

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CHURCH Constitution

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PREAMBLE

We, baptized members of the Church of Christ, responding in faith to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, desiring to unite together to preach the Word, administer the sacraments, and carry out God's mission, do hereby adopt this constitution and solemnly pledge ourselves to be governed by its provisions. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 1. Name and Incorporation

- C1.01.** The name of this congregation shall be **Concordia Lutheran Church**.
- C1.02.** For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the congregation of The Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Concordia Congregation of Kingsburg, Fresno County, California, is hereinafter designated as **"this congregation."**
- C1.03.** This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of California.

CHAPTER 2. Confession of Faith

- C2.01.** This congregation confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- C2.02.** This congregation confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.
- C2.03.** This congregation believes and confesses that the Holy Scriptures and the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, are the Word of God, revealed for the salvation of all, and therefore the only source and rule of faith, doctrine and life.
- C2.04.** This congregation accepts the Apostolic, the Nicene and the Athanasian Creed, and also the unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism as a correct exposition of the teaching of the Word of God, and all preaching and teaching in this congregation shall conform to these confessions.
- C2.05.** This congregation also accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord: The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, The Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, Luther's Large Catechism, The Formula of Concord, The First Seven Ecumenical Councils of the church catholic, as further correct expositions of the teaching of the Word of God and all preaching and teaching in this congregation shall conform to these witnesses to the Faith.

CHAPTER 3. Statement of Purpose

- C3.01.** The purpose of this congregation shall be to preach and teach the Christian faith as confessed in CHAPTER 2. The congregation shall provide worship services consistent with such confession, administer the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper,

propagate, evangelize and witness the Christian faith to members of the congregation and to persons who are not members. They shall care for, nurture and strengthen, and otherwise serve the needs of such persons, and cooperate in the work and service of the Lutheran Church.

CHAPTER 4. Church Affiliation

- C4.01.** This congregation shall be a Lutheran Congregation and may be a member of a conference, cluster, coalition, or other organization that is Lutheran.
- C4.02.** This congregation may terminate its relationship with any organization to which it belongs in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

CHAPTER 5. Property Ownership

- C5.01.** Title to all real or personal property acquired by the congregation, its organizations, or individuals for use by the congregation and its organizations, shall be held by the congregation as a corporation
- C5.02.** Real property shall not be purchased, conveyed, disposed of, or encumbered in any manner unless approved by the congregation at a regular or special meeting by a two-thirds majority of voting members present and voting.
- C5.03.** Ownership by the congregation of its real and personal property is not affected by the congregation's membership in any organization and no such organization has any authority whatsoever with respect to the real and personal property of the congregation.
- C5.04.** In the event that the congregation dissolves, all property shall be disposed of by the final voters assembly for the payment of debts and all just claims against the congregation, and any and all surplus and all rights connected therewith shall be conveyed to and become the property of an entity to be determined at that time.
- C5.05.** If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a regularly called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to affiliate with another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.
- C5.06.** If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a regularly called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body, title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation.

CHAPTER 6. Membership

- C6.01.** Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons of the roll of this congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted

thereafter and who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

- C6.02.** All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Congregation Council.
- C6.03.** Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by death, resignation, transfer to another congregation, or removal pursuant to the bylaws if removal of membership is provided for in the bylaws. Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the church has a continuing pastoral concern.

CHAPTER 7. The Pastor

- C7.01.** Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting called for that purpose.
- C7.02.** The pastor shall be primarily responsible for seeing that the Word of God is properly preached and the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion are rightly administered. The pastor is responsible for all baptisms and presides at all services of Holy Communion. The pastor is to uphold the Bible as the inspired Word of God and adhere to the authority of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.
- C7.03.** The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call.
- C7.04.** Called, ordained or commissioned ministers may be removed from office in Christian and lawful order by a two-thirds majority ballot vote of the voting members present for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of the duties of office, or the inability to perform those duties.
- C7.05.** At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the Congregation Council.
- C7.06.** During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.
- C7.07.** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligation to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation.
- C7.08.** When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, and the

Congregation Council. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

- C7.09.** The congregation may call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of C7.04.
- C7.10.** The pastor shall certify accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, and shall record a summary of such statistics in the annual report. The pastor shall be a member of the congregation that has extended the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

CHAPTER 8. Congregation Meeting

- C8.01.** The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.
- C8.02.** A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the pastor, the Congregation Council, or the acting president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of the congregation upon the written request of 10 of the voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.
- C8.03.** Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship beginning at least two weeks prior to the meeting.
- C8.04.** A quorum shall consist of no less than 50 Voting Members.
- C8.05.** Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- C8.06.** All actions by the congregation shall be by majority vote of those present and voting except as otherwise provided in this constitution.
- C8.07.** Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

CHAPTER 9. Officers

- C9.01.** The officers of this congregation shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Financial secretary. Their duties shall be as specified in the bylaws.
- C9.02.** The pastor shall be a voting member of the Congregation Council. The Congregation Council shall elect the other officers of the congregation who shall serve for a one year term or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the meeting at which they are elected.

C9.03. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time.

CHAPTER 10. Congregation Council

- C10.01.** The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of not more than nine (9) members of the congregation plus the Pastor. Any voting member of the congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b) is absent from three successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause.
- C10.02.** The members of the Congregation Council shall be elected by written ballot to serve for three (3) years or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two "full terms" consecutively. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected, as specified in the bylaws. (Serving the remaining time of a vacated Council position does not constitute a "full term".)
- C10.03.** Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next annual meeting, at which time the congregation shall vote a successor to serve any remaining time of the three (3) year term.
- C10.04.** The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and Lutheran Confessions. The duties of the Congregation Council shall be as specified in the bylaws
- C10.05.** The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation as specified in the bylaws.
- C10.06.** The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution, its bylaws, and any continuing resolutions are carried out.
- C10.07.** The Congregation Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.
- C10.08.** The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the salaried lay workers of this congregation.
- C10.09.** The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor, and shall be called by the pastor at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.
- C10.10.** A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of the Congregation Council.

CHAPTER 11. Congregation Committees

- C11.01.** The officers of this congregation and the pastor shall constitute the Executive Committee.
- C11.02.** A Nominating Committee of three (3) or five (5) voting members of this congregation, one or two of whom, if possible shall be outgoing members of the Congregation Council, along with the Pastor as an ad hoc member, shall be appointed by the Council and elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year. Members of the Nomination Committee are not eligible for consecutive re-election.
- C11.03.** An Audit Committee of two or three voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council.
- C11.04.** A Staff Support Committee of four members shall be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor. Term of office shall be two years, with two members to be appointed each successive year.
- C11.05.** When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of five, seven, or nine voting members shall be nominated. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor. The Council may serve as the Call Committee or Voting Members who submit their names to the Council and are nominated by the Council may serve.
- C11.06.** Other committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council.

CHAPTER 12. Organizations within the Congregation

- C12.01.** All organizations within this congregation shall exist to aid in ministering to the members of this congregation and to all persons who can be reached with the Gospel of Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of this congregation's life, the organizations are subject to its oversight and direction. The Church Council shall approve their policies, guide their activities, and the congregation shall receive an annual report concerning their membership, work and finances.

CHAPTER 13. Discipline of Members and Adjudication

- C13.01.** Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps: a) private admonition by the pastor, b) admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, and c) citation to appear before the Congregation Council.
- C13.02** The process for discipline of a member of the congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions. A member charged with the offense shall appear before the Congregation Council after having received written notice, specifying the exact charges that have been made against the member, at least 10 days prior to the meeting.

CHAPTER 14. Bylaws

- C14.01.** This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.
- C14.02.** Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting.
- C14.03.** Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose and that the Congregation Council notify the members of the proposal with its recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting.

CHAPTER 15. Amendments

- C15.01.** Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least ten (10) voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at its regular or special meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the members of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.

CHAPTER 16. Continuing Resolutions

- C16.01.** The Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions which affect the life, work and ministry of this congregation.
- C16.02.** Continuing resolutions shall be enacted by a majority vote of those voting members present at a regularly called congregational meeting, but will require a two-thirds vote for removal or amendment.

**This Constitution Adopted at a
Congregation Meeting Held
August 15, 2010**