

OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH
MCKINNEY, TEXAS

CONSTITUTION (Adopted 1977, Revised 1988, Revised 2009)

PREAMBLE: Whereas it is the expressed will of our Lord Jesus Christ that His disciples should proclaim the Gospel to the whole world (Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 8). and in order that this mission might be carried out by God's people according to His will, He has commanded that Christians unite in worship (Hebrews 10:24-25), conform to His divine Word in doctrine and practice (Psalm 119:105; Galatians 1:6-8; 2 Timothy 4:1-5), enjoy fellowship with one another (Acts 2:42), serve the needs of all people in Christian love (Ephesians 4:7-16; Mark 10:42-44; John 13:35; Galatians 6:10), exercise the office of the keys as His body, the church, (John 20:21-23; Matthew 18:15-20), and maintain decency and good order in the church (1 Corinthians 14:40). **THEREFORE: WE, THE MEMBERS OF OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH, MCKINNEY, TEXAS, DO HEREBY ACCEPT AND SUBSCRIBE TO THE FOLLOWING CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH WHICH ALL SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL AFFAIRS OF THIS CONGREGATION SHALL BE GOVERNED.**

ARTICLE 1 - NAME

The name of this congregation shall be **OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH** of McKinney, Texas.

ARTICLE 2 - STATEMENT OF MISSION AND MINISTRY

Our Savior congregation is a family of baptized and confirmed believers in Christ who exist and are so guided by the expressed commitment to effectively communicate the love, care, and warmth of Jesus Christ in the Good News of His death and resurrection, to any and everyone with whom the Lord provides us the opportunity, in all that we say or do.

ARTICLE 3 - DOCTRINAL STANDARD

This congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the old and new testaments as the revealed Word of God, verbally inspired. Furthermore, this congregation acknowledges and accepts all of the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church, contained in the Book of Concord of the year 1580, to be a true and genuine exposition of the doctrines of the Bible. These confessional writings are:

1. *The three ecumenical creeds; namely,*
 - A. *The Apostle's Creed*
 - B. *The Nicene Creed*
 - C. *The Athanasion Creed*
2. *The Unaltered Augsburg Confession*
3. *The Apology of the Augsburg Confession*
4. *The Smalcald Articles*
5. *Luther's Large Catechism*
6. *Luther's Small Catechism*
7. *The Formula of Concord*

This congregation insists that all doctrine preached, taught, or practiced in her midst must be in accord with this doctrinal standard. All doctrinal disputes which may arise shall be judged and decided according to it.

ARTICLE 4 - PRIVILEGES OF MEN AND WOMEN

We believe that God created man and woman equal in their standing under Him. We also hold to the belief that God in His love created male and female as separate and unique beings; assigning to each, separate and distinct roles (Genesis 2:7, 18-25). These differing roles in no way expressed a superior or inferior relationship to God on the part of either sex over and against the other.

We also understand that both man and woman fell into sin and were (are) held equally responsible (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12-21). Both were under the curse of sin, both needed redemption, and both are justified only through faith in Jesus Christ. Furthermore, we believe that, in Christ, both are equally important, forgiven and loved (Galatians 3:28). We also hold that both sexes have been given the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

However, we also confess that this equality of the sexes, under God in Christ, has not overturned the God-given roles of divine creation; anymore than our freedom in Christ has overturned and done away with the Law of God. Rather, it is our attitude and motivation for fulfilling our God-given roles that has been overturned. Namely, in Christ, the fulfillment of our roles are prompted by the love of Christ within us, and, only in such fulfillment of our God-given roles can we hope to reach our fullest potential in our life in Christ (1 Timothy).

Accordingly, it is clear in Scripture that one of the roles which God has assigned to the males is headship (1 Corinthians 14:34-38 & 1 Timothy 2:11-15). In both Old and New Testaments, God upholds the natural created order and calls the male to lead His people. This role, however, does not imply the lording over, the excluding from, or the dismissing of the female from her role in the church or her part in fulfilling the Great Commission of our Lord given to all believers.

Therefore, in order to acknowledge the uniqueness of our roles and at the same time to be faithful to our confession of equality between the sexes; Our Savior Lutheran seeks to encourage and enable all of her members to reach their fullest potential in the Lord, as they together “walk in the newness of life”, by:

1. Placing the responsibility of the execution of the office of public ministry upon the qualified and called male in the office of Pastor. These responsibilities may be delegated by the Pastor(s) to male members of the congregation as deemed necessary to ensure faithful and fruitful ministry to God’s people and the world.
2. Placing the responsibility of administrative governance in the qualified person through election or appointment as set forth by the by-laws.
3. Granting both male and female members the right to vote through the congregational assemblies (according to the guidelines as set forth in the by-laws). In this way all members are enabled to join hands in the work of the Kingdom, elect properly qualified members, and gain a fuller vision of the plan of God for our congregation as expressed in the annual budget, congregational programs, and ministry reports.

Through these methods, we seek to remain filled with the spirit, united in Christ, and accountable to God, as we are each “subject to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:17 – 21).

ARTICLE 5 - OUR SAVIOR'S PLEDGE TO HER MEMBERS

We, as a collective body of believers, pledge to ourselves the following:

1. *To preach and teach the Word of God in its truth and purity.*
2. *To maintain the best possible agencies for the Christian education and training of our youth and adults.*

- 3. To perform official acts as necessary (i.e. baptisms, weddings, and funerals).*
- 4. To set an example of Christian love and fellowship.*
- 5. To offer specialized ministries (i.e., counseling) as possible.*
- 6. To provide opportunities for Christian friendships to develop.*
- 7. To show concern for fellow members with special needs.*
- 8. To maintain an interest in fulfilling the needs of our members; whether they be spiritual, emotional, or physical needs.*
- 9. To make available opportunities for service to the Lord and His people through various roles/tasks according to their God-given time and talents.*

ARTICLE 6 - OUR SAVIOR'S EXPECTATIONS OF HER MEMBERS

This congregation, as an institution of God, existing under the Lordship of Christ, and operating under His divine command, expects each of her members to conform his/her life to the Word of God; and to that end, **WE EXPECT:**

- 1. A diligent and faithful use of the means of grace through regular and consistent worship, including frequent attendance at the Lord's Table. (Hebrews 10:25)*
- 2. The exercise of faithful stewardship of God's gifts, seeking to serve God and His church through the blessings of time, talents, and treasures. (1 Corinthians 8:1-5; 9:8-15)*
- 3. The leading of a Christian life, by the grace of God, as clearly taught in Galatians 5:19-26.*
- 4. A willingness to participate in a regular study of God's Word, making use of the Christian educational opportunities provided, for both, adults and children. (Psalm 1)*
- 5. From our parents, the responsibility to bring their children for baptism at an early age and to provide for their proper training in the Lord through Sunday School and Jr. Confirmation. Proverbs 22:6)*
- 6. A continual refusal to become members, affiliates, and/ or supporters of the Masonic lodge and/or other organizations which stand in direct opposition to the Gospel of Jesus Christ (John 5:23; 1 John 2:22; Ephesians 5:11-12; Matthew 5:34-37; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18).*
- 7. A willing and cheerful submission to the regulations properly adopted by this congregation, providing such regulations do not conflict with the Word of God. (1 Corinthians 14:40)*
- 8. An acceptance of Christian discipline according to Matthew 18:15-20 as the need for it becomes apparent.*

Furthermore, we expect our officers:

- 1. To be regular in their attendance at appropriate meetings.*
- 2. To be faithful in their performance of their assigned duties.*
- 3. To be honest in their inability to responsibly continue in their positions.*
- 4. To maintain a sincere concern for the total welfare of this congregation and her individual members.*
- 5. To become familiar with the constitution, bylaws, and the manuals, especially as it relates to their specific office.*

ARTICLE 7 - PASTORS AND OTHER CALLED WORKERS

GENERAL. The pastoral office as well as any other office of a called worker in this congregation shall be conferred upon such candidates only as profess their acceptance of and adherence to all the canonical books of the old and new testaments as the verbally inspired Word of God, and subscribe to all of the symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church enumerated in Article 3 of this constitution. Such called workers shall pledge themselves to the same by the call extended to and accepted by them. Called workers shall be members of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod or belong to a synod with which we are in pulpit and altar

fellowship. Called workers shall be properly called and publicly installed in their office as set forth in the bylaws of this constitution. (According to Article 4 of this constitution, only male candidates shall be considered for the office of pastor.)

DUTIES. The rights, duties, and expectations of called workers shall be clearly defined in the call documents of any worker. Any adjustments to such rights, duties, or expectations may be made only after consulting called workers whose job descriptions are effected. Any disputes over the suggested change/s shall be brought before the congregation in a properly convened assembly for a final and binding decision.

ARTICLE 8 - SYNODICAL AFFILIATION

A. This congregation shall hold membership in the Lutheran Church- Missouri Synod so long as said synod shall remain true to the doctrinal standards as set forth in Article 3 of this constitution.

B. It shall be the duty of this congregation and her individual members to support the work of the District and Synod, since they thereby support their own Christ-appointed work.

ARTICLE 9- MEMBERSHIP

Members are classified as follows:

A. **Baptized members.** All persons under the spiritual and pastoral care of the congregation who have been baptized with water in the Name of the Triune God. All baptized members are expected in due time to receive confirmation instruction in order to prepare for communicant membership in this congregation by either:

1. *enrolling in the Jr. Confirmation classes during the 7th and 8th grades, or*
2. *having joined the congregation as a baptized member after the 8th grade, to attend the adult confirmation class within one year of becoming a baptized member of this congregation.*

B. **Communicant members.** All baptized members of this congregation who have been confirmed through proper confirmation instruction and are familiar with the teachings of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, at least as set forth in Luther's Small catechism, and have declared acceptance of them.

C. **Voting members.** All communicant members of this congregation who have reached the age of 18 years and have attended worship at Our Savior at least once within the past six months.

The admission and termination of members to Our Savior is set forth in the bylaws of this constitution. The above provisions for baptized, communicant, and voting membership in this congregation are applied equally to all persons, regardless of race, national origin, or sex.

ARTICLE 10 - AUTHORITY OF THE CONGREGATION

A. **GENERAL.** The congregation as an assembled body, properly convened, shall have supreme and final power to administer and manage all of its external and internal affairs. It may not relinquish the ultimate supervision or responsibility of such.

B. **RIGHT OF CALLING.** The right of extending a call to any worker shall be vested in the congregational assembly and shall never be delegated to a smaller group or to an individual.

C. **OFFICERS.** The congregational assembly shall elect officers as defined and specified in the bylaws and manuals; and, may delegate appointments and the establishment of committees to the governing boards, etc. when necessary. Other offices and/or boards may be established by the congregational assembly and their duties defined by the same.

D. **DECISIONS.** The congregation shall not be empowered to decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the confessions of the Lutheran Church (Article 3), and any such decision shall be immediately null and void. Any member of this congregation may appeal to the congregational assembly in regard to any matter relating to the government and affairs of this congregation. The decision of the assembly shall be final and binding, but, such decisions shall always be in accord with Article 3. Doctrinal matters shall be decided by the Word of God. All other matters may be decided by a majority vote of the congregational assembly, properly convened, unless otherwise specified by this constitution and bylaws, or the accepted rules of parliamentary procedure.

E. **POWERS OF OFFICERS.** Congregational officers, boards, or committees, whether elected or appointed, shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them by the appropriate authority, and, what ever power may have been delegated to them may at any time be altered or revoked by the voters.

F. **REMOVAL FROM OFFICE.** The congregational assembly shall have the right to remove from office by two-thirds of the votes cast by a ballot, in Christian and lawful order, any pastor, called worker, or officer of the congregation for any of the following reasons:

persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, inability to discharge his/her duties, and/or willful neglect of duties

The circuit counselor and/or District president shall be consulted before the congregational assembly acts on any proposed removal of a pastor or called worker.

G. **REMOVAL FROM CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERSHIP.** The congregational assembly shall have the authority to exercise Christian discipline according to Matthew 18 and to remove anyone from membership in this congregation for the reasons laid down in the bylaws of this constitution.

ARTICLE 11 - PROPERTY RIGHTS

This congregation, represented by the assembly, shall have the right to acquire, own, or dispose of, such property as is necessary for the successful realization of her aims. Everything owned by the congregation, whether movable or fixed is the estate of the congregation.

A. **SEPARATION.** Members who sever their connection with this congregation through any means, forfeit all claims to the property of this congregation. This likewise applies to any member who has been excommunicated from membership according to the guidelines in this constitution and bylaws.

B. **DOCTRINAL DISPUTES.** If at any time a separation on account of doctrinal dispute should take place in this congregation, which we pray God prevents, the property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those members who adhere to the doctrinal standard of Article 3 of this constitution. In such case, three consecrated Christian pastors of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, chosen and agreeable to both parties, shall act as judges.

C. **DISSOLUTION.** In the event of dissolution of this congregation all property of the congregation shall be disposed of by the final congregational assembly for the payment of debts, and any and all surplus, after due settlement of just claims against this congregation, shall be conveyed to and become the property; of the Texas District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

ARTICLE 12 - ADOPTING BYLAWS

This congregation may adopt bylaws and the like as may be required for the accomplishment of her purpose.

ARTICLE 13 - CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION

- A. The principles laid down in Article 3 of this constitution shall be unalterable and irrevocable.
- B. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed in writing at any regular or special congregational assembly by any voting member. If a majority of the members present at such meeting shall vote in favor of the proposal, a copy of such proposed amendments shall be made available to the membership of the congregation at least two weeks prior to the next regular or special congregational assembly at which the proposed amendment will be addressed. The final vote shall be taken in that meeting or at a subsequent meeting, and a two-thirds majority of the voters present shall be required for adoption.