

CONSTITUTION

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
Winfield, Kansas
A member congregation of
The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS)

PREAMBLE

The Word of God requires that a Christian congregation shall conform to this divine Word in doctrine and practice (Ps.119:105; Matt. 28:18-20; Gal.1:6-8; & 2 Tim.4:1-5) and that all things be done decently and in order (1 Cor.14:40). Therefore, we, the undersigned, herewith adopt this Constitution and its Bylaws by which all affairs of this congregation shall be conducted.

ARTICLE I – NAME

The corporate legal name of this congregation shall be **TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, Inc.** (commonly known as **Trinity Lutheran Church - LCMS**) of Winfield, Cowley County, Kansas.

ARTICLE II – SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

This congregation shall hold membership in The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod as long as the Synod conforms to the congregation’s confessional standards as set forth in this constitution.

ARTICLE III – PURPOSE

The purpose of this congregation shall be to serve its members and to spread the kingdom of God by the preaching of the Word of God, by the administration of the sacraments, and by the religious instruction of youth and adults, according to the confessional standards of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Article IV), and to foster Christian fellowship and welfare.

ARTICLE IV – CONFESSIONS

This congregation accepts without reservation all the canonical books of the Old and New Testament as the inspired Word of God. This congregation also accepts without reservation as a true interpretation and explanation thereof the confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. These are contained in the Book of Concord of the year 1580, namely: the three Ecumenical Creeds - The Apostles’ Creed, The Nicene Creed, and The Athanasian Creed; the Unaltered Augsburg Confession; the Apology of the Augsburg Confession; the Smalcald Articles; Luther’s Large Catechism; Luther’s Small Catechism; and the Formula of Concord.

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ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this congregation consists of the following:

A. Baptized Membership

Baptized members are all who have been baptized with water in the name of the Triune God and who are under the spiritual care of the Pastor of this congregation.

B. Communicant Membership

1. Communicant members of this congregation are those

- a. *Who are baptized in the name of the Triune God;*
- b. *Who accept without reservation the confessional standards of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as described in Article IV of this Constitution, and who have been instructed in and are familiar with Luther's Small Catechism and declare their acceptance of it;*
- c. *Who lead a godly life and avoid works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21);*
- d. *Who attend divine services faithfully;*
- e. *Who partake of the Lord's Supper on a frequent and regular basis;*
- f. *Who permit themselves to be fraternally admonished and corrected when they have erred;*
- g. *Who contribute regularly and faithfully of their time, talents, and treasure as God has prospered them, toward the building of Christ's kingdom in the congregation and throughout the world;*
- h. *Who do not hold membership in any organization whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God.*

2. *If an erring member has been duly admonished with the Word of God according to Matt.18:15-20, but stubbornly resists all efforts to bring him/her to repentance, he/she shall be excommunicated. He/she thereby forfeits all claims on the church property and all privileges of membership. This latter clause also pertains to those who voluntarily sever connections with the congregation (Bylaws Article I.C.4 and D).*

C. Voting membership

Voting membership is determined by the Bylaws.

D. Guest Membership

Guest membership is determined by the Bylaws.

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ARTICLE VI - ORDAINED AND COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

- A. Only such men shall be called as Ordained Ministers who accept all the books of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God, who are in full agreement with the Confessional Standard (Constitution Article IV), and who have the qualifications for such calls according to the standards and teachings of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. The Ordained Minister in the call extended to him and accepted by him pledges himself to this confessional standard.
- B. Only such men and women shall be called as Commissioned Ministers who accept all the books of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God, who are in full agreement with the Confessional Standard (Constitution Article IV), and who have the qualifications for such calls according to the standards and teachings of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. The Commissioned Minister in the call extended to him/her and accepted by him/her pledges himself/herself to this confessional standard.

ARTICLE VII – POWERS VESTED IN THE CONGREGATION

- A. The congregation as a body, through the Voters' Assembly, shall have supreme power through the Administrative Council, to administer and manage its external and internal affairs. The establishment and conduct of all institutions and societies within the congregation, such as the Christian day school, Sunday school, youth societies, ladies organizations, choir, etc. at all times shall be subject to the approval and supervision of the congregation.
- B. *The right of calling Ordained or Commissioned ministers shall be vested in the Voters' Assembly of the congregation and shall never be delegated to a smaller body or to an individual.*
- C. *The matters of doctrine shall require unanimity for the final decision. The congregation, however, shall not be empowered to decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Article IV). Any such decision shall be null and void. Other matters shall be disposed of by the vote of a majority of the voting members present at a duly called meeting, except as otherwise stated in the Constitution or Bylaws.*
- D. Any Ordained or Commissioned Minister, or officer of the congregation may be removed from office by the Voters' Assembly, by a two-thirds majority vote, by ballot, in Christian and lawful order for any of the following causes: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of or inability to perform his or her official duties (Bylaws Article VII).
- E. When a vacancy occurs in the office of an Ordained Minister, the appropriate Call Committee (Bylaws Article VI.) shall notify the Circuit Visitor and the president of the District to receive assistance in temporarily filling the vacancy and to receive counsel in calling a new Ordained Minister.

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- F. When a vacancy occurs in the office of a Commissioned Minister, the appropriate Call Committee (Bylaws Article VI.) shall notify the appropriate District Official for assistance in temporarily filling the vacancy and to receive counsel in calling a new Commissioned Minister. As a matter of courtesy, the Circuit Visitor shall be kept informed of this process.

ARTICLE VIII – PROPERTY RIGHTS

In case of dissensions in doctrinal matters or divisions in the congregation the counsel of the District President shall be sought. All property of the congregation shall remain with those who remain faithful and strictly adhere to all the Evangelical Lutheran Confessions (Article IV).

ARTICLE IX – DISSOLUTION OF THE CONGREGATION

In the event that the congregation dissolves, all property shall be disposed of by the final Voter's Assembly for the payment of debts and all just claims against the congregation. Any and all surplus items, and all rights connected to the remaining property shall be dispersed by the Church Council, with special consideration being given to the LCMS Kansas District.

ARTICLE X – AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- A. *Proposed amendments to the provisions of this Constitution not identified in the following paragraph shall be submitted in writing to a member of the Executive Board prior to a duly called meeting of the Voters' Assembly and announced to the congregation by public posting and/or mail to all communicant members at least 30 days prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the voters present shall be required for adoption. The date of approval shall be referenced in any amendment adopted. (Please consult the Manual of Duties, Policies, and Procedures, IV.D., Constitution and Bylaw Committee.)*
- B. *Amendments to Articles IV; V.B.1.a,b,c,g,h; V.B.2; VI; VII.B,C; VIII; and X shall not destroy their essential meaning. (The listed Articles are italicized.) Proposed amendments to these articles shall follow the same procedure as noted in Article X.A.*
- C. *The revised Constitution shall, as a condition of continued membership in The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, be submitted to the President of the District for review by the District's Constitution Committee and favorable action by the District's Board of Directors before being implemented by the congregation.*

Revised and adopted 6/8/2010
Revised and adopted 6/16/2019