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# Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

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## Constitution



DECEMBER 1, 2020

## PREAMBLE

WHEREAS, The History of the Christian Church at all times proves that certain rules and regulations are necessary to properly attain the purposes and fulfil the obligations of congregations; and

WHEREAS, The Apostle Paul sets forth (1 Cor. 14:40) that all things in the church should be done decently and in order, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, a congregation of Lutherans of the Township of Redford, State of Michigan, do herewith, in the Name of the Triune God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, adopt the following:

### ARTICLE I – NAME

A. The name of the congregation shall be Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church.

### ARTICLE II – ARTICLE OF FAITH

A. This congregation accepts and confesses all the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testaments as the Inspired Word of God, and all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the Book of Concord, as a correct presentation and true exposition of Christian Doctrine, drawn from and in full agreement with the Holy Scriptures; hence no doctrine shall be taught or tolerated in this Congregation which is in any degree at variance with the following symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, viz:

1. The Three Ecumenical Creeds: The Apostolic, The Nicene and The Athanasian.
2. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession and its Apology.
3. The Smalcald Articles.
4. Luther's Catechisms, The Large and The Small.
5. The Formula of Concord.

B. We set forth that all controversies which may arise in this congregation shall be decided and adjudicated according to this norm of Doctrine and Faith.

### ARTICLE III – PURPOSES

- A. The purposes of a congregation are clearly defined in Holy Scripture, to Wit; Establishment and maintenance of the public ministry; public and private administration of the means of grace and due application of Church discipline. (Matthew 18; John 20; Acts 20; 1 Cor. 5; 1 Peter 5, etc.)
- B. To this end we obligate ourselves:
1. To conduct regular public worship, or church services, in which Hymns and Church forms of Lutheran content shall be used;
  2. To provide Pastoral care of all our members, including a thorough instruction of Lutheran Doctrine and continuing education of our children and adults;
  3. To engage in Mission work at home and to support it abroad.

### ARTICLE IV – SYNODICAL AFFILIATION

This congregation shall be a member of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod as long as the Synod conforms to the congregation’s confessional standards as set forth in Article II of this constitution.

### ARTICLE V – BOOKS AND FORMS

All Hymnals, Textbooks, Worship Forms, etc., used in this Congregation must conform to ARTICLE II of this Constitution.

### ARTICLE VI – MEMBERSHIP

This congregation distinguishes between three types of congregational membership.

- A. The membership of this congregation includes the following:
1. Baptized members are all who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and who are under the spiritual care of the pastor of this congregation, including the children who have not yet been confirmed into communicant membership.
  2. Communicant members are those baptized members who have been instructed and are familiar with the contents of Luther’s Small Catechism, have been confirmed in the Lutheran faith, and accept the confessional standard of Article II of this Constitution.

3. Voting members are communicant members who have reached the age of 18 years.

B. The members of this congregation are received in the following manner:

1. Baptized members are received through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism or through the consent of one or both parents in the case of children who have been baptized in another Christian congregation.
2. Adult members are received through the rite of confirmation and Sacrament of Holy Baptism as appropriate, through transfer from a sister congregation, or through profession of faith or reaffirmation of faith.
3. All communicant members who have reached the age of 18 automatically become a voting member.

C. Members of this congregation shall conform their entire lives to the authority of God's Word and to that end shall make diligent use of the Means of Grace, exercise faithful stewardship of God's many gifts and talents, impart and accept fraternal admonition as the need of such admonition becomes apparent, and be readily available for service in the kingdom of Christ within and beyond the congregation. Membership in organizations whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God is prohibited. Every communicant member of the congregation is expected to receive the Sacrament of our Lord's Body and Blood on a regular basis.

D. Membership in this congregation shall be terminated as follows:

1. Membership shall be terminated by transfer to a sister congregation, by joining a congregation outside the fellowship of this congregation, by excommunication or self-exclusion, or by death.
2. Communicant members who conduct themselves in an un-Christian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20.

#### ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS

A. Meetings – Meetings of the voter assembly shall be held as determined in the bylaws.

B. Announcements of regular meetings shall be made in the services of the two previous Sundays.

- C. Announcements of special meetings shall be made in the services of the two previous Sundays or in the services of the previous Sunday when accompanied by notification by mail. Such special meetings may be called at the request of the pastors, chairman, church council, or ten (10) voting members.
- D. All voting members present at a properly called meeting shall constitute a quorum.

#### ARTICLE VIII – AUTHORITY OF AND WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

The voter assembly shall be the governing body of this congregation and shall be empowered to administer and manage all its affairs.

- A. Expenditures exceeding \$25,000.00 must be approved at a voter assembly.
- B. 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 voter assembly.
- C. All matters before the voter 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.

#### ARTICLE IX – OFFICERS AND BOARDS

This congregation shall have the following officers and boards in addition to any which the congregation shall establish from time to time. Those officers identified by state law shall serve as legal representatives of the congregation.

- A. The officers of this congregation shall be:
  - 1. A President, who shall conduct the meetings of the voter assembly.
  - 2. A Vice-President, who shall serve in the President's absence or inability to act.
  - 3. A secretary, who shall keep the minutes of the voters' meetings.
  - 4. A treasurer, who shall be responsible for the financial records of the congregation.
- B. The boards of this congregation shall be:
  - 1. Board of Elders shall assist the pastor in the spiritual life of the congregation.

2. Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the physical properties of the congregation.
- C. The Church Council shall consist of: The Pastors by virtue of their office, the President and Vice-President of the congregation, the Co-Chief Elders, the Trustees, the Treasurer, the Secretary and the Congregational Representatives.
- D. Removal of officers and board members.

Any officer or board or committee member who fails to perform the duties of office or the responsibilities of confirmed membership may be removed from office by the voter assembly by a two-thirds majority ballot vote, in Christian and lawful order. Matthew 18 should be followed under such circumstances.

#### ARTICLE X –ORDAINED AND COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

The voter assembly of this congregation shall have the exclusive right to call ordained and commissioned ministers.

- A. The pastoral office shall be conferred only upon 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, or 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. Only those commissioned ministers shall receive a call who adhere to the confessional standard set forth in this constitution, who are qualified for the work of the ministry to which they are called, and who have been endorsed by and are members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, who are candidates of LCMS colleges and universities who have satisfied the qualifications and requirements for assignment of first calls, and who are commissioned ministers in good standing from church bodies that are in altar and pulpit fellowship with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
- C. The right of calling ordained or commissioned ministers shall be vested in the voter assembly and shall not be delegated otherwise.
- D. Ordained or commissioned ministers may be removed from office in Christian and lawful order by a two-thirds majority ballot vote at a meeting of the voter assembly called specifically for that purpose. Prior to scheduling such a meeting, the congregation shall seek the counsel of the District President or his representative. The congregation shall provide the ordained or commissioned minister with written notice of the time and place of such a meeting along with a specific explanation of the charges. Removal from office shall be for one

of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of the duties of the office, the inability to perform those duties, or domineering in office.

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

#### ARTICLE XI – DIVISION OR DISSOLUTION

- A. If at any time a separation should occur in this congregation on account of Doctrine, (which however may God graciously prevent) the property of this congregation and all of its benefits shall remain with those members, provided there be two or more who shall continue to confess and adhere to ARTICLES II, III, and V of this Constitution.
- B. At no time shall the Title of any property owned by this congregation be transferred to any individual member or members and no member or members shall benefit monetarily from the ownership of property of this congregation. In the event that the property of this congregation is to be lost through abandonment or forfeiture, or any other reason, Title to all property owned by this congregation shall be transferred to the District of the Synod with which this congregation is affiliated at the time of such threatened loss.

#### ARTICLE XII – AMENDMENTS

- A. This constitution, or any of its paragraphs, may be revised, altered or replaced at a regular or special meeting of this congregation. This meeting and its purpose shall be announced on the two Sundays immediately preceding such meeting. To effect such revision, amending, or repeal, a 2/3 majority vote of the members present shall be necessary. No revision, amending, or repeal shall be made which conflicts with Holy Scripture and the symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church mentioned in Article II - Articles of Faith.
- B. Amendments to Articles II, III, IV and V, shall not destroy the original essential meaning. Amendments are to be submitted in writing at a meeting of the voter assembly and made public to the congregation by public posting to all communicant members. Notice of the discussion of such amendments shall be given prior to two regular voters assemblies when the proposed action will be discussed. Notice that action will be taken on proposed amendments shall be provided to all voting members prior to the meeting when a vote will be taken. The date of approval shall be reference in any amendment adopted.
- C. The revised constitution shall, as a condition of continued membership in good standing in The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, be submitted to the president of the district for review by the district’s board of directors before being adopted by the congregation.