

HOLY CROSS EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF FORT WAYNE, INDIANA, INC.

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

In response to the love of God the Father in Christ Jesus and empowered by the Holy Spirit, each member of this congregation does the work of the Church. The vocation of every Christian is service. A believer serves the Lord by serving brothers and sisters in Christ and by serving a world of neighbors. Each member, as a new creation in Christ, is endowed with the fruit of the Spirit. The Lord also gives to each member natural talents and gifts of the Spirit as He sees fit for our specific time and place. Furthermore, our Lord promises that, as a group, this congregation possesses all of the natural talents and gifts of the Spirit necessary to fulfill His mission for the congregation.

The Word of God requires that a Christian congregation shall conform to the Divine Word in doctrine and practice (Ps. 119:105, Matt. 28:18-20, Gal. 1:6-8, 2 Tim. 4:1-5) and that all things be done decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40, Col. 2:5). Therefore, we the members of Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church accept and subscribe to this Constitution and Bylaws, in accordance with which all spiritual and material affairs of our congregation shall be governed.

ARTICLE 1: NAME

The name of this congregation shall be: Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church of Fort Wayne, Indiana, Inc.

ARTICLE 2: PURPOSE

The purpose of this congregation shall be to fulfill its stated mission as it worships and serves God, loves others, expands God's Kingdom by seeking those who do not yet know Jesus as Savior and Lord, and makes disciples. Such purpose shall be accomplished by the preaching of the Word of God, by the administration of the Sacraments, and by the teaching of its members; all of which is done according to the confessional standard of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Article 3).

ARTICLE 3: CONFESSIONAL STANDARD

This congregation as a body and all of its individual members accept without reservation:

3.1 The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired, inerrant, written Word of God and as the only rule and norm of faith and practice.

3.2 All of the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, including:

- 3.2.1 The three Ecumenical Creeds: the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed;
- 3.2.2 The Unaltered Augsburg Confession;
- 3.2.3 The Apology of the Augsburg Confession;
- 3.2.4 The Smalcald Articles;
- 3.2.5 The Small Catechism of Luther;
- 3.2.6 The Large Catechism of Luther; and
- 3.2.7 The Formula of Concord.

Hymns, prayers, liturgies, books, and audio/visual materials shall be used in a manner that conforms to this confessional standard in all worship services of this congregation, in all ministerial acts, in all instruction in Christian doctrine, and in all classes in Holy Cross Lutheran School.

ARTICLE 4: SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

This congregation shall be a member of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and shall exercise all rights associated with that membership as long as the Synod conforms to the congregation's confessional standard set forth in Article 3 of this Constitution. Conformity to this confessional standard, if challenged, shall be determined by a two-thirds majority vote of the Voters' Assembly at a meeting called for that purpose.

ARTICLE 5: CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this congregation includes the following:

5.1 **Baptized Members** are those who have been baptized into the Name of the Triune God, including children who have not yet confirmed their baptismal vows.

5.2 **Communicant Members** are those who:

5.2.1 are baptized into the Name of the Triune God;

5.2.2 accept the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the only divine rule and standard of faith and life;

5.2.3 are familiar with Luther's Small Catechism and declare their acceptance of it;

5.2.4 are not members of, affiliated with, or supporters of organizations that conflict with the Word of God;

5.2.5 faithfully attend divine services;

5.2.6 regularly partake of the Lord's Supper;

5.2.7 faithfully contribute, as God has prospered them, toward the building of God's Kingdom in the congregation and throughout the world;

5.2.8 devote time, talents, and spiritual gifts to the extension of God's Kingdom;

5.2.9 lead Christian lives and do not live in manifest works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21);

5.2.10 commit their unconfirmed children, if any, to the parochial school of the congregation or otherwise provide for their proper training in pure Christian doctrine;

5.2.11 permit themselves to be fraternally admonished and corrected when they have erred (Matt. 18:15-20).

5.3 **Voting Members** are those communicant members who have reached their eighteenth birthday.

ARTICLE 6: MINISTERS OF RELIGION (ORDAINED OR COMMISSIONED)

Only such candidates shall be called who profess acceptance of and pledge faithful adherence to the confessions of this congregation as set forth in Article 3 of this constitution and who have been certified and endorsed by the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as eligible for a call as a Minister of Religion—Ordained or a Minister of Religion—Commissioned.

ARTICLE 7: DIVISION

7.1 **Division on Account of Doctrine:** If at any time a division should occur on account of doctrine, the property of this congregation shall remain with those Voting Members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Article 3 of this constitution as determined by the adjudication procedures of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

7.2 **Division for Any Other Reason:** If division occurs for any other reason, the property shall remain with the majority of the Voting Members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Article 3 of this Constitution as determined by the adjudication procedures of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

7.3 **Dissolution:** In the event this congregation should dissolve, the property shall be transferred to the District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in which the congregation held membership at the time of dissolution.

ARTICLE 8: BYLAWS

The congregation shall adopt such bylaws to this Constitution as may be required for the accomplishment of its purpose.

ARTICLE 9: AMENDMENTS

9.1 **Articles 3, 4, 6, 7, and 9:** Notice of a proposal to amend any of these articles shall be presented with opportunity for discussion at two regularly called meetings of the Voters' Assembly before the meeting at which the proposed amendment is to receive action.

9.1.1 All Voting Members shall be provided notice of the intent to amend.

9.1.2 Any change shall not destroy the essential meaning of the article.

9.1.2.1 If a dispute arises over whether or not the essential meaning of an article has been changed, the matter shall be referred for decision to the District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in which the congregation holds membership at that time.

9.1.3 A two-thirds majority affirmative vote of the Voting Members present is required to amend any of these articles.

9.2 **Articles 1, 2, 5, 8:** Notice of a proposal to amend any of these articles shall be presented with opportunity for discussion at a regularly called meeting of the Voters' Assembly before the meeting at which the proposed amendment is to receive action.

9.2.1 All Voting Members shall be provided notice of the intent to amend.

9.2.2 A two-thirds majority affirmative vote of the Voting Members present is required to amend any of these articles.