

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this congregation shall be:

Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church
4000 Wallings Road
North Royalton, OH 44133

ARTICLE II: MISSION

The purpose of this congregation shall be to give honor and glory to the Triune God, to carry out His will, to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world, to nurture the faith of its members, to manifest the unity of our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior, to foster Christian fellowship and love, to extend a helping hand to human need, and to achieve its objectives by the preaching of the Word of God, by the administration of the sacraments, and by the religious instruction of all its members according to the confessional standard of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as outlined in Article III.

In fulfilling these purposes, the congregation shall be that of a religious organization established and maintained not for profit.

ARTICLE III: CONFSSIONAL STANDARD

The congregation accepts without reservation the Scriptures of the Old Testament and New Testament as the inerrant, revealed Word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit and as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and practice.

This congregation also accepts the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as the true interpretation of the faith set forth in the Scriptures. The symbolical books are the Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, the Large and Small Catechisms of Luther, the Formula of Concord-Epitome, and the Formula of Concord-Solid Declaration. To this Word of God, as correctly confessed in the Book of Concord, all doctrine and practice shall conform and according to it all religious disputes shall be decided.

Only such hymns, prayers, and liturgies that conform to the Confessional standard set forth above shall be used in public services and in all ministerial acts. Likewise, in all classes for instruction in Christian doctrine, only books that conform to this standard shall be used.

ARTICLE IV: SYNOD MEMBERSHIP

This congregation shall be a member congregation of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as long as the confession of faith and the constitution of the Synod remain in accord with the congregation's confessional standard as set forth in Article III of this constitution. This congregation accepts its duty to support the work and programs of the Synod and the District to which it belongs.

ARTICLE V. MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION

Membership in this congregation precludes membership in organizations whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God.

A. Baptized Members

Baptized members of this congregation are all persons who have been baptized with water in the name of the Triune God and are under its spiritual care. Expectations of baptized membership include:

1. Faithful and regular attendance at worship services
2. Living a Christian life (Galatians 5:19–26)
3. Submission to Christian admonition (Matthew 18)
4. Contribution of time, talents, and treasure toward the maintenance of the congregation and extension of the church at large as God has blessed
5. Willingness, in due time, to be instructed in the Christian faith in preparation for communicant membership in this congregation

B. Communicant Members

Communicant members are all baptized persons who desire to become communicant members and have completed a course of instruction in Christian doctrine according to The Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther. When the pastor on examination deems an individual ready, the pastor shall be authorized to extend communicant membership to the person and announce such in a public worship service.

In addition to the duties of baptized members, communicant membership shall be maintained by:

1. Accepting the confession of faith described in Article III of this constitution
2. Familiarizing themselves with the doctrine described in Article III of this constitution
3. Partaking of the Lord's Supper
4. Participating in continuing Christian education
5. Presenting their children for Holy Baptism
6. Training their children in the Christian faith

C. Voting Members

Voting Members are communicant members who have reached the age of majority, have been confirmed, request membership by attending a voters' assembly meeting, and sign the constitution of the congregation. The total number of voting members constitutes the voters' assembly of the congregation.

Voting members have the following rights and privileges:

1. May vote at voters' assembly meetings.
2. May be a member of the Church Council, subject to the procedures and qualifications listed in the bylaws.
3. May vote and hold office in the organizations of the congregation subject to the qualifications for membership in such organizations.
4. May attend Church Council meetings as an observer. This right does not include those parts of a Church Council meeting when matters of a confidential nature are under consideration.

D. Termination of Membership

Membership in the congregation may be terminated in the following manners:

1. A member desiring to transfer membership to another LCMS congregation shall inform the pastor, who shall be responsible for creating and mailing a letter of transfer to the receiving congregation.
2. A member desiring to transfer membership to another church body or desiring to terminate his/her membership shall inform the pastor, who shall be responsible for creating and mailing a letter of release to the member.
3. A member whose whereabouts is unknown or who has moved from the area may be removed from membership after a period of one year.
4. A member whose actions call into question his/her continued membership in the congregation shall be the subject of Christian discipline in accord with Matthew 18:15–20, its purpose to renew the member's relationship with the Lord and the church.
5. A member who is not responsive to the witness and ministry of the church shall be considered self excluded.
6. Death.

ARTICLE VI. CALLED CHURCH WORKERS

A. Pastoral Office

The voters' assembly of this congregation shall have the exclusive right to call pastors. The pastoral office shall be conferred only upon ordained ministers or candidates for the pastoral ministry who have satisfied the qualifications and requirements for assignment of first calls, who profess and adhere to the confessional standards set forth in Article III, and who are well qualified for this work. Pastors shall be pledged to this confessional standard.

B. Commissioned Church Workers

The right to call commissioned church workers belongs to the voters' assembly of this congregation and ordinarily shall not be delegated to a smaller body and never to an individual. Only those individuals who are commissioned church workers or who are candidates of colleges and universities who have satisfied the qualifications and requirements for assignment of first calls, who adhere to the confessional standard set forth in this constitution, and who are qualified for the work to which they are called shall receive a call.

C. Removal From Office

Called ordained ministers or commissioned church workers may be removed from office in Christian and lawful order by a three-quarters (3/4) majority ballot vote of the voters' assembly for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of the duties of office, the inability to perform those duties, or domineering in office. Prior to voting, the church council shall notify the district president to request his counsel.

D. Vacancy

When a vacancy occurs in an office of an ordained minister or commissioned church worker, the congregation shall normally notify the president of the district to request assistance in temporarily filling the vacancy and to receive his counsel in calling a new pastor or commissioned church worker.

ARTICLE VII. AUTHORITY OF AND WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

A. Voters' Assembly

The voters' assembly, as defined in this congregation's bylaws, shall be the governing body of this congregation and shall be empowered to call its ordained and commissioned church workers, elect its officers, and administer and manage its affairs as specified in the bylaws and in accordance with Article III: Confessional Standard.

1. The establishment and conduct of all organizations and societies within the congregation or related directly to the congregation shall be subject to the overall authority and general oversight of the voters' assembly.
2. Only the voters' assembly may encumber, purchase, or sell real property, including buildings; adopt the annual budget of the congregation; incur non-budgeted (emergency) expenses; and dissolve the congregation, merge with another congregation, or terminate its membership in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
3. All matters before the voters' assembly shall be decided by a majority vote unless otherwise specified by this constitution or bylaws. Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided only on the basis of the Word of God.

B. Meetings

Dates for regular meetings of the voters' assembly will be set at the previous meeting. Any change in the date of these meetings shall be announced at all worship services starting no less than thirty (30) days before the rescheduled date.

Special meetings of the voters' assembly may be called at the request of the pastor, the president, or five members of the voters' assembly. All meetings shall be announced at all worship services in each of the two (2) weeks prior. The reason and purpose of special meetings must be specified when they are announced. The agenda of special meetings is fixed, and such meetings may address only the specific matter for which they have been convened.

The quorum requirement outlined in the bylaws must be satisfied to conduct business for both regular and special voters' assembly meetings.

C. Officers and Boards

This congregation shall have such officers and boards as provided in its bylaws, in addition to any that the congregation shall establish from time to time.

ARTICLE VIII. DIVISION, DISSOLUTION, OR MERGER

If at any time division shall take place within this congregation, efforts shall be made to resolve differences in a God-pleasing manner. If division into factions occurs, the counsel of the district president shall be sought. 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 the confessional standards set forth in Article III of this constitution.

In the event that the congregation dissolves, all property shall be disposed of by the voters' assembly for the payment of debts and all just claims against the congregation. Any and all surplus and all rights connected therewith shall be conveyed as outlined below by a majority vote of the voters' assembly. In no case shall any of this be used for the personal gain of individual members.

If this congregation is a member congregation of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) at the time of dissolution and the confession of faith and the constitution of the Synod remain in accord with the congregation's confessional standard as set forth in Article III of this constitution, all surplus and rights shall be conveyed to any combination of the LCMS, one or more Districts of the LCMS, one or more LCMS seminaries, one or more LCMS congregations with a called pastor or an active call committee, or one or more congregations in altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCMS. If there is an organization that upholds the confessional standard as set forth in Article III that the congregation has supported as a distinct budget item for two (2) out of the past five (5) years, this organization may also be included in this list.

If this congregation is not a member congregation of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) at the time of dissolution or if the confession of faith and the constitution of the Synod are not in accord with the congregation's confessional standard as set forth in Article III of this constitution, all surplus and rights shall be conveyed to organizations that uphold the confessional standard as set forth in Article III.

If this congregation merges with another congregation, any property and all interests connected therewith shall be conveyed to the newly merged congregation.

ARTICLE IX. AMENDMENTS TO THIS CONSTITUTION

This constitution may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the voters' assembly in the following manner. Article III: Confessional Standard is immutable and may not be amended.

- Amendments to the provisions of this constitution shall be made available to all communicant members, in written form, by publication in the bulletin or other means at least two (2) weeks prior to each of two consecutive meetings at which the proposed amendments will be discussed. These two meetings will be held not less than fourteen (14) days and not more than two hundred (200) days apart. At each meeting, a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the voters present shall be required to continue the amendment process.
- All revisions shall be submitted to the president of the district for review by the district's constitution committee and favorable action by the district's board of directors prior to final adoption by the congregation.

Bylaws

A. MEMBERSHIP

i. Confirmation

A baptized individual is considered to be “confirmed” when he or she has been administered the public rite of Confirmation of the Church preceded by a period of instruction, which should include, but is not limited to, committing to heart Luther’s Small Catechism by memorization.

ii. Church Discipline of Members

The Office of the Keys is rightly used so that we may gain a brother or sister, not lose one. Therefore, a manifest and impenitent sinner shall be admonished in accordance with the steps prescribed in St. Matthew 18:15-17, whenever this is possible. Fruitless admonition shall result in excommunication and the loss of all rights and privileges of membership. A member who refuses to submit to Church discipline shall be adjudged as having deliberately severed all connections with this congregation.

After sincere repentance, an excommunicated person shall be eligible for reinstatement into membership.

B. CALLED CHURCH WORKERS

i. Qualifications

a. Pastoral Office

As long as this congregation remains a member congregation of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and as long as the confession of faith and the constitution of the Synod remain in accord with the congregation’s confessional standard as set forth in Article III of this constitution, calls to the pastoral office may be extended only to biological males (Genesis 1, 1 Timothy 2-3) who satisfy one of the following criteria:

- Ordained ministers who are members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
- Candidates for the pastoral ministry who have satisfied the qualifications and requirements for assignment of first calls by Synod
- Ordained ministers who are members in good standing of church bodies that have been formally recognized to be in altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod when agreements for such calls are in place

b. Commissioned Church Workers

Likewise, calls to commissioned church workers may be extended only to individuals who satisfy one of the following criteria:

- Individuals who have been endorsed by and are members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
- Candidates of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod colleges and universities who have satisfied the qualifications and requirements for assignment of first calls
- Commissioned church workers in good standing from church bodies that are in altar and pulpit fellowship with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

ii. Calling a Pastor or Commissioned Church Worker

When this congregation calls a pastor or commissioned church worker, the following procedure shall be followed:

- When a pastor or commissioned church worker is to be called, every member of the congregation shall be provided opportunity to suggest one or more names for consideration.
- A call committee shall be appointed by the church council to serve as a screening committee and shall submit all suggested names to the district president for information and evaluation. The committee shall then present to the congregation by public announcement its proposed list of candidates and their biographical sketches.
- At a voters' assembly called for the purpose of calling a new pastor or commissioned church worker, the proposed list may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the assembly. When possible, information regarding additional candidates shall be provided by the district president and/or his representative at the meeting.
- Ballot voting shall continue until a majority vote determines the disposition of the call. If no candidate receives a majority of votes, another vote will be taken with the candidate who received the fewest votes removed from consideration in each subsequent round of voting.

C. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

i. Voters' Assembly

The voters' assembly shall meet at least three (3) times each year. Meetings shall be called as outlined in Article VII of this constitution. The agenda for all voters' assembly meetings shall be made available to all members.

A quorum shall consist of 40 percent of the voting members of the congregation; however, a quorum shall consist of 60 percent of the voting members of the congregation to call a pastor, to act regarding the conclusion of the service of a pastor, or for the purchase or sale of real estate. If a quorum is not present, the meeting shall be rescheduled. At each such rescheduled meeting, the quorum requirement shall decrease by one-half.

If a member does not attend any voters' assembly meetings in a one (1) year period, that individual will no longer be considered a voting member and will not be included in the count used to determine quorum requirements. This individual can be reinstated as a voting member by attending any future voters' assembly meeting.

In addition to principles laid down in the Holy Scriptures and in the constitution and bylaws of this congregation, basic parliamentary procedures shall be followed (as found in *Robert's Rules of Order*).

If there is an emergency where non-budgeted funds must be spent before the voters' assembly can meet, the church council is authorized to make appropriate arrangements that obligate the church to the minimum reasonable commitment. The church council must also call a special voters' assembly meeting to be held not more than three (3) weeks from the time the emergency is discovered to explain the situation, ratify the expenditure, and authorize any additional funding required to address this emergency. At this meeting, a motion may be made to forbid the church council from authorizing any future non-budgeted funding for a defined period of time if the voters decide that the church council acted inappropriately.

ii. Officers

This congregation shall have the following officers elected by the voters' assembly. In accordance with Biblical precepts (1 Timothy 2), the president and vice-president must be biological males.

a. President

The president shall preside at all meetings of the voters' assembly and church council and monitor the congregation's compliance with the constitution and bylaws of the congregation. He shall also perform such other duties as are common for his office or as directed by the congregation.

b. Vice-President

The vice-president will serve in the president's absence or inability to serve and should assist the President as needed.

c. Secretary

The secretary shall keep and preserve accurate records of all meetings of the voters' assembly and church council, making available minutes of these meetings. In addition, the secretary shall handle correspondence and such other duties commonly required of the office.

d. Treasurer

The treasurer shall keep and preserve accurate records of all receipts and disbursements, submit a written report at all regular voters' assembly and church council meetings, and assure the accuracy and propriety of its financial transactions. The treasurer is also responsible for preparing a budget for review and approval by the voters' assembly.

All officers shall be elected for a term of two (2) years. These four (4) officers make up the legal officers of this congregation. Elected officers shall not receive compensation from the congregation.

iii. Other Positions

This congregation shall have the following positions elected by the voters' assembly.

a. Financial Secretary

The financial secretary shall receive, record, and deposit all monies received by the congregation. The financial secretary shall keep complete and accurate records in accordance with accepted accounting practice, make the records available to the treasurer, and provide regular reports to the treasurer.

Individuals who serve in this position shall be elected for a term of two (2) years and shall not receive compensation from the congregation.

iv. Church Council

The church council will consist of the elected officers and the chairs of all permanent boards established by the voters' assembly. The pastor shall serve as a non-voting, ex-officio member of council. The president and secretary of the congregation shall also serve as the chairman and secretary of the church council.

The church council is responsible for acting on matters pertaining to the general welfare of the congregation to the extent authorized by the voters' assembly and is responsible for preparing the agenda for each voters' assembly meeting. In addition, the council may make recommendations to officers, boards, and the voters' assembly. The church council shall have no authority to act in matters that are specifically reserved to the voters' assembly.

The church council shall hold meetings as needed. Meetings may be called by the pastor, the chairman, or any two members by providing notice to all members at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. A majority of the voting members of the council shall constitute a quorum.

v. Boards

a. Board of Elders

The Elders shall consist of one (1) to three (3) men of good standing in the congregation, and they shall be elected for terms of two (2) years.

The Elders shall counsel and assist the Pastor in the spiritual care of the congregation. They shall correct the erring and admonish the careless and indifferent. In the case of contention and strife within the congregation, they shall endeavor to reconcile the disagreeing parties.

The Elders shall supervise the work of a competent organist and choirmaster if such positions exist; they shall supervise the acolytes; and they shall assist the Pastor in arranging pulpit and altar assistance, and special services.

In consultation with the Pastor, they shall make provision for the giving of alms and

assistance to members who may be in physical or economic need.

The voters' assembly may establish one or more additional boards with responsibilities established by resolution of the congregation as are necessary to assist the called workers, elected leaders, and members of the congregation in carrying out its mission and ministry.

The voters' assembly shall elect chairs of these boards for a specified period of time, which will typically be one year, and may remove a chair from his/her position for cause. Final board membership must be approved by the voters' assembly.

vi. Nominating Committee and Elections

The church council is responsible for forming a nominating committee to seek qualified individuals willing to serve as officers, chairs of boards, and other elected positions before each election.

Elections will occur during a voters' assembly meeting, and notice of these elections must be included as part of the announcement of this meeting. Candidates for each position can be nominated by the nominating committee or by any voting member during the meeting of the voters' assembly. In all cases, nominees can be considered for an office only if they are willing to stand for election.

For each position, the nominee who receives the majority of votes cast shall be declared elected. If there are more than two candidates and no individual receives a majority of votes, another vote will be taken with the candidate who received the fewest votes removed from consideration.

vii. Removal From Office

An officer or chair of a board may be removed from his/her position by the affirmative vote of at least three-quarters (3/4) of the voting members present at a voters' assembly called for this purpose, by ballot, in a Christian and lawful order.

Individuals may be removed from office for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, inability to perform official duties, or willful neglect of duties.

viii. Vacancies

If a vacancy occurs in any office position, a special election shall be held if more than one half (1/2) of the term remains. If less than this amount of time remains, the church council may decide either to leave the position empty for the remainder of the term, hold a special election, or appoint an individual to fill the remainder of this term.

D. CONGREGATIONAL POLICIES

The voters' assembly may approve policies that are meant to be ongoing. Examples could include, but are not limited to, a facilities use policy or a statement of beliefs and practices. In addition to these policies being recorded as part of minutes, a separate copy of these approved

statements shall be kept in a single location so that they can easily be made available on the request of any member or to share as necessary with individuals outside this congregation.

E. AMENDMENTS TO THESE BYLAWS

These bylaws may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the voters' assembly in the following manner.

- i. Amendments to the provisions of these bylaws shall be made available to all communicant members, in written form, by publication in the bulletin or other means at least two (2) weeks prior to a meeting at which the proposed amendments will be discussed. A two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the voters present shall be required to approve the proposed amendments.
- ii. All revisions shall be submitted to the president of the district for review by the district's constitution committee and favorable action by the district's board of directors prior to final adoption by the congregation.