

SOUTH ZUMBRO CONSTITUTION

Preamble

Recognizing our unity in Christ and our common practice in the Christian faith; desiring to express our fellowship in worship and work; knowing our spiritual needs; mindful of our Christian privileges and duties; and wishing to observe orderly cooperation, we adopt the following constitution:

Article I Name and Incorporation

1. The name of this congregation shall be: South Zumbro Lutheran Church.
2. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

Article II Confession of Faith

1. The congregation believes and confesses that the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments are God's Holy Word, and the only source, rule, and guide for faith, doctrine and life.
2. This congregation accepts the three most ancient symbols: The Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds; also the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, and Luther's Small Catechism as a correct exposition of the chief teachings of God's Word.

Article III Purpose and Aim

1. The purpose of this congregation is to extend the Kingdom of God through the right and proper ministrations of the inspired Word of God and the Holy Sacraments. To this end we regard it as necessary aims:
 - a. To persuade persons to a personal surrender of heart and life to Jesus Christ.
 - b. To promote the fellowship of Christian people around God's Word and prayer.
 - c. To encourage our members to pray, to labor, and to give, that the Gospel of Christ might be brought to those who are in spiritual need in our community and throughout the world.

Article IV Powers

1. All power in the congregation has its source in the Word of God, which is the norm for its faith and life. All individuals and groups within the congregation shall submit to the authority of the Word; and the life and activity of the congregation and its organizations shall conform to it.
2. The powers of the congregation shall be vested in the congregational meeting, called and conducted according to this constitution and in the church council to the extent conveyed by this constitution or as assigned from time to time by the congregational meeting.
3. In the fulfillment of its purposes, the congregation is empowered to:
 - a. Acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, bequest, purchase or other lawful means.
 - b. Hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose.

- c. Sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means.
 - d. Enter into contract.
 - e. Elect officers and boards for the exercise of their powers and authority and require them to conduct their affairs in accordance to this constitution and its bylaws, and the resolutions of the congregation.
4. Real property shall not be purchased, disposed of, or encumbered in any manner except by resolution adopted by not less than a two-thirds majority ballot vote of the members present and voting at a legally called meeting of the congregation.
 5. Title to all real or personal property acquired by the congregation and its organizations shall be held by the congregation as a corporation.

Article V Relationship to Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC)

1. For the better attainment of its purpose, this congregation shall be a member of the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC).
2. This congregation covenants to support with prayer, personal services, and offerings, the common work of the church.
3. The relationship of the congregation to the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) may be changed by the procedure outlined in the Constitutional Amendment Article XIII.

Article VI Membership

1. In order to be received as a member of this congregation it is required that one:
 - a. Sincerely accepts the paragraphs on Faith and Confession adopted in this Constitution. (Article II)
 - b. Professes to be a Christian or is a seeking soul.
 - c. Is not a member of another church, or of a secret society which militates against the Word of God.
 - d. Agrees to abide by this Constitution.
2. Members shall be classified as (a) baptized, (b) confirmed, (c) voting.
 - a. Baptized members are those who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having previously been baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by proper transfer from other Lutheran congregations, or by affirmation of faith.
 - b. Confirmed members are:
 1. baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation;
 2. those who have been received by Adult Baptism;
 3. by transfer as a confirmed member from other Lutheran congregations
 4. or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.
 - c. Voting members shall be those who are confirmed members in good standing and have attained the legal voting age of the State of Minnesota. If anyone by removal or in any other manner plans to withdraw from this congregation, then he/she shall inform the congregation about this, and they will

then lose their right to property of the congregation. Those who neglect to inform of their removal within two years shall be considered as inactive members of the congregation.

3. It shall be the privilege and responsibility of the members of this congregation:
 - a. To receive God's Word with readiness and meekness; to obey the pastor's exhortations and show him/her proper confidence and respect; also assist him/her with counsel and deed, comfort and encouragement in his/her important calling; lead a Christian life, and associate with each other in mutual love and peace; bring their children to baptism early, attend regularly public worship in the church, partake of the Lord's Supper often and in a worthy manner, diligently use the Word of God and practice in their own homes, and see that their children are brought up and educated in a Christian manner; and on the whole, set a good example in word and deed, not alone within the congregation but also among those who are without.
 - b. To contribute annually toward paying the expenses of the congregation.
 - c. To be present at business meetings of the congregation.
 - d. New members shall be received into the congregation according to procedures contained in the bylaws.

Article VII Discipline

1. Church discipline must be practiced earnestly in this congregation, and it is the duty of every member according to God's Word in Matthew 18:15-17 to rebuke his brother or sister for the sins or works of the flesh which are manifest. Galatians 5:19-21, I Corinthians 6:9-10, Ephesians 5:3-5. If exhortation does not avail, the individual must be subject to discipline according to the bylaws.

Article VIII Worship

1. The public services of this congregation may be conducted according to low-churchly tradition within the pattern of liturgical freedom which has characterized evangelical Lutheranism in America.
2. The congregation shall hold evangelistic meetings annually and shall also be receptive to church approved mission presentations as the opportunities arise.

Article IX The Pastor

1. The authority to call a pastor shall rest in the congregation. Such authority to call shall be exercised by at least two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting called for said purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers or a committee authorized by the congregation, shall seek the advice and help of the relationship organization defined in Article V.
2. As a servant of the Lord and the church, the pastor must be faithful and diligent in the conduct of his/her office; preach the Word of God in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and teaching and to be diligent in instruction of the young. In teaching and in life, in speech, and in association, both publicly and privately, he/she shall be an example to the flock, not lording it over them as an autocrat. II Tim. 4:2 Acts 20:21 I Peter 5:2-3 II Cor. 4-5 et. al.
3. It is also the duty of the pastor to search out those who have for a long time absented themselves from public worship in the congregation, or from the Lord's Table, in order if possible to remedy the cause of absenting themselves.
4. The pastor shall also visit the poor, the sick, and all needy, and when it is considered necessary, bring the condition of each to the knowledge of the congregation.

5. If in the judgment of the congregation, the pastor is not able to serve satisfactorily, he/she may be requested to resign. However, before the resignation is requested, the matter shall first be prayerfully considered at a meeting of the Church Council, and in consultation with the relationship organization defined in Article V. A resolution requesting the pastor's resignation shall require a two-thirds majority ballot vote of a special meeting of the congregation. If the pastor's resignation has been requested in the manner here specified, the pastor shall vacate the office at the time specified by the congregation.
6. Matters of discipline involving the pastor for alleged Incorrect use or interpretation of doctrine or for alleged conduct unbecoming a pastor, shall be discussed by the Church Council, and reviewed with the relationship organization defined in Article V. After which, the Church Council may bring resolution to the congregation for action.

Article X Meetings of the Congregation

1. The power and authority of this congregation shall be exercised through the congregational meeting, called and held in conformity with civil laws and the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws of the congregation.
2. The annual meeting shall be held the last Sunday in January or first Sunday of February. Notice of the annual meeting shall be given as provided in the Bylaws.
3. There shall usually be a spring meeting.
4. Special meetings may be called when the pastor, or the president, the deacons, board of trustees, or five voting members of the congregation, find it necessary in certain stated matters. If the president refuses to call the meeting, one of the above may call the meeting on written request.
5. Only the business for which a special meeting has been called shall be transacted at the meeting.
6. A meeting of the congregation may recess by a majority vote to reconvene at a specified time and place. A meeting may also recess to reconvene upon call as provided in the Bylaws.
7. When questions of doctrine or conscience come up at a business meeting, these shall not be voted upon except as expressing the considered opinion of the congregation; because questions of doctrine and conscience are not decided by voting, but only according to the Word of God.

Article XI Officers and Boards

1. At its annual meeting the congregation shall elect the following officers each for a term of one year;
 - a. President
 - b. Vice-president
 - c. Secretary
 - d. Treasurer
 - e. Financial secretary
 - f. Financial assistant

The duties of the officers of the congregation shall be those provided in the bylaws.

2. Board of Deacons

- a. The congregation shall elect three of its most Christian-minded and enlightened men/women to be deacons. Their term of office shall be three years. Approximately one-third shall be elected at each annual meeting.
 - b. They shall assist the pastor in word and deed in the work of his/her office, lead the devotional meetings of the congregation in the pastor's absence, make use of the gifts of grace found in this congregation and elsewhere, which can serve to build up the church according to God's Word. While it is the common duty of everyone to look after the life and walk of the congregational members, this duty shall particularly rest upon the deacons as a part of their office. In deciding whether a person is qualified to serve as a deacon, I Timothy 3:5-13 should be applied.
3. Board of Trustees
- a. There shall be a Board of Trustees of three members elected at the annual meeting of the congregation, each for a term of three years. Approximately one-third shall be elected at each annual meeting.
 - b. The duties and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees shall be to have charge of the general management of all matters relating to the legal and corporate affairs and to supervise the maintenance of the properties of the congregation. All legal documents shall be signed by the president and secretary.
4. Board of Education
- a. There shall be a Board of Education of five members, three shall be elected at the annual meeting of the congregation, each for a term of three years. Approximately one-third shall be elected at each annual meeting. The vice president of the congregation and a pastor shall serve as voting members.
 - b. The duties and responsibilities of the Board of Education shall be to provide leadership and supervision of the educational program of the congregation.
5. The Church Council
- a. The officers of the congregation, and the members of the boards of deacons and trustees, together with a representative of the South Zumbro women's organization and the pastor shall constitute the church council.
 - b. The president of the congregation shall serve as the president of the church council.
 - c. The officers and boards shall exercise only the authority as may be delegated by the congregation, and this authority shall be exercised in accordance with the constitution, the bylaws, and resolutions of the congregation.
 - d. Other duties of the church council shall be those prescribed by the bylaws.
6. Cemetery Board
- a. There shall be a Church Cemetery Board of three members elected at the annual meeting of the congregation, each for a term of three years. Approximately, one-third of the members shall be elected at each annual meeting of the congregation.
 - b. The duties and responsibilities of the Church Cemetery Board shall be to have charge of management, care, and maintenance of the church cemetery. Other duties and responsibilities shall be those provided in the bylaws.

Article XII Bylaws

1. The congregation shall adopt such bylaws as may from time to time be necessary. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.
2. Bylaws may be amended or adopted at any legally called meeting of the congregation by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting. The proposed bylaw must be read at public services of the congregation or mailed to voting members, in either case posted at least two Sundays prior to the called meeting.

Article XIII Amendments

1. The doctrinal basis and the confessional subscription contained in Article II, and in this paragraph of Article XIII, the purpose and aim as contained in Article III, shall be unalterable; and no amendment to this constitution shall conflict therewith.
2. A proposed amendment to this constitution shall be:
 - a. Announced and read at a public service of the congregation or mailed to the voting members at least thirty (30) days before the annual meeting at which it is to be considered.
 - b. Approved, with or without change at the annual meeting following its announcement, by a majority vote of those present and voting.
 - c. Ratified without further change at the next year's annual meeting of the congregation, by two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting.
3. If a proposed amendment fails to be adopted, it may be amended by a majority vote of those present and voting; and adopted without change by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting at the next annual meeting of the congregation.