

CONSTITUTION

OF

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

OCALLALA, NEBRASKA

Constitution of Trinity Lutheran Church

Perkins County - RFD 1 - Ogallala, Nebraska

Preamble

According to the Word of God (1 Cor. 14:40) all things in a Christian congregation ought to be done decently and in order: therefore, we of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in this vicinity, have drawn up a constitution according to which all our congregational affairs, spiritual and material, shall be conducted.

Article I - Name

The name of the congregation shall be: Trinity Lutheran Church.

Article II - Purpose

The purpose of this congregation shall be to build and enlarge the Kingdom of God by the proclamation of the word of God, by the administration of the sacraments, by the Christian instruction of children, youth, and adults, and by provision for opportunities for growth in Christian living, according to the confessional standard of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (Article III).

Article III - Confessional Basis

This congregation acknowledges and accepts all the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God, verbally inspired by the Holy Ghost, as the only infallible source, rule, and guide in all matters of faith and practice. This congregation also acknowledges and accepts all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, to be the true and genuine exposition of the doctrines of the Bible. Those Symbolical Books are: The Three Ecumenical Creeds (The Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the same, The Smalcald Articles, Luther's Small and Large Catechisms, and the Formula of Concord.

Article IV - Membership

The membership of this congregation includes the following:

A. Baptized membership

Baptized members are all members who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God, including the children on the membership rolls who have not yet confirmed their baptismal vows.

B. Communicant Membership

Communicant members are those who

1. Are baptized in the name of the Triune God.

2. Accept all the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testaments as the divine rule and standard of faith and life, and study this Word of God diligently.
3. Are in agreement with the doctrines of the Lutheran-Church - Missouri Synod.
4. Lead Christian lives and do not live in manifest works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21).
5. Attend divine worship faithfully and partake of the Lord's Supper frequently, if eligible (John 8:31,32,47; 1 Cor, 11:24-28; Acts 2:42).
6. Submit any children in their parental care for Holy Baptism, and provide for their Christian education and training, both before and after Confirmation.
7. Contribute regularly and faithfully with time, treasures and talents, as God has prospered them, toward the building of Christ's Kingdom in the congregation and throughout the world.
8. Submit, for the sake of love and peace, to the regulations already made or still to be made, by this body, provided they do not conflict with the Word of God, and who permit brotherly admonition when having erred or offended (Matt. 18:15-20).
9. Are not members, affiliates, or supporters of an organization whose purposes, principles, or practices conflict with the Word of God.
10. Acknowledge and accept the Constitution, and By-Laws of this congregation.

Article V - Voting Eligibility

All confirmed Male members of the congregation who are eighteen years of age or older shall be entitled to vote, subsequent to signing the voters roll call list. Only such voters who are at least eighteen years of age and who have been faithful members of the congregation for one year, shall be eligible to hold elective offices.

Article VI - Offices of Pastors and Other Professional Church Workers

A. Only such pastors and other professional church workers shall be called who:

1. Accept and acknowledge the confessional basis set forth in Article III of this constitution, and who, in the call extended to and accepted by them, stand pledged to the same.
2. Have been certified by the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod as to knowledge, ability, and attitude, and have been found to possess the necessary qualifications for the Christian Ministry.

The pastor's call is not for a specified time only, but for as long as he teaches the Word of God in its truth and purity, is faithful and capable in the performance of the duties, and leads a Christian life. Failure in these things could lead to dismissal from the congregation in a Christian manner.

B. In the administration of his office, the pastor shall be held;

1. To teach the Word of God in truth and purity in accordance with the confessional principles specified in Article III of this Constitution.
2. To administer the Sacraments and the Office of the Keys according to Christ's institution.
3. To advise, admonish, and encourage individual members, whenever necessary, on the basis of God's Word.
4. To instruct the catechumens on the basis of God's Word and the Doctrinal Teachings of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.
5. To be a good example to the congregation for emulation in true piety.

No one shall be permitted to perform the duties of a pastor unless he has first received permission from the pastor and the elected elders, or during a vacancy in office, from the elected elders of the congregation.

Article VII - Powers of the Congregation

A. General

The congregation as a body, through the voting members, shall have supreme power to administer and manage all its external and internal affairs.

The establishment and conduct of all institutions and societies within the congregation shall at all times be subject to the approval and supervision of the voting members of the congregation. The congregation, however, shall not be empowered to decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the confessions of the Lutheran Church (Article III), and any such decisions shall be null and void.

B. Right of Calling

The right of calling pastors and other professional church workers shall be vested in the voting members of the congregation and shall never be delegated to a smaller body or to an individual.

C. Decisions

Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided by the Word of God; other matters shall be decided by the voting members of the congregation by a majority vote, unless otherwise specified by the Constitution, By-laws, or Articles of Incorporation.

D. Powers of Officers

Congregational officers or boards, whether elected or appointed by the voters, shall have no authority beyond that which has been delegated to them; but these powers may at any time be altered or revoked by the voting members of the congregation.

E. Removal from Office

Any officers may be removed from office by the voting members of the congregation, by ballot, in Christian and lawful order, for one of the following causes: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, inability to perform his duties, or willful neglect of these duties.

Article VIII - Officers

The officers of this congregation shall be such officers as the By-laws of this congregation may prescribe.

Article IX - Property

A. Rights

This congregation may receive, acquire, hold title to, and manage such real estate and other property as it may need to accomplish its purposes. Everything owned by the congregation, whether movable or fixed, is the estate of the whole congregation. This congregation may sell or dispose of such real estate and other property, or any part thereof. This congregation shall have all the rights and powers that are granted by the laws of the State of Nebraska to religious corporations and nonprofit organizations.

B. Separation and Dissolution

If at any time a separation on account of doctrine should take place in this congregation, which may God graciously prevent, the property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those members who adhere to confessional basis set forth in Article III of the constitution. If a separation should occur for any other reason and no peaceable settlement can be reached, the property shall remain with the majority. In case the congregation ever dissolves, the property (except the cemetery) shall be given to the Nebraska District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, subject to acceptance thereof by the District.

Article X - Doctrinal Literature

In the public worship of the congregation, and in all official acts, only such forms and hymns may be used which contain nothing contrary to the Word of God.

Article XI - Synodical Membership

In order to do the Lord's work more efficiently, locally and world wide, this congregation maintains voting membership in the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, as long as that body adheres to the confessional basis detailed in Article III of this constitution.

Article XII - By-laws

This congregation may adopt such By-laws as may be required for the accomplishment of its purposes.

Article XIII - Changing the Constitution, By-laws, or Articles of Incorporation.

Amendments to this Constitution, By-laws and Articles of Incorporation may be adopted by the voters provided:

- A. That such amendments do not conflict with the provisions laid down in Article III or with any section of any article that pertains to Scriptural doctrine or practice.
- B. That any motion to alter, add, or repeal any article in this constitution shall be presented in two consecutive constitutional meetings of the congregation, and two-thirds of all the voting members present cast their votes in favor of such change. (Quorum of nine members also applies).

By-Laws

Article I - Membership

A. Admission into Membership

1. Baptized Membership

A. By Valid Baptism

All those baptized in this congregation shall be considered baptized members of the congregation.

B. By presentation of Evidence of Valid Baptism

Persons proving evidence of valid baptism shall be recieved into baptized membership by the pastor, whose action is to be approved in the subsequent voter's meeting

2. Communicant Membership

A. By Confirmation

Confirmation itself being a reception into Church membership, all who are thus received by this rite become cummunicant members.

B. By Transfer

Persons providing a communicant letter of transfer from a congregation in church fellowship, provided they conform in all respects to the requirements of membership in the congregation, shall be received by the pastor, whose action is to be affirmed in a subsequent voter's meeting.

C. By Profession of Faith

Other persons shall submit to the pastor their application and evidence of qualifications for communicant membership. The pastor shall examine the evidence and may receive them as communicant members; this action shall be affirmed in the subsequent voter's meeting.

3. Voting Membership

It shall be the duty of every voting member to attend the congregational meetings. By failing to attend such meeting a member waives the right to cast his vote during that meeting. He shall accept nomination for office, committee appointments, etc., if possible, and generally participate in the business activities of the congregation.

B. Termination of Membership in Trinity Lutheran Church

1. Transfer to Other Congregations

Members desiring to join a congregation in church fellowship shall present their request for transfer to the pastor, to whom authorization is given to issue such transfer. Such transfer of membership shall be affirmed in the subsequent voter's meeting.

2. Joining other Churches

In cases where members have joined another congregation outside our own fellowship, they shall be considered as having terminated their membership and their names shall be removed from the membership list by the pastor, whose action shall be affirmed by the subsequent voter's meeting.

3. Whereabouts Unknown

The names of members whose whereabouts are unknown and cannot be established may be removed by action of the voter's meeting and forthwith such membership is terminated.

4. Excommunication and Self-Exclusion

Any member who persists in false doctrine, conducts himself in an unChristian manner, or steadfastly excludes himself from all forms of congregational fellowship shall be admonished according to Matt. 18: 15-20. If he refuses to amend his sinful life after proper admonition, he shall be considered excommunicated. Excommunication or self-exclusion terminates membership.

5. Death

Death automatically shall terminate membership.

A person who has terminated his membership has forfeited all rights of a member of this congregation and all claims upon the property of the congregation as such, or upon any part thereof, so long as he is not reinstated into membership.

Article II - Voter's Meetings

- A. Regular meetings of the Voting Body shall be held during the first month of each quarter, if possible.
- B. Special meetings of the Voting Body may be called by the pastor, the Chairman of the Congregation or the Elders.
- C. Every regular meeting of the Voters Body shall be announced the preceeding Sunday. For special meetings all voters must be notified at least 10 days but not more than 50 days prior to the special meeting. The date, time, place, and purpose of the special meeting must be given.
- D. There must be at least nine voters present to constitute a quorum.

Article III - Order of Business

The following shall be the order of business for the regular voters meeting.

- 1. Call to order.
- 2. Devotions.

3. Report of officers, boards, and committees.
4. Report of the pastor.
5. Unfinished business.
6. New business.
7. Adjournment.
8. Prayer.

All meetings shall be conducted decently and with good order. In case of controversy and where the By-laws do not specify otherwise, "Robert's Rules of Order Revised" shall be the mode of procedure.

Article IV - Calling of Pastors and Other Professional Church Workers

A. Nominations

At a meeting of the Voters Body properly convened, the list of candidates having been received from the District President and presented, candidates for the office of pastor or other called worker shall be submitted. Any voter is entitled to make additional nominations from the floor.

B. Elections.

The election of a pastor or other professional church worker from the list of candidates chosen by the Voters Body shall be by ballot. The candidate receiving the majority of all votes cast shall be considered elected. The election shall be made unanimous by a rising vote, and the call shall be sent to the one elected.

Article V - Officers of the Congregation

The officers shall be the following:

1. Chairman of the Voting Body
- 2 & 3. Two Elders
- 4 & 5. Two Trustees
6. Recording Secretary (minutes)
7. Financial Secretary
8. Treasurer
9. Director of Education
10. Assistant Director of Education

In the event the Chairman is not present at any meeting, a temporary Chairman shall be elected for that meeting. The same applies to the recording secretary. The duties of each office are outlined in the Manual for Church Officers.

Article VI - Election of Congregational Officers

The officers of the congregation shall be nominated and elected by ballot at the

October voter's meeting, if possible. The officers elect shall , if possible, be installed and assume their respective duties on the first Sunday of the following calendar year. In the event of a vacancy in any office, the elders shall appoint a successor to fill the unexpired term. The officers shall be elected for two year terms and shall hold office until their successors have been duly elected and installed. The officers shall be divided into two equal groups, as nearly as possible, elected in alternate years. There shall be the restriction of two consecutive terms that a person may be elected to a particular office.

Article VII - Manual for Church Officers

The voting body shall adopt and shall, as needed, alter and amend specific duties in its "Manual for Church Officers".