



**CONSTITUTION OF
ST. TIMOTHY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Approved May 01, 2016



“For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter . . .”

Ecclesiastes 8:6

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Preamble

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Recognizing our unity in Christ and our common practice in the Christian faith; desiring to express our fellowship in worship and work; knowing our spiritual needs; mindful of our Christian privileges and duties; and wishing to observe orderly cooperation, we adopt the following Constitution.

1 Article I – Name and Incorporation

1.1 Name

The name of the Congregation shall be St. Timothy Evangelical Lutheran Church, Huber Heights, Ohio, Montgomery County.

1.2 Incorporation

The Congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Ohio.

1.3 Fiscal Year

St. Timothy will operate with a fiscal year beginning July 1 and concluding June 30.

2 Article II – Confession of Faith

2.1 Acceptance

The Congregation accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as a whole and in all their parts as the divinely inspired, revealed, and inerrant Word of God and submits to this as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life.

2.2 Accepts and Confesses the Following Symbols

As brief and true statements of the doctrine of the Word of God, the Congregation accepts and confesses the following Symbols, to which assent shall be required of all its members:

1. The ancient ecumenical Creeds: the Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian.
2. The unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism.

2.3 Normative Theology

As further elaboration of, and in accord with, these Lutheran Symbols, the Congregation also accepts the other documents in the Book of Concord of 1580: the Apology, Luther's Large Catechism, the Smalcald Articles, and the Formula of Concord; and recognizes them as normative for its theology.

2.4 Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church

The Congregation accepts without reservation the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, not insofar as, but because they are the presentation and explanation of the pure doctrine of the Word of God and a summary of the faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

2.5 Unity in Doctrine and Practice

The Congregation regards unity in doctrine and practice the necessary prerequisite for church fellowship and, therefore, adheres to the Galesburg rule "Lutheran Pulpits for Lutheran Clergymen only, and Lutheran Altars for Lutheran Communicants only." (Henceforth, "Lutheran" shall be taken to mean the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), and/or any other Lutheran body with which the LCMS has pulpit and altar fellowship.)

2.6 Opposed Organizations

It is the solemn, sacred, and god-given duty of every pastor properly to instruct his people concerning the sinfulness of all organizations that

- (1) explicitly or implicitly deny the Holy Trinity, the deity of Christ, or the vicarious atonement;
- (2) promise spiritual light apart from that revealed in the Holy Scriptures;
- (3) attach spiritual or eternal rewards to the works or virtues of men; and/or
- (4) embrace ideologies or principals that clearly violate and express teaching of the Holy Scriptures concerning the relationship of men to one another.

3 Article III – Purpose

The purpose of the Congregation shall be to glorify God and to help in the extension of His kingdom among men and women for their salvation by promoting and living the Christian religion as expressed in the doctrine and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

4 Article IV – Powers of the Congregation

4.1 Powers

All powers of the Congregation have their source in the Word of God which is the norm for its faith and life. All individuals and groups within the Congregation shall submit to the authority of the Word. The life and activity of the Congregation and its organizations shall conform to the Word.

The powers of the Congregation shall be those necessary to fulfill its purpose as set forth in this Constitution.

In fulfillment of its purpose, the Congregation is empowered to:

1. Acquire real and personal property by gift, device, bequest, purchase, or other lawful means.
2. Hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose.
3. Sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means.
4. Enter into contract.
5. Sue and be sued.
6. Elect officers and boards for the exercise of their powers and authority and require them to conduct their affairs in accordance with this Constitution and its By-Laws, and the resolutions of the Congregation.

4.2 Exercising Powers

The powers of the Congregation as provided and defined in paragraph 4.1 (Powers) of this Article shall be exercised at annual or special meetings of the Congregation and by the Church Council as elected by the Congregation.

In the exercise of congregational power, specific situations shall be addressed as follows:

1. All schools, societies, and other organizations within the Church must be organized with the consent of the Congregation and operate under its control.
2. Real property shall not be purchased, disposed of, or encumbered in any manner except by resolution adopted by not less than a two-thirds (2/3) majority ballot vote of the voting members present and voting at a properly called meeting of the Congregation.
3. Should disagreement among the members bring about a separation in this Congregation, all property shall revert to those who adhere to this Constitution. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of all voting members present at a properly called meeting of the Congregation shall be required to determine who is adhering to the Constitution. Should the separation be on account of doctrine, the adjudication procedures of the Synod shall be followed in determining which members are adhering to Article II of this Constitution.
4. Should the Congregation cease to do business and be dissolved, all property and funds remaining after the payment of the debts of the Congregation shall be distributed in accordance with the decision of the Congregation by a majority vote of all voting members present at a validly called meeting of the Congregation.

5 Article V – Relationship to Organizations

5.1 Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

St. Timothy Evangelical Lutheran Church, as determined by the Congregation on May 15, 1994, is a member of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

5.2 Other Lutheran Organizations

The Congregation reserves the right at any future time to become a member of, or be associated with, another Lutheran organization not in conflict with the St. Timothy Evangelical Lutheran Church Constitution to better attain its purpose.

5.3 Join or Sever Relationships

To join or sever any future relationship with any organization shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority ballot vote of all voting members present and voting at a legally called meeting of the Congregation. Such a decision shall become effective on the date the vote is taken or at a time in compliance with the constitution of the parent organization involved.

6 Article VI – Members in the Congregation

6.1 Member of the Congregation

Members of the Congregation shall be those who are designated as such at the time that this Constitution is adopted, and those who are admitted thereafter and who maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and its By-Laws. There shall be no membership restrictions with respect to race, color, or national origin.

6.2 Member Classification

Members shall be classified as baptized, confirmed, or voting (cf. Part III of the By-Laws).

6.2.1 Baptized Members

BAPTIZED MEMBERS are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this Congregation, or have been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God and have been received in this Congregation.

6.2.2 Confirmed Members

CONFIRMED MEMBERS are baptized persons who have been: (1) confirmed in this Congregation, (2) received by Adult Baptism, (3) received by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or (4) received by affirmation of faith.

6.2.3 Voting Members

VOTING MEMBERS are confirmed members who are “in good standing,” under the By-Laws. A voting member who has not reached the age of 18 may not vote to enter into a contract or to sell, mortgage, or encumber real estate.

6.3 Members’ Privileges and Duties

It shall be the privilege and duty of the members of the Congregation to:

1. Make diligent use of the Means of Grace, both Word and Sacraments.
2. Live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran Church.
3. Support the work of the Congregation with their Gift(s) of the Spirit employing time, monies, and talents (I Peter 4:10-11).

7 Article VII – Instruction of Children

7.1 Child Rearing

As Evangelical Christians, we recognize that it is our responsibility to rear our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and to have them carefully and conscientiously instructed in the confessions of our holy Christian faith.

In order that the children may be taught adequately in the faith of the church and trained in the fear of God, thorough instruction to prepare them for their confirmation and Holy Communion shall be given by the pastor(s) with all diligence and faithfulness. Confirmation instruction shall be given during a period of at least two years, with a minimum of 72 hours of instruction.

7.2 Parents’ Responsibility

Parents shall be responsible for seeing that their children make faithful use of all other portions of the Parish Education Program.

8 Article VIII - Discipline

8.1 Guilty of Persisting in Unrepented Sin

A member who advocates doctrine which is contrary to Holy Scripture and the Confessions of the Church, or is guilty of persisting in unrepented sin which is grossly unbecoming a member of the Body of Christ, shall be subject to discipline.

8.2 Exercising Discipline

Discipline in the Congregation shall be exercised in accordance with Matthew 18:15-18.

8.3 Administering Discipline

Discipline shall be administered by the Pastor's Advisory Committee on behalf of the Congregation.

8.4 Disciplined Member's Rights

A disciplined member has the right of appeal to the Congregation upon written request to the Congregational President.

8.5 Discipline Procedures

Procedures for the exercise of discipline shall be those provided in the By-Laws.

9 Article IX - Worship

As an expression of the unity of the Church in Christ, the Congregation recognizes the desirability of conforming to practices of other Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod congregations in using such forms of worship, including liturgies and hymn books, that conform to Article II of this Constitution. Only such variations as authorized by the Pastor's Advisory Committee shall be permitted.

10 Article X - The Pastor

10.1 Call

The congregation alone has the power to issue a call to a man who is or will be a member of the ministerium of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The terms and conditions of the call may not conflict with the Constitution or the By-Laws.

10.2 Properly Ordained

Only such a man shall be called who is or will become a properly ordained Lutheran Pastor of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

10.3 Lutheran Doctrine

The Pastor of this Congregation must preach and teach purely Lutheran doctrine, which is in full accord with the Word of God, the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church, and the principles set forth in this Constitution. When matters of Christian conscience are involved on the part of the Pastor, the Congregation has a right to hear the Pastor's views on such matters pertaining to theology, church practices or management, including the administration of the Sacraments. The Pastor is obligated to present these viewpoints in person.

10.4 Ministry

The Pastor shall minister to all members of the Congregation, call on them, administer the Means of Grace to them, and provide for prayer support.

10.5 Pastoral Oversight

The Pastor shall oversee the work of the schools, organizations, and activities within the Congregation.

10.6 Pastor Qualifications

The Pastor shall lead a Christian life and possess the qualities outlined by St. Paul in I Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:7-9.

10.7 Congregational Responsibilities to the Pastor

10.7.1 Accord Love, Respect, Good Will, and Cooperation

The members of the Congregation shall accord the Pastor the love, respect, good will, and cooperation due the Office of Pastor.

10.7.2 Faithful Assistance

The members of the Congregation promise the Pastor their faithful assistance in the work to which he is called.

10.8 Officiate in the Pulpit

No one shall be permitted to officiate in the pulpit or at the altar of this Congregation unless the individual is a properly ordained Pastor in good standing in a Lutheran Church body with which we have Pulpit and Altar Fellowship, in accordance with paragraphs 1.2.1 (Exceptions) and 1.2.2 (Exception Determination) of the By-Laws.

10.9 Assistant Pastor

The above provisions shall also be observed when this Congregation calls an assistant to the Pastor with the addition that the concurrence of the Pastor shall be obtained as to the person called.

11 Article XI – Meetings of the Congregation

11.1 Congregational Meetings

The power and authority of the Congregation is exercised through congregational meetings that are called and conducted in conformity with civil law and the Constitution and By-Laws.

11.2 Annual Meeting

Each year the Congregation must hold two congregational meetings. The first meeting is held on the third Sunday in September. The second meeting is held on the first Sunday in May.

11.3 Special Congregational Meetings

A special meeting of the Congregation may be called by action of the Congregation by petition of at least ten (10) of the voting members, or by any one of the following: the Church Council, the President of the Congregation, or the Pastor. Notice of special meetings shall be given as provided in the By-Laws.

11.3.1 Business

Only the business for which a special meeting has been called shall be transacted at the meeting.

11.3.2 Resolution of Pastor Resignation

For special meetings called to consider a resolution requesting the Pastor to resign, notice shall be given to all members in writing not less than fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting.

11.3.3 Disposition of Real Property

Special meetings called to consider the disposition or encumbrance of real property must be called and held in conformity with such provisions of civil law as may be applicable.

11.3.4 Pastor Notification

The Pastor shall be notified of the time and place at which any special meeting of the Congregation is to be held.

11.4 Quorum

A quorum of any regular or special meeting of the Congregation, except for the purposes of dissolution, shall be ten percent (10%) of the voting members.

11.5 Majority

A vote of not less than the majority of the voting members present and voting shall be required to pass business issues.

11.6 Reconvene

A meeting of the Congregation may by majority vote recess to reconvene at a specified time and place. A meeting may also recess to reconvene upon Call; provided, however, that the time and place of such a reconvened meeting must be announced at a public service of the

Congregation, and not less than three (3) days' written notice be given of the reconvened meeting.

12 Article XII – Church Council (Officers and Members)

12.1 Officer Elections and Appointments

At the second annual (May) meeting of the Congregation, the Congregation shall elect a President, a Vice President, and a Secretary for a two (2) year term of office. These officers shall be chosen from the voting members age 18 and older and shall also serve as officers and voting members of the Church Council. The President and Secretary shall be elected in even-numbered years, and the Vice President shall be elected in odd-numbered years.

The Council shall appoint for a period of one (1) year a Treasurer of the Congregation, who shall also serve as an officer and non-voting member of the Church Council.

(See paragraph 12.7)

12.2 Other Council Member Elections

At the second annual (May) meeting of the Congregation, the Congregation elects, for a term of two years each, Council Members responsible for missions, education, parish life, property, finance, and youth. These must be elected from members who have reached the age of 18 and shall also serve as voting members of the Church Council. Members responsible for missions, education, and youth are elected in odd-numbered years, and members responsible for property, finance, and parish life are elected in even-numbered years.

12.3 Consecutive Terms

No elected Church Council member shall be elected to more than two consecutive terms.

12.4 Term of Office

The official term of office for all elected Council members shall be from July 1 to June 30.

12.5 Pastor

The Pastor(s) shall be voting member(s) of the Church Council by virtue of his office.

12.6 Pastor's Advisory Committee

The chair of the Pastor's Advisory Committee shall be a voting member of the Church Council.

12.7 Treasurer

The Council shall appoint for a period of one (1) year a Treasurer of the Congregation, who shall also serve as an officer and non-voting member of the Church Council.

(See paragraph 12.1)

12.8 Executive Committee

The President, Vice President and the Secretary together with the Pastor(s) shall constitute the Executive Committee of the Church.

12.9 Duties

The duties of the Church Council shall be those provided in the By-Laws.

13 Article XIII – By-Laws

13.1 By-Laws

The Congregation shall adopt such By-Laws as may from time to time be necessary. No By-Law may conflict with this Constitution.

13.2 By-Laws Amendment

By-Laws may be adopted or amended at any legally called and conducted meeting of the Congregation by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those voting members present and voting.

14 Article XIV - Amendments

14.1 Doctrinal Basis and the Confessional Subscription

The doctrinal basis and the confessional subscription (contained in Article II), as well as certain disciplines contained in Articles III, IV, V, VI, X, and this paragraph of Article XIV shall be unalterable in intent and purpose, and no amendments to this Constitution shall conflict therewith.

14.2 Constitution

This Constitution may otherwise be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting members present and voting at any regular or special meeting of the Congregation, provided that said amendment(s) are presented at two public services of the Congregation preceding the meeting at which the amendment(s) are to be considered and mailed to voting members not less than thirty days preceding the meeting.

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