

**OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH
TACOMA, WA
CONSTITUTION**

PREAMBLE

The Word of God demands that a Christian congregation conform to the Word of God in doctrine and practice (Psalm 119:105, Galatians 1:6-8). It also states that all things be done decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:40). Therefore, we the members of Our Savior Lutheran Church, set forth this constitution and bylaws to govern all our congregational affairs.

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this congregation shall be Our Savior Lutheran Church, Pierce County, Tacoma, WA.

ARTICLE II: STATEMENT OF MISSION

The primary mission of Our Savior Lutheran Church shall always be to make disciples for our Lord Jesus Christ and to fulfill his Great Commission. To this end, this congregation shall be a charitable organization aimed at meeting the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of individuals. The congregation shall from time to time adopt an appropriate motto and/or mission statement, which shall be incorporated into the bylaws upon adoption by the Voters Assembly.

ARTICLE III: CONFESSIONAL STANDARD

This congregation accepts without reservation all the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God, verbally inspired and inerrant, and the only rule and norm for Christian faith and practice. It accepts the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as contained in the Book of Concord, 1580, 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. All preaching and teaching must be in accord with these standards and all doctrinal controversies shall be decided in accordance with them.

ARTICLE IV: DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION

This congregation with its pastor(s) and called worker(s) shall be endorsed by and be members of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod so long as said denomination shall remain true to the confessional standard as set forth in Article III of this constitution.

ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this congregation includes baptized, confirmed and voting members. The admission of new members, church discipline, and termination of membership shall be set forth in policies recommended by the Board of Discipleship and approved by the Board of Directors in accordance with the spirit of this constitution. The types and duties of membership are as follows:

- A. Baptized Members - Baptized members are all persons within the congregation who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God, whether children or adults, and come under the pastoral care of this congregation. It is expected of all baptized members that they:
 1. Attend worship services faithfully and regularly;
 2. Lead a Christian life as taught in Galatians 5:19-26;
 3. Out of Christian love, submit to brotherly admonition, according to Matthew 18:15 - 17, when having erred or offended;

4. Contribute, as God has blessed them, of their time, talents and treasure toward the maintenance of the congregation and the extension of the church at large;
 5. In due time, take a course of instruction in preparation for confirmed membership in this congregation;
 6. Are not members of any organization conflicting with the Word of God.
- B. Confirmed Members - Confirmed members are all baptized persons within the congregation who have received a course of instruction in Christian doctrine which meets with the approval of the Board of Discipleship. In addition to the duties of baptized members, it is expected of all confirmed members that they:
1. Accept all Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament as the standard of faith and life;
 2. Familiarize themselves with the doctrines of this church, at least as set forth in Luther's Small Catechism and declare acceptance of them;
 3. Regularly partake of the Lord's Supper;
 4. Provide for the Christian training of their children by making use of the educational agencies of the church;
 5. Submit willingly and cheerfully to the policies already made or still to be made, provided such policies do not conflict with the Word of God.
- C. Voting Members - Voting membership shall be confirmed members in accordance with this constitution who have reached legal voting age in the State of Washington. It is expected of all voting members that they shall:
1. Faithfully attend all meetings of the Voters Assembly.
 2. Faithfully serve, according to their God-given talents, in any capacity in which they may be called upon to serve.

ARTICLE VI: THE OFFICES OF ORDAINED AND COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

The pastoral office of this congregation as well as that of called worker(s) shall be conferred upon only such ministers and candidates as are rostered members of the LCMS and adhere to the confessional standards set forth in Article III of the constitution and who are well qualified for their work. Pastor(s) and workers shall, in the call issued to and accepted by them, be pledged to this confessional standard.

ARTICLE VII: POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

- A. General - The congregation as a body, through its Voters Assembly, shall have supreme power to administer and manage all of the congregation's external and internal affairs. The congregation, however, shall not be empowered to decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the confessions listed in Article III, and any such contrary decision shall be null and void. Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided in accordance with the Word of God. Other matters shall be decided by a simple majority vote of the voting members in attendance at a Voters Assembly meeting unless otherwise specified by this constitution or bylaws.
- B. Right of Calling - The right of calling pastors, rostered LCMS workers, or of hiring the Executive Director shall be vested in the Voters Assembly and shall not be delegated to a smaller body or an individual.
- C. Ratification of the Board of Directors - The voting members of the Board of Directors shall consist of the officers and at-large members of the congregation, with the Senior Pastor, the Executive Director, and an Elder representative serving as non-voting *ex officio* members of the Board. The Voters Assembly shall ratify the voting members of the Board of Directors as specified in the bylaws.
- D. Board of Directors Actions Requiring Approval of the Voters Assembly - The Board of Directors shall obtain approval of the Voters Assembly on the following actions/items.

1. Annual Financial Operating Plan.
 2. Acquisition or disposal of any real property, or any capital asset or liability that exceeds 10% of the annual Financial Operating Plan.
 3. Approval of any major operating expenditure exceeding the Annual Financial Operating Plan by more than 5%.
 4. Calling or removal of pastors and other rostered LCMS workers and hiring or removal of the Executive Director.
 5. Dissolution of the congregation.
- E. Ratification of the Board of Elders —The Voters Assembly shall ratify Elders and the Board of Elders shall appoint the Discipleship Team Leaders as specified in the bylaws.
- F. Removal from Office – Any called pastor or other rostered LCMS worker, the Executive Director, officer, or board member, who fails to perform the duties of confirmed members as stated in Article V, or is unable or willfully neglectful in the performance of his/her official duties, is guilty of persistent adherence to false doctrine, or of immoral conduct, may be removed from office in Christian and lawful order by the Voters Assembly. Such action shall be initiated through the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VIII: POWERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- A. Officers and Executive Committee - The officers of the congregation shall serve as the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, with the Senior Pastor and Executive Director serving as non-voting *ex officio* members. The Executive Committee will obtain its power and authority for action at the express designation of the full Board. The President, Secretary/Treasurer, Executive Director, and/or Director of Operations shall sign all legal documents.
- B. Board of Directors - Members of the Board of Directors shall not be Elders or Discipleship Team Leaders. The Board shall have the power to develop and implement those policies and procedures as required to execute the plans approved by the Voters Assembly. Written policies and procedures shall be available to voting members upon request. The Board shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them by the constitution, its bylaws or by the Voters Assembly. Powers delegated to the Board may at any time be altered or revoked by the Voters Assembly.
- C. Duties of the Board -
1. The Board shall implement governance policies necessary for the Senior Pastor, staff and congregation to accomplish the mission as stated in Article II.
 2. The Board shall watch over the administration of the office of the Senior Pastor.
 3. The Board shall consult with the Senior Pastor and Executive Director to ensure proper supervision of the staff. Such consultation shall enable the staff to develop and implement strategies and programs to accomplish the mission as stated in Article II. The staff shall function within the policies established by the Board of Directors.
 4. The Board shall transact or supervise the transaction of all legal and general business of the congregation.
 5. The Board shall conduct business within the limitations of the annual financial operating plan approved by the Voters Assembly.
 6. The Board shall annually report to the Voters Assembly on the organizational and financial condition of the congregation. It shall also recommend an annual financial operating plan at the annual Voters Assembly meeting.

ARTICLE IX: POWERS OF THE BOARD OF DISCIPLESHIP

The Board of Elders and Discipleship Team Leaders serve as assistant spiritual shepherds to the pastor(s). Collectively, the Board of Discipleship is a ministering rather than a legislative

body. They shall be qualified as cited in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The Board of Discipleship shall exercise ministry leadership as specified in the bylaws.

ARTICLE X: PROPERTY RIGHTS

All property of this congregation shall be held in the corporate name as stated in Article I. If at any time a separation should take place in this congregation, the property of the congregation and all benefits pertaining thereto shall remain with those members who shall continue to adhere to Article III of this constitution. In the event of the dissolution of this congregation, all property of the congregation shall be disposed of by the final Voters Assembly for the payment of debts, and any and all surplus, after due settlement of just claims against this congregation, shall be conveyed to and become the property of the Northwest District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

ARTICLE XI: BYLAWS

This congregation, through its Voters Assembly, may adopt such bylaws as the accomplishment of the purpose of this organization may demand.

ARTICLE XII: AMENDMENTS

- A. Amendment Procedures - Amendments to this Constitution may be adopted in either of the following ways:
1. The Board of Directors may present amendments to a Voters Assembly for adoption, provided the meeting is properly called in accordance with the bylaws and provided:
 - a. The meeting of the Voters Assembly is announced at least four weeks in advance.
 - b. And, congregational hearings regarding the proposed amendments are conducted on at least two separate days and that both days are at least two weeks before the meeting of the Voters Assembly.
 - c. And, all proposed amendments are published at least two weeks before the meeting of the Voters Assembly in at least any two of the following methods: posted in a conspicuous place in the church, posted on the church web site, or mailed to all voting member households.
 - d. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting members present at the Voters Assembly shall be required for adoption.
 2. Any voting member may propose amendments in writing in any Voters Assembly meeting. If the majority of the voting members present shall vote in favor of the proposal a copy of such proposed amendment shall be mailed to all voting members at least two (2) weeks preceding the next meeting. Thereupon the final vote shall be taken in that meeting or at a duly publicized continuation of that meeting, and a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting members there present shall be required for adoption.
- B. Essential Articles - Any changes in the following articles of this Constitution or sections thereof shall not destroy the essential meaning of the same: Article III (Confessional Standard); Article VI (The Offices of Ordained and Commissioned Ministers); and this Article XIIB.
- C. Date of Adoption – The date of adoption shall be included in the amendment. Upon adoption, such amendments shall be submitted to the Board of Directors of the Northwest District of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

Approved by Voters Assembly: January 10, 2010