

CONSTITUTION
Revised 2008-2010

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOR

675 Belmont Avenue
Mt. Pocono, Pennsylvania 18344

PREAMBLE

In the name of The Father and of The Son and of The Holy Spirit:

The Word of God requires that a Christian congregation conform to the Divine Word in doctrine and in practice (Ps. 119:105, Gal. 1:6-8; Rom. 16:17; Mt. 28:18-20) and that all things be done decently and in good order (I Cor. 14:40). Therefore, we, the members of the Lutheran Church of Our Savior set forth by this present document, signed by ourselves, the constitution and by-laws in accordance with which our congregational affairs, spiritual and material, shall be conducted.

ARTICLE I - NAME OF THE CHURCH

The name of this Christian congregation shall be the Lutheran Church Of Our Savior, Borough of Mt. Pocono, County of Monroe, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, a Non-Profit (Non Stock) entity. Entity Number: 212241, as filed with the Pennsylvania Department of State.

ARTICLE II- PURPOSE AND MISSION

- A. To gather in corporate worship, to use the divinely appointed means of Grace, to receive from God His forgiveness, life and salvation and to respond to his grace by thankful worship and praise, giving honor and glory to our Triune God for all His gifts of life and salvation.
- B. To nurture Christians in God's word and Lutheran Doctrine.
- C. To carry out Christ's command to make disciples of all nations (Mt. 28: 18-20).
- D. To manifest unity of faith and doctrine in Jesus Christ, to foster Christian fellowship and love, to extend a helping hand in human need.
- E. To achieve our objectives by the preaching of God's Word, by the teaching of God's Word, by the administration of the Sacraments and by the careful instruction of all members according to the confessional standards of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Article III).

ARTICLE III - CONFSSIONAL STANDARD

This congregation accepts without reservation:

- A. The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments as the inspired and written Word of God and the only infallible rule and norm of faith and practice.
- B. The confessional statements of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as they are contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 as a pure and true statement and exposition of God's Word. These are:
 - 1. The three Ecumenical Creeds: The Apostle's Creed, The Nicene Creed, The Athanasian Creed.
 - 2. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
 - 3. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession.
 - 4. The Smalcald Articles and the Treatise of the Power And Primacy Of The Pope.
 - 5. The Small Catechism of Luther.
 - 6. The Large Catechism of Luther.
 - 7. The Formula of Concord.

ARTICLE IV - SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

This congregation shall be a member of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as long as the Synod conforms to the congregation's confessional standards as set forth in this constitution in Article III.

ARTICLE V - CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

This congregation distinguishes between four types of congregational membership.

A. Baptized membership:

1. Baptized members are all who have been baptized in the name of The Father and of The Son and of The Holy Spirit and who are under the spiritual care of the pastor of this congregation, including the children who have not yet been confirmed into communicant membership.
2. Communicant members are those baptized members who have been instructed and are familiar with the contents of Luther's Small Catechism, have been confirmed in the Lutheran Faith, and accept the confessional standard of ARTICLE III of this constitution.
3. Voting members are communicant members who have reached the age of 18 years.
4. Guest members are seasonal members, who meet the standards of 1 and 2 in this Section, with rights and privileges as reception of the sacraments, pastoral care, congregational concern, use of their time, talents, and treasures in the service of the Lord, and attendance and participation in the voters' assembly.

B. Reception as members:

1. Baptized members are received through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism or through the consent of one or both parents in the case of children who have been baptized in another Christian congregation.
2. Adult members are received through the rite of confirmation pursuant to Article V.A.2. and Sacrament of Holy Baptism as appropriate, through transfer from a sister congregation, or through profession of faith or reaffirmation of faith.

C. Duties and Privileges of members:

Members of this congregation shall conform their entire lives to the authority of God's Word and to that end shall make diligent use of the means of grace, exercise faithful stewardship of God's many gifts and talents, impart and accept fraternal admonition as the need of such admonition becomes apparent, and be readily available for service in the Kingdom of Christ within and beyond the congregation. Membership in organizations whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God is prohibited.

D. Exclusion, withdrawal and terminating membership:

1. Transfer or release to another congregation.
2. Death.
3. Self exclusion which shall happen.
 - a. by relocation to another community (unless retained by special request or circumstances).
 - b. by joining a congregation outside the doctrinal fellowship of this congregation.
 - c. by persistent membership in any religious organization which maintains principles, doctrines or conduct conflicting with God's Word and Lutheran doctrine.
 - d. by purposeful and willful neglect of God's Word and Sacraments for an extended period.
 - e. by written request.

4. Excommunication:

Members who purposely and willfully conduct their lives in clear and manifest disobedience to God's Word or indicate clear disregard for God's Word and Sacrament shall be admonished. If they refuse to repent and amend their sinful life after such proper admonition they shall be excommunicated. Each case of excommunication or self-exclusion shall be presented to the voters' assembly for a decision. A two-thirds majority vote of the voters' assembly shall be required. Person or persons excommunicated are to be notified by registered letter of such action by the voters' assembly.

ARTICLE VI - THE OFFICE OF THE PASTOR

- A. The Church, properly speaking, is the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its truth and purity and the Holy Sacraments are administered according to the Word of God (Augsburg Confession VII). Therefore, God Himself instituted the Office of the Ministry for the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments through which means He gives the Holy Spirit who creates faith in those who hear the Gospel (Augsburg Confession V; John 20:22-23; Romans 10:14ff.). While a congregation pays the pastor's salary and cares for his other material and physical needs (Small Catechism, "What the Hearers Owe Their pastor(s)"), the pastor is not an 'employee' of the congregation in the secular sense. Rather God, working through the congregation, calls men to serve as Ministers in His Church (Acts 20:28). Ministers are accountable to God for their use of the "Power of the Keys" (Hebrews 13: 17; 1 Corinthians 4:1-4).
- B. Only those men shall serve in the Office of the Ministry who are properly qualified (1 Timothy 3:1- 7; Titus 1:5-9), ordained, and rightly called (Augsburg Confession XIV). Only ordained ministers who are members of Synod can be called.
- C. The pastor(s) shall be unequivocally pledged to the Confessional Standard of Article III before assuming the office of pastor in this congregation.
- D. The Divine Call shall be extended to pastor(s) by the congregation following the procedures described in the by-laws.
- E. Removal of a pastor from his office can be only for those reasons given in the written Word of God who first placed him in the office by His own Divine Call. The reasons and procedures are described in the by-laws.

ARTICLE VII - CALLED CHURCH WORKERS

- A. The Church may also only call commissioned workers who are members of the Synod.
- B. Removal of a church worker can be only for those reasons given in the written Word of God. The reasons and procedures are described in the by-laws.

ARTICLE VIII - AUTHORITY OF AND WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

The voters' assembly shall be the governing body of this congregation and shall be empowered to administer and manage all its affairs.

- A. The establishment and conduct of all organizations and societies within the congregation or related directly to the congregation shall be subject to the overall authority and general oversight of the voter's assembly.
- B. All matters before the voters' assembly shall be decided by a majority vote unless otherwise specified by this constitution or by-laws. Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided only on the basis of the Word of God.

ARTICLE IX- MEETINGS

Meetings of the voters' assembly shall be held as determined in the by-laws.

- A. Announcements of regular meetings shall be made in the services of the two previous Sundays.
- B. Announcements of special meetings shall be made in the services of the two previous Sundays or in the services of the previous Sunday when accompanied by notification by mail. Such special meetings may be called at the request of the pastor, president, church council, or ten (10) voting members.
- C. All voting members present at a properly called meeting shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE X - OFFICERS AND BOARDS

This congregation shall have the following officers and boards in addition to any, which the congregation shall establish from time to time. The officers and the chairpersons of the boards, and the pastor as an advisory member, shall constitute the membership of the church council. Those officers identified by state law shall serve as legal representatives of the congregation .

A. The officers of this congregation shall be: 10 in number (see by-laws for duties)

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| 1. President | 2. Vice-President |
| 3. Recording Secretary | 4. Treasurer |
| 5. Financial Secretary | 6. Three (3) at large |
| 7. Head Trustee | 8. Head Deacon |

B. The boards of this congregation shall be: 2 in number (see by-laws for duties)

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| 1. Board of Deacons | 2. Board of Trustees |
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C. Limitation

In accordance with Gen. 1,2, 1 Cor. 14, I Tim. 2 and Eph. 5 and the Scriptural teaching about order of creation and the service of women:

Women who have reached the age of 18 may serve as officers and as members of boards and committees of this congregation which do not call upon them to carry out the specific functions of the pastoral office (preaching in or serving as the leader of the public worship service, the public administration of the sacraments, the public exercise of church discipline) or put them in headship/authority over men. Accordingly, a woman shall not serve as pastor of this congregation or as president, vice president, deacon or head trustee.

Any officer or board member who fails to carry out his or her duties of office or who fails to perform the responsibilities of confirmed membership (see Article V.C) may be removed from office by the voters' assembly by a two-thirds majority ballot vote, in Christian and lawful order. Matthew 18 should be followed under such circumstances.

ARTICLE XI - DISSOLUTION

A. If at any time a division of the congregation should take place for any reason, the following principles will govern. The property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those communicant members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to the confessional standards set forth in this constitution.

B. In the event that the congregation dissolves, all property shall be disposed of by the final voters' assembly for the payment of debts and all just claims against the congregation, and any and all surplus and all rights connected therewith shall be conveyed to and become the property the Eastern District of the LCMS of which it is a member and/or, such recognized service organization and educational institution with the LCMS and as determined by the final voters' assembly.

ARTICLE XII- UNALTERABLE ARTICLES OF THIS CONSITUITION

These are: Articles II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII.

ARTICLE XIII- CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION

Alteration or appeal of any alterable article of this constitution shall require a two-thirds majority vote in a meeting of a voters' assembly duly announced in the services of this congregation on the two preceding Sundays, publicly posted and/or mailed to all communicant members two weeks before the meeting at which the proposed amendment is to be voted upon.

ARTICLE XIV- CHANGING THE BY-LAWS

This congregation may adopt, repeal or amend such by-laws as may be necessary for the execution and administration of its affairs.