



**BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
Gurnee, Illinois

# **CONSTITUTION OF THE CONGREGATION**

## **ARTICLE I – NAME**

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- A. The name of this Congregation shall be Bethel Lutheran Church, a religious corporation, located at 5110 Grand Avenue, Gurnee, Illinois 60031.
- B. The President of the Governing Board shall be the Registered Agent.

## **ARTICLE II – PURPOSE**

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- A. The purpose of this Congregation shall be to edify its members and to spread the Kingdom of God by:
  - 1. Preaching the Word of God.
  - 2. Administering the Sacraments.
  - 3. Providing religious instruction of children, youth and adults.
  - 4. Fostering Christian fellowship and charity.
  - 5. Equipping the members for ministry to the people of the community and the world.

This will be according to the confessional standards of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as contained in Articles III and IX of this Constitution.

## **ARTICLE III – CONFESSION**

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- A. This Congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God, verbally inspired, and acknowledges and accepts all the Confessional Writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the Book of Concord of the year 1580, as a true exposition of the doctrines of the Bible. These Confessional Writings are the three Ecumenical Creeds (Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, Luther's Large and Small Catechisms, and the Formula of Concord.

These teachings shall be the basis for the ministry and teachings conducted at Bethel Lutheran Church.

Modification requires a level II vote (as defined in Article XI.B).

## **ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP**

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- A. Membership (Baptized, Communicant, and Voting) shall include members received by transfer from Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) congregations and by profession or re-affirmation of faith.
- B. Baptized membership in this Congregation shall include all the members who have been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, including all children who have not yet confirmed their baptismal vows.



C. Communicant membership in this Congregation shall:

1. Be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and have confirmed their baptismal vows.
2. Accept all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the only divine rule and standard of faith and life.
3. Be familiar with Luther's Small Catechism and declare their acceptance of it.
4. Permit themselves to be lovingly admonished and corrected when they have erred.
5. Not be members, affiliates or supporters of lodges or societies of an unchristian or antichristian character.
6. Accept the provisions of this Constitution and the Bylaws of this Congregation.

D. Voting Membership

Voting membership shall include all communicant members who are at least eighteen years of age.

E. All Members shall be encouraged to grow in faith by:

1. Attending worship services.
2. Partaking of the Lord's Supper frequently.
3. Leading Christian lives and not living in manifest works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19- 21).
4. Contributing financially, regularly and faithfully, as God has prospered them, toward the building of Christ's Kingdom in the Congregation and throughout the world.
5. Devoting their time and talents to the development and extension of the Kingdom of God.

F. Membership Termination

The Bylaws shall define the process for membership termination (see Article X of the Bylaws).

## **ARTICLE V – THE PASTORAL OFFICE**

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- A. The Pastoral office in this Congregation, and that of other called staff, shall be conferred upon such staff who profess and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in Article III of this Constitution, who are well qualified for their work, and who are members of, or have been declared qualified by, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Pastors and other called staff shall be pledged to this confessional standard in the calls extended to and accepted by them.

Modification requires a level II vote (as defined in Article XI.B).

## **ARTICLE VI – POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

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- A. The Voters Assembly (as a representative of the Congregation) shall have final authority to administer and manage all internal and external affairs, consistent with the word of God, tenets of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, this Constitution, Bylaws, and the laws of the State of Illinois.
- B. The Congregation shall elect officers as their representatives in the matters of operating and conducting the business and ministry of Bethel Lutheran Church. These officers shall conduct the organization within



their best abilities and make decisions to benefit the Congregation within the guidelines provided by the Constitution and Bylaws. These officers shall not be held liable for actions taken within their best ability to serve the needs of the Congregation.

- C. The right to call Pastors and other staff shall be vested in the Congregation as represented by the Voters Assembly and shall never be delegated to a smaller body or to an individual.
- D. All matters of doctrine and of conscience shall be decided only by the Word of God. All other matters shall be decided by a majority vote of the voting members present at meetings of the Voters Assembly, except where a vote in excess of a simple majority is specified in this Constitution and the Bylaws of the Congregation.
- E. Congregational officers, boards and committees, whether called, employed, elected or appointed, shall have no other authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them by this Constitution, the Bylaws and the Policies of the Congregation. Whatever power may have been delegated to them may at any time be altered or revoked by the Voters Assembly.
- F. Any Pastor, teacher, congregational officer or other official, whether employed, called, elected or appointed, may be removed from office by the Voters Assembly, by a ballot vote and in Christian and lawful order, for persistent adherence to false doctrine or scandalous life or for persistent neglect of official duties.
- G. The Congregation shall have power to acquire property of every kind and description, real, personal, or mixed; to hold and use such property and deal with, or dispose of, any or all such property when necessary or expedient to carry out the purposes of the Congregation.

#### **ARTICLE VII – OFFICERS AND BOARDS**

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- A. The following positions will be the officers and boards of this Congregation:
  - 1. The Church Governing Board consists of six at-large members plus Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and a Representative from the Board of Elders. From the at-large members, the Governing Board will select a President and Recording Secretary.
  - 2. The Board of Elders consists of six or more at-large members. From the at-large members, the Elders will select a President and Recording Secretary.

#### **ARTICLE VIII – PROPERTY RIGHTS**

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- A. If at any time a separation should take place on account of doctrine or for any other reason, the property of the Congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those voting members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Articles III, IV, VI and VII of this Constitution.
- B. In the event that the Congregation shall totally disband, the property and all rights connected therewith shall be transferred to the Northern Illinois District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, provided the Congregation maintains membership in the Synod as described in Article IX of this Constitution.

Modification requires a level II vote (as defined in Article XI.B).



#### **ARTICLE IX – SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP**

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- A. This Congregation shall hold membership in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as long as the confessions and constitution of the Synod are in accord with the confessional standard of Article III of this Constitution. Accordingly, any and all references to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the Northern Illinois District shall be valid only as long as this Congregation maintains its membership in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the Northern Illinois District.

Modification requires a level II vote (as defined in Article XI.B).

#### **ARTICLE X – BYLAWS**

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- A. This Congregation through its Voters Assembly may adopt such Bylaws as may be required for the accomplishment of its purposes.

#### **ARTICLE XI – CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

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- A. Changes may be made to Articles or sections of this Constitution or Bylaws at a meeting of the Voters Assembly by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the voting members present, provided that the proposed amendments or changes do not conflict with the confessional standard of Article III or any other Article or section.
- B. Articles identified as requiring a level II vote may be modified by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the voting members present. A level II vote shall be conducted at two Voters Assemblies that are at least a week apart. Members may vote in both elections.
- C. All proposed changes to the Constitution or Bylaws shall be submitted to voting members showing the proposed written revisions at least one month prior to the first of the two required Voters Assemblies.

Modification requires a level II vote (as defined in Article XI.B).