

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

The Word of God requires that a Christian congregation shall conform to this divine Word in doctrine and practice (*Psalm 119:105, Matthew 28:18-20, Galatians 1:6-8, II Timothy 4:1-5*); and that all things be done decently and in order (*I Corinthians 14:40*). Therefore, we, the members of Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church, Oregon, Wisconsin accept and subscribe to the following constitution, and Bylaws, in accordance with which all spiritual and material affairs of our congregation shall be governed.

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this congregation shall be FAITH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, Oregon, Wisconsin.

ARTICLE II

CONFESSIONAL STANDARD

This congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God, verbally inspired and inerrant; and acknowledges and accepts all the creeds and confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the Book of Concord in the year 1580, to be a true and genuine exposition of the doctrines of the Bible. These creeds and confessions are:

The three Ecumenical Creeds (*Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian*),
The Unaltered Augsburg Confession,
The Apology of the Augsburg Confession,
The Smalcald Articles,
Luther's Large and Small Catechisms,
The Formula of Concord,

Nothing contrary to these creeds and confessions shall be taught in the congregation.

ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

1. **BAPTIZED MEMBERS:** All persons who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and are in the spiritual care of the pastor shall be counted as baptized members of this congregation.

2. **COMMUNICANT MEMBERS:** Only such persons can be or remain communicant members of this congregation who:
- .have been baptized in the name of the Triune God;
 - .declare their acceptance of all the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the verbally inspired and inerrant Word of God and regard them as the only divine rule of faith and life;
 - .are familiar with the Small Catechism of Luther and declare their acceptance thereof;
 - .do not live in manifest works of the flesh (*Galatians 5:19-21*), but lead Christian lives (*Galatians 5:22-23*);
 - .attend public worship faithfully and partake of the Lord's Supper frequently;
 - .present their children for Holy Baptism as soon as possible;
 - .provide their children with instruction in Christian doctrine as offered and prescribed by the congregation;
 - .contribute, according to their ability, for the support of the congregation and mission work;
 - .will abide by the resolution of the Voters' Assembly (provided they are not contrary to the Word of God), and permit themselves to be admonished when they have erred;
 - .are not members of any oath-bound secret society (any lodge with beliefs and practices in conflict with God's Word). If any communicant member should become a member of such a society, disciplinary action shall be instituted, and if he fails to withdraw from such society, he shall be excommunicated (*Matthew 18:15-20; see also Article V*).
3. **VOTING MEMBERS:** Only male communicant members of this congregation who have completed their eighteenth year of life shall constitute the Voters' Assembly.

ARTICLE IV

RECEPTION OF COMMUNICANT MEMBERS

- .Persons desiring communicant membership in this congregation who present a letter of dismissal from a recognized orthodox Lutheran congregation shall be accepted as communicant members by resolution of the Church Council.
- .Children who have received thorough instruction in the chief parts of Christian doctrine according to Luther's Small Catechism and have given evidence that they can examine themselves for a worth communion shall become communicant members by the rite of confirmation.
- .Persons desiring membership in this congregation who have not previously been communicant members of a recognized orthodox Lutheran congregation shall receive instruction in the chief parts of Christian doctrine and having thereafter declared in the

presence of witnesses or in writing their acceptance of the doctrines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, shall be received as communicant members by resolution of the Church Council.

ARTICLE V FORFEITURE OF RIGHTS OF MEMBERSHIP

.When a communicant member of this congregation, after fruitless admonition in the various grades prescribed by the Word of God in Matthew 18:15-20, shall have been expelled from the congregation, such excommunicated person shall then have forfeited all rights of a member of this congregation as such or upon any part thereof.

.A member who refuses to submit to Church discipline shall be regarded as having excommunicated himself.

.The excommunication of a person shall require at least a two thirds majority vote of the entire Voters' Assembly*, with the provision that such member, if he be a voting member, shall be deprived of his right to vote while his case is in the third stage of Church discipline.

.An excommunicated person who repents shall be eligible for reinstatement into communicant membership by resolution of the Voters' Assembly.

.Members who have moved from the parish and failed to request a letter of transfer to a recognized orthodox Lutheran congregation may, after a period of one year, be declared by resolution of the Voters' Assembly to have forfeited their membership.

*Note that in cases of excommunication, a majority of all the voting members must be obtained – not just those present at any given meeting.

ARTICLE VI VOTERS' ASSEMBLY

.The Voters' Assembly shall be constituted of all male members of the congregation who have completed the eighteenth year of their life (*see Article III, 3*).

.It shall be the duty of every voting member to attend, if possible, every meeting of the Voters' Assembly. Members failing to attend a meeting waive the right to vote during such meeting.

.In order to transact business and to pass valid resolutions, it is necessary that at least one-fourth of the voting members be present at the meeting.

1/4 members = QUORUM

.Roberts' Rules of Order shall govern parliamentary procedure insofar as they do not conflict with this constitution.

.Matters of doctrine cannot be decided by a majority vote, but solely by the Word of God. A vote may be taken in such matters if the purpose is not to decide the matter itself, but to ascertain whether or not all members have understood it and agree with what the Word of God says in reference to it.

.The Voters' Assembly may grant the right of speech to such as are not Voting Members.

ARTICLE VII AUTHORITY IN THE CONGREGATION

.The Voters' Assembly shall have supreme authority in the administration and management of congregational affairs. No decision, enactment or performance in behalf of the congregation or with reference to a member thereof as such shall be valid, whether it has proceeded from an individual or from a group within the congregation, unless it shall have been enacted or performed according to a general or special power conferred by the Voters' Assembly.

.Any member of the congregation may appeal to the Voters' Assembly in regard to any matter relating to the affairs and government of the congregation.

.Not even the Voters' Assembly shall be empowered to order, enact or decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the confessional declarations named in Article II of this constitution, and any such ordinance, enactment or decision shall be null and void.

.The right of choosing and calling pastors and Christian Day School teachers and of electing officers to serve the congregation shall ever be vested in the Voters' Assembly and shall never be delegated to an individual or to a minor group within the congregation.

.Organizations or societies within the congregation shall be created only with the consent and approval of the Voters' Assembly. All organizations shall be under the supervision of the Voters' Assembly, and such supervision shall be exercised by the Voters' Assembly through the pastor. All activities and policies or organizations shall be subject to the principles and provisions of the constitution and bylaws of the congregation.

ARTICLE VIII OFFICE OF PASTOR AND TEACHER

This congregation shall bestow the office of pastor or Christian Day School teacher only upon such candidates for the office as are unreservedly in accord with the confessional standard of the congregation (*Article II*), have been prepared for their work and are well qualified for it, and have been properly and rightfully called to the congregation.

ARTICLE IX REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

- . A pastor, teacher or officer may be removed from office in a Christian and rightful manner only.
- . Valid and urgent reasons for removal are persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of official duty, or evident and protracted inability to perform the functions of the office.
- . Such removal shall require a majority vote of all the members of the Voters' Assembly*.

*See the note under Article V, 3 regarding voting in cases of excommunication. The same principle applies here.

ARTICLE X OFFICERS

- . The officers of this congregation shall be: three Elders (one of these being Christian Education Chairman), three Trustees, a President, a Vice-President, a Treasurer, a Financial Secretary, and a Secretary. These officers shall constitute the Church Council. The pastor shall be Ex-officio member of all boards, committees and organizations within the congregation.
- . Only those men who are voting members and have the abilities required shall be eligible for congregational office.
- . Care should be taken so that all officers and others selected for responsible positions in the church shall be voting members who, besides possessing the necessary practical ability and Christian knowledge, are commonly recognized as men who show high esteem for the Word of God, both by consistent Christian living and by faithful attendance at divine worship and the Lord's Table.

ARTICLE XI BOOKS AND FORMS

All hymnals, books of forms for official acts, and textbooks for instruction in Christian doctrine used in this congregation must conform to Article II of this constitution.

ARTICLE XII SEPARATION

Should separation on account of doctrine take place – which may God graciously prevent! – the property of the congregation and all interests connected therewith shall belong to those members who steadfastly and unreservedly adhere to the doctrinal standard in Article II of this constitution.

ARTICLE XIII AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended by the affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the members present at any meeting of the Voters' Assembly, provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at a previous meeting of the Voters' Assembly.

Article II of this constitution and any other article of section that pertains to Scripture doctrine and practice shall be unalterable and irrevocable.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I VOTERS' ASSEMBLY

The regular meeting of the Voters' Assembly shall be scheduled in January and shall constitute the annual meeting. An additional Voters' Assembly meeting may be held in September, as needed.

Announcement of the meeting shall be made at a Sunday public service previous to the date of the meeting, and/or notice of such meetings shall be sent by mail to all members of the Voters' Assembly by the Secretary not less than four nor more than twenty days previous to the date of the meeting.

Special meetings may be called by resolution of the Voters' Assembly or Church Council, or, in urgent cases, by the pastor or any 10% of the voting members. Special meetings shall be announced so that all voting members are informed of the time of the meeting and the business to be discussed at said meeting.

ARTICLE II
ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- .The election of officers (Constitution, Article X) shall be held at the annual meeting.
- .The officers shall be elected for terms of one year, except the Elders and Trustees. These shall serve a term of two years, with one being elected in one year and two being elected the following year.
- .An Elder, Trustee, and the Pastor shall constitute the nominating committee with the Elder always serving as chairman. An Elder or Trustee cannot serve on the nominating committee two years in a row, that duty and privilege must be rotated. They shall nominate one candidate for each office to be filled. All candidates shall be notified previously and be asked whether or not they are willing to serve if elected. The list of candidates shall be approved and may be augmented by the Church Council.
- .The candidates receiving the majority of all votes cast shall be declared elected.
- .Unexpired terms for any office shall be filled by the Voters' Assembly.
- .Newly elected members of the Church Council shall be installed in a public service.

ARTICLE III
DUTIES OF OFFICERS

.Of the ELDERS:

- .The Elders shall counsel with the pastor and assist him in the spiritual care of the congregation. They shall correct the erring and admonish the careless and indifferent and those lax in church and communion attendance. Because of the very nature of their work, the Elders shall be particularly careful to set the example of a devout Christian life.
- .They shall offer assistance to and comfort those in distress and be particularly concerned about the poor and needy in the congregation.
- .In case of contention and strife within the congregation, they shall endeavor to reconcile the disagreeing parties.
- .The Elders shall maintain good order in all public services, supervise the staff of ushers, greet and welcome visitors, render such assistance as may be necessary for the various ministerial acts, and visit prospective members.

They shall serve as a Board of Christian Education in the congregation and supervise all agencies for religious education.

2. Of the TRUSTEES:

The Trustees shall have charge of all real and personal property of the congregation and shall hold and manage such property in agreement with instructions given by the Voters' Assembly.

They shall provide for proper protection of the congregation through insurance policies and for the safekeeping of its deeds and other valuable documents.

They shall employ whatever employees are deemed necessary for the work of the congregation other than the pastor and Christian Day School teachers.

They shall be empowered to draw on the treasury to the amount stipulated in the annual budget for maintenance of the property and other necessary expenditures.

In cases of emergency expenditures, the Trustees shall have authority to draw on the treasury to the amount of \$500.00 without special resolution to the Church Council.

3. Of the PRESIDENT:

The President shall preside at the business meetings of the Voters' Assembly and the Church Council, and shall exercise care that the meetings are conducted in an orderly Christian manner.

He shall see to it that the resolutions of the Voters' Assembly and Church Council are carried out, and that committees are ready to report at the time designated by the Voters' Assembly.

He shall be privileged to bring to the notice of officers, boards or committees of the congregation any matter requiring attention, and to inform himself of the activities of the various boards and committees.

4. Of the VICE-PRESIDENT:

The Vice-President shall assume the duties of the President whenever the latter is absent or unable to serve.

He shall be an ex-officio member of the Board of Elders to assist and offer guidance in the Spiritual care of the congregation.

5. Of the TREASURER:

The Treasurer shall record all receipts and disbursements in a book provided for that purpose by the congregation, said book to remain the property of the congregation.

He shall pay all fixed or regular expenses and all bills properly approved by the Church Council and make other disbursements as directed by the Voters' Assembly.

He shall be ready to give a report on the congregation's financial condition at all regular meetings of the Church Council and the Voters' Assembly.

He shall submit an annual report at the annual meeting of the Voters' Assembly showing a summary of all receipts and disbursements and make this report available for publication.

6. Of the FINANCIAL SECRETARY:

The Financial Secretary shall keep an accurate accounting of the receipts of the congregation.

He shall keep an accurate account of all individual contributions, and prepare and distribute quarterly statements to all contributors.

He shall be ready to give a report of contributions at the annual meeting of the Voters' Assembly.

He shall assign an account number to each contributing member and cause the contribution envelopes to be distributed for the new fiscal year.

He shall provide new members with contribution envelopes and explain to them the financial program and contribution system of the congregation.

7. Of the SECRETARY:

The Secretary shall keep an exact record of all transactions and resolutions of the Voters' Assembly and Church Council in both regular and special meetings, submit his minutes for approval at the next regular meeting of the Voters' Assembly or Church Council, and enter such approved minutes in a book provided for the purpose, said book to remain the property of the congregation.

.He shall keep a membership record of all communicant members and a separate list of all voting members.

.He shall mail notices of meetings of the Voters' Assembly at least four days, but not more than twenty days, before the date of each meeting.

.He shall keep a record of attendance at all Voters' Assembly meetings and give a report of the yearly attendance at the annual meeting.

8. Of the CHURCH COUNCIL:

.The Church Council shall manage the affairs of the congregation according to the Constitution and Bylaws.

.They shall prepare the schedule of business for the annual Voters' Assembly meeting and make specific recommendations in the interest of the congregation and the Kingdom of God at large.

.They shall approve bills before payment and authorize the Treasurer to pay them, except for fixed and regular expenses.

ARTICLE IV AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

.These bylaws may be amended by the Voters' Assembly.

.Such amendments to the bylaws shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of the voting members present at any meeting.

ARTICLE V ORDER OF BUSINESS

In the regular meetings of the Voters' Assembly the order of business shall be:

- .Call to Order
- .Opening Devotion
- .Roll Call
- .Reading of Minutes
- .Financial Reports
- .Reports of other Officers, Boards, Committees
- .Elections
- .Unfinished Business
- .New Business
- .Adjournment with Prayer

RESPONSIBILITIES

ELDERS:

Spiritual Welfare

Individually and corporately
Attendance at worship
Use of the Sacraments
Church discipline
Delinquents
Help pastor with
difficult problems

Welfare of Pastor & Family

Adequate compensation
Housing
Free time
Vacation
Assistance for illness

Worship

Analyze time, number & meaningfulness
Analyze condition of the needs for worship
Ushers
Assistance in ministerial acts
Assistance in arranging pastoral
assistance, guest speakers, etc.
Encourage private worship

Christian Education

Supervise agencies
Examine educational facilities
Promote Church periodicals

Evangelism

Greeting of Visitors
Integration of new members
Assistance in visitation

TRUSTEES:

Physical Property

Maintenance
Improvements
Repairs

Trusteeship

Contracts
Legal documents
Insurance
Keys
Safety deposit box

Employment

Organist
Janitor
Etc.

Enlistment of Work Crews

STEWARDSHIP:

Fund Handling

Recording
Depositing
Payments
Budget

Reporting

To Council
To Voters' Assembly
Quarterly statements

Envelope System

Explanation to new members
Distribution

USHERS

Promote reverent worship of God by:

1. Preparing a setting appropriate for worship.
 - a. Be at church 15 to 20 minutes before the service.
 - b. Clear sidewalk during winter.
 - c. Post hymn numbers.
 - d. Light candles - extinguish candles.

2. Serving as a host in God's house.
 - a. Distributing bulletins/worship folders.
 - b. Taking care of illness
 - c. Refer guests to guest register.
 - d. Make sure there is enough chairs and hymnals, straighten chairs and hymnals at the end of the service.

3. Maintaining order.
 - a. Gathering offering.
 - b. Ushering for Lord's Supper. People are to be ushered up the center aisle and return to their seats down the right aisle, 8 people to a table.
 - c. During a baptism make sure warm water is in the font.
 - d. Assisting with the unexpected.

4. Witnessing Christ in friendly greeting and conversation.

5. Furthering good public relations.