

### III. Commitment to the Mission of Bethlehem

**Mission:** “As ministers of the Gospel, we will together reach out and bring people into a living relationship with Jesus Christ through dynamic worship of God, vigorous study of His Word, loving care for one another and committed support of His Work throughout the world.”

*As a forgiven child of God, relying on His grace and strength in all I do, I intend to participate in God’s mission through Bethlehem Lutheran Church & School in the following ways:*

**Dynamic Worship of God:**

1. I intend, by the Grace of God, to attend worship services unless some unselfish reason prevents me.
2. I intend, by the Grace of God, to partake of the Lord’s Supper as often as it is offered.

**Vigorous Study of His Word:**

1. I intend, by the Grace of God, to read and study God’s Word on a regular basis.
2. I intend, by the Grace of God, to take time out daily for God in private prayer.
3. I intend, by the Grace of God, to raise my children in the Christian faith.

**Loving Care for One Another:**

1. I intend, by the Grace of God, to live a Christian life, guided by God’s Holy Spirit, as described in *Galatians 5:19-26*.
2. I intend, by the Grace of God, to receive spiritual admonition should Satan succeed in deceiving me into a life of sin. Likewise, I will give spiritual admonition should I see my fellow Christian being deceived into a life of sin. (*Galatians 6; Matthew 18*)
3. I intend, by the Grace of God, not to hold membership in any organization conflicting with the Word of God. (*2 Corinthians 4:1-6; Ephesians 5:8-21; 2 Peter 2:1-3*)

**Committed Support of His Work Throughout the World:**

1. I intend, by the Grace of God, to live my life as a witness to Jesus Christ. (*Acts 1:8*)
2. I intend, by the Grace of God, to find a satisfying place in ministry at Bethlehem where I am able to use my God given gifts for the benefit and encouragement of the Body of Christ and His glory. (*Romans 12:3-8*)
3. I intend, by the Grace of God, to financially support the Lord’s work through Bethlehem.

I understand that *all* I have has been gifted to me by God—that I am its caretaker and responsible to give a portion of what God has given me back to Him to further His kingdom. In order to do so, I commit to practice “*firstfruit*” giving; i.e., setting aside a portion of my income on a regular basis for the Lord’s work.

I know God in the Old Testament required 10% of all that you had, while Jesus in the New Testament frees us up to give so much more. I also recognize that whatever I choose to give back to God serves as a measure of my faith and trust in God (*2 Corinthians 8:8-9; Malachi 3:10*), therefore the percentage I choose to give will reflect that faith and trust. (*Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 6:38; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:7*)

***I have received instruction in Lutheran teachings. I understand what I can expect of Bethlehem and what is expected of me as a member of this congregation.***

Signature	Date	Signature	Date
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**CHURCH OF “FOLLOW THE STAR”  
BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN  
MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENT**

**I. The Gift of Baptism**

*My minor children and I have been baptized in the name of the Triune God.*

**II. Statement of Personal Faith**

1. I believe that the Bible is God’s Word and is the only divine rule and standard for my Christian faith and life. (2 Tim.3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21)
2. I believe in the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, not three Gods, but one, and am resolved to suffer all things, rather than fall away from Him. (*Matt.10:26-33*)
3. I believe that I am by nature sinful and need God’s grace for the forgiveness of my sins. (*Psalms 51:5; 1 Corinthians 12:3; Rom.3:22-24,28*)
4. I believe that God took human form in the person of Jesus Christ, and gave Himself for the forgiveness of my sins on the cross of Calvary. (*John 1:14; John 3:16,17*)
5. I believe that God the Holy Spirit is given to us through the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper through which He extends to us the forgiveness of our sins.
  - a. Baptism is the application of water together with God's Word on an individual who is being disciplined as Christ commanded in Matthew 28:18-20. Baptism is for **all** people of **all** ages, including infants. (*Acts 2:38,39; Matthew 28:19*).
  - b. The Lord's Supper is the eating and drinking of bread and wine in which we also actually receive Jesus' body and blood as He said. (*1 Corinthians 11:24, 25*)
6. I believe that I have eternal life as a free gift of grace through faith in Jesus Christ. (*Ephesians2:8-9*)
7. I accept the teachings of the Lutheran Church as summarized in *Martin Luther’s Small Catechism*.



**PROVISOS**

**I. INITIAL SELECTION OF THE BOARD OF MINISTRY**

For the initial selection of the Board of Ministry, members of the church shall have a three-week time period during which they shall be asked in a congregational letter to submit names of individuals for consideration as members of the Board of Ministry. An ad hoc Senior Leadership Team -- consisting of the President, Vice President, Head Elder, and one other Elder (Appointed by the Head Elder) -- and the Senior Pastor shall submit the names of candidates to serve on the Board of Ministry for the congregation's consideration and selection. For this initial selection of members to the Board of Ministry, members shall serve terms as follows, in order of most votes received:

- A. Six members (4 Directors and 2 Governing Elders) shall serve a term ending July 1, 2004.
- B. Five members (3 Directors and 2 Governing Elder) shall serve a term ending July 1, 2003.

**II. Board of Ministry Term abbreviations to accommodate Amendment to Bylaws; Article IV, Section A.** (approved at Voter's Meeting November 4, 2007)

“For the existing Board of Ministry Directors and Governing Elders in office on 11/4/07, the date of the Voters' Assembly Meeting amending the Bylaws; Article IV, Section A; their terms will be abbreviated. Those terms due to end July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008, will be abbreviated to February 1, 2008. All other terms will be abbreviated to February 1, 2009. In January 2008, an election will be held for those Board positions that would have come to term in July 2008. The Existing Senior Leadership Team will, in accordance with the Bylaws; Article IV, Section E, Subsection 3, provide nominations for those open positions to the Voters' Assembly for consideration and selection at a Voters' Meeting to be scheduled in January 2008. For the selection of members to the Board of Ministry to serve henceforth, members shall serve terms as follows:

- A. Members elected during the January 2008 Voter's Meeting shall serve a term ending February 1, 2010.
- B. Members, whose positions have not come to term for the January 2008 election, will serve until February 1, 2009.

**ARTICLE VII: AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to these Bylaws may be made in the following manner: A copy of the proposed amendment shall be mailed to all voting members at least two (2) weeks prior to a Voters' Assembly meeting. At this meeting, the vote shall be taken on the amendment, and two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members present shall secure adoption. Upon adoption, such amendment shall be submitted to the District Committee on Constitutions for approval, in accordance with the Synod's Bylaws.

Forum Meetings – Prior to a vote on any proposed changes to these Bylaws, a minimum of two (2) open discussion forums will be held. The purpose of the forums will be to give the members of the congregation the opportunity to openly discuss and understand the proposals.

**AMENDMENTS**

- I. Article IV, Section A:** (Approved at Voter's Meeting November 4, 2007)  
Replace the following sentence: "Every term of office shall begin on July 1 following the election". With: "**Every term of office shall begin on February 1 following the election**".

**ARTICLE VI: DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

The specific duties are listed below.

- A. President – The duties of the President shall be as follows:
1. Preside at all meetings of the Voters’ Assembly and the Board of Ministry.
  2. Sign, with the Secretary, all legal documents on behalf of the congregation.
  3. Enforce the Constitution and Bylaws and perform the general duties as are common to the office, including such additional duties as may be directed by the Voters' Assembly from time to time.
  4. Promptly deliver notice of calling or hiring to candidates for pastor or called staff.
  5. Serve as a member of Senior Leadership Team.
- B. Vice-President – The duties of the Vice-President shall be as follows:
1. Perform all of the duties of the President in the latter's absence and such other additional duties which may be detailed from time to time by the Voters' Assembly or by the President.
  2. Serve as a member of Senior Leadership Team.
- C. Secretary – The duties of the Secretary shall be as follows:
1. Perform the common requirements of that office, especially the keeping and preserving of accurate records of all Voters' Assembly meetings, and the handling of such correspondence the congregation may require.
  2. Sign, with the President, all legal documents on behalf of the congregation.
  3. Keep minutes of all Board of Ministry meetings.
  4. Be responsible for keeping and preserving an accurate file of all policies, copies of which shall be available to voting members upon request.
- D. Treasurer – The duties of the Treasurer shall be as follows:
1. Assist the Business Administrator or the Senior Pastor in the;
    - a) Development of policies and procedures;
    - b) Development and presentation of yearly budget; and,
    - c) Development, promotion, and administration of the stewardship ministry.
  2. Submit permanent financial records for independent audit.

**ARTICLE V:        ELDERS AT LARGE**

- A. Appointment and Terms of Office – Unless otherwise specified by policy, Elders at Large will be appointed by the Senior Leadership Team and ratified by the Voter’s Assembly as required and have terms of office as the needs of the congregation dictate.
- B. Qualifications – See qualifications for Governing Elders and Senior Leadership Team (Article IV, Paragraph C of Bylaws).
- C. Duties – While not serving on the Board of Ministry, Elders at Large are primarily responsible to directly assist the Pastoral Office with hands-on ministry in many areas including, but not limited to the following:
1. Spiritual oversight of members living within a specified area.
  2. All matters pertaining to congregational worship.
  3. All matters pertaining to the study of God’s Word.
  4. All matters pertaining to the loving care of the members.
  5. All matters pertaining to the committed support of God’s Work.

- F. Duties of Governing Elders – As members of the Board of Ministry, the Governing Elders are primarily responsible for the congregation’s vision and the strategies necessary to make that vision a reality. In addition, they will assist the Senior Pastor as overseers in many areas of ministry, including, but not limited to the following:
1. Matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the congregation.
  2. The doctrine and life of the Pastor(s) and called staff.
  3. The welfare of the Pastor(s) and called staff providing pastoral care as appropriate.
  4. All matters pertaining to congregational worship, the study of God’s Word, the loving care of the members, and the committed support of God’s Work throughout the world.
  5. The recording, maintaining, and publicizing of a roster of membership.
- G. Meetings – The Board of Ministry shall meet at least quarterly and may be called more frequently at the request of the President or any three Board members. Seven (7) members of the Board of Ministry shall constitute a quorum for any meeting. Minutes of each meeting shall be kept in typed form. The minutes shall fully disclose all actions taken and be signed by the Secretary. Minutes of the meeting shall be available to voting members upon request.
- H. Reports to the Congregation – It will be the responsibility of the Board to make regular reports to the Congregation on its proceedings and activities via the posting of agendas and summaries of meetings. This requirement will not be extended to matters taken to Senior Leadership Team sessions.

- D. Duties of the Board of Ministry – The Board of Ministry will perform the following duties including but not limited to:
1. Support ministries of the pastoral office and the called staff in their efforts to achieve the goal of Article II of this Constitution.
  2. Execute the transaction of all legal and binding procedures and monitor the general business of the congregation.
  3. Report annually to the Voters' Assembly on the organization and financial condition of the congregation and recommend an annual financial operating plan at the annual Voters' Assembly meeting.
  4. Develop, approve and monitor policies and procedures.
  5. Assist the Pastor(s), in prayer, word, and action, in all matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the congregation.
  6. Watch over the doctrine and life of the Pastor(s) and called staff and monitor, as appropriate, the welfare of the Pastor(s), and called staff providing pastoral care.
  7. Supervise, in full cooperation with the Senior Pastor and Pastoral staff, everything pertaining to congregational worship.
  8. Record, maintain, and publicize a roster of membership.
  9. Develop the Ministry Plan.
  10. Develop the Facilities Plan.
- E. Duties of Senior Leadership Team – The Senior Leadership Team, in addition to the actions designated by the Board of Ministry, will also perform duties including but not limited to:
1. Being the advisory team for the Senior Pastor.
  2. Determination of just compensation for Senior Pastor.
  3. Acting as the nominating committee for Board of Ministry and Elders at Large.
  4. Resolving personnel issues following criteria in Policy Manual.
  5. Endorsing recommended staff raises.

**ARTICLE IV: BOARD OF MINISTRY**

- A. Elections and Terms of Office – The Voter's Assembly shall elect members of the Board of Ministry, which shall consist of seven (7) Directors and four (4) Governing Elders. The term of office shall be for a maximum of two years, with approximately one half of the Board being elected each year. Board members shall serve no more than two full successive terms. Following the election of the new Board members, the Board shall elect a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer from the members of the Board. These officers shall be elected for a one-year term. Every term of office shall begin on February 1 following the election. In the event of a vacancy on the Board of Ministry, the President, using a list of candidates supplied by the Senior Leadership Team, will make appointments to fill unexpired terms. A majority vote of the Board must ratify appointments. The individual appointed shall serve until the next election for that particular position.
- B. Qualifications for Board of Ministry – The nature of the service on this Board, in accordance with Romans 12: 6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12: 27-31, requires that, to be considered for the Board of Ministry, candidates shall show by their example and testimony that they are filled with Christian zeal and have a heart for service to our Lord and the Congregation.
- C. Qualifications for Governing Elders and Senior Leadership Team – The nature of the duties of the Senior Leadership Team or a Governing Elder, in accordance with the passages in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, requires that only men noted for their Christian knowledge, zeal, and experience in the spiritual work of the Kingdom of Christ shall be eligible. In order to be considered, a candidate shall have shown by his example and testimony to be a mature Christian with a heart for service to our Lord and the Congregation.

**ARTICLE III: VOTERS' ASSEMBLY**

- A. Meetings – The Voters' Assembly shall meet at least quarterly for the separate annual approval/review of: 1) the Congregational Budget; 2) the Ministry Plan; 3) the Facility Plan; and, 4) the Board of Ministry elections. The Board of Ministry shall set the day and hour of the annual meetings and publicize them at least six weeks in advance. The Voting Assembly is comprised of all voting members in attendance at a scheduled meeting. The notification shall contain an agenda of items to be considered. The Voters' Assembly may meet at other times of the year subject to a call by the Board of Ministry or Senior Pastor or at the request of any twelve (12) voting members. Notice of any special meeting shall be publicized as early as possible and at least one week in advance. The notice shall contain an agenda of items to be considered. No agenda items may be added once notification of the meeting is publicized. The President, Vice President, or their designated Board member shall preside at all Voters' Assembly meetings.
  
- B. Quorum – A quorum is considered those congregational members who are present for a properly called Voter's Assembly meeting.
  
- C. Proxy and Absentee Voting – There shall be no voting by absentee ballot. Proxy voting may be allowed in extenuating circumstances with the approval of the Board of Ministry. Only members of the Board of Ministry may serve as a proxy.
  
- D. Nominating Committee – The committee, consisting of the Senior Leadership Team, shall annually prepare a slate of nominees to fill vacancies created by expired terms of Board of Ministry members. A separate slate of candidates will be made for Director and Governing Elder positions. Each nominee must be, at minimum, a voting member.
  
- E. Nominations from the Floor – No floor nominees for the Board of Ministry will be allowed. Voting members may propose nominees by submitting names to the Nominating Committee two weeks prior to the election meeting.
  
- F. Right of Calling – The Board of Ministry shall select the call team consisting of a minimum of seven (7) voting members. The committee, with the guidance of the circuit counselor when applicable, will process available candidates and make recommendations to voters. Prior to the posting of recommendations, voting members may submit names of candidates to the committee.

**ARTICLE II: PASTORAL OFFICE**

A. Requirements – The requirements for Pastor shall be as follows:

1. The Pastor(s) shall:
  - a) Profess and conform to the confessional standards as stated in Article III of this Constitution; and,
  - b) Live a life of faith in Jesus Christ.
2. The Pastor(s) must be a Seminary graduate of a Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Seminary and/or on the Pastoral Roster of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

B. General Pastoral Duties – Areas of Pastoral duties include:

1. The Word - Preaching and Teaching: The Pastor(s) shall proclaim to the congregation the Word of God.
2. The Sacraments: The Pastor(s) is authorized and obligated to administer the sacraments, in accordance with their divine institution, to the congregation.
3. Spiritual Welfare, Official Acts, and Counseling: The activities of the Pastor(s) shall include:
  - a) Pastoral conversations, intervention in time of death, pre-marital counseling, and preparation of families for baptism,
  - b) Conducting Official Acts (i.e. baptisms, weddings, funerals).
4. Other duties, such as evangelism, outreach, congregational life and social programs, shall be as defined by documented policy.

C. Duties of the Senior Pastor – The Senior Pastor duties shall include those listed above and the following:

1. Primary responsibility for church administration, including the church office and those activities specified in this Constitution and its Bylaws.
2. Responsibility for the arrangement and the coordination of Official Acts of this congregation.
3. Responsibility for determination of ministry needs and appointment of Lay Ministers as needed.
4. Accountability to the congregation through the Board of Ministry.
5. Responsibility for annual review of all staff and recommendation of increases within budget guidelines to Senior Leadership Team.

D. Vacancy in Pastoral Office - In case of vacancy in the Pastoral Office, pastoral duties will be overseen by the Board of Ministry.

F. Termination of Membership – Termination of membership in this congregation shall be administered as follows:

1. Transfers – A member desiring to transfer to another Lutheran congregation shall apply to the Pastor, who will issue a letter of transfer. The Pastor shall report all transfers to the Board of Ministry for recording on the roster of membership.
2. Joining Other Churches – When a member of this congregation has joined a non-Lutheran congregation, he shall, upon decision of the Pastor(s) and the Board of Ministry, be deemed to have terminated his membership in this congregation and to have forfeited all rights and privileges of such membership. His name shall be removed from the roster of membership.
3. Whereabouts Unknown – Any member whose address is unknown and cannot be established within a period of six months may have his name removed from the roster of membership.
4. Self-Exclusion – Any person who has excluded himself from the fellowship of God and the church shall be removed from the roster of membership. If such a person repents and asks forgiveness, he shall be received back into membership as provided in Article I, Paragraph A of Bylaws.
5. Excommunication – Any member is subject to excommunication if he:
  - a) Openly adheres to false doctrine;
  - b) Gives evidence of an immoral and/or offensive life; or
  - c) Willfully despises the preaching of the Gospel or the Sacraments.

Excommunication shall be initiated through the Board of Ministry only after prayerful consideration and careful investigation and only after all disciplinary actions provided in Article I, Paragraph E of Bylaws have been exhausted. Should such charges be substantiated by clear evidence, the individual involved shall be given an opportunity to repent and ask forgiveness. If the individual is a pastor or called worker, action shall only be taken after consultation with the appropriate officers of the Pacific Southwest District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Such action shall require a unanimous public vote of the members at a Voters' Assembly. If a person who has been excommunicated repents and asks forgiveness, that person will be received into membership as provided in Article I, Paragraph A of Bylaws.

# ***BYLAWS***

## **ARTICLE I: MEMBERSHIP**

- A. Application for Membership – Before being received as a member, an applicant must consult with the Senior Pastor, who shall determine eligibility for membership in accordance with Article V of the Constitution. An applicant from another Evangelical Lutheran church shall submit a letter of transfer from his former congregation to establish his eligibility for membership. In the case of a lapsed membership or the unavailability of letter of transfer, the Pastor may arrange a period of re-instruction prior to reaffirmation of faith for such applicant. The roster of new members shall be recorded and publicized to the congregation.
  
- B. Baptized Members – Baptized members are all persons within the congregation who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God, whether children or adults, and who come under the pastoral care of this congregation.
  
- C. Confirmed Members – Confirmed members are all baptized persons within the congregation who have received a course of instruction in Christian doctrine, which meets with the approval of the Board of Ministry.
  
- D. Voting Members – Voting membership in accordance with this Constitution are confirmed members who have attained the age of 18 years and who have indicated their commitment to the mission and ministry of the congregation by signing a membership covenant (See Attachment 1) and who are not currently under church discipline.
  
- E. Discipline in the Congregation – All discipline in this congregation shall be administered in accordance with the order of discipline laid down in Matthew 18: 15-20, 1 Corinthians 5: 1-5, and other related New Testament passages.

**ARTICLE X: BYLAWS**

This congregation, through its Voters' Assembly, may adopt Bylaws that the accomplishment of the purposes of this organization may demand.

**ARTICLE XI: AMENDMENTS**

- A. Amendments – Any voting member may propose amendments to this Constitution in writing for consideration at a Voters' Assembly meeting. If the majority of the voting members present vote in favor of the proposal, a copy of the proposed amendment shall be mailed to all voting members at least two (2) weeks preceding the next Voters' Assembly meeting. The final vote shall be taken at that meeting or at a duly publicized continuation of that meeting, and a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the voting members present shall be required for adoption. Upon adoption, the amendment shall be submitted to the District Committee on Constitutions for approval in accordance with the Synod's Bylaws.
  
- B. Forum Meetings – Prior to a vote on any proposed changes to this Constitution, a minimum of two (2) open discussion forums must be held. The purpose of the forums is to give the members of the congregation an opportunity to openly discuss and understand the proposals.
  
- C. Unalterable Articles – The following articles of this Constitution or sections thereof shall be unalterable and irreplaceable: Article III - Confessional Standard; Article V - Membership; and, Article XI - Amendments, Paragraph C.

**ARTICLE VIII: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF MINISTRY**

- A. Board of Ministry – Comprised of eleven voting members of the congregation, four of whom are Governing Elders. The Board of Ministry shall have the responsibility to act on behalf of the congregation in practicing Godly stewardship, strategizing the future of the church, and caring for the spiritual needs of its members. The board shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon it by the Constitution, its Bylaws, or the Voters' Assembly; and responsibilities delegated to it may at any time be altered or revoked by the Voters' Assembly. The Senior Pastor shall be a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Board.
- B. Senior Leadership Team – The Senior Leadership team shall consist of: two Governing Elders selected by the Board of Ministry, the President, the Vice President, and the Senior Pastor. The Senior Leadership Team will obtain its authority for action at the express designation of the full Board of Ministry.
- C. Board of Ministry Actions Requiring Prior Approval of the Voters' Assembly – The Board of Ministry shall obtain prior approval of the Voters' Assembly on the following actions/items:
1. Annual Financial Operating Plan.
  2. Acquisition or disposal of any single asset or liability that exceeds ten percent (10%) of the annual operating budget.
  3. Calling of pastors or other called staff.
  4. Initiation of procedures to remove any pastor or called staff.
  5. Dissolution of the congregation.

**ARTICLE IX: PROPERTY RIGHTS**

All property of this congregation shall be held in the corporate name as stated in Article I. If at any time a separation should take place in this congregation, the property of the congregation and all benefits pertaining thereto shall remain with those members who shall continue to adhere to Article III and Article IV of this congregation. In the event of the dissolution of this congregation, all property of the congregation shall be disposed of by the final Voters' Assembly for the payment of debts; and any and all surplus, after due settlement of just claims against this congregation, shall be conveyed to and become the property of the Pacific Southwest District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

**ARTICLE VII: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CONGREGATION**

- A. General – The congregation as a body, through its Board of Ministry, shall have the responsibility to administer and manage all of the congregation's external and internal affairs. Unless otherwise specified by this Constitution or Bylaws, all matters shall be decided by a simple majority vote of the voting members in attendance at a Voter's Assembly meeting. The Board of Ministry, however, shall not be empowered to decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the confessions of the Lutheran Church (see Article III); and any such contrary decision shall be null and void. Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided in accordance with the Word of God.
  
- B. Right of Calling – The right of calling a pastor or called staff shall be vested in the Voters' Assembly. A two-thirds (2/3's) majority is needed in order to place a call.
  
- C. Election of Board of Ministry and Officers – The Voter's Assembly shall by majority vote elect eleven (11) voting members to the Board of Ministry. The Board of Ministry shall elect a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer from the Board of Ministry. These four (4) individuals shall be the officers of the congregation. Precepts regarding nominations, election, and terms of officers and Board members shall be as specified in the Bylaws.
  
- D. Removal from Office – Any pastor or other called staff who is unable or is willfully neglectful in the performance of his official duties may be removed from office in Christian and lawful order by the Voters' Assembly. Such action shall be initiated through the Board of Ministry only after prayerful consideration and careful investigation. Should such charges be substantiated by clear evidence, the individual involved shall first be given an opportunity to resign his position. Action shall only be taken after consultation with the appropriate officers of the Pacific Southwest District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The removal of called staff shall require a vote of two thirds of the members at a Voters' Assembly, the removal of pastors a three-fourths majority vote.

**ARTICLE VI: THE OFFICES OF THE CHURCH**

- A. Pastoral Office – The pastoral office of this congregation shall be conferred upon only “Ministers of the Gospel,” who profess and adhere to the confessional standards set forth in Article III of this Constitution and who are well qualified for their work. Ministers of the Gospel are designated by the Synod as “ministers of religion – ordained” (from here on referred to as Pastor(s)). Pastors shall, in the call extended to and accepted by them, be pledged to this confessional standard. The duties of the Pastoral Office shall be as defined in the Bylaws. The Senior Pastor shall supervise the pastoral office.
- B. Called Staff – “Teachers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Directors of Christian education, Directors of Christian out-reach, Deacon/Deaconesses, and Certified Lay Ministers” are designated by Synod as “ministers of religion – commissioned” (from here on referred to as “called staff”). The called staff of this congregation shall be ministers, teachers, and candidates who profess and adhere to the confessional standards set forth in Article III of this Constitution and who are well qualified for their work and shall, in the call extended to and accepted by them, be pledged to this confessional standard. The duties of called staff shall be as defined by documented policy governed by the Board of Ministry. Unless otherwise specified by policy, the Senior Pastor shall supervise the called staff.
- C. Non-Called Staff – The paid and volunteer support staff of this congregation as well as the staff of the Christian School shall be qualified for their work and be active, practicing Christians. Prior to being offered a position, whether paid or volunteer, with Bethlehem Lutheran Church and School, they shall be required to submit a personal statement of faith (i.e., Membership Covenant or equivalent) that shall be reviewed and accepted by the Board of Ministry. The duties of non-called staff shall be as defined by documented policy governed by the Board of Ministry. Unless otherwise specified by policy, the Senior Pastor shall supervise the non-called staff.

**ARTICLE III:      CONFSSIONAL STANDARD**

This congregation accepts all the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed, inerrant Word of God, verbally inspired; and it accepts all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 A.D., as a true exposition of the Word of God. The Symbolical Books are the three Ecumenical Creeds (Apostle's, Nicene, and Athanasian), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, Luther's Large and Small Catechisms and the Formula of Concord. All preaching and teaching must be in accord with the above, and all doctrinal controversies, which may occur, shall be decided in accordance with the same.

**ARTICLE IV:      SYNODICAL AFFILIATION**

This congregation with its pastor(s) and called staff shall be members of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod so long as said synod remains true to the confessional standard as set forth in Article III of this Constitution.

**ARTICLE V:      MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of this congregation includes baptized, confirmed, and voting members. Precepts about the admission of new members as well as the duties and termination of membership shall be set forth in the Bylaws of this Constitution. The types of membership are as follows:

- A. Baptized Members – Baptized members are all persons within the congregation who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God, whether children or adults, and come under the pastoral care of this congregation.
  
- B. Confirmed Members – Confirmed members are all baptized members within the congregation who have received a course of instruction in Christian doctrine, which meets with the approval of the Board of Ministry.
  
- C. Voting Members – Voting members in accordance with this Constitution shall be confirmed members who have attained the age of 18 years.

# CONSTITUTION

## PREAMBLE

Whereas, the Word of God demands not only that a Christian congregation conform to the Word of God in doctrine and practice, but also that all things are done decently and in order, we, therefore, the members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church and School set forth this Constitution and Bylaws. Said document shall govern all our congregational affairs.

- *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Psalm 119:105 (KJV)*
- *I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ, and are turning to a different gospel; which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel other than the one we have preached to you, let him be eternally condemned. Galatians 1:6-8 (NIV)*
- *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. 2 Timothy 3:16 (NIV)*
- *But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way. 1 Corinthians 14:40 (NIV)*

## ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this congregation shall be Bethlehem Lutheran Church and School.

## ARTICLE II: STATEMENT OF MISSION

As "ministers of the Gospel," we will together reach out and bring people into a living relationship with Jesus Christ through dynamic worship of God, vigorous study of His Word, loving care for one another, and committed support of His Work throughout the world.