

**Constitution of
Our Savior's Way Evangelical Lutheran Church
Ashburn, Virginia**

Preamble

We, the undersigned members of Our Savior's Way Evangelical Lutheran Church, sensible of our spiritual needs and mindful of our Christian duties, adopt the following constitution and bylaws with the hope of His blessing.

**Article I
Name**

The name of this congregation shall be Our Savior's Way Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ashburn, Virginia.

**Article II
Mission**

The mission of this church is to reach broken and hurting people with the saving and healing message of Jesus Christ. We will accomplish this mission through a wide variety of means, especially including:

- A. Growing in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ,
- B. Sharing the Gospel with ourselves and others, and
- C. Fostering Christian stewardship, fellowship and charity.

**Article III
Confession of Faith**

This congregation accepts all the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God, verbally inspired. It also accepts all Confessional Writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, including:

- A. The three Ecumenical Creeds: The Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed;
- B. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession;
- C. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession;
- D. The Smalcald Articles;
- E. The Large Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther;
- F. The Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther; and
- G. The Formula of Concord.

**Article IV
Synodical Affiliation**

This congregation shall be affiliated with The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as long as the confessions and constitution of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod are in accord with the confessions and constitution of this congregation as laid down in Article III.

**Article V
Membership**

The membership of this congregation includes the Baptized Members, Confirmed Members, and Voting Members as defined in the bylaws.

**Article VI
Organization**

- A. Voters' Assembly
The Voters' Assembly shall consist of all voting members present at a regular or special meeting of the congregation. The congregation, through the Voters' Assembly, shall have final authority in managing its internal and external affairs.
- B. Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group
The Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group shall be the governing body of the congregation and is responsible to administer all the congregation's affairs except the following matters for action only by the Voters' Assembly:
 - 1. Call or remove a called worker.
 - 2. Purchase or sell church property or buildings valued over five percent of the annual operating budget.
 - 3. Incur a non-budgeted emergency expense of over five percent of the annual expense budget of the congregation.
 - 4. Adopt the Annual Financial Plan.
- C. Officers
The officers of this congregation shall be such officers as the bylaws of this constitution prescribe. The officers prescribed in the bylaws shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them in the constitution or bylaws.

**Article VII
Property Rights**

- A. Division within the congregation
If, at any time, a separation shall take place within this congregation, the advice of the officers of the denomination shall be sought. If, despite all efforts to resolve differences in peace and love, a division into factions of the congregation shall occur, the property of the congregation and all benefits connected shall remain with the majority voting at an official meeting of the Voters' Assembly.
- B. Dissolution of the congregation
If the congregation is dissolved, after settling all debts, the remaining assets shall be transferred to the district of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in which the congregation holds membership at the time of the dissolution.

**Article VIII
Decisions**

All congregational matters decided by the Voters' Assembly shall be decided by a simple majority of the voting members present at a properly convened meeting of the Voters' Assembly, except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws. Procedural questions will be decided by following *Robert's Rules of Order*.

**Article IX
Amendments**

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in a meeting of the Voters' Assembly. The wording of the amended constitution and bylaws shall be mailed to all members in a mailing as far in advance as possible, but no fewer than two Sundays in advance. In addition, the revisions will be distributed to the congregation assembled for worship on two different Sundays prior to the date upon which the amendment is presented for action.

**Bylaws of
Our Savior's Way Evangelical Lutheran Church
Ashburn, Virginia**

**Article 1
Baptized Membership**

Baptized members are all persons within the congregation who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and come under the pastoral care of this congregation. It is expected that all baptized members, to the extent they are physically and mentally able, will:

- A. Attend worship services faithfully and regularly.
- B. Lead a Christian life as taught in Galatians 5:19-26.
- C. Out of Christian love, submit to brotherly admonition, according to Matthew 18, when having erred or offended.
- D. Contribute, as God has blessed them, of their time, talents and treasure toward the maintenance of the congregation and the extension of the church at large.
- E. Participate in continuing Christian education, and in due time, take a course of instruction in preparation for confirmed membership in this congregation.
- F. Provide for the Christian training of their children by making use of the educational agencies of the congregation.

**Article 2
Confirmed Membership**

Confirmed members are all baptized persons within the congregation who have completed a course of instruction in Christian doctrine that meets with the approval of the Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group.

Persons seeking to attain confirmed membership shall make that fact known to the Senior Pastor or any other pastor delegated by the Senior Pastor. The pastor shall ascertain the understanding and commitment to the purpose and theological commitment contained in Article III. The pastor will determine if additional training is needed and the appropriate method for that training. The pastor is authorized to extend confirmed membership to the person and shall announce that in a public service.

In addition to the duties of baptized members, it is expected of all confirmed members that they:

- A. Accept the confessions of faith listed in Article III of the constitution.
- B. Familiarize themselves with the doctrines of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.
- C. Partake of the Lord's Supper.

**Article 3
Voting Membership**

Voting members are communicant members of the congregation who have reached the age of 16 years and have accepted and signed the Constitution and Bylaws.

**Article 4
Termination of Membership**

- A. Transfers
A member desiring transfer to another congregation shall make that fact known to the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor shall cause the creating and mailing of a letter of transfer to the receiving congregation.
- B. Whereabouts unknown or moved
The names of members whose whereabouts cannot be ascertained after reasonable efforts or who have moved from the area may be removed from membership after a period of one year upon approval of the Senior Pastor.

C. Elective Disassociation

A member who elects to withdraw membership for any reason may be removed from membership at any time upon approval of the Senior Pastor.

D. Discipline

All discipline in this congregation shall be administered in accordance with Matthew 18:15-20. The purpose of any disciplinary action is to renew a member's relationship with the Lord and with the church. A member shall be considered self-excluded when unresponsive to the witness and ministry of the church, and may be removed from membership upon unanimous vote of the Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group.

**Article 5
Voters' Assembly**

A. Regular Meetings

The Voters' Assembly shall meet at least twice a year. The day and hour of these meetings shall be set by the Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group and publicized in writing at least two weeks in advance. The notification shall contain an agenda of items to be considered. No agenda items may be voted on that are not included in the notification agenda.

B. Special Meetings

The Voters' Assembly may meet at other times of the year subject to a call by the Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group, or at the request of any twenty (20) voting members. Notice of any such special meeting shall be publicized in writing at least two weeks in advance. The notice shall contain an agenda of items to be considered. No agenda items may be added once notification of any meeting is publicized.

C. Presiding

The President, Vice President, or their designated Group member shall preside at all Voters' Assembly meetings.

D. Quorum

Ordinarily the voters present at a properly called meeting shall constitute a quorum to do business. However, for amending the Constitution or for the removal of a called person, a majority of all voting members shall be required for a quorum. In the absence of a majority, those present may fix the date for an adjourned meeting for which at least five days written notice shall be given. The members who are present at such an adjourned meeting shall constitute a quorum.

**Article 6
Called Workers**

D. Called Workers

1. After authorization is received from the Voters' Assembly, the Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group shall appoint a Call Committee. The Call Committee shall include members of affected ministry area(s) and no more than one-third of the Call Committee members may be members of the Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group.

2. The Call Committee shall consult with the district of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in which the congregation holds membership as part of their efforts to secure the names of candidates. Calls will only be issued to such candidates who are approved by The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

3. The Call Committee will present a final list of candidates to the Voters' Assembly for issuance of the Call.

E. Removal from Office of Called Workers

In Christian love and lawful order, and after consultation with officials of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod district, any Called Worker may be removed from office by the Voters' Assembly by a two-thirds majority secret ballot vote for the following reasons including but not limited to: persistent adherence to false doctrine, inappropriate behavior, neglect of duties, and inability to perform the duties of the office.

**Article 7
Officers**

These four are the officers of the congregation, officers of the Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group, and the Executive Committee of the congregation.

- A. President:
 1. Set the agenda for and preside at all meetings of the Voters' Assembly and the Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group.
 2. Enforce the constitution and bylaws.
 3. Perform the general duties as are common for the office, including such additional duties as may be directed by the Voters' Assembly from time to time.
 4. Sign all legal documents, with the Secretary, on behalf of the congregation.
 5. Annually submit a report to the congregation concerning the approved outcomes.
- B. Vice President:
 1. Perform all of the duties of the President in the latter's absence and such other additional duties which may be directed by the Voters' Assembly or by the President from time to time.
 2. Chair and appoint a Nominating Committee with the advice and consent of the Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group.
 3. Serve as the congregation's representative to the circuit forum.
- C. Secretary:
 1. The duties shall be those commonly required of that office, especially the keeping and preserving of accurate records of all Voters' Assembly meetings, and handling such correspondence as the congregation may require.
 2. Keep and make available minutes of all Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group meetings.
 3. Sign all legal documents with the President on behalf of the congregation where more than one signature is required.
- D. Treasurer:
 1. Keep and preserve accurate records of all receipts and disbursements, and submit a regular financial to the Voters' Assembly and the Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group.
 2. Assure accuracy and propriety of all financial transactions of the congregation.
 3. Appoints the auditing committee to audit the financial records of the congregation at least annually.
- E. Term of Office

Each officer shall serve for a term of two years and shall serve no more than two full successive terms in that position without a break of at least one year.

Article 8
Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group

- A. Membership

The Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group shall consist of nine voting members, five members elected at large by the Voters' Assembly, plus the four congregation officers listed in Article 7. The Senior Pastor is a non-voting member.
- A. Term of Office

The term of office shall be two years, with approximately half of the Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group being elected each year. Group members shall serve no more than two full successive terms in that position without a break of at least one year.
- B. Meetings

The Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group shall meet at least quarterly and may be called more frequently at the request of the President or any three Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group members. An elected officer shall be present and preside with five members of the Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group to constitute a quorum for any meeting. Notice of each meeting shall be posted. The minutes shall fully disclose all actions taken and be signed by the President and Secretary. Minutes of the meetings shall be available to voting members upon request.

Article 9
Powers of the Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group

The Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group shall have the power to develop policies as required to execute the goals approved by the Voters' Assembly. Written policies shall be available upon request. The Group shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them by the constitution, its bylaws, or by the Voters' Assembly.

Article 10
Duties of the Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group

- A. The Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group, as the chief governing Council of the congregation, shall act in all matters pertaining to the legal and general welfare of the congregation, except those reserved for the Voters' Assembly in Article VI.B. of the constitution.
- B. The Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group shall see to it that all activities of the church reflect the purpose and faith of the congregation.
- C. It shall concern itself with establishing all policies governing the activities of the congregation and with the implementation of the mission, vision, budget, and plans adopted by the Voters' Assembly.
- D. The Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group may appoint any entity needed. It shall oversee and have authority over all other boards, committees, task forces, action teams, or other entities of the congregation.
- E. Annually, the Group shall name three male members of the Group as the Clergy Oversight Committee with the sole and limited purpose to supervise the called clergy in matters of preaching, administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of church discipline.

Article 11
Election, Removal from Office, and Vacancies

A. Nomination

The Vice President of the congregation shall appoint a Nominating Committee whose responsibility will be to develop a slate of candidates for officers and Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group members to be elected each year. The committee shall contain a majority who are not on the Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group, shall function for one year only, and shall report the nominations to the election meeting of the Voters' Assembly. The Senior Pastor shall be a non-voting member of the Nominating Committee.

All nominees shall be voting members noted for their Christian knowledge, zeal, and experience in the spiritual work in the Kingdom. Specific criteria for elected officials shall be outlined by the Nominating Committee prior to accepting any nominations. In addition to the Nominating Committee's slate of candidates, any voting member may nominate candidates. A call for nominations will be distributed to the congregation no less than two months prior to the election meeting. The list of nominations will be closed at the time that the meeting agenda and slate of candidates is distributed.

Those elected by the voters may not receive compensation from the congregation and may not lead any group that reports directly to the Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group, except a Call Committee or the Nominations Committee.

B. Election

Nominees who receive a majority of the ballots cast at the Voters' Assembly shall be elected.

C. Taking office

All elected officials will begin their term of office on the second Sunday of the month following election.

D. Removal from Office of Elected Officials

Any elected official who is unable or is willfully negligent in the performance of their official duties, may be removed from office by two-thirds secret ballot vote of the Voters' Assembly. The Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group shall initiate such action.

E. Vacancy

The Mission and Ministry Servant Leaders Group shall be authorized to appoint a person to fill an unexpired term of an elected person.

Article 13
Amendments

The bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in a meeting of the Voters' Assembly. The wording of the amended constitution and bylaws shall be distributed to all members in a mailing as far in advance as possible, but no fewer than two Sundays in advance. In addition, the revisions will be distributed to the congregation assembled for worship on two different Sundays prior to the date upon which the amendment is presented for action.