

CONSTITUTION  
OF  
OUR SAVIOR EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
OF ST. MATTHEWS, KENTUCKY

PREAMBLE

Because the Holy Scriptures have enjoined us to come together and to encourage one another (Hebrews 10:23:25), we, the undersigned Lutherans of Jefferson County, Commonwealth of Kentucky and vicinity hereby unite to form a Lutheran congregation and set forth by this document the Constitution and bylaws in accordance with all the affairs of this congregation shall be regulated.

CONSTITUTION

Article I - Name

The name of this congregation shall be:

OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH OF ST. MATTHEWS, KENTUCKY (a Kentucky corporation).

Article II — Purpose

As followers of Jesus Christ, gathered in a common bond of love, we propose to establish procedures of nurture by which we may strengthen one another in our common commitment to Christ and His mission. We pledge ourselves to study the scriptures faithfully and to use the sacraments diligently in order that we may give ourselves Individually and corporately to Christ's mission of serving all our fellow humans in their needs and of proclaiming to them the freedom and forgiveness of God in Christ.

Article III — Declaration of Creed

This congregation as a body and all its members as individuals accept without reservation all of the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired and revealed Word of God and the only rule and norm in faith and life. We also accept without reservation all symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as contained In the Book of Concord of 1580 as the true and sound exposition 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 Small and Large Catechisms; and the Formula of Concord.

Article IV — Synodical Membership

A. This congregation shall hold membership in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. It was admitted to the Synod on September 22, 1942. It shall send its Pastor and lay delegate to the District conventions of such Synod.

B. It shall be the duty of the congregation and its individual members to support the work of the Synod in all its activities according to their ability.

C. Should a dispute occur on account of doctrinal differences with the Synod, two properly convened Congregational Voters Assembly meetings must be held to discuss the issues of separation from the Synod, with active participation from Synodical counselors. Within 60 days of the second meeting held for the purpose of discussion of Synodical separation, a properly convened Congregational Voters Assembly meeting may be held to take action on the separation issue. A separation action supported by a two-thirds majority of the voting Members present, who continue to adhere to Article III of this Constitution, will constitute formal separation from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod,

## Article V — Membership

### A. Baptized Members

1. Definition: Baptized members are all members who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and who are under the spiritual care of the pastor of this congregation.

2. Reception: Baptized members are received through the Rite of Holy Baptism, through transfer, or with the consent of one or both parents or guardians in the case of children who have been baptized in another Christian congregation.

### B. Communicant Membership

Anyone may become a communicant member of this congregation who meets all the following:

1. Is baptized in the name of the Triune God, and
2. Declares acceptance of and adherence to the Declaration of Creed as contained in Article III of this Constitution, and
3. Has read, studied and is familiar with Luther's Small Catechism and declares acceptance thereof, and
4. Leads a Christian life and does not continue to commit willful and deliberate acts of a sinful nature (Galatians 5:10-21 NIV), and
5. Avoids membership or participation in any organization that in its objectives, ceremonies or practices is opposed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ or the faith and life of the Christian church (1986 Synodical Handbook, page 141).

### C. Mode of Reception of Communicant Members

1. Children by the Rite of Confirmation, or
2. Persons who come from a Lutheran congregation in fellowship with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and present a letter of transfer to the Pastor, or

3. Persons not affiliated with such a Lutheran congregation who give satisfactory evidence of their qualification for membership in an interview with the Pastor, and if necessary, receive an adequate course of instruction in the chief parts of Christian doctrine. These individuals shall declare, in the presence of the congregation their acceptance of and adherence to the Declaration of Creed as contained in Article III of this Constitution.

#### D. Duties of Communicant Members

All communicant members are expected to:

1. Attend public worship regularly, and receive the Lord's Supper with due frequency, and
2. Contribute according to their ability to the maintenance and extension of the Church at home and abroad, and
3. Respect and observe the Constitution, By-laws, rules and regulations established by this congregation, and
4. As parents or guardians of unconfirmed children of school age, provide proper Christian education and training for such children and shall send them to confirmation instruction.

#### Article VI - Voting and Eligibility

All communicant members of the congregation who have attended their 18th birthday and have declared their acceptance of, and have signed, this Constitution shall be entitled to vote. This group shall be known as the Congregational Voters Assembly.

#### Article VII — Release and Withdrawal

A. Members desiring a release for the purpose of joining a congregation in fellowship with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod shall obtain a written transfer from the Pastor who shall consult with the Elders and report to the Church Council concerning such transfers.

B. Members severing their connection with the congregation without obtaining a transfer or a peaceful release shall, after a period of one year, be stricken from the list of membership and notified if possible.

#### Article VIII - Church Discipline

A. It is necessary for an erring member to submit to Christian admonition and correction.

B. Communicant members who conducting themselves in an unchristian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20. If they remain impenitent after proper admonition, their case shall be presented individually by the Pastor and the Department of

Elders to the Voters Assembly for a decision, which may include excommunication. If such member deliberately absents themselves from the meeting(s) at which their case is to be discussed, they shall be regarded as having excluded themselves from the membership of the congregation.

C. Excommunicated persons who repent and ask forgiveness shall be reinstated into membership.

#### Article IX - Authority of the Congregational Voters Assembly

The Congregational Voters Assembly as a body:

A. Is the final authority in all matters, but charges the Department of Elders with the general spiritual supervision of the church members, and delegates administrative authority to the President of the congregation and to the Church Council for budget concerns and normal operational policies.

B. Annually reviews the President's written or oral report of the total program.

C. Approves the budget and the annual plans for the program with or without changes as recommended by the Church Council.

D. Elects the Church Council which shall consist of: The President, Vice President, Treasurer, Head Elder and the Department Heads of the congregation. Other officers, boards or committees may be established, and all shall be elected or appointed in the manner and for the term prescribed in the By-laws of this constitution. The President, Vice President and Head Elder all shall be male and shall have the eligibility qualifications specified in Synod's current handbook.

E. Annually reviews and confirms, by majority vote, the members of the Department of Elders.

F. Decides general matters by a simple majority of the voters present at a meeting properly convened. All matters of doctrine and of conscience shall be decided only by the Word of God.

#### Article X — Offices of Pastor or Other Called Professional Church Workers

A. The offices of Pastor or other called professional church workers shall be conferred only upon those who:

1. Unreservedly pledge their acceptance of and adherence to the Declaration of Creed as contained in Article III of this Constitution, and
2. Are members of the Lutheran Church Missouri-Synod
3. Have been properly and rightfully called, or have been offered and accepted employment, by the congregation,

B. A called Pastor or called professional church worker can only be removed from office by the Congregational Voters Assembly in a rightful Christian manner as outlined in the By-laws of this Constitution. Sufficient and urgent causes for removal are persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of official duties, or evident and protracted incapacity to perform the function of the sacred office.

#### Article XI — Christian Training

A. The congregation recognizes the institution of the Christian Day School as potentially the most valuable agency for the Christian education of the young,

B. The congregation also recognized the value of other agencies for Christian education such as Sunday School, weekday religious instruction group, Vacation Bible School, Confirmation Class, and expresses its determination to utilize these agencies to the best advantage.

C. The congregation also recognizes the value of continuing Christian education through life and therefore expresses its determination to establish such opportunities for the youth and adult membership and to encourage full participation in these study groups.

#### Article XII — Societies

A. Organized societies within the congregation shall exist only by the consent of the Congregational Voters Assembly.

B. Only such resolutions, enactments, conduct and policies of such societies shall be valid which are not in conflict with Constitution, By-laws, Rules and Regulations established by the congregational Voters Assembly.

C. If any society disbands, all funds and assets of the society shall be turned over to the congregation.

D. The Pastor, by virtue of his office, shall exercise spiritual guidance over any society within the congregation.

#### Article XIII – Ownership of Property in Case of Dissolution or Separation

A. In case this congregation should ever be dissolved, the property and other assets of the defunct congregation shall be turned over to the Indiana District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, its successors or assignees.

B. Should separation from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod occur as outlined in Article IV(C), that part of the congregation which steadfastly adheres to Article III of this Constitution and prevails as the two-thirds majority of the voting members present will take possession of all the property of the congregation.

Article XIV — Books and Forms

In addition to the Bible only that literature which does not conflict with the Declaration of Creed as found in Article III of this Constitution shall be used:

1. For the purpose of religious instruction
2. As hymn books in public worship, or
3. As books or form to be employed in official acts of the Pastor.

Article XV — Changing the Constitution or By-Laws

A. Article III of this Constitution shall be unalterable and irrevocable.

B. Amendment to this Constitution shall require a two-thirds majority affirmative vote of the members present and voting at two consecutive Constitutional meetings of the Congregational Voters Assembly. These meetings shall not be more than 60 days apart. The proposed change shall be mailed either by 1st class mail, by narthex members mailbox, by electronic mail or by Sunday service bulletin to the membership two weeks prior to the first meeting.

C. Changes in the By-laws to this Constitution shall require a two-thirds majority affirmative vote of the members present and voting at a properly convened Congregational Meeting. The proposed change shall be mailed either by 1st class mail, by narthex members mailbox, by electronic mail or by Sunday service bulletin to the membership two weeks prior to the meeting.

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Article XVI deleted from the Constitution to resolve conflict with By-laws Article IV, Section A, item 3 which permits a variance from Robert's Rules of Order. The Constitution did not allow any variance. First reading 9/15/1996

Article XVI —Parliamentary Procedure

All meetings of the Congregational Voters Assembly shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order.

Constitution and By-laws of Our Savior Lutheran Church approved by District Committee on Constitutional Matters on October 12, 1990. Rev. 1, 1st reading 9/15/1996, 2nd reading & adoption, October 21, 1996, see last page for definition.