

# CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH



## CONSTITUTION

**December 8, 2019**

**Member of The American Association of Lutheran Churches  
(TAALC)**



*The*  
American Association  
of Lutheran Churches

# Christ Lutheran Church Constitution

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## CONSTITUTION

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## CONSTITUTION

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit Amen.

### PREAMBLE

We unite in confident reliance upon the Holy Spirit by whom we are drawn to God and to one another. We believe in one, holy, universal (the Church, militant and triumphant), and apostolic Church of which Jesus Christ is the Head. We are mindful of our own inadequacies, but we have unwavering confidence in the destiny and duty of the one true Church of Christ.

Therefore, we, Christ Lutheran Church approving this Constitution, in order to serve more effectively the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, do now enter into this fellowship to express the unity of faith which exists among us. Moreover, we dedicate ourselves anew to proclaim in word and deed, on this continent and throughout the world, the Gospel of forgiveness and life everlasting through Jesus Christ our Lord.<sup>1</sup>

**01.**

### Article I

#### NAME AND INCORPORATION

The name of this congregation shall be Christ Lutheran Fellowship; doing business as Christ Lutheran Church. The congregation is incorporated under the laws of the State of Maryland.

**02.**

### Article II

#### CONFESSION OF FAITH

The congregation accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as a whole and in all their parts as the divinely inspired, revealed, and inerrant Word of God and submits to this as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life.<sup>2</sup> As brief and true statements of the doctrines of the Word of God, the congregation accepts and confesses the following Symbols, subscription to which shall be required of all its members:

1. The ancient ecumenical Creeds:
  - a. The Apostolic,
  - b. The Nicene,
  - c. The Athanasian
2. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession and
3. Luther's Small Catechism.

1. See Constitution of TAALC, February 17, 2011 page 3 Preamble.

2. See Concordia Theological Monthly May, 1952 Testimony on Faith and Life page 361, III The Means of Grace

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As further elaboration of and in accord with these Lutheran Symbols, the congregation also receives the other documents in the Book of Concord of 1580:

1. The Apology
2. Luther's Large Catechism,
3. The Smalcald Articles,
4. And The Formula of Concord,

and recognizes them as normative for its theology.

The congregation accepts without reservation the symbolical books of the Lutheran Church, not insofar as, but because they are the presentation and explanation of the pure doctrine of the Word of God and a summary of the faith of the evangelical Lutheran Church.<sup>1</sup>

## **03. Article III PURPOSE**

The purpose of the congregation shall be to proclaim and propagate the Christian faith through the Means of Grace, and to cooperate in the work and service of the Lutheran Church.

## **04. 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 organization shall conform to it.
2. The powers of the congregation shall be those necessary to fulfill its purpose, as set forth in this constitution.
3. The powers of the congregation shall be vested in the congregational meeting, called and conducted in such manner as is provided in this constitution, and, to the extent conveyed by this constitution or as assigned from time to time by the congregational meeting, or the Church Council elected by the congregation.
4. In the fulfillment of its purpose, 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;

1. Constitution of TAALC, February 17, 2011 page 5, 03.08. Pure Doctrine

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- e. sue and be sued;
  - f. elect officers and boards for the exercise of their powers and authority and require them to conduct their affairs in accordance with this constitution and its by-laws, and the resolutions of the congregation.
5. 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.
  6. Should the congregation cease to do business and be dissolved, all property and funds remaining after payments of the debts of the congregation shall be distributed to TAALC (or its successor) or any Christian corporation, trust, foundation, or organization which would then qualify under the provisions of Section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code, as now enacted or as may hereafter be amended. Such recipient of assets shall be determined prior to dissolution by a two-thirds majority vote of voting members present and voting at a congregational meeting.

**05.**

## **Article V RELATIONSHIP TO TAALC**

1. For the better attainment of its purpose, the congregation shall be a member of TAALC or its successor and shall be on the roster of the Eastern District Region or its successor. It shall be subject to the polity and discipline of TAALC.
2. The congregation claims for itself all the rights and privileges and accepts all the duties and obligations connected with membership.
3. The congregation covenants to support with prayer, personal service, and offerings the common work of the Church.
4. Severance membership in TAALC shall require a two-thirds majority ballot vote of all voting members present and voting at a legally called and conducted meeting. Such a decision shall not be effective until at least ninety days after the Presiding Pastor has been notified and until the initial action has been confirmed by a two-thirds majority ballot vote at a subsequent legally called and conducted meeting.

**06.**

## **Article VI MEMBERSHIP IN THE CONGREGATION**

Mark 16:16 New International Version “*Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*” We understand that Holy Scripture establishes Baptism as the only Rite initiating one into membership in the Christian church.

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However for the right order of the congregation, we have established what is required to be a member of this congregation.

1. Members of the congregation shall be those who are designated as such at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter, and who maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its by-laws. There shall be no membership restrictions with respect to race, color, national origin, or sex.
2. Members shall be:
  - a. Baptized in this congregation and have completed Catechism in this congregation, or
  - b. Baptized previously in the name of the Triune God and have completed Catechism in this congregation, or
  - c. Baptized previously in the name of the Triune God and have been received by proper transfer from other Lutheran Congregations, or
  - d. Baptized in this congregation as an adult and have completed the Pastor's New Member Training, or
  - e. Baptized previously in the name of the Triune God and have completed the Pastor's New Member Training.
3. Voting Members shall be:
  - a. Members who are in good standing, as provided in the by-laws.
4. It shall be the privilege and duty of members of the congregation to:
  - a. make diligent use of the Means of Grace, both Word and Sacrament, and
  - b. live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran Church, and
  - c. support the work of the congregation and TAALC.

## **07. Article VII DISCIPLINE**

1. Church discipline shall be the exercise of loving concern for each and all members of the congregation in order that together we might continue in the Christian faith, live lives worthy of the Gospel of Christ, and carry out our responsibilities of membership in this congregation.
2. A member, who advocates doctrines which are contrary to Holy Scripture and the Confessions of the Church, or who is found guilty of conduct unbecoming a member of the Body of Christ, shall be subject to discipline.
3. Discipline shall be administered by the Church Council acting in behalf of the congregation with the right to appeal to the congregation.
4. Recognizing that for the good of the Body we should teach and admonish one another, discipline in the congregation shall be exercised in accordance with Matthew 18: 15-19, and if brought to the church, the procedure set forth in the by-laws shall be used.

**08.**

## **Article VIII THE PASTOR**

1. A pastor of the congregation shall be one whose soundness in the faith, aptness to teach, and educational qualifications have been examined and approved by the Church, and who has been properly ordained, who accepts and adheres to the Confession of Faith of TAALC.
2. Authority to call a pastor shall rest in the congregation. Such authority to call shall be exercised by not less than a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a Call is issued, the officers, or a committee authorized by the congregation, shall seek the advice and help of TAALC Presiding Pastor.
3. Clergy roster: In order to serve Christ Lutheran Church, a clergyman shall be in good standing on the clergy roster of TAALC or of a judicatory in pulpit and altar fellowship with TAALC.
4. In the event of a vacancy in the pastoral office, the Church Council shall, in consultation with TAALC Presiding Pastor, provide for interim pastoral services.
5. If in the judgment of the congregation, the pastor is no longer able to serve satisfactorily, the pastor may be requested to resign. Before the resignation is requested, all parties, including the pastor, shall have the opportunity of being heard at a specially called meeting of the Church Council, in consultation with TAALC Presiding Pastor. After the hearing before the Church Council, a special meeting of the congregation must be called to consider a request for the pastor's resignation. A resolution requesting a pastor's resignation must be adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting. Not less than ten days' notice of such meeting of a congregation must be given. If the pastor's resignation has been requested in the manner here provided, the pastor shall vacate the office at the time the congregation specifies. Should the pastor fail to do so, the Church Council shall declare the pastoral office vacant.
6. In the event of alleged defection in doctrine or alleged conduct unbecoming a pastor, the matter shall be referred by the Church Council to TAALC Presiding Pastor.

**09.**

## **Article IX MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION**

1. The power and authority of the congregation shall be exercised through the congregational meeting, which shall be called and conducted in conformity with civil laws and the provisions of the constitution and by-laws of the congregation.
2. The annual meeting of the congregation shall be held not less than twenty one days nor more than forty five days after the beginning of the calendar year.

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3. A quorum for any regular or special meeting of the congregation shall be twenty five percent of the voting members.
4. A special meeting of the congregation may be called by;
  - a. action of the congregation by petition of at least twenty percent of the voting members, or
  - b. the Church Council, or
  - c. the Pastor, or
  - d. the President of the Church Council shall call a special meeting of the congregation upon the request of TAALC Regional or Presiding Pastor.
5. Official notice of a special meeting of the congregation shall be in writing and shall be posted conspicuously in the place the congregation customarily worships. Such notice shall state the time, the place, and the purpose of the meeting. It shall be signed by the President and the Vice-President of the Church Council, or by the person or persons who have called the meeting, as authorized by this paragraph. The notice of a special meeting shall also be read at all public services of the congregation held during the days preceding the date of the meeting. If no services are held during the stipulated time, not less than five days written notice of such meeting shall be given, provided, however, that no less than ten days written notice shall be given of a meeting to consider a resolution requesting the pastor to resign, and provided further that a meeting called to consider the disposition of encumbrance of real property must be called and held in conformity with such provisions of civil law as may be applicable.
6. The pastor shall be notified of the time and place at which a special meeting of the congregation is to be held.
7. Only the business for which the special meeting has been called shall be transacted at the meeting.
8. A meeting of the congregation may, by majority vote, recess to reconvene at a specified time and place. A meeting may also recess to reconvene upon call, provided, however, that the time and place of such a reconvened meeting must be announced at a public service of the congregation, and not less than three days written notice be given of the reconvened meeting.

## 10.

### Article X

#### OFFICERS, COUNCIL, AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

In as much as the membership and composition of the congregation permits, the following is to be established for the Officers, Council, and Board of Trustees.

1. At the annual meeting, the congregation shall elect a Church Council of not less than seven or more than twelve members for terms of three years each with approximately one-third of the terms expiring annually.
2. No member shall be eligible for more than two successive terms.

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3. A husband and wife may not serve on the Church Council at the same time.
4. The pastor shall be an advisory member of the Church Council, but without vote
5. At its first meeting following the annual meeting of the congregation, the Church Council shall select from its own membership, a president, a vice-president, and a treasurer who shall be president, vice-president, and treasurer of the Church Council for the congregation; and elect a council secretary and a financial secretary who may or may not be a voting member of the Church Council based on appointment or election. The pastor is a non-voting member of the Council. The duties of the officers of the congregation shall be those provided by the by-laws. The Church Council shall:
  - a. Act as the Board of Trustees. This board shall be responsible for all matters relating to legal and corporate affairs, and shall supervise the maintenance of the properties of the congregation. All legal documents shall be signed by the president and the vice-president.
  - b. Establish committees as are provided by the by-laws and supervise their work. The pastor shall be an advisory member of all committees.
  - c. Determine rosters of all the baptized, the confirmed, the members, and the voting members of the congregation.
  - d. Exercise such authority as is delegated to it by this constitution, the by-laws, and the resolutions of the congregation.
  - e. Appoint the nominating committee as provided for in the by-laws.

## **11. Article XI BY-LAWS**

The Congregation shall adopt such by-laws as may from time to time be necessary. No by-law may conflict with this constitution. By-laws may be adopted or amended at any legally called and conducted meeting of the congregation by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting.

## **12. Article XII AMENDMENTS**

1. The doctrinal basis and the confessional subscription contained in Article II, and this paragraph of Article XII shall be unalterable, and no amendment to this constitution shall conflict therewith.
2. A proposed amendment to this constitution shall be:
  - a. Read at a public service of the congregation or mailed to the voting members, not less than thirty days before the legally called meeting at which it is to be considered; and

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- b. Approved without change by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present and voting. The effective date of the amendment shall be included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.
3. If a proposed amendment fails adoption, it may be amended by a majority vote of those present and voting, and adopted without change by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting at the next annual meeting.