

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Constitution

Preamble

God requires that a Christian congregation will confess to His divine word in doctrine and practice (Psalm 119:105, 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 Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, located in LaGrange, Kentucky accept and subscribe to the following Constitution and Bylaws, in accordance with which all spiritual affairs of our congregation shall be governed.

1.0 NAME

The name of this congregation will be Holy Trinity Lutheran Church of LaGrange Kentucky.

2.0 MISSION

The purpose of this congregation will be to give honor and glory to the Triune God, to carry out His will, to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world, to manifest the unity of our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior, to foster Christian fellowship and love, to extend a helping hand in human need, and to achieve our objectives by the preaching of the Word of God, by the administration of the sacraments, and by the religious instruction of all its members according to the confessional standard of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

3.0 DOCTRINAL STANDARD

- 3.1 This congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the Old Testament and the New Testament as the revealed and inerrant Work of God, verbally inspired, and submits to them as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life.
- 3.2 This congregation acknowledges and accepts all the confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the book of concord of the year 1580, as true and genuine expositions of the doctrines of the Bible. These confessional writings are the three Ecumenical Creeds (Apostles, Nicene, and Athanasian), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, Luther's Large and Small Catechisms and the Formula of Concord.

- 3.3 Any controversy involving matters of faith and doctrine that may arise within this congregation will be judged and decided according to the doctrinal standard here set forth in this section.

4.0 MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Membership

The membership of this congregation includes the following:

4.1.1 *Baptized* members are all who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and who are under the spiritual care of the pastor of this congregation, including the children who have not yet been confirmed.

4.1.2 *Communicant* members are those baptized members who have been in the Lutheran faith, accept the confessional standard of Section 3.0 of this constitution, are familiar with contents of *Luther's Small Catechism*, and are not members of organizations whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God.

4.1.3 *Voting* members are communicant members who have reached the age of 18 years, have been received by the Voters' Assembly, and have signed the constitution of the congregation.

4.2 Reception

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

The reception will be approved by the Voters' Assembly. Eligible communicant members may be received as voting members upon application for such privilege, upon approval by the Voters' Assembly, and upon signing the constitution.

4.3 Duties

Members of the congregation will conform their entire lives to the rule of God's Word and to that end make diligent use of the means of grace, exercise faithful stewardship of 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.

4.4 Termination

4.4.1 Membership shall be terminated by transfer to a sister congregation, by death, by joining a congregation outside the fellowship of this congregation, by excommunication, or by self-exclusion. In cases of excommunication or self-exclusion, each case will be presented individually to the Voters' Assembly for a decision.

4.4.2 Communicant members who conduct themselves in an un-Christian manner will be admonished according to Matthew 18: 15-20. If they remain impenitent after proper admonition, they shall be excommunicated. In all disciplinary cases, the congregation will follow its stated and adopted guidelines.

5.0 THE OFFICE OF THE PASTOR

The pastoral office of this congregation will be conferred upon such ministers and candidates only as those who profess and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in Section 3.0 of this Constitution and who are well qualified for their work. Pastors will, in the call extended to and accepted by them, be pledged to this confessional standard.

6.0 AUTHORITY OF THE CONGREGATION

6.1 General

The Voters' Assembly will be the governing body of this congregation and will be empowered to administer and manage all its affairs. The establishment and conduct of the Church council and all organizations and societies within the congregation will be subject to the approval and supervision of the Voters' Assembly.

6.2 The Right of Calling

The right of calling pastors will be vested in the Voters' Assembly of the congregation and will never be delegated to a smaller body or to an individual of the congregation.

6.3 Decisions

All matters will be decided under the word of God, doctrine, and conscience; and matters shall be carried out by a majority vote of the Voters' Assembly unless other than a majority vote is specified by this Constitution or Bylaws.

6.4 Removal from Office

6.4.1 Any pastor, teacher, or officer may be removed from office by the Voters' Assembly by a two-thirds majority ballot vote, in Christian and lawful order, for one of the following reason; persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, or willful neglect of duties.

6.4.2 The Voters' Assembly may request the resignation of any pastor, teacher, or officer from his position in the congregation in the case of prolonged incapacity or general incompetence.

6.5 Removal from Membership

The Voters' Assembly will have the authority to exclude any communicant member according to Matthew 18: 15-18 (see section 4.0). The person so excluded (excommunicated) shall forfeit all rights of membership of this congregation.

7.0 OFFICERS

7.1 The officers of this congregation will be such officers, boards or committees as the Bylaws of this Constitution may prescribe.

7.2 Congregational officers, elected by the Voters' Assembly, or committees, appointed by Church Council, will have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them, and whatever authority may have been delegated may at any time be altered or revoked by the body which originally conferred the authority.

8.0 DIVISION

8.1 If at any time a division should take place on account of doctrine, the property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith will remain with those communicant members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Section 3.0 of this Constitution. If division takes place for any other reason(s), the property will remain with the majority of the communicant members.

- 8.2 In the event the congregation should totally disband, the property and all rights connected therewith will be transferred to the District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod of which the congregation has been a member at the time of disbanding.

9.0 DOCTRINAL CONFORMITY

All hymns, prayers, and liturgies to be used in the services of the congregation and in all ministerial acts will conform to Section 3.0. Likewise, in all classes for instruction in Christian doctrine, only such books and teaching aids will be used as conform to this standard.

10.0 SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

- 10.1 This congregation will hold membership in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod as long as this synod remains true to the word of god and the Lutheran confessions. It will send its pastor(s), and a lay delegate to the District Convention of the Synod.
- 10.2 Severance of membership in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod will require action by the Voters’ Assembly. Such action will not be effective until at least 90 days after the District and Synod Presidents have been officially notified.

11.0 BYLAWS

This congregation may adopt such Bylaws as may be required for the accomplishment of its purpose.

12.0 ADMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- 12.1 Amendments to provisions of this constitution except Sections 2.0, 3.0, 5.0 and 9.0 may be adopted at a regular voters’ meeting, except as hereinafter provided.
- 12.1.1 That the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at a previous meeting of the Voters’ Assembly and published by posting in a conspicuous place in the church or by mail to all communicant members of the congregation prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon;
- 12.1.2 That an affirmative vote of two-thirds majority of the voters present is secured.

12.2 In addition to the above requirements, proposals to amend Sections 2.0, 3.0, 5.0 and 9.0 will require that previous notice of such amendment and discussion of the same will be presented at two regular meetings of the Voters' Assembly before the meeting at which the proposed amendment is to receive action. Due notice of the fact that a vote will be taken will be given to all voting members of the congregation. Any changes in these articles will not destroy the essential meaning of the same. Whether or not this has occurred will be decided, if challenged, by a decision by the dispute resolution process described in the Bylaws of the Synod.