

CONSTITUTION

FOR

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

OSKALOOSA, IOWA

Revised 1977

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

2370 Merino Avenue
OSKALOOSA, IOWA 52577

FINAL APPROVAL BY VOTERS

October 11, 1977

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CONSTITUTION

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CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

Since in every Christian congregation all things should be done decently and in order (1 Cor.14:40), we, members of this congregation, do in this present document, signed by ourselves, lay down the order in accordance with which all our congregational affairs, both spiritual and material, shall be conducted.

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of our congregation shall be: St. John Lutheran Church of Oskaloosa, Iowa.

ARTICLE II

Purpose

The purpose of this congregation shall be to provide pastoral care for its members, to teach the Word of God and administer the Sacraments, to preserve purity of doctrine, to exercise Christian love and fellowship, to provide for the Christian training of the young and adults, and to extend the kingdom of God at large.

ARTICLE III

Declaration of Creed

This congregation as a body and all of its members as individuals declare unreserved acceptance of and adherence to all canonical books of the Old and the New Testaments as the inspired and revealed Word of God and the only rule of faith and life; and to all Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, as a true and sound exhibition of the Word of God. These Symbolical Books are the Ecumenical Creeds, viz., the Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian; the Unaltered Augsburg Confession; the Apology thereof; the Smalcald Articles; Luther's Large Catechism; Luther's Small Catechism; and the Formula of Concord.

According to this Declaration of Creed all matters of doctrine, conscience, and Christian life shall be decided.

ARTICLE IV

Authority of the Congregation

The Voters' Assembly as a body shall have supreme authority and power to manage and adjust all spiritual and material affairs of the congregation. Any enactment or decision, whether it proceeds from an individual or from a body within the congregation, shall be invalid unless it is enacted or performed in the name of the Voters' Assembly and according to

the authority conferred by it. Any enactment or decision of the Voters' Assembly contrary to the Word of God and to the Symbols of the Church shall be null and void.

ARTICLE V

Membership

1. Condition of Confirmed Membership.
 - A. Those only can become, be, or remain members of this congregation, who Are Baptized in the name of the Triune God;
 - B. Declare their acceptance of and adherence to the Declaration of Creed as contained in Article III of this Constitution;
 - C. Are familiar with Luther's Small Catechism and declare their acceptance thereof (Hebrews 10:23);
 - D. Do not live in manifest work of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21), but lead a Christian life;
 - E. Are not members of a secret society (lodge) or of any other organization conflicting with the Word of God (2 Corinthians 6:14-18, John 5:23).

2. Reception of Members.
 - A. Baptism is the mark by which infants, children and adults are received into membership.
 - B. Children are received into communicant membership by confirmation.
 - C. Applicants for communicant membership presenting a letter of transfer from a recognized orthodox Lutheran Church shall be accepted as communicant members.
 - D. Applicants for communicant membership not affiliated with a recognized orthodox Lutheran Church shall give satisfactory evidence of their familiarity with Luther's Small Catechism and declare their acceptance thereof in the presence of the pastor and at least one elder, and if necessary, receive instruction in the doctrine of the Small Catechism.
 - E. The reception of members shall be announced by the pastor in the Voters' Assembly.

3. Duties of Members.
 - A. To attend public worship diligently and to partake of Holy Communion frequently.
 - B. To submit, if possible, any children in their parental care for Holy Baptism, and to provide for their Christian education and training, making use of such educational facilities as the congregation may provide.
 - C. To contribute according to ability toward the maintenance of the church and its work.

- D. To submit, for the sake of love and peace, to the regulations established by the congregation.

ARTICLE VI

Eligibility of Office

- A. All members as have attained the age of eighteen (18) years are entitled to hold office, except that a woman shall not serve as pastor, as a member of the Board of Elders, or as Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the congregation.
- B. Only such members as have been communicant members of this congregation for the period of at least one (1) year shall be eligible for the office of Chairman, Elders, Trustees, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary.

ARTICLE VII

Release of Members

- A. Members desiring a release for the purpose of joining a sister congregation shall obtain a written transfer ratified by the Voters' Assembly.
- B. Members moving away, and severing their connection with the congregation without obtaining a release shall, after a period of two (2) years be stricken from the list of active membership by a unanimous vote of the Voters' Assembly.

ARTICLE VIII

Church Discipline

- A. It shall be the duty of an erring member to submit to brotherly admonition and correction.
- B. Manifest and impenitent sinners shall be excommunicated after fruitless admonition in the various graces prescribed in Matthew 18:15-20. Persons unwilling to submit to this divine rule shall be adjudged as such as have excommunicated themselves.
- C. Excommunicated persons forfeit all rights and privileges of membership and lose all claims upon property of the church.
- D. Excommunicated persons who repent and ask forgiveness shall be reinstated into membership.

ARTICLE IX

Office of Pastor and Christian Day School Teacher

- A. The office of a Pastor or Teacher shall be conferred upon such pastors, teachers, or candidates only as:
1. Unreservedly pledge their acceptance of and adherence to the Declaration of Creed contained in Article III of this Constitution.
 2. Are members of, or have applied for membership in the same orthodox synod to which the congregation belongs;
 3. Have been properly and rightfully called by the congregation.
- B. A pastor or teacher can be removed from office in a rightful and Christian manner only. Sufficient and urgent causes for removal are persistent adherence to false doctrine, ungodly life, willful neglect of official duties, or evidence of and protracted incapacity to perform the functions of the sacred office.

This rule applies to other officers of the congregation as well.

ARTICLE X

Synodical Membership

- A. The congregation shall hold membership in the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. The congregation shall send its pastor and lay-delegates to the conventions of such Synod.
- B. It shall be the duty of the congregation and its individual members to support the work of their Synod in all its activities according to their ability.

ARTICLE XI

Property Rights

Should separation on Account of Doctrine take place--which God forbid--the property of the congregation shall remain the legal possession of those members who steadfastly and unreservedly adhere to the Declaration of Creed contained in this Constitution.

Should the various parties claim adherence to Article III of the Constitution, then the property rights shall be given to the party having the greatest number of members present at two consecutive duly called, advertised and convened meetings of the voters of this congregation not less than 30 days apart.

ARTICLE XII

Books and Forms

Only such hymns, prayers, and liturgies shall be used in the public service of the congregation and in all ministerial acts as conform to the confessional standard of Article III.

ARTICLE XIII

Amending the Constitution

- A. Amendments to the Constitution or Bylaws may not contradict Article III of this constitution.
- B. Amendments to Article III of the Constitution may not change the doctrinal intent of the article. Altering or repealing Article III or Article XIII shall require the following steps.
 - 1. The proposed amendment shall be submitted in writing to all voting members at least two weeks prior to the meeting.
 - 2. Amendments shall require a 3/4 majority of members present at each of two consecutive regular quarterly meetings of the Voters' Assembly.
- C. Amendments to all other articles of the Constitution or Bylaws have the same requirements for approval with the exception that a 2/3 majority vote is required.
- D. Upon approval, the newly revised constitution and bylaws shall be sent to the district office for review.

ARTICLE XIV

Societies

- A. Organized societies within the congregation shall exist only with the consent of the Voters' Assembly.
- B. Communicant members of this congregation shall be eligible to membership in such societies.
- C. Any person may become an associate member of the various societies of the church upon being accepted by that society.
- D. Any decision, enactment, or performance of such societies shall be invalid if it shall meet with the disapproval of the Voters' Assembly.
- E. The Pastor, by virtue of his office, shall exercise supervision over all societies within the congregation.

ARTICLE XV

Marriage Policy

The marriage policy of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church of Oskaloosa, Iowa, a member congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is, and always has been consistent with The Missouri Synod's belief concerning marriage. We believe that marriage is a sacred union of one man and one woman (Gen. 2.24-25), and that God gave marriage as a picture of the relationship between Christ and his bride The Church (Eph. 5.32). The official position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and this congregation of the Synod, as set forth in the 1998 Res.3-21 ("To Affirm the Sanctity of Marriage and to Reject Same-Sex Unions"), is that homosexual unions come under categorical prohibition in the Old and New

Testaments (Lev. 18.22, 24; 20.13; 1 Cor. 6.9-10; 1 Tim. 1.9-10) as contrary to the Creator's design and the Apostolic teaching (Rom. 1.26-27). These positions and beliefs can be found on the LCMS website, along with other statements, papers and reports on the subject of homosexuality and same-sex civil unions and "marriage." Our pastor(s) will not officiate over any marriages inconsistent with these beliefs, and our church property may not be used for any marriage ceremony, reception or other activity that would be inconsistent with our beliefs and this policy.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I

Voters' Assembly

A. Regular Meetings:

Regular quarterly meetings of the Voters' Assembly shall be held in January, April, July, and October. (Amendment approved January 18, 2011)

B. Election Meetings:

The election of officers shall be held at the regular quarterly meeting in July (Amendment approves October 10, 1995).

C. Budget Meeting

A meeting of the Voters' Assembly shall be held in October for the purpose of establishing a budget for the coming year. (Amendment approved April 13, 1998; January 18, 2011)

D. Special Meetings:

1. Special meetings may be called when the pastor and the chairman of the congregation, or the Board of Elders, or seven (7) other voting members request it, or the congregation so decides.
2. Special meetings shall be announced twice (2). However, in very urgent cases one (1) announcement shall be sufficient.

E. Voters:

All members as have attained the age of eighteen (18) years and have declared their acceptance of this Constitution and its ByLaws shall be entitled to vote.

ARTICLE II

Officers

A. Board of Elders:

1. There shall be a Board of Elders consisting of at least six (6) members.
2. Two (2) Elders shall be elected annually for three-year terms.

B. Board of Trustees:

There shall be a Board of at least four (4) Trustees; at least one Trustee shall be elected each year, for a term of three years.

C. Board of Christian Education:

1. There shall be a Board of Christian Education, under the supervision of the Board of Elders.
2. It shall consist of one Elder and one youth representative to be appointed by the Board of Elders, one male teacher actively teaching Bible class, one Sunday School teacher appointed by the teaching staff, and the Sunday School Superintendent.
3. The personnel of the Board of Christian Education shall be announced at the October meeting.

D. Board of Missions and Evangelism:

1. This Board shall consist of at least four (4) members whose terms shall be one (1) year.
2. It shall consist of two (2) men and two (2) women of the congregation. They shall be appointed by the chairman of the congregation and pastor with the subsequent approval of the voters' assembly.
3. This Board shall work under the Board of Elders.

E. Sunday School Superintendent:

1. The Sunday School Superintendent shall hold office for one year, beginning September 1. The Board of Christian Education shall propose a candidate for Sunday School Superintendent for approval of the Voters' Assembly at the July Quarterly meeting and shall be installed with other Sunday School teachers in September. (Amendment approved July 10, 1979).
2. Assistant Sunday School Superintendent shall be appointed by the Board of Education.

F. Finance Committee:

1. The Committee shall consist of the Treasurer, Financial Secretary and at least four (4) other members.
2. Of the four members other than the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer, three shall be elected for three years and one for one year; two members shall be elected annually, one for three years and one for one year.

G. Auditing Committee:

1. There shall be an Auditing Committee of three (3) members who shall be elected in the July meeting to audit the Treasurer's books prior to the regular succeeding September meeting. (Amendment approved January 9, 1979).

H. Other Officers:

1. There shall be a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, and a Secretary, each elected for a term of one (1) year.
 2. There shall be a Treasurer and a Financial Secretary elected for a two (2) year term. (Amendment approved April 14, 1998).
- I. Term of Office:
All terms of office shall begin on September 1, unless otherwise specified. The newly-elected officers shall be installed in a public service in September (Amendment approved October 10, 1995).
- J. Pastor:
The Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all Boards and all Committees.
- K. Stewardship Committee:
The Stewardship Committee shall consist of six (6) members, namely the Vice-Chairman of the Congregation, a member of the Finance Committee, a member of the Elders, a member of the Board of Trustees, the Financial Secretary, and the Treasurer. The chairman of the Committee shall be the Vice-Chairman of the Congregation.
- L. Corporate Officers:
The corporate officers of this congregation shall be the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer, and the two senior members of the Board of Trustees. (Amendment approved April 14, 1999).
- M. Church Council:
1. There shall be a Church Council composed of the following: Pastor, Chairman, Vice-chairman (to be Chairman of the Church Council), Secretary, Treasurer, and Chair of the following: Elders, Trustees, Christian Education, Ladies Guild, Evangelism, and others appointed by congregation. (Amendment approved October 8, 1991).

ARTICLE III

Election of Officers

- A. The election of officers shall be held in the quarterly meeting in July. (Amendment approved October 10, 1995; January 18, 2011).
- B.
1. One Elder and one Trustee, whose office does not expire in the respective year, and the two other members elected by the voters in the April quarterly meeting, shall constitute the Nominating Committee, and the Committee shall attempt to nominate two candidates for each office. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. (Amendment approved October 10, 1995).
 2. Said Nominating Committee shall provide candidates for vacancies during their term of office. The Nominating Committee term of

office is from July Voters' meeting to July Voters' meeting.
(Amendment approved April 9, 1996).

- C. No individual shall hold more than one (1) elective office.
- D. A separate ballot shall be cast for each office.
- E. The candidate receiving the majority of all votes cast shall be considered elected by the congregation.
- F. In case of a vacancy between elections, the Voters' Assembly shall fill the vacancy until the next regular election.

ARTICLE IV

Calling A Pastor

- A. The following steps shall be followed in calling a Pastor.
 - 1. A Call Committee will be formed.
 - 2. The Call Committee shall be instructed to procure a list of suitable candidates from the District Office.
 - 3. At a constitutionally-called meeting those candidates shall be discussed one by one. Additional candidates may be nominated from on the floor.
 - 4. Election of a candidate is to take place by ballot, and that candidate obtaining a majority of all votes cast shall be considered as selected by the congregation. The Chairman shall then call for a unanimous vote.

ARTICLE V

Duties of Officers

In addition to the duties hereinafter assigned in these ByLaws for all officers, members of Boards and members of Committees shall perform all such duties as may from time to time be assigned to them by the Voters' Assembly.

A. Pastor:

The duties of the Pastor shall be those stated in the Diploma of Vocation, namely:

- 1. To proclaim to us, jointly and severally, the Word of God in the full truth and purity as contained in the canonical writings of the Old and the New Testament and professed in the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church.
- 2. To administer the Holy Sacraments in accordance with their divine institution.
- 3. To discharge toward all members of our congregation the function of a Pastor and curate of their souls in an evangelical manner,

in particular to visit the sick and dying and to admonish indifferent and erring members.

4. To faithfully guard the spiritual welfare of the younger members of the congregation, in particular to instruct our catechumens in the Word of God, as it is taught in the Small Catechism of Doctor Martin Luther, and thus prepare them for their first communion.
5. To guide us in applying the divinely ordained discipline of the church, agreeable to the Word of God.
6. To serve the congregation as an example by his Christian conduct and by the Grace of God to do all that is possible for him to do, within the limits of his calling, for the up building of our congregation and for the general advancement of the Kingdom of Christ.

B. Elders:

1. It shall be the duty of the Elders to assist the Pastor in all matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the congregation.
2. They shall see to it that the Evangelical Lutheran Doctrine and the church discipline demanded by the Word of God are practiced and preserved in the congregation.
3. The Board of Elders shall elect their own Chairman from those Elders who are serving the final year of their term.

C. Board of Christian Education:

1. The Board of Christian Education shall have supervision of the Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and any other agencies in the congregation set up to foster spiritual growth in the life of the individual Christian.
2. It shall encourage the congregation to set up agencies and organizations to help it best perform its educational task for each specific age level -- (pre-school, school age, youth, adult).
3. It shall give attention to enrollment, attendance of pupils, an expansion program and personal development.
4. It shall report to the Voters' Assembly regularly.

D. Board of Missions:

1. Shall plan, promote, and carry out an Evangelism program in the congregation and in the community.
2. Shall plan and supervise religious surveys of the community.
3. Shall arrange for the maintenance of record files in order to keep an evangelism program active.
4. Shall enlist aid in visiting prospective members of the church.
5. Shall assist the Pastor in training the laity to bring the unchurched to the adult instruction classes.
6. Shall integrate new members into the life and work of the church.

7. In the area of public relations, it shall endeavor to publicize the Gospel and the activities of the congregation, including various modern avenues available.

E. Trustees:

1. They shall have charge of the property of the congregation and see to it that it is in good condition and repair.
2. For minor repairs and necessary expenditures they shall have the power to draw on the treasury to the amount of two hundred fifty (\$250) per incident without special resolution of the Voters' Assembly. (Amendment April 11, 2000).
3. The senior (in term of office) Trustee shall be the Chairman of the Trustees.
4. The Trustees shall meet at least every two months.
5. The Trustees shall see that an annual inventory and inspection of all church property is completed by the January quarterly meeting. One copy of the inventory shall be kept in the safety deposit box and one copy in the church office.

F. Treasurer:

1. The Treasurer shall keep an accurate account of all money received.
2. He shall make payments by check of current expenses as directed by the Finance Committee.
3. He shall give regular reports to the Finance Committee and the Voters' Assembly.

G. The Financial Secretary:

1. The Financial Secretary shall receive and deposit all money in a bank designated by the congregation, and keep on file records of contributions.
2. A quarterly remittance statement shall be mailed to all communicant members.
3. A report of all receipts shall be submitted to the Treasurer at regularly weekly intervals.

H. Finance Committee:

1. Initiate annual preparation to the congregation of a God-pleasing work-program, determine anticipated receipts, and recommend a budget for Voters' adoption.
2. This Committee shall hold monthly meetings and examine and authorize payment of all bills.

I. The Chairman:

1. The Chairman shall preside at the meetings of the Voters' Assembly, and shall exercise care that the meetings are conducted in an orderly Christian manner.

2. The Chairman shall be responsible to see that all resolutions of the Boards, the Voters' Assembly, and Bylaws of this Constitution be carried out.
3. The Chairman shall meet at least once a month with the Pastor.

J. The Vice-Chairman:

1. The Vice-Chairman shall perform the duties of the Chairman during the inability of the latter to serve, or when the office of Chairman is vacant. The Vice-Chairman shall be Chairman of the Stewardship Committee, and also shall preside at the Church council meetings.

K. The Secretary:

1. The Secretary shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of all meetings of the Voters' Assembly, submit Minutes for approval at the next regular meeting and enter such records into a book provided for that purpose. Secretary shall also take care of the correspondence of the Voters' Assembly.

L. The Auditing Committee:

1. The Auditing Committee shall examine the financial accounts of the financial officers in accordance with auditing procedure, shall affix their signatures that audits have been made, and shall report to the Voters' Assembly.

M. The Stewardship Committee:

1. Provide continuing stimulation for God-pleasing growth of the congregation, individually and corporately, in commitment to the stewardship of the Gospel as a Spirit-empowered result of faith in Christ.
2. Conduct an intensive program annually to encourage every member personally with basic Biblical stewardship principles.
3. Encourage the Gospel-motivated practice of joyous, worshipful, liberal, proportionate, firstfruits giving in response to receive blessings and recognized needs.
4. Annually give every member an opportunity to make a commitment of his treasure of Kingdom work through the congregation, and to distribute envelopes.
5. Maintain a program to discover and enlist for Kingdom service the talents God has given members, old and new, youth and adults.

N. Corporate Officers:

1. The Chairman of the congregation shall serve as Chairman of this body.
2. Official documents, loans, bank loans, contracts, and Pastoral calls that have been negotiated and approved by the Voters' Assembly shall be signed by a minimum of three (3) of the six (6) corporate officers mentioned in Article II, L above.

3. It shall be the responsibility of the Chairman to annually execute the real estate tax exemption certification in the County Assessor's office.

O. Church Council:

1. The Church Council in conjunction with the Pastor shall be empowered to act for and in behalf of the voters to do all things necessary in the interim between Voters' Meeting for the advancement, betterment, and interest of the Voters' Assembly, provided those actions shall be in accordance with the Constitution and the Bylaws. The church Council should meet monthly, with five members constituting a quorum. (Amendment approved October 8, 1991).

ARTICLE VI

Quorum

At any duly announced Voters' Assembly, twelve (12) voting members and adopt valid resolutions.

ARTICLE VII

Suggested Order of Business

1. Opening Devotion
2. Recognition of new voting members
3. Reading of Minutes
4. application, Reception and Dismissal of Members
5. Report of Officers and Action thereon
6. Report of Committees and Action thereon
7. Unfinished Business
8. New Business
9. Acceptance of new voting members
10. Adjournment with Prayer