

# Constitution and Bylaws

## **NAME**

The name of the congregation shall be Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church U.A.C., Inc. Rochester, Minnesota

## **2.0 MISSION**

As Christians based on the solid foundation of God's Word, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we strive to live out, lift up, and share our faith in Jesus Christ – welcoming all into our family of believers

## **3.0 CONFESSIONAL STANDARD**

This congregation accepts without reservation:

**3.1** The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and practice.

**3.2** All the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, to wit: the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord.

## **4.0 SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP**

This congregation shall be a member of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod as long as the Synod conforms to the congregation's confessional standards as set forth in this constitution.

## **5.0 MEMBERSHIP**

This congregation distinguishes between four types of congregational membership.

**5.1** The membership of this congregation includes the following:

**5.1.1 Baptized** members are all who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and who are under the spiritual care of this congregation

**5.1.2 Communicant** members are those baptized members who have been properly instructed and prepared to receive Holy Communion.

**5.1.3. Confirmed** members are those Communicant members confirmed in the teachings of the Lutheran Church and who accept the confessional standard of Section 3.0 of this Constitution.

**5.1.4. Voting** members are confirmed members who have reached the age of 18 years.

**5.2.1** Baptized members are received through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism or through the consent of one or both parents (or guardian/responsible party) in the case of children who have been baptized in another Christian congregation.

**5.2.2** Adult members are received through the rite of confirmation and Sacrament of Holy Baptism as appropriate, through transfer from a sister congregation, or through profession of faith or reaffirmation of faith.

**5.2.3** Eligible members who reach age 18 are received as voting members.

**5.3** Members of this congregation shall conform their entire lives to the authority of God's Word and to that end shall make diligent use of the means of grace, exercise faithful stewardship of God's many gifts and talents, impart and accept fraternal admonition as the need of such admonition becomes apparent, and be readily available for service in the kingdom of Christ within and beyond the congregation. Membership in organizations whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God is prohibited.

**5.4** Membership in this congregation shall be terminated as follows:

**5.4.1** Membership shall be terminated by transfer to a sister congregation, by joining a congregation outside the fellowship of this congregation, by excommunication or self-exclusion, or by death.

**5.4.2** Communicant members who conduct themselves in an un-Christian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20 and the congregation's stated and adopted guidelines. If they remain impenitent after proper admonition, they shall be excommunicated. Each case of excommunication shall be presented to the voters' assembly for a decision. A two-thirds majority vote of the voters' assembly shall be required.

## **6.0 CALLED CHURCH WORKERS**

The voters' assembly of this congregation shall have the exclusive right to call ordained ministers. The right to call commissioned ministers also belongs to the congregation and shall not be delegated to a smaller body and never to an individual.

**6.1** The pastoral office shall be conferred only upon pastors or candidates who profess and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in this constitution, who are qualified for the work of the ministry, and who have been endorsed by and are members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

**6.2** Only those commissioned ministers shall receive a call who adhere to the confessional standard set forth in this constitution, who are qualified for the work of the ministry to which they are called, and who have been endorsed by and are members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

**6.3** Called ordained or commissioned ministers may be removed from office in Christian and lawful order by a two-thirds majority ballot vote of the voters' assembly for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of the duties of office, or the inability to perform those duties.

**6.4** When a vacancy occurs in an office of an ordained or commissioned minister, the congregation shall notify the president of the district to receive assistance in temporarily filling the vacancy and to receive his counsel in calling a new pastor, teacher, or other church worker.

## **7.0 AUTHORITY OF AND WITHIN THE CONGREGATION**

The voters' assembly shall be the governing body of this congregation and shall be empowered to administer and manage all its affairs.

**7.1** The establishment and conduct of all organizations and societies within the congregation or related directly to the congregation shall be subject to the overall authority and general oversight of the voters' assembly.

**7.2** All matters before the voters' assembly shall be decided by a majority vote unless otherwise specified by this constitution or bylaws. Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided only on the basis of the Word of God.

## **8.0 MEETINGS**

Meetings of the voters' assembly shall be held as determined in the bylaws.

**8.1** Announcements of regular meetings shall be made in the services of the two previous Sundays.

**8.2** Announcements of special meetings shall be made in the services of the two previous Sundays or in the services of the previous Sunday when accompanied by notification by mail. Such special meetings may be called at the request of the pastor, president, church council, or ten (10) voting members.

**8.3** All voting members present at a properly called meeting shall constitute a quorum.

## **9.0 OFFICERS, CHURCH COUNCIL, BOARDS, AND MINISTRY TEAMS**

This congregation shall have the following officers, boards, and ministry teams in addition to any which the congregation shall establish from time to time. The voters' assembly shall elect a president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer who shall be the officers of the congregation. The voters' assembly shall also elect four at-large Council members, Council Elder, Council Trustee, Council Board of Education representative, Board of Elders, and Board of Fund Development. The officers, the four at-large elected voting members, the Council Elder, Council Board of Education representative, and Council Trustee as well as the administrative pastor shall comprise the Church Council of the congregation. [The administrative pastor is a non-voting, *ex officio*, member of the Church Council.] The nomination and election of officers and council members shall be as specified in this constitution and accompanying bylaws.

**9.1** The officers of this congregation shall be:

**9.1.1** The **President** shall preside at all meetings of the Voters' Assembly and shall be the chairperson of the Church Council. The President shall execute all the fiscal responsibilities authorized by the congregation or in the absence of the treasurer.

**9.1.2** The **Vice-President** shall assist the president with the president's duties.

**9.1.3** The **Secretary** shall keep accurate minutes of the meetings of the Voters' Assembly and Church Council.

**9.1.4** The **Treasurer** shall keep accurate records of the receipts and disbursement of the congregation in books which shall be and remain the property of the congregation and present reports to Voters' Assemblies and Church Council.

**9.2** The boards of this congregation shall be:

**9.2.1** The **Board of Elders**, consisting of 9 members and one additional member for every 40 family units or fraction thereof over 400 families, shall assist the pastor in the spiritual life of the congregation. One member of the Board of Elders will be the elected Council Elder.

**9.2.2** The **Board of Education**, consisting of at least 4 members, shall be responsible for the nurture and Christian growth of the members of the congregation. One member of the Board of Education will be the elected Council Board of Education Representative.

**9.2.3** The **Board of Trustees**, consisting of at least 6 members, shall be responsible for the physical properties of the congregation. One member of the Board of Trustees will be the elected Council Trustee.

**9.2.4** The **Board of Fund Development**, consisting of at least 3 members, shall govern the congregational fund and make recommendation to Church Council of available funds.

**9.3** The Church Council shall have the authority to develop and implement policies, procedures, and ministries as necessary to execute the vision and plans approved by the voters' assembly.

**9.4** The officers of the congregation and the administrative pastor [The administrative pastor is a non-voting, *ex officio*.] shall serve as the executive committee of the Church Council.

**9.5** This congregation shall have such ministry teams as are necessary to assist the called workers, elected leaders, and members of the congregation in carrying out its mission and ministry.

**9.6** Any member of Church Council or ministry team member who fails to perform the duties of office or the responsibilities of confirmed membership may be removed from duties by the voters' assembly by a two-thirds majority ballot vote in Christian and lawful order. Matthew 18 should be followed under such circumstances.

## **10.0 ELIGIBILITY FOR HOLDING OFFICE**

Voting members may serve as officers of this congregation.

In accordance with LCMS policy, only men may carry out the specific functions of the pastoral office (preaching in or serving as the leader of the public worship service, the public administration of the sacraments, the public exercise of church discipline). Accordingly, a woman shall not serve as pastor of this congregation or as a member of the Board of Elders.

## **11.0 DIVISION**

If at any time a division of the congregation should take place for any reason, the following principles will govern:

**11.1** The property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those voting members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to the confessional standards set forth in this constitution.

**11.2** In the event that the congregation dissolves, all property shall be disposed of by the final voters' assembly for the payment of debts and all just claims against the congregation, and any and all surplus and all rights connected therewith shall be conveyed to and become the property of the Minnesota South District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

## **12.0 AMENDMENTS**

This constitution may be amended in the following manner.

**12.1** Amendments to the provisions of this constitution not identified in the following paragraph shall be submitted in writing at a meeting of the voters' assembly and announced to the congregation by public posting

and/or distributed to all voting members prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the voters' present shall be required for adoption.

**12.2** Amendments to Articles III shall not destroy their essential meaning. Amendments shall be submitted in writing at a meeting of the voters' assembly and made public to the congregation by public posting and/or by distribution to all voting members. Notice of the discussion of such amendments shall be given prior to two regular voters' assemblies when the proposed action will be discussed. Notice that action will be taken on proposed amendments shall be provided to all voting members prior to the meeting when a vote will be taken. The date of approval shall be referenced in any amendment adopted.

**12.3** The revised constitution shall, as a condition of continued membership in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, be submitted to the president of the district for review by the district's constitution committee and favorable action by the district's board of directors before being implemented by the congregation.

## **BY-LAWS**

### **13.0 PROCEDURES FOR CALLING MINISTERS OF RELIGION**

When this congregation calls a minister of religion, ordained or commissioned, the following procedure shall be followed:

**13.1** When a pastor or commissioned minister is to be called, every member of the congregation shall be provided opportunity to suggest one or more names for consideration.

**13.2** A call committee shall be appointed by Church Council to serve as a screening committee and shall submit all suggested names to the district president for information and evaluation. The committee shall then present to the congregation by public announcement its proposed list of candidates and their biographical sketches.

**13.3** Ballot voting shall continue until a majority vote determines the disposition of the call.

### **14.0 CHURCH COUNCIL**

The officers of the congregation along with four at-large elected voting members, Council Elder, Council Board of Education Representative, Council Trustee, and the administrative pastor [The administrative pastor is a non-voting, *ex officio*, member of the Church Council] shall comprise the Church Council, which shall provide direction to the congregation on behalf of the voters' assembly.

**14.1** Church Council shall have the authority to develop and implement policies, procedures, and ministries as necessary to execute the vision and plans approved by the voters' assembly. Written policies and procedures shall be made available to voting members upon request. Church Council shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon it by the constitution, its bylaws, or the voters' assembly, and authority delegated to Church Council may at any time be altered or revoked by the voters' assembly. Church Council shall normally meet in regular session at least quarterly.

**14.2** The officers of the congregation along with the administrative pastor [the administrative pastor is a non-voting, *ex officio*] shall serve as the executive committee of Church Council, which shall have the authority to administer all property belonging to the congregation, approve contracts, accept and receive grants and bequests, sign documents, appear in court, review the constitution and bylaws, report to the congregation when appropriate, and take other such action as may be authorized by the Church Council.

**14.3** This congregation shall have such ministry teams as are necessary to assist the called workers, elected leaders, and members of the congregation in carrying out its mission and ministry. These ministry teams may be authorized or created by Church Council, unless a different method of authorization and/or membership selection is required by action of the voters' assembly. The ministry team shall meet on an as needed basis and report to Church Council at least annually.

## **15.0 NOMINATIONS, ELECTIONS, AND TERMS OF OFFICE**

The procedure for the nomination for elected and appointed officers, elected at-large voting members of Church Council, and the Boards of Elders, Board of Fund Development, Council Elder, Council Board of Education Representative, and Council Trustee.

**15.1** A nominating committee appointed by the Church Council shall present a slate of candidates for each elected and appointed office, voting at-large members of Church Council, Board of Elders, Board of Fund Development, Council Elder, Council Board of Education Representative, and Council Trustee. In the case of elected positions, additional nominations may be made from the floor. No person shall be nominated without his or her consent.

**15.2** A majority of the votes cast shall be required for all elections. Candidates receiving the lowest number of votes shall be eliminated in each succeeding ballot.

**15.3** All council members shall be elected for a term of 2 years (may only serve 2 consecutive terms, but may serve again in the future) (President will be Vice-president for 1 year and President for 1 year).

**15.3** Appointed members to ministry teams will serve terms as defined by their charge and membership.

**15.4** Council members, Boards, and other appointed members to ministry teams shall be installed into office in a public service of the congregation.

**15.5** In case of a vacancy in an elective office the church council shall appoint a successor to fill the unexpired term. Service for more than one-half of a term shall constitute a full term.

## **16.0 OFFICIAL DUTIES**

Church Council members, Board of Elders, Board of Education, Board of Trustees, Board of Fund Development, and ministry teams shall perform the duties as provided in the constitution. The congregation shall also have the right to detail and expand upon those responsibilities by the development of job descriptions developed by the Church Council and approved by the voters' assembly.

## **17.0 MEETINGS**

The regular meeting of the Voters' Assembly shall be held annually in January and May, and due announcement shall be made in the services the two Sundays preceding the date on which such meeting is to be held. The date shall be determined by the Church Council.

**17.1** The fiscal year of this congregation shall be January 1 to December 31

## **18.0 RULES OF ORDER**

In addition to principles laid down in Scripture and in the constitution and bylaws of this congregation, accepted parliamentary procedures such as Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed.

## **19.0 AMENDMENTS**

These bylaws may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the voters' assembly.

**19.1** Amendments shall be adopted by a majority of all votes cast, provided the proposed change has been announced in a previous meeting or has been submitted in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting to all voting members.

**19.2** The revised bylaws shall, as a condition of continued membership in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, be submitted to the president of the district for review by the district's constitution committee and favorable action by the district's board of directors before being placed into practice by the congregation.