call was voted, and shall be attested by the signature of the president of the district. A Call to a clergyman to be an assistant pastor shall be issued only with the concurrence of the pastor of the congregation and in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph.
2. The Call shall normally be for an indefinite time. A Call issued to an assistant pastor may be for a definite time.

3. If a pastor receives the call to another ministry, he may consult the Church Council, or, if he desires, the congregation, before reaching a decision. He shall announce his decision as quickly as possible, normally within three weeks. He shall notify the district president of his decision. When a Call has been accepted, the pastor shall terminate his ministry as soon as feasible, normally within 60 days.

Part V - MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION

(Cf. Article X of Constitution)

1. Announcement of the time and place of the annual meeting of the congregation shall be made at two public services immediately preceding the meeting, said services to be at least a week apart; and in such publications as the congregation or the pastor may periodically issue, or by written notice to the voting members mailed not less than ten days in advance of the meeting.
2. The current rosters of voting, confirmed, and baptized members shall be available at each meeting of the congregation.
3. The annual meeting shall receive reports from all the organizations of the congregation. Such reports, including a financial statement, shall be submitted in writing to the pastor not less than fifteen days before such meeting.
4. The annual meeting of the congregation shall elect a nominating committee of two members. The pastor shall serve as convener and as an advisory member. The term of office of the members of the nominating committee shall be one year. The Church Council shall fill vacancies on the nominating committee.
5. Unless otherwise ordered, parliamentary procedures shall be in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

Part VI – OFFICERS AND BOARDS

(Cf. Article XI of Constitution)

Alternate One

A. MEMBERSHIP AND MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

In addition to the provisions of the constitution, the following shall govern membership on the Church Council and the conduct of its meetings.

1. Only a voting member of the congregation shall be eligible for membership on the Church Council.
2. If a vacancy occurs on the Church Council, the Council shall fill the vacancy until the next meeting of the congregation. Should the unexpired term be one year or less it shall not be considered in determining eligibility for succession.
3. A member of the Church Council who is absent from two consecutive regular meetings shall be consulted by the president of the congregation; if he is absent from three consecutive regular meetings without valid excuse, the Council may declare the office vacant.
4. A quorum for any regular or special meeting of the Church Council shall be one-half of its membership.
5. A special meeting may be called by the pastor, the president, or any three members of the Church Council by notice given at a worship service or a written notice mailed three days in advance.

B. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

In addition to the duties and responsibilities provided in the constitution, the Church Council shall:

1. Secure necessary staff other than the pastor(s), such as church organist, choir director, custodian, etc. and fix and review annually their salaries.
2. Review annually the salary of the pastor(s) and make adjustments from time to time within the limits of the budget approved by the congregation.
3. Receive reports regularly from the treasurer to ascertain that the expenditures are within the budget approved by the congregation.
4. Prepare a budget for submission to the annual meeting of the congregation.
5. Assure itself that the treasurer and others who have access to the funds of the congregation are adequately bonded.
6. Appoint annually an auditing committee composed of two members which shall audit the fiscal records of the congregation and report its findings in writing to the annual meeting. Such audits shall include examination of existing insurance coverage.
7. Be responsible for the buildings and premises of the congregation so that their use is normally limited to the functions of the congregation. Should groups or individuals not associated with the congregation desire to use such property, application shall be made to the Church Council for its approval.
8. Elect the superintendent of the Sunday School, upon nomination by the Board of Education.
9. There shall be a Board of Education consisting of the Sunday School Superintendent, one member of the Board of Deacons, and three members elected at the annual meeting of the congregation, each for a term of three years. One-third of the members of the board shall be elected at each annual meeting of the congregation. The pastor shall be an advisory member by virtue of his office, without vote. Their duties shall be:
 - (1) Conduct regular meetings as needed at such time and place as the board may determine.
 - (2) Develop an effective teaching ministry which includes the training of teachers and leaders, and provide opportunity for study by every member of the congregation through its teaching agencies.
 - (3) Nominate candidates for Sunday School Superintendent to the Church Council.

(4) Report regularly to the Church Council on its activities.

C. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. The president shall preside at meetings of the Church Council and of the Congregation.
2. The vice-president shall preside at the meetings of the Church Council and of the congregation in the absence of the president.
3. The secretary shall keep the minutes of the Church Council and of the congregation and shall have custody of the archives of the congregation.

D. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. The president shall preside at meetings of the Church Council and of the Congregation.
2. The vice-president shall preside at the meetings of the Church Council and of the congregation in the absence of the president.
3. The secretary shall keep the minutes of the Church Council and of the congregation and shall have custody of the archives of the congregation.
4. The treasurer shall have custody of all funds of the congregation. He shall receive and disburse such funds in accordance with the decisions of the congregation or the Church Council. He shall maintain records of all contributions and make regular reports to the Church Council and to the members as required by the Church Council.

THE PARISH BOARD

- A. In addition to the provisions of the constitution, the following shall govern membership on the parish board and the conduct of its meeting.
 1. Only a voting member shall be eligible for membership on the Parish Board.
 2. If a vacancy occurs on the Parish Board, the Church Council shall fill the vacancy until the next meeting of the congregation. Should the unexpired term be one year or less, it shall not be considered in determining eligibility for succession.
 3. At its annual meeting, the congregation shall elect a Parish Board of three members
- B. Duties and responsibilities of the Parish Board.
 1. Prepare a budget annually for submission to the Church Council.
 2. Review annually the salary of the pastor.
 3. Receive reports regularly from the treasurer to ascertain that the expenditures are within the budget approved by the congregation.
 4. Annually review the material needs of the parish.
 5. Expenditures above and beyond the approved budget shall be presented to the congregation for their approval.
 6. Appoint annually an auditing committee composed of two members which shall audit the fiscal records of the parish and report its findings in writing to the annual meeting. Such audits shall include examination of existing insurance coverage and outstanding liabilities.
 7. Be responsible for the buildings and real estate of the parish.
- C. Duties of Officers
 1. The chairman shall preside at meetings of the Parish Board.
 2. The secretary shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the Parish Board.
 3. The treasurer shall have custody of all funds of the parish and shall receive and disburse such funds in accordance with the decisions of the Parish Board.

Part VI – PARISH RECORDS

- A. The records of the congregation shall be and remain the property of the congregation. The pastor shall be responsible for the maintenance of the records, except as otherwise provided herein. Upon the termination of his service to the congregation, he shall have brought the records up to date prior to his departure. The records shall consist of:
 1. The roster of baptized, confirmed, and voting members.
 2. The ministerial acts performed by the pastor.
 3. The minutes and reports of the district and the Handbook of the American Lutheran Church.
 4. The minutes of the meetings of the congregation and the Church Council, for which the secretary of the congregation shall be responsible.
 5. The financial records of the congregation, for which the treasurer shall be responsible.
- B. The pastor shall report to the secretary of The American Lutheran Church such statistics as may be requested and shall annually report to the congregation a summary of his ministerial acts.
- C. Should the congregation be dissolved, the official records of the congregation shall be deposited in the archives of The American Lutheran Church or its successor.

CONSTITUTION

St. Luke Congregation

Foster, Wisconsin

Preamble

We, the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – St. Luke congregation in Foster, Wisconsin, mindful of our spiritual needs and of our Christian duties, in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ and with the prayer for His blessing, adopt the following constitution.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 1 - NAME

The name of this congregation shall be: The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – St. Luke Congregation in Foster, Wisconsin.

ARTICLE 2 – CONFESSION

1. We, the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – St. Luke Congregation believe and confess that the Bible, viz: The Canonical books of the Old and New Testament, is the revealed and divinely inspired Word of God and the only infallible source, rule and guide in all matters of faith and life. To this Word we bow humble and unconditionally.
2. We also accept all the Symbolic Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to-wit: The Unaltered Augsburg Confession and its Apology; the Smalcald Articles; the Large and Small Catechism of Luther; and the Formula of Concord as the true and unadulterated exposition and presentation of God's Word.
3. Consequently, no doctrine or practice that disagrees with this our confessional position, shall be tolerated in our congregation.

ARTICLE 3 – POWER OF THE CONGREGATION

The highest authority in the congregation is the congregation itself as expressed by the decisions of its voting members. All schools, societies, and other additional organizations within the congregation and must labor under congregational control.

ARTICLE 4 – MEMBERSHIP

1. Only those may be members of this congregation:
 - a) Who are baptized
 - b) Who accept the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, and who, at least know and acknowledge the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism
 - c) Who abstain from manifest works of the flesh and lead a Christian life, (Gal. 5:9-22)
 - d) Who manifest an active interest in the church services and the work of the congregation and partake of Holy Communion as often as possible
 - e) Who are sincerely concerned about having their children in the saving doctrine of God's Word
 - f) Who submit to all rules and regulations of the congregation as long as these do not conflict with God's Word but serve to uphold good Christian discipline and order, and who therefore, when they have failed, will accept brotherly correction provided it is done according to Matt. 18:15-19
 - g) Who help to support the church and the ministry to the best of their ability.
2. All confirmed/communicant members have the right to vote and those 18 years and older may hold office. To hold an office, they must have been a member for at least one year. An office cannot alternate between spouses or between family members. Ten members shall constitute a quorum.
3. Persons who wish to be received into this congregation shall make their desire known to the pastor who shall examine said person as to his eligibility. The pastor then shall bring the matter to the attention of the church council. The church council shall vote on the application.

ARTICLE 5 – THE PASTOR AND HIS DUTIES

1. The congregation alone shall have the power to call its pastor. He must teach and preach purely Lutheran doctrine which is in full accord with the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America mentioned in Article 2.
2. He shall lead a Christian life and possess the qualifications required by the apostle of a Bishop (1 Tim. 3:2-7; Tit. 1:7-9).

ARTICLE 6 – THE CHURCH COUNCIL

The ex officio pastor together with the following officers shall constitute the church council who are: Two (2) Deacons, two (2) Trustees, and a Treasurer.

ARTICLE 7 – DUTIES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

It shall be the duty of the church council to see to it that the rules regulations of the congregation are carried out and that proper church discipline be enforced in cases where open offences are given.

ARTICLE 8 – LEGAL OWNERSHIP IN CASE OF DIVISION

Should disagreement among the members bring about a separation in the congregation, which God forbid, all property shall revert to those who adhere to this constitution and bind the pastor to the same.

ARTICLE 9 – UNALTERABLE ARTICLES

In order to preserve and maintain intact the doctrinal and confessional position of St. Luke Congregation, to bind its pastor likewise to faithfulness thereto in the administration of his sacred office, and to secure and preserve unto all those members of the congregation who remain faithful to the constitution the rightful possession and use of the church property, Articles 2, 3, 5, 8, and 9 of this constitution cannot be repealed or altered.

ARTICLE 10 – LEGAL OWNERSHIP OTHER THAN DIVISION

Should the congregation by means other than legal dissolution cease to exist or its property be abandoned, title to its land and other estates, real and personal, shall pass to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

ARTICLE 11 – BY-LAWS

By-laws may be changed or repealed or new ones may be added at any regular business meeting of the congregation by a vote of not less than two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting members present, provided however, that the subject matter of said by-laws be published on two Sundays immediately preceding the regular business meeting.

ARTICLE 12 – AMENDMENTS

1. No amendments to this constitution shall conflict with the unalterable articles as contained in Article 9.
2. A proposed amendment to this constitution shall be:
 - a) Read at a public service of the congregation or mailed to the voting members, in either case at least thirty days before the annual meeting at which it is to be considered.
 - b) Approved, with or without change, at the annual meeting following its announcement, by a majority vote of those present and voting.
 - c) Ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting at the next following annual meeting.

BY-LAWS

BY-LAW 1 – THE CALLING OF A PASTOR

A majority of at least two-thirds of the votes cast is required to elect a pastor, and a unanimous vote is necessary in case a pastor of another Synod is to be called. After a pastor has been elected, a written call, signed by members of the church council shall be transmitted to the pastor elect. By this call the pastor shall be held to teach, reprove and comfort in accordance with the confessions and regulations of this congregation. In the call, the congregation shall bind itself, in accordance with the Word of God, to supply his temporal wants in such a manner that he may be able, as much as possible, to devote all his time to this official office. Sufficient cause for a pastor's removal shall be: a) persistent adherence to false doctrine and practice; b) offensive deportment; c) official incapacity; d) unfaithfulness in his office.

This paragraph cannot be changed or repealed except by unanimous vote at a regular meeting of the congregation.

BY-LAW 2 – ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Election of officers shall take place at the regular business meeting of the congregation in January. A simple majority shall be sufficient for election. Candidates for each office are to be nominated from the floor, and the election is to be by written ballot. The secretary shall record the vote and report the results. Prior to the election, the secretary shall read the names of candidates for each office. The officers to be elected are: Two Deacons, one of which is to be secretary, for five years; two Trustees, one of which is to be president, for five years. Deacons and Trustees can not serve more than one term. One treasurer shall be elected for five years and cannot succeed himself. On financial officer will be appointed by the church council annually and may succeed himself but is not a voting council member.

BY-LAW 3 – DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. General Duties. The officers shall give a good and Christian example to the other members of the congregation by regular participation in worship and The Lord's Supper.
2. Special Duties. It shall be the duties of the Deacons to see to it that the Word of God is preached in its truth and purity, and that the sacraments are rightly administered. The Trustees shall hold all congregational property in trust and oversee its maintenance. Repairs costing more than \$100.00 must be endorsed by the church council, and those repairs amounting to more than \$500.00 must be voted upon by the congregation. The Financial Officer with assistance of the Treasurer shall have the custody of all church monies. They shall disburse monies only in accordance with instructions from the congregation or church council. They shall render a full accounting to the congregation at the annual meeting and the financial records of the congregation shall be open for inspection to any member of the congregation. The secretary shall record all proceedings of the meetings of the council and congregation. He shall also keep in his custody all valuable documents of the congregation.