

The Constitution of
OUR SAVIOUR'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

30370 Hardwood Way
Cannon Falls, MN 55009

PREAMBLE

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In as much as all things in the Church of Christ ought, according to the Word of God

(I Cor. 14:40; Col. 2:5), to be done decently and in order.

We, members of the Church of Christ, desiring to be blessed together with Word and Sacrament, and to unite as a congregation in the common confession, defense and propagation of our faith in Jesus Christ, our Saviour, do hereby adopt this constitution and solemnly pledge ourselves to be governed by its provisions.

ARTICLE I

Confession of Faith

Section 1: This congregation confesses Jesus Christ as Lord of the Church. The Holy Spirit creates and sustains the Church through the Gospel and thereby unites believers with their Lord and with one another in the fellowship of faith.

Section 2: This congregation acknowledges the Holy Scriptures as the revealed Word of God and as the only sufficient and infallible rule and standard of faith and practice. It confesses the three ecumenical creeds, namely the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian. It accepts the unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true exposition of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, together with the further development of these doctrines as contained in the other symbolical books of the Lutheran Church, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smaldcald Articles, the Small and Large Catechisms of Luther, and the Formula of Concord.

ARTICLE II

Purpose and Aim

The object and purpose of this congregation shall be to proclaim and propagate the Christian faith through the inspired Word of God and the Holy Sacraments. To this end, we regard as necessary the following aims:

1. To call men to repentance and to a personal commitment of their life and loyalty to Jesus Christ.
2. To promote the fellowship of Christian people around His Word and in Prayer.
3. To encourage our members to engage in individual and family worship, that the Word of God may dwell richly among us, and that we might demonstrate to others the life of faith in Christ.
4. To urge our members to pray, to labor and to give, that the Gospel might be brought to those who are dead in sin, both in our community and in every foreign field.
5. This congregation shall follow a simple form of worship, and discourages the wearing of clerical robes by its pastor.

6. This congregation shall be conducted and maintained as an independent church, and must not be controlled by any Synod or church body. It shall not support other church associations, synods or groups (such as the World Council of Churches, National Council of Churches, etc.) whose teachings and practices and beliefs, in whole or in part, are contrary to Section 2 of Article I in this constitution.
7. This congregation seeks and supports having its members lead Spirit-filled and directed lives. We support and promote the gifts of the Spirit, but do not allow the use of tongues within our congregation unless this practice strictly follows God's Word, specifically I Cor. 14:26-33.

ARTICLE III

The power of the Congregation and its Officers

- Section 1: In all matters pertaining to the Christian faith and life, the authority of the Word of God shall be supreme.
- Section 2: In all matters not decided by the Word of God and not subject to civil laws, the congregation itself, and its officers which it elects, and not any individual or group within it, shall have the right of decision, but shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order (Revised).
- Section 3: All schools, societies, and other organizations within the congregation shall be organized with the approval of the congregation and operate in harmony with church policies. (The Church Council has the right to discharge for false teaching, scandalous living, and unfaithfulness in the exercise of office. This discipline shall be carried out in accordance with Matthew 18:15-18).

ARTICLE IV

Membership and Voting

- Section 1: The congregation shall consist of the baptized and confirmed persons who accept the provisions of this constitution, and who have been, or who will be, duly received into membership as hereinafter provided, and such children as have been or shall be received through Holy Baptism.
- Section 2: All children of parents who belong to the congregation become members through baptism. Children of non-members become members of this congregation by the act of confirmation, if they so desire.
- Section 3: Adults who are to be received into the congregation must:
- a. be baptized with Christian baptism,
 - b. be confirmed or have a knowledge of Christian doctrine equivalent to that required for confirmation,
 - c. by confession and life show that they seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness,
 - d. subscribe to this Constitution and partake according to ability in the work and expenses of the congregation,
 - e. not be a member of any lodge or secret society.
- Section 4: Admission may also be granted when an applicant presents a letter of transfer duly issued from some other Lutheran congregation, and upon examination of the applicant by the Church Council.
- Section 5: When one who is eligible desires to become a member of the congregation, he shall apply to the pastor, who shall partly by conversation and partly by conferring with the Church Council, make himself acquainted with the faith and life of the person in question. A person

to be eligible for membership must have been baptized and must have a testimony of being a true believer, or a seeker for God. If the pastor and Church Council approve his or her admission, the application shall be announced to the congregation.

Section 6: When non-Lutheran persons desire to become members of this congregation, aside from satisfying the requirements for membership mentioned in this Article IV of this Constitution, they should be willing to receive instruction in Luther's Small Catechism with special attention to the "Articles of the Creed" and the Lutheran interpretation of the two Sacraments. Christian truth as set forth in the Catechism must be accepted by such applicants, either by the Rite of Confirmation or in some other manner satisfactory to the Church Council, prior to their acceptance into membership.

Section 7: The congregation shall act upon the applications for membership at the annual meeting or at a regular business meeting of the congregation. They do, at this time, become voting members.

Section 8: When new members have been accepted by the congregation at a business meeting, they shall be formally received and welcomed at the worship service.

Section 9: No person shall be received into membership, or retained as a member who is associated with an organization based on the lodge system, or any movement inconsistent with the Christian faith, or which gives offense to the Church of God.

Section 10: The pastor and his family automatically become members of this congregation upon his acceptance of the letter of call.

Section 11: Members of this congregation who are 18 and over and have been fully received into the congregation and whose memberships have not later been withdrawn, transferred or expelled, and who have fulfilled their reasonable obligations (according to Article IV, Section 3:d.) shall be eligible to vote.

Section 12: All members must be of legal voting age to vote on the purchasing, sale or encumbrance of real estate, or in any other matters of legal nature.

Section 13: Duties of Members.

Para. 1: They shall endeavor to lead a Christian life and live together in charity, humility, and peace, endeavoring to edify one another in the Holy faith through admonition, consolation, and encouragement; promote the unity and welfare of the congregation; diligently and prayerfully read and study the Word of God; keep the Lord's day holy, diligently attending the public services and devotional meetings of the congregation; make a reverent use of the Holy Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper; practice private and family worship - all this in order that they themselves may grow in grace and sanctification, and that God's Kingdom may be advanced and His Holy Name glorified.

Para 2: Recognizing that all good gifts come from above, all members shall, according as God has prospered them, contribute toward the current expenses of the congregation and benevolences.

The Lord's work in and through this congregation shall be supported, with prayer, by the direct giving of tithes and free-will offerings. No indirect ways or artificial means of raising money shall be used in this congregation or in its various organizations without prior approval of the church board.

Para 3: Parents shall have their children baptized in early infancy and all members should exercise due concern for the instruction of the young in the Christian faith in the Sunday School, Vacation Bible School and the Confirmation class.

Section 14: Discipline of Members

Para. 1: The congregation zealously watches over the purity of the doctrine and life of its members,

and when anyone is overtaken in any trespass (as Paul states in Galatians 5:19-21 and in other similar passages) it strives in the spirit of meekness and love, to restore such a one in accordance with Matthew 18:15 and I Corinthians 5.

Para. 2: With this purpose in mind, it is forbidden to accuse a brother before the congregation without first having sought privately to admonish him in love.

Para. 3: If such admonition fails, the case may be brought before the Church Council which, after careful consideration, shall seek through admonition and conviction by the Word of God, to bring the erring one to confession and repentance.

Para. 4: If these methods fail, the Church Council shall submit the matter to the congregation, together with its recommendation as to the proper course to be pursued. The means the congregation may employ are:

- a. admonition and intercessory prayer in the assembly of the congregation.
- b. expulsion from participation in the Lord's Supper
- c. expulsion from the congregation.

Para. 5: Manifested indifference to the Word of God, persistent non-attendance at divine worship, continuing failure to participate in the program of the church, or radical divergence from the doctrinal stand of the congregation, (see Article I of the Constitution) shall be investigated by the Church Council which shall, by loving admonition and prayer in their behalf, seek to bring the negligent members of the congregation back into fellowship with the assembly of the church. Upon a member's failure to respond to such admonition, the Church Council shall recommend that such members be dropped from the roll of the congregation.

ARTICLE V

The Pastor

Section 1: Terms of his call.

Para. 1: The pastor of this congregation must be duly examined, legally called and fully authorized to perform the duties of his office, and must be a member of the Lutheran Church.

Para. 2: The election of a pastor must take place at a legally called business meeting of this congregation and requires a two-thirds majority of votes cast.

Section 2: Duties of the Pastor

Para. 1: The pastor shall preach the Word of God and administer the Holy Sacraments in full accordance with the confessions of this congregation. He shall be a true and sincere Christian, lead a godly and exemplary life, visit the sick and destitute, be diligent in the Christian instruction of the young, comfort, instruct, reprove, admonish, and warn both publicly and privately, as the Word of God directs (II Timothy 4:2, Titus 1:6-9), and be ever mindful of his calling as a winner of souls, both within and without the congregation.

Para. 2: The pastor is the spiritual leader of the congregation, and advisor to all other boards, committees and officers of the congregation. He shall faithfully keep all the ministerial records of the congregation and function as archivist.

Para. 3: The pastor shall submit a pastoral report to the annual meeting of the congregation.

Para. 4: The pastor, as spiritual leader of this congregation, shall devote his time to this ministry. Other duties that do not contribute directly to this ministry are to be held to a minimum and accepted and undertaken only after approval by the Church Council.

Section 3: Termination of his Call

Para. 1: In the event of the pastor's resignation or discharge, such resignation or discharge shall not be effective until two months have elapsed. His discharge must take place at a legally called business meeting of this congregation and required a two-thirds majority of votes cast.

Para. 2: The regular call of this congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a permanent relationship which shall be terminated only for the following causes:

- a. the death of the pastor or dissolution of this congregation
- b. the resignation of the pastor
- c. the attainment by the pastor to the age of 70 years, after which time pastoral service may be extended year to year, by a two-thirds vote of the congregation
- d. disqualification of the pastor through discipline
- e. the physical or mental disability of the pastor
- f. continual neglect of duty
- g. inability to conduct the pastoral office efficiently in this congregation in view of local conditions, without reflection on the moral or spiritual character of the pastor.

ARTICLE VI

Administration

Section 1: The administration of the spiritual and temporal affairs of this congregation shall be vested in (a) Congregational Chair, (b) Church Secretary, (c) Financial Secretary, (d) Church Council.

Section 2: The Congregational Chair. The Chairman of the congregation shall be the moderator of all congregational meetings and shall order the call of all regular meetings of the congregation and receive all petitions for calling special meetings. The chairman of the congregation shall be elected at the annual meeting of the congregation for a term of one year. In the event that the person filling this position is not presently on the Church Council, he would have voting privileges.

Section 3: The Church Secretary. The secretary of the congregation shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year, or until his or her successor has been duly chosen. The duties of the secretary shall be to keep accurate minutes of all congregational meetings, to preserve the historical records of the congregation and to perform such other duties as may be delegated to him or her. The secretary shall not succeed himself or herself for longer than two terms.

Section 4: Financial Secretary. The financial secretary shall be elected by the Church Council. The financial secretary (treasurer) shall receive and keep record of all income from contributing members and other sources. He shall report in writing, properly audited, to the annual meeting of the congregation. He will also provide a financial report for the Spring Congregational Meeting. Some work routine to this office may, with the approval of the Board, be delegated by the financial secretary to an assistant, but the responsibility for the proper discharge of the duties of the office shall rest with the financial secretary.

Section 5: Church Council

Para. 1: The Church Council shall be self-perpetuating.

Para. 2: Members shall be men who are known Christians, who personally know the experience of salvation, and have given a testimony before the pastor and/or the congregation. Their life,

character and behavior shall be patterns of example for the flock.

Para. 3: The Church Council shall conduct an annual meeting at its first regular meeting following the annual congregational meeting for the purpose of electing its officers for the coming year.

Para. 4: The Church Council shall elect its own Chairman, Secretary, and Church Treasurer from among its own members.

- a. The church treasurer shall receive all monies collected from whatsoever source, except such funds as are handled by the Mission Treasurer for the church council, if there be one, and shall make all disbursements by the direction of the Board and/or the congregation.
- b. The treasurer shall keep proper records of all funds handled by him, producing receipts for all disbursements. He shall render a financial statement to the Board at its regular meetings and a yearly report, properly audited, to the congregation at its annual meeting, including a statement of assets and liabilities.
- c. This church council shall be comprised of no less than six members and no more than ten. If the congregational chair is elected from outside the church council, that person would be in addition to the designated numbers of members.

ARTICLE VII

Meetings of the Congregation

Section 1: Annual Meetings.

Para. 1: The annual business meeting of this congregation shall be held the third Wednesday of November. All congregational meetings are legally called when they have been announced at the public services of the congregation on the three previous Sundays.

Para. 2: Ten voting members shall constitute a quorum. When membership reaches 50, or more, it shall be changed to 30% of the voting membership.

Para. 3: The order of business at the annual meeting shall be:

- a. Opening devotions
- b. Approval of minutes
- c. Changes/ Additions to the Agenda
- d. Reports
- e. Old Business
- f. New Business.