

CONSTITUTION
Of
OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH
Laurel, Maryland
(As Amended: March 19, 1979)

PREAMBLE:

God requires that a Christian congregation shall conform to His divine Word in doctrine and practice (Psalm 119:105; Matthew 28:18-20; Galatians 1:6-8; II Timothy 4:1-5) and that all things be done decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:40). Therefore, we, the members of Our Savior Lutheran Church, located at Laurel, Maryland, accept and subscribe to the following Constitution and Bylaws, in accordance with which all spiritual and material affairs of our congregation shall be governed.

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ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this congregation shall be Our Savior Lutheran Church of Laurel, Maryland.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

- A. Our mission is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to ourselves, our neighbors, our community, and the world.
- B. With this mission in mind we set forth the following purposes for our congregation:
 - 1. To worship our Lord with inspiring services which clearly proclaim the Gospel through Word, Sacraments, music, and other expressions, and which encourage the total worshipping assembly to participate;
 - 2. To teach people of all ages the Word of God as it has come to us in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments according to their exposition in the Lutheran Confessions;
 - 3. To care for all our members through professional and lay ministry which gives physical, emotional, and spiritual support in crises, as expressions of our love for one another in Christ;
 - 4. To stimulate our junior high, senior high and college age members in their walk with Christ
 - 5. To witness to our faith in Jesus Christ in our daily lives and in organized ventures into our community, and to provide the training which is necessary to make thus possible;
 - 6. To foster Christian friendships through regular gatherings which nourish the fellowship which God has given us with one another, and which combat the impersonality and impermanence of our community;
 - 7. To support the work of our district and national organizations through regular contributions of our time, talents, and finances;
 - 8. To provide the physical resources which are needed to carry out our mission and to tend them as befits a place identified as God's house;
 - 9. To care for one another through admonition and discipline when any of us begins to stray from the Gospel of Christ;
 - 10. To be involved in local and metropolitan efforts to meet the physical and social needs of people, and to concern ourselves with the hungry people in the world;
 - 11. To involve all our members in the mission of our congregation through efficient organization; and
 - 12. To publicize our existence and activities through intra-congregation communications and public media.

ARTICLE III - DOCTRINAL STANDARD

- A. This congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the Old Testament and the New Testament as the revealed and inerrant Word of God, verbally inspired, and submits to them as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life.
- B. This congregation acknowledges and accepts all the confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, as true and genuine expositions of the doctrines of the Bible. These confessional writings are:
 - 1. The three Ecumenical Creeds (Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian)
 - 2. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession
 - 3. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession
 - 4. The Smalcald Articles
 - 5. Luther's Large and Small Catechisms
 - 6. The Formula of Concord

ARTICLE IV - SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

This congregation shall hold membership in the Luther Church-Missouri' Synod as long as Synod remains true to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. It shall be the duty of the congregation and its individual members to support the work and programs of the Synod according to their ability.

ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the congregation includes the following:

- A. Baptized Membership - Baptized members are all persons who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and who are under the spiritual care of the pastor of this congregation.
- B. Confirmed Membership - Confirmed members are those baptized persons who have been instructed and confirmed in the Lutheran teaching of the Christian faith and have publicly affirmed their Baptism before this congregation.
- C. Assembly Membership - Assembly members are those confirmed members who have signed this Constitution and its Bylaws at a Congregational Assembly.

ARTICLE VI - AUTHORITY OF THE CONGREGATION

- A. General - The Congregational Assembly shall be the governing body of this congregation and shall be the highest authority in the congregation. No other body or person shall have authority to act on those matters reserved solely for the Congregational Assembly, as stated in the Constitution and Bylaws.
- B. Right of Calling - The right of calling pastors or teachers shall be vested in the Congregational Assembly and shall never be delegated to a smaller group or to an individual.
- C. Decisions - 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 Congregational Assembly unless otherwise specified by this Constitution or Bylaws.
- D. Removal from Office - Any officer, teacher or pastor may be removed from office by the congregation in Christian and lawful order, for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false teaching contrary to the Confessional Standard of the congregation, a scandalous life, inability to perform, and willful neglect of duties. This action shall be taken only after the officer, teacher or pastor has been pre-advised of the charges preferred against him and given the opportunity to answer such charges. The Circuit Counselor and District President shall have full knowledge of removal procedures when they are preferred against a pastor or teacher, and all such actions shall be taken in full consultation with said officials.
- E. Removal from Membership - The Congregational Assembly shall have authority to exclude any Assembly member according to Matthew 15:15-18. The person so excluded (excommunicated) shall forfeit all rights of a member.

ARTICLE VII - OFFICERS

- A. The officers of this congregation shall be such officers, boards, or committees as the Bylaws of this Constitution may prescribe.
- B. Congregational officers or committees, whether elected or appointed, shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon time, and whatever authority may have been delegated to them may at any time be altered or revoked.

ARTICLE VI - THE OFFICE OF PASTOR

The pastoral office of this congregation shall be conferred only on such pastors and candidates who profess and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in Article III of this Constitution and who are qualified for their work. Pastors shall be pledged to this confessional standard.

ARTICLE IX – DIVISION

If at any time a division should take place on account of doctrine, the property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those Assembly members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Article III of this Constitution. If division takes place for any other reason, the property shall remain with the majority of the Assembly members. In the event the congregation should totally disband, the property and all rights connected therewith shall be transferred to the District of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod of which the congregation has been a member at the time of disbanding.

ARTICLE X - ADMINISTRATION OF CHURCH PROPERTIES

All properties of the congregation is entrusted to the Board of Trustees who shall constitute the body corporate as specified in the Laws of Maryland and as such shall manage the estate, property, interest, and inheritance of the congregation in accordance with the Constitution, Bylaws, and Resolutions of the Congregational Assembly. This Board shall have no power to sell, mortgage, or otherwise encumber, convey or dispose of the same except under proper resolution of the Congregational Assembly.

ARTICLE XI – BYLAWS

This congregation may adopt such Bylaws as may be required for the accomplishment of its purpose.

ARTICLE XII - CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION

- A. Unalterable Article - Article III of this Constitution shall not be subject to change or repeal.
- B. Amendments - Amendments to this Constitution may be adopted at a Congregational Assembly, provided:
 - 1. That they do not conflict with the provisions laid down in Article III, or with any other article that pertains to a scriptural doctrine and practice; and
 - 2. That the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at a previous meeting of the Congregational Assembly and published prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon.
 - 3. That an affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the members present is secured.