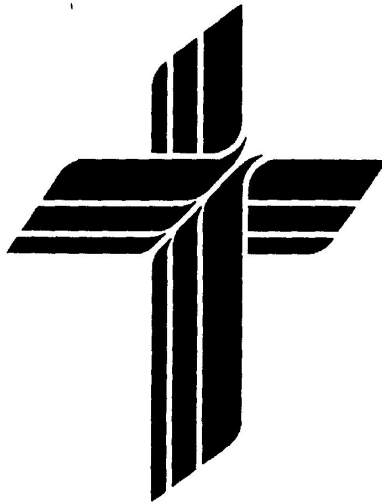


**THE CONSTITUTION
&
BY-LAWS
OF
ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**



A Congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

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Preamble

Whereas according to Holy Scripture it is the duty of Christians:

- A. to fellowship with those who confess the true faith (Acts 2:42-47, Hebrews 10:24-25, 1 John 2:19, 1 Corinthians 1:10-11).
- B. to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3-6).
- C. to administer the Office of the Keys as a body (Matthew 18:17, John 20:22-23).
- D. to conduct all the internal and external affairs of such body "decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40).

Therefore be it resolved that we, a number of Lutheran Christians residing in this vicinity of Almond, Wisconsin, declare ourselves united as a Congregation, and herewith adopt the following Constitution and By-Laws.

Constitution

I. NAME

The name of this congregation affiliated with The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, shall be ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession of Almond, Portage County, Wisconsin.

II. CONFESSION

This congregation accepts without reservation:

- A. the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice.
- B. all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as found in the Book of Concord of the year 1580, as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of Holy Scripture, to wit: the three Ecumenical Creeds (Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Large and Small Catechisms of Dr. Martin Luther, and the Formula of Concord.

III. MISSION

The Mission of this Congregation is clearly defined in Holy Scripture, the establishment and maintenance of the public ministry; public and private administration of the means of grace; due application of church discipline (Matthew 18, John 20, Acts 20, 1 Corinthians 5, 1 Peter 5 etc.).

To this we obligate ourselves:

- A. to conduct regular public worship or church services, in which hymns and church forms of Lutheran content shall be used.
- B. to provide pastoral care for all our members, including a thorough indoctrination of our children and of adults without sufficient knowledge of Lutheran teachings.
- C. to maintain a Sunday School and Vacation Bible School using the following for religious instruction; the Bible, Luther's Small Catechism, and such other instructional materials that contain nothing at variance with Holy Scripture.
- D. to engage in mission work and for this purpose to affiliate with and support the work of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, so long as said Synod strictly adheres to the Confessions referred to in Article II (Confession).

IV. MEMBERSHIPS

A. Baptized membership:

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.

B. Communicant membership:

Communicant membership in this congregation shall be restricted to such as:

1. are baptized, have been instructed in Luther's Small Catechism, and declare their adherence to the doctrines of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.
2. diligently attend divine services and frequently partake of Holy Communion.
3. willingly contribute toward the maintenance of church according to ability.
4. do not live in manifest works of the flesh, but lead a sober Christian life (Galatians 5:19-21).
5. are not members of organizations, secret or otherwise, whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God.
6. will readily submit to the rules and regulations of this Congregation provided these are not at variance to Holy Scripture and the Confessions mentioned in Article II (Confession).

C. Voting membership:

Voting membership shall be conferred upon male and female communicant members who have:

1. reached the legal voting age in the state of Wisconsin.
2. been received by the voters assembly.

They shall then have the privilege to vote at the next voters assembly meeting attended.

V. RECEPTION OF MEMBERS

A. Baptized members are received:

1. through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.
2. through the consent of one or both parents in the case of children who have been baptized in another Christian congregation.

B. Communicant members are received:

1. through the rite of confirmation.
2. through transfer from a sister congregation.
3. through profession of faith or reaffirmation of faith.

The reception shall be approved by the voters assembly or church council.

C. Voting members are received:

by attending a meeting of the voters assembly and being received as a voting member at this meeting. They shall then have the privilege to vote at the next voters assembly meeting attended.

VI. DUTIES OF MEMBERS

- A. Members of this congregation have the following duties:
1. attend public worship diligently and regularly.
 2. as a communicant member partake of Holy Communion regularly.
 3. as a parent send unconfirmed children to Sunday School, Vacation Bible School and Confirmation Instruction.
 4. contribute toward the operation and expenses of the church and the work of Synod according to ability.
- B. Voting members of this congregation are encouraged to attend the meetings of the voters assembly regularly.

VII. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall be terminated:

- A. by transfer to a sister congregation or by release to a congregation outside the fellowship of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.
1. These members shall make their intent known to the pastor and/or the elders in a written request.
 2. This request shall be acted upon by the pastor and elders.
 3. The pastor and/or elders will report on this action at the next meeting of the voters assembly or church council.
- B. by death.
- C. by self-exclusion.
1. A communicant member who has not communed for a year, has been contacted by the pastor and/or elders and still chooses not to commune within the following year.
Membership shall be reinstated after contact has been made with the pastor and elders for a reaffirmation of faith.
 2. A baptized member who has not been confirmed by the age of 18.
Membership shall be reinstated after proper instruction has been taken for confirmation.

note: Special circumstances will be considered for all the above with the approval of the pastor and the board of elders.

- D. by excommunication.
- Communicant members who conduct themselves in an un-Christian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20; if they remain impenitent after proper admonition, they shall be excommunicated. Each case shall be presented individually to the voters assembly for a decision. **A two-third majority vote of voting members present is required.** If such members deliberately absent 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. When such excommunicated persons repent of their sins and receive forgiveness from God and the congregation, they shall be reinstated.

VIII. PASTORAL OFFICE

- A. The pastoral office of this congregation, shall be conferred only on such a pastor or candidate who:
 - 1. professes and adheres to the confessional standard set forth in Article II (Confession) of this constitution.
 - 2. is qualified for his work.
 - 3. has been endorsed by the Synod.
 - 4. is a member of the Synod.

- B. This congregation will properly call a pastor or candidate in a regular or special meeting according to the by-laws of this constitution.

- C. A pastor may be removed from office in a Christian and lawful order for any of the following reasons.
 - 1. persistent adherence to false doctrine.
 - 2. scandalous life.
 - 3. willful neglect.
 - 4. inability to perform the duties of the office.

The decision to do so must be made by a two-third majority vote of voting members at a scheduled voters assembly.

IX. POWERS AND RIGHTS OF THE CONGREGATION

- A. Authority of the congregation
 - 1. The voters assembly shall be the governing body of this congregation, shall be empowered to administer and manage all its affairs and shall hold regular meetings as prescribed in the by-laws of this congregation.
 - 2. All matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided solely upon the basis of Holy Scripture.
 - 3. Matters of Christian liberty shall be decided by a majority vote of the voting members present.

- B. Property rights of the congregation
 - 1. If at any time a division should take place on account of doctrine or for any other reason the property and assets of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those communicant members who continue to adhere in confession and practice of Article II (Confession) of this constitution, as determined by the adjudication procedures of the Synod.
 - 2. In the event the congregation should dissolve, the property and all rights connected therewith shall be transferred to that District of the Synod in which the congregation holds membership at the time of dissolution.

- C. Organizations of the congregation
 - 1. All organizations of the congregation shall be under the control and supervision of the voters assembly.

2. Membership in these organizations may be held only by those who are under the spiritual care of the pastor of this congregation.

X. OTHER OFFICERS

- A. General - This congregation shall have the officers, boards, or committees as prescribed by the by-laws of this congregation.
- B. Powers of officers - Congregational officers, boards, or committees, whether elected or appointed by the voters, shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them. Whatever power may have been delegated to the congregational officers, boards, or committees can be at any time altered or revoked by the voters assembly of the congregation.
- C. A congregational officer may be removed from office in a Christian and lawful order for any of the following reasons:
 1. persistent adherence to false doctrine.
 2. scandalous life.
 3. willful neglect.
 4. inability to perform the duties of the office.

XI. ALTERATIONS

Revisions, alterations or repeals of this constitution, except Article II (Confession), may be adopted at a regular meeting of the voters assembly using the following procedure.

- A. The revisions, alterations or repeals of this constitution or any of its paragraphs will be presented and discussed at two consecutive meetings of the voters assembly.
- B. These two meetings of the voters assembly and their purpose shall be announced on two preceeding Sundays.
- C. A two-thirds vote of the voting members present is needed to adopt a revision, alteration or repeal. This vote shall be taken at the second meeting of the voters assembly.
- D. The old and new documents shall be sent to the Chairman of the North Wisconsin District Constitution Committee for approval from the District Board of Directors.

No revision, alteration or repeal shall be made which conflicts with Holy Scripture and the confession and practice of Article II (Confession).

By-Laws

I. THE VOTERS ASSEMBLY

A. Voting

A church member may vote at a meeting of the voters assembly if he/she has:

1. followed the voting member policy as stated in the constitution (section IV-C).
2. been accepted as a voting member at a previous meeting of the voters assembly.

II. PROCEDURES FOR CALLING A PASTOR

A. A pre-call meeting shall be arranged with the District President or his representative to meet with the congregation.

B. Every member of the congregation shall have the privilege of submitting one or more nominations. The congregation shall also request recommendations from the District President.

C. A call committee consisting of six voting members of the congregation shall serve as a screening committee. The church council shall appoint these six (6) voting members from a list of volunteers. This committee shall consist of:

1. the president or designee
2. an elder
3. four (4) other voting members from the congregation at large

D. The screening process

1. The call committee shall submit all names to their circuit counselor who will then submit them to the District President for information and evaluation.
2. The call committee will receive information and recommendations on a number of possible candidates to review from their circuit counselor.
3. The self evaluation tool (résumé) on the candidate(s) shall be made available for the congregation to review at church.
4. In a public announcement to the congregation the call committee shall indicate their preferred candidate(s) and include a biographical sketch of each.
5. At a meeting of the congregation, arranged for the purpose of calling a new pastor, a secret ballot vote shall be taken. The ballot shall contain a brief description of the candidate(s). All communicant members 18 years or older are eligible to vote. A majority vote of the votes cast shall determine the disposition of the call.

III. OFFICERS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

- A. The eligible members of this congregation who may hold an elected office or a board position are:
1. male members who have held voting membership for one (1) year
 2. female members who have held voting membership for one (1) year but they shall not serve as pastor, president, vice president or elder since these positions are involved in the specific functions of the pastoral office (preaching, the public administration of the sacraments, and church discipline).
- B. The voters assembly shall elect from its eligible voting membership:
1. Officers
 - a. a president
 - b. a vice-president
 - c. a recording secretary
 - d. a treasurer
 - e. a financial secretary
 2. Boards
 - a. three (3) or more elders
 - b. three (3) or more trustees
 - c. three (3) or more stewards
 - d. and such other boards as deemed necessary
- C. Committees shall be appointed by the president and approved by the church council. These committees shall consist of voting members of the congregation with the chairperson being a council member. The pastor is an ex officio member of all committees.

The recommended committees and number of members are:

1. five (5) or more budget members
 2. three (3) or more cemetery members
 3. five (5) or more Christian education members
 4. five (5) or more financial review members
 5. and such other committees as deemed necessary
 6. the board of elders and the president shall be the members of the nominating committee
- D. The Sunday School Superintendent, Vacation Bible School Director and the Youth Group Advisor shall be voting members of the congregation, appointed by the president and approved by the church council. They shall be appointed for a 2 year term.
- E. Elections
1. The nominating committee shall present a slate of eligible candidates for all elected offices and boards at the November meeting of the voters assembly, followed by the election. The slate shall normally consist of two or more nominees for each office/board. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. No person shall be nominated without his/her consent.
 2. The election sequence shall be president and vice-president for a two year term, recording secretary, treasurer and financial secretary for a three year term, elders, trustees and stewards for a three year term with the terms of office being staggered so that a new term begins each

year. The President and Vice-president shall not serve more than two consecutive terms in the same position.

3. All officers and boards shall be elected by a majority vote. Voting shall continue until a clear majority has been established. This shall take place after candidates, receiving the lowest number of votes, have been eliminated in each succeeding vote.
4. Officers and board members shall assume their respective duties January 1st.
5. Officers and board members shall be installed by the pastor in a public service, but the election by the voters assembly, not the installation by the pastor, actually confers upon these people their respective offices.
6. In case of a vacancy in an elective office, the nominating committee selects a candidate & the church council approves the candidate for the unexpired term.

IV. CHURCH COUNCIL

A. Membership

The church council shall be the board of directors and shall consist of the president, the vice-president, the recording secretary, the treasurer, the financial secretary, the elders, the trustees and the stewards. The pastor shall be an ex officio member of the council. The president and the recording secretary of the congregation shall serve as president and recording secretary of the church council.

B. Meetings

The church council shall meet at least monthly. If a council member is unable to attend a council meeting, he/she is encouraged to contact the president before the meeting to inform him that he/she will not be present. Special meetings may be called by the president, pastor or any three members of the church council by notifying each member at least 24 hours in advance. A quorum shall consist of six (6) of the council members.

C. Duties

Council members shall:

1. discuss all matters pertaining to the spiritual and physical welfare of the congregation as presented by various boards and committees.
2. be responsible for the normal operations of the church and current operation and maintenance of the church properties.
3. present recommendations to the meetings of the voters assembly.
4. act in matters committed to it by the voters assembly.
5. review the constitution and by-laws of the church as needed.
6. have no legislative power but serve in an advisory and executive capacity only.
7. approve memorial donations and the disbursements of memorial funds.

V. DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

All officers and members of boards and committees shall set a good example to the congregation in Christian conduct, and to take heed not to interfere with the official duties of the pastor or those of the other offices of the congregation (1 Peter 4:15).

A. The Board of Elders

The elders shall:

1. be elected from the eligible male voting members only.
2. assist the pastor in all matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the congregation.
3. consider complaints and grievances of members of the congregation as long as Matthew 18:15-16 has been fully observed and shall report to the congregation those which cannot be otherwise adjusted, in accordance with Matthew 18:17-18.
4. make every effort to call on members who have been negligent in their attendance to services, in the use of the Sacraments, and the financial support of the church and encourage them to mend their sinful ways so they may fully enjoy the rights and privileges of their membership.
5. be an example of Christian conduct and life as evident by regular attendance at worship, Bible class, and the Sacraments.
6. see to it that all services are conducted in such a manner as to avoid needless disturbances and to foster an attitude conducive to worship among those in attendance.
7. assist the pastor in all areas of the worship service (for example assisting with the distribution of communion)
8. assist the pastor in arranging for special services and guest speakers.
9. see to it that proper ushering is provided for all services through recruiting and training procedures.
10. participate in monthly elder meetings.
11. present a written report at church council and voters assembly meetings.

B. The Board of Trustees

The trustees shall:

1. be elected from the eligible male and female voting members.
2. be the legal representatives of the congregation and supervisor of the physical properties, including all valuable papers, deeds, documents, insurance policies, certificates of incorporation etc.
3. make loans for the congregation when authorized by the voters assembly to do so.
4. supervise janitor service, grounds maintenance, and other properties of the church.
5. attend to the necessary repairs of the church properties according to resolutions of the church council.
6. report to the church council and the voters assembly

C. The Board of Stewardship

The vice-president shall be the chairman of the board of stewardship.

The stewards shall:

1. be elected from the eligible male and female voting members.
2. discover the talents of the members and enlist them in congregational programs.
3. instruct the members in the grace of proportionate giving for God's work in the church and in the world.
4. evaluate the financial stability of the congregation by reviewing the offerings of the congregation and share these evaluations with the church council and the voters assembly.
5. review the counting procedure of the financial secretary.
6. inform the members of programs and opportunities in the congregation to strengthen their outreach into all the world through District and Synod.

D. The Office of President

The president shall:

1. be elected from the eligible male voting members only.
2. be the executive director who supervises all elected and appointed officers, boards, and committees of the church.
3. set the agenda for meetings, post it the Sunday before a meeting and preside over council and voters assembly meetings.
4. provide a written agenda for everyone at meetings
5. conduct all meetings in an orderly and Christian manner.
6. organize appropriate committees and designate a chairperson who shall then be approved by the church council. The president is not a member of the individual committees but is invited to participate in committee meetings, the president is a member of the nominating committee.
7. not vote on an issue unless the vote may be necessary to break a tie.
8. not enter into debate unless he steps down from the chairman position to discuss that issue.
9. supervise the church administrative secretary

E. The Office of Vice-President

The vice-president shall:

1. be elected from the eligible male voting members only.
2. preside at meetings in the absence of the president or when the president steps down.
3. be the chairman of the board of stewardship.

F. The Office of Recording Secretary

The recording secretary shall:

1. be elected from the eligible male and female voting members.
2. be responsible for the safe keeping of all permanent minutes of the congregation.
3. record the minutes of the church council and voters assembly meetings.
4. submit the minutes at the next meeting for approval. Council approves council minutes & voters approve voters assembly minutes.
5. maintain a current list of voting members.
6. maintain a list of attendance at church council and voters assembly meetings.
7. make minutes available from voters and church council meetings.

G. The Office of Treasurer

The treasurer shall:

1. be elected from the eligible male and female voting members.
2. be the chief financial officer responsible for safe keeping of all funds and accurate reporting of the financial condition of the congregation.
3. see that records of receipts and disbursements are maintained.
4. see that all state and federal tax and payroll reports are filed.
5. be prompt in the payment of salaries, authorized bills and missions as directed by the voters assembly, church council or trustees.
6. see that all accounts are reconciled in a timely manner.
7. see that the memorial fund records are maintained.
8. disburse memorial funds as authorized by the church council.
9. present written financial reports to the council and voters assembly.

H. The Office of Financial Secretary

The financial secretary shall:

1. be elected from the eligible male and female voting members.
2. communicate the offering counting procedure to the stewardship board
3. be responsible to count the weekly offerings with at least one other individual not immediately related to the financial secretary.
4. post all contributions to individual member's contribution records and resolve disputes in posting errors.
5. issue periodic and annual statements to members of their contributions.
6. deposit the weekly offerings in a timely matter.

I. The Budget Committee

1. The president shall appoint as members of this committee, an elder, a trustee, the treasurer, a steward and other voting members. The chairperson shall be a member of the council. This committee shall be approved by the church council.
2. This committee will meet in October to prepare a list of anticipated expenses for the next calendar year.
3. This budget shall be submitted to the church council for review.
4. At the November meeting of the voters assembly this committee will present this budget for approval.

J. The Cemetery Committee

1. A cemetery secretary/treasurer, shall be a voting member of the congregation and appointed by the church council. He/She shall be responsible for the cemetery finances, the maintenance of the books and the map, the filing of official reports of the cemetery and the sale of lots.
2. The other committee members shall consist of a trustee and other voting members of the congregation who have been appointed by the president and approved by the church council. The chairperson will be chosen by the committee.
3. The committee shall meet as needed to discuss the cemetery procedures.
4. This committee shall be responsible for locating lots when needed and cemetery maintenance.
5. The chairperson shall report all transactions to the church council.
6. The cemetery records shall be reviewed annually by the financial review committee and submit an annual report to the voters assembly.

K. The Christian Education Committee

Members shall:

1. consist of an elder, the Sunday School superintendent, the Vacation Bible School director and the Youth Group advisor.
2. be concerned with the Christian education for all age levels (preschool, school age, youth and adult).
3. encourage all families to participate in the Christian education programs.
4. review all phases of the education programs and plan for improvements by meeting regularly with the pastor and report to church council.

L. The Financial Review Committee

Members shall:

1. be appointed by the president and consist of an elder, a trustee, the treasurer, a steward and other voting members. The chairperson shall be a member of the council. This committee shall be approved by the church council.
2. meet to review the books of the church before the February meeting of the voters assembly.

3. review all the books and accounts of the treasurer and financial secretary using the "Guide For Financial Review Committees" found in the "Congregational Treasurer's Manual" located in the church office.
4. review the books of the cemetery.
5. review the memorial fund books.
6. review the records kept by the pastor and/or the church administrative secretary to verify that all entries in the records (baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communions new members, transfers and releases) are up to date.
7. report the results of the review to the church council and the February meeting of the voters assembly.

M. The Nominating Committee

Members shall:

1. consist of the board of elders and the president of the congregation.
2. meet in October to prepare their suggested nominations for the church officers and board members as stated in the by-laws under section III part E - elections.
3. present the slate of nominations to the November voters meeting.

VI. MEETINGS OF THE VOTERS ASSEMBLY

- A. The annual meeting of the voters assembly is to be held not later than the third Wednesday in February. The voting members present at a duly called meeting shall constitute a quorum.
- B. Other regular meetings shall be held not later than the third Wednesday of the month. In the November meeting the necessary elections shall take place.
- C. All regular meetings shall be announced on two preceding Sundays.
- D. Special meetings may be called by the church council, the president or the pastor with the consent of the church council. Such meetings and their purpose shall be announced in at least one worship service.
- E. Individual members shall submit to whatever the majority may resolve in meetings called and held in conformity with this constitution.

The voters assembly has no authority to initiate or condone anything that is contrary to the Word of God and the symbols of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

VII. RULES OF ORDER

Ordinarily all meetings are to be opened with a Scripture lesson and a prayer by the pastor, or in his absence by his designee.

- A. roll call
- B. reading and approval of minutes
- C. acceptance of new members

- D. releases or transfers of membership
- E. report of the treasurer/financial secretary
- F. report of the elders
- G. report of the trustees
- H. report of the board of stewardship
- I. report of the pastor
- J. reports of committees and action taken
- K. unfinished business
- L. other business properly coming before the meeting
- M. adjournment with prayer

VIII. VOTING METHODS AND TYPES

There are several methods of taking a vote. The methods are by a voice vote, a show of hands, a ballot, and by general or unanimous consent.

There are four types of votes.

- A. The majority vote indicates a number greater than one-half of the votes cast.
- B. The plurality indicates the most votes cast regardless of majority.
- C. The two-thirds vote, indicates that two-thirds of the members present vote in favor of the proposition. To determine a two-thirds vote quickly, double the negative vote cast and if it is equal to or less than the affirmative vote cast, a two-thirds vote has been obtained.
- D. The tie vote indicates an equal number for and against.

IX. AMENDMENTS

Revisions, alterations or repeals of the by-laws may be adopted at a regular meeting of the voters assembly using the following procedure.

- A. The revisions, alterations or repeals of the by-laws or any of its paragraphs will be presented and discussed at two consecutive meetings of the voters assembly.
- B. These two meetings of the voters assembly and their purpose shall be announced on two preceding Sundays.
- C. A two-thirds vote of the voting members present is needed to adopt a revision, alteration or repeal. This vote shall be taken at the second meeting of the voters assembly.
- D. The old and new documents shall be sent to the Chairman of the North Wisconsin District Constitution Committee for approval from the District Board of Directors.

No revision, alteration or repeal shall be made which conflicts with Holy Scripture or the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.