

# **Constitution of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church—Brule, Nebraska**

Adopted by St. John's Voters Assembly April 30, 2006  
Accepted by Nebraska District May 5, 2006

## **1.0 NAME**

The name of this congregation shall be St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brule, (Keith County,) Nebraska.

## **2.0 MISSION**

Through Christ Jesus' blessing, all members of St. John's Lutheran Church enjoy growing in faith. Our living faith is shown by our teaching, reaching out and serving. (John 14:6)

## **3.0 CONFSSIONAL STANDARD**

3.1 This congregation accepts without reservation:

- 3.1.1 The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice;
- 3.1.2 All the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, to wit: the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord.

## **4.0 MEMBERSHIP**

4.1 The membership of this congregation includes:

- 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 (or confirmed) members are those baptized members who have been in the Lutheran faith, accept the confessional standard of Section 3 of this constitution, are familiar with the 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 confirmed members who have reached the age of twenty-one (21) years, and have been received by the Voters' Assembly.

### **4.2 Reception into membership**

- 4.2.1 Baptized and communicant members are received through the

## Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

- 4.2.2 Through the consent of one or both parents in the case of children who have been baptized in another Christian congregation.
- 4.2.3 Through the Rite of Confirmation.
- 4.2.4 Through transfer from a sister congregation.
- 4.2.5 Through profession of faith
- 4.2.6 Through reaffirmation of faith.
- 4.2.7 The reception shall be approved by the Board of Elders and ratified by the Quarterly Voters' Assembly.

## 4.3 Duties of membership

- 4.3.1 Members of this congregation shall conform their entire lives to the rule of God's Word.
- 4.3.2 Make diligent use of the means of grace.
- 4.3.3 Exercise faithful stewardship of God's many gifts and talents.
- 4.3.4 Impart and accept fraternal admonition as the need of such admonition becomes apparent.
- 4.3.5 Be readily available for service in the kingdom of Christ within and beyond the congregation.

## 4.4 Termination of membership

- 4.4.1 Membership shall be terminated by transfer to a sister congregation.
- 4.4.2 By death.
- 4.4.3 By joining a congregation outside the fellowship of this congregation.
- 4.4.4 By excommunication.
- 4.4.5 By self-exclusion.
- 4.4.6 In cases of excommunication or self-exclusion, each case shall be presented individually to the Voters' Assembly for a decision.
- 4.4.7 Confirmed members who conduct themselves in an unchristian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20. If they remain impenitent after proper admonition, they shall be

excommunicated.

4.4.8 The desired outcome of all church discipline is to call a fellow Christian to repentance and restore him or her into full fellowship.

4.4.9 Unsubstantiated charges will not be allowed to be circulated by the church.

## 5.0 CALLED CHURCH WORKERS

5.1 This congregation has the exclusive right to call ordained and commissioned ministers.

5.2 The pastoral office shall be conferred only on such a pastor or candidate who professes and adheres to the confessional standard set forth in this constitution, who is qualified for his work, who has been endorsed by the Missouri Synod, and who is a member of the Missouri Synod. (The same shall apply to all commissioned ministers.)

5.3 Any ordained or commissioned minister 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 reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect, or inability to perform the duties of the office.

5.4 In case of a vacancy in the office of an ordained or commissioned minister, the congregation shall notify the President of the Nebraska District so that he may assist in temporarily filling the vacancy and also give assistance in regard to the calling of a new pastor or teacher.

## 6.0 AUTHORITY OF THE CONGREGATION

6.1 The Voters' Assembly shall be the governing body of this congregation and shall be empowered to administer and manage all its affairs. The establishment and conduct of all organizations and societies within the congregation or related directly to it shall be subject to the approval and supervision of the Voters' Assembly.

6.2 All matters shall be decided by a majority vote of the Voters' Assembly unless otherwise specified by this constitution or bylaws, including matters of doctrine and conscience, which shall be decided only on the basis of the Word of God.

6.3 The right of calling ordained or commissioned ministers shall be vested in the Voters' Assembly and shall not be delegated otherwise.

## 7.0 OFFICERS AND BOARDS

7.1 This congregation shall have the following officers and boards in addition to any which the congregation shall authorize from time to time:

7.2 Officers:

7.2.1 A chairman, who shall conduct the meetings of the Voters' Assembly.

- 7.2.2 A recording secretary, who shall keep the minutes of the Voters' Assembly.
- 7.2.3 A treasurer who shall be responsible for the financial records of the congregation.
- 7.2.4 A financial secretary, who shall oversee the receipt of all monies and deposit the same in an account established in the name of the congregation.

#### 7.3 Boards

- 7.3.1 A board of elders, which shall assist the pastor in the spiritual life of the congregation.
- 7.3.2 A board of trustees, which shall be responsible for the physical properties of the congregation.

#### 7.4 Removal from office

- 7.4.1 Any officer or board member 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 reasons:
  - 7.4.1.1 Persistent adherence to false doctrine.
  - 7.4.1.2 Scandalous life.
  - 7.4.1.3 Willful neglect.
  - 7.4.1.4 Inability to perform the duties of the office.

### 8.0 SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

- 8.1 This congregation shall be a member of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as long as the Synod conforms to the congregation's confessional standards set forth in this constitution, as determined by a majority vote of the congregation at a meeting called for that purpose.

### 9.0 DIVISION

- 9.1 If at any time a division should take place for any reason, the property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those communicant members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to the confessional standards set forth in this constitution, as determined by the dispute resolution process described in the Bylaws of the Synod.
- 9.2 In the event the congregation should dissolve, the property and all rights connected therewith shall be transferred to the remaining members for them to decide what should be done.

## 10.0 MEETINGS

- 10.1 Regular meetings of the Voters' Assembly shall be held as determined in the bylaws.
- 10.2 Announcement of the meeting shall be made in the services of the two previous Sundays.
- 10.3 Special meetings require announcement in services in the two previous Sundays or notification by mail and announcement in the services of one previous Sunday.
- 10.4 Special meetings may be called at the request of the pastor, chairman, or any three (3) voting members.

## 11.0 QUORUM

- 11.1 One-third of the voting members of the congregation shall be capable of transacting business and passing valid resolutions.

## 12.0 LIMITATIONS ON HOLDING OFFICE

- 12.1 Women who have reached the age of twenty-one (21) and who are confirmed members of the congregation, may hold voting membership in the congregation and serve as officers and members of boards and committees, as long as these positions are not directly involved in the specific functions of the pastoral office (preaching, the public administration of the sacraments, church discipline), and as long as this service does not violate the order of creation (usurping authority over men).
- 12.2 Accordingly, women shall not serve as pastor, as a member of the board of elders, or as chairman of the congregation.

## 13.0 AMENDMENTS

- 13.1 Amendments to provisions of this constitution, (except Sections 2.0, 3.0, 5.0, 8.0, 13.0), may be adopted at a regular voters' meeting, provided the following conditions have been met:
  - 13.1.1 The proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at two previous meetings of the Voters' Assembly,
  - 13.1.2 The proposed amendment has been published by posting in a conspicuous place in the church or mailed to all voting members of the congregation prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon,
  - 13.1.3 An affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the voters present at two consecutive meetings is secured.

- 13.2 In addition to the above requirements, proposals to amend Sections 2.0, 3.0, 5.0, 8.0, 13.0, shall require that previous notice of such amendment and discussion of the same shall 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 shall be given to all voting members of the congregation. Any changes in these articles shall not destroy the essential meaning of the same. Whether or not this has occurred shall be decided, if challenged, by a decision by the dispute resolution process described in the Bylaws of the Synod.

## **BY-LAWS**

### **14.0 PROCEDURS FOR CALLING ORDAINED AND COMMISSIONED MINISTERS**

- 14.1 When a pastor or a teacher is to be called, every confirmed member of the congregation shall have the privilege of making one or more nominations
- 14.2 The congregation shall also ask the President of the Nebraska District for recommendations.
- 14.3 In the case of a pastoral call the Board of Elders may serve as the screening committee.
- 14.4 The screening committee shall submit all names to the Nebraska District President for information and evaluation. After receiving information and recommendations from the District President, the screening committee shall present to the congregation by means of a public announcement, at least five (5) preferred candidates, together with a biographical sketch of each.
- 14.5 At the Voters' meeting, called for the purpose of electing a new pastor or teacher, the preferred list may be amended by means of a two-thirds vote of those present. At that point the Voters' Assembly shall be asked to agree to be satisfied with whatever selection is finally made.
- 14.6 Balloting shall proceed by means of a secret ballot vote. A majority is needed in order to determine the disposition of the Call.
- 14.7 Final vote for pastor or candidate elect shall be made unanimous.

### **15.0 CHURCH COUNCIL**

#### **15.1 Membership**

- 15.1.1.1 The church council shall consist of the chairman, the recording secretary, the treasurer, the financial secretary, the elders, and the trustees.
- 15.1.1.2 The pastor shall be an advisory member of the church council.
- 15.1.1.3 The chairman and recording secretary of the congregation shall serve as chairman and recording secretary of the Voters' Assembly.

#### **15.2 Meetings**

- 15.2.1 The Voters' Assembly shall meet toward the beginning of each quarter.
- 15.2.2 The order of meetings will be:
  - Opening devotion
  - Roll call and reading of minutes.
  - Treasurer's report.
  - Admission of new members.
  - Pastor's report.
  - Elders' report
  - Committee repots

Unfinished business.  
New business.  
Adjournment and prayer.

15.2.3 Special meetings may be called by the pastor, chairman, or any three (3) voting members.

15.2.4 When a meeting has been announced in public service on the previous Sunday, such a meeting shall be capable of transacting business and passing valid resolutions if at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation are in attendance.

## 16.0 NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

16.1 The Board of Elders shall serve as a nominating committee.

16.2 The nominating committee shall present a slate of candidates for all elected offices.

16.3 The slate shall normally consist of two names for each office. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. No person shall be nominated without his or her consent.

16.4 All officers shall be elected by a majority ballot vote and voting shall continue until a clear majority has been established after candidates receiving the lowest number of votes have been eliminated in each succeeding ballot

## 17.0 TERM OF OFFICE

17.1 Chairman—one (1)year.

17.2 Elder— four (4) years.  
One of the elders shall be elected by the Voters' Assembly each year to act as chairman of the Voters' Assembly and Council meetings.

17.3 Treasurer— two (2) years.

17.4 Recording Secretary — two (2) years.

17.5 Financial Secretary — two (2) years.

17.6 Trustee — two (2) years.

17.7 Officers and board members shall be inducted into office in a public service of the congregation.

17.8 In case of a vacancy in an elective office, the Voters' Assembly shall elect a successor to fill the remainder of the term.

## 18.0 RULES OF ORDER

In addition to principles laid down in Scripture, the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be followed.



## 19.0 AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the Voters' Assembly by a majority of all voting members present, provided the proposed change has been announced in a previous meeting or has been submitted in writing at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting to all voting members.

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This revised constitution was adopted by St. John's Lutheran Church, Brule, Nebraska on April 30, 2006.

This constitution was accepted by the Nebraska District, LCMS, May 5, 2006

# Robert's Rules of Order Motions Chart

Based on *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (10th Edition)*

## Part 1—Main Motions

These motions are listed in order of precedence. A motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion. § indicates the section from Robert's Rules.

§	PURPOSE:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§21	Close meeting	I move to adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§20	Take break	I move to recess for ...	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§19	Register complaint	I rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None
§18	Make follow agenda	I call for the orders of the day	Yes	No	No	No	None
§17	Lay aside temporarily	I move to lay the question on the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§16	Close debate	I move the previous question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
§15	Limit or extend debate	I move that debate be limited to ...	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
§14	Postpone to a certain time	I move to postpone the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§13	Refer to committee	I move to refer the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§12	Modify wording of motion	I move to amend the motion by ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§11	Kill main motion	I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
§10	Bring business before assembly (a main motion)	I move that [or "to"] ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

## Part 2—Incidental Motions

No order of precedence. These motions arise incidentally and are decided immediately.

§	PURPOSE:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
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§23	Enforce rules	Point of Order	Yes	No	No	No	None
§24	Submit matter to assembly	I appeal from the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Varies	No	Majority
§25	Suspend rules	I move to suspend the rules	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
§26	Avoid main motion altogether	I object to the consideration of the question	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
§27	Divide motion	I move to divide the question	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§29	Demand a rising vote	I move for a rising vote	Yes	No	No	No	None
§33	Parliamentary law question	Parliamentary inquiry	Yes	No	No	No	None
§33	Request for information	Point of information	Yes	No	No	No	None

### **Part 3 — Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly.**

No order of precedence. Introduce only when nothing else is pending.

§	PURPOSE:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§34	Take matter from table	I move to take from the table ...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§35	Cancel previous action	I move to rescind ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 or Majority with notice
§37	Reconsider motion	I move to reconsider ...	No	Yes	Varies	No	Majority