

**THE CONSTITUTION OF
HOLY CROSS EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
WICHITA, KANSAS**

**Adopted by the Congregation May 2, 1982
Restated by the Congregation April 27, 2014**

THE PREAMBLE

In compliance with God's Word which says, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (I Corinthians 14:40), we, the members of this congregation, accept and subscribe to the following Constitution and Bylaws in which we establish the principles under which we are incorporated and by which all the internal and external affairs of this congregation shall be governed.

ARTICLE I — NAME

The name of this congregation shall be: HOLY CROSS EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, WICHITA, KANSAS.

ARTICLE II — AUTHORITY-PURPOSE-GOAL-MISSION

AUTHORITY — Our authority is from God the Father who has sent Jesus Christ as head of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Philippians 2:9-11). By the power of the Holy Spirit and in accord with the will of Jesus Christ, we are baptized into the body of Christ and become heirs of eternal life (Matthew 28:18-20; I Corinthians 12:13; Matthew 3:11; Titus 3:5-8; I Corinthians 6:11). The Holy Spirit's continuing presence within us equips and empowers us to fulfill our ministry (I Corinthians 6:19; I Corinthians 12:7; John 14:26; Romans 8:14; Matthew 10:40).

PURPOSE — Our purpose as members of Christ's body is to glorify God by obedience to his preeminent authority (II Corinthians 10:3-5; Colossians 1:18), by carrying out his great commission of reconciliation (Matthew 28:19-20; II Corinthians 5:17-21), and by diligence in prayer, preaching, and teaching his word of truth (John 8:31-32; John 17:17; Acts 6:4; Romans 12:9-13; Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6-7; Colossians 4:2; I Thessalonians 5:17; II Timothy 3:16-17; II Timothy 4:1-2; Revelation 22:18-19).

GOAL — Our goal is to nurture each person to personally know God through Jesus Christ (John 17:3; Ephesians 4:13; Philippians 3:8-11), to grow to maturity in him, and to be equipped to win souls for him and do the work of his ministry and service for building up his body (Matthew 28:19-20; II Corinthians 5:17-21; Ephesians 3:14-21; Ephesians 4:12-13; Colossians 1:27-28). In all things we propose to preserve the unity of his body in love (Romans 12:9-13; I Corinthians 13:1-13; Philippians 2:2; I John 4:21), led by his Spirit to the glory of God (Romans 8:9-14; Ephesians 3:20-21).

MISSION — Holy Cross Lutheran Church of Wichita, Kansas, is a community of God's people gathered by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ through Word and Sacrament.

Guided by the Spirit we conclude that we are called by Christ to do the following:

- To seek conversion of the unsaved to Christ; and to encourage a Christian lifestyle through prayer, word and deed.
- To create a greater awareness of and response to the spiritual and material needs of others.
- To encourage a deeper understanding of our Christian Faith through the study of God's Word.
- To build a more personal relationship with Christ through worship.

ARTICLE III — MINISTRIES

In order to accomplish its purpose, this Congregation obligates itself as follows:

- A. To a Ministry of Worship — which shall present by Word and Sacrament God's grace and forgiveness through Jesus Christ our Lord, and provide members with the opportunity to respond in corporate worship and private devotions, resulting in a living witness (life of worship) to the world in the glorification of the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- B. To a Ministry of Parish Education — which shall train members for Christian living and discipleship, and equip members for the work of Christian witness and service through parish Christian education.
- C. To a Ministry of Witness and Service — which shall seek out and provide opportunities for Christian witness and service to the members of Christ's church and the community.
- D. To a Ministry of Management — which shall secure and manage the physical resources and assets of this Congregation—its buildings, land, equipment, and funds—to accomplish the purpose and goal of this congregation as set forth in Article II.
- E. To a Ministry of Stewardship — which shall be responsible for planning, initiating, and carrying through a continuous, on-going Stewardship program for the congregation, organized that the congregation may realize the best use of time, talents, spiritual gifts, and money to its fullest in the pursuit of personal and corporate concerns, as well as supporting mission ministries to the edification of the body of Christ and to the glory of God.
- F. To a Ministry of Fellowship — which recognizes our heavenly Father's personal and abiding fellowship with us through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ, thus enabling us, by the power of His Holy Spirit, to joyfully express our love in a sincere, personal, and edifying fellowship with the other members of the body of Christ.
- G. To a Ministry of Christian Day School Education — which shall train students for Christian living and discipleship, and equip students for the work of Christian witness and service through Christian Day School activities.
- H. To a Ministry of Youth — which exists to involve the youth of the congregation in the work of Christ in Christian service, worship and witness, provide for their spiritual growth and nurture, to promote Christian fellowship for the youth of the congregation and to be an advocate for the youth within the church structure.

ARTICLE IV — CONFSSIONAL STANDARDS

This Congregation accepts and confesses, without reservation, the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God, the only rule of faith and standard of life.

The Congregation accepts the *Book of Concord* of 1580, consisting of the following symbolical books of the Lutheran church, as the true exposition and presentation of the divine word and will:

- A. The Apostolic, The Nicene, and The Athanasian Creeds (Ecumenical Creeds)
- B. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession
- C. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession
- D. The Smalcald Articles
- E. Luther's Large and Small Catechisms
- F. The Formula of Concord

In the Divine Service of the congregation, in all educational departments, and in all ministerial acts, only such hymnals, books of instruction, and forms which are in full accord with the Word of God shall be used.

All controversies which may arise in this Congregation shall be decided and adjusted in accordance with this Article IV.

ARTICLE V — SYNODICAL AFFILIATION

It is the declared policy of this congregation to affiliate with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, founded in 1847, and this affiliation shall continue so long as the Confession of Faith of said synod is in agreement with Article IV of this Constitution.

The congregation will send the appropriate persons as determined by the president of the congregation to the District Conventions of said synod.

ARTICLE VI — MEMBERSHIP

The congregation consists of those people baptized in the name of the Triune God and/or who are under the spiritual care of Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church. Accordingly, the membership of this congregation includes the following:

A. Baptized Membership:

Baptized members are all members who have been baptized in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

B. Communicant Membership:

Communicant members are those:

1. Who are baptized members openly professing Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of their life;
2. Who accept all the Canonical books of the Old and New Testament as the only divine rule and standard of faith in life;

3. Who are familiar, at least, with Luther's Small Catechism and declare their acceptance of it;
4. Who live Christian lives and do not live in manifest works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21);
5. Who commit themselves to be fraternally admonished and corrected when they have erred (Matthew 18:15-20);
6. Who are not members, affiliates, or supporters of secret societies or other organizations conflicting with the word of God (II Corinthians 6:14-18, Matthew 5:34-37);
7. Who attend worship services faithfully and partake of the Lord's Supper frequently; and
8. Who submit for the sake of love and peace to the regulations already made or which are still to be made by this congregation, provided they do not conflict with the Word of God.

C. Voting Membership

Communicant members have the right of suffrage. The congregation realizes that a difference in the qualification of communicant members for voting privileges may be necessary in those internal congregational matters affecting the congregation and specifies the qualifications for each category fully in the Bylaws.

ARTICLE VII — CHURCH DISCIPLINE

I Corinthians 5:1-2, 9-13 establishes the responsibility of a Christian congregation to exercise church discipline. Luke 17:3-4 and Matthew 18:15-20 establish the procedure which shall be followed in the cases of church discipline. In the case of an erring member, when the successive grades of admonition have been observed, but without avail, and the member has been excommunicated, then such an excommunicated person shall lose all rights of membership and all rightful claims upon the property of this congregation. All rights of membership shall be restored upon errant persons acknowledgement and repentance of wrongdoing and reestablishment of Christian behavior.

This rule pertaining to the loss of membership and property right shall apply also to those who excommunicate themselves by refusing to submit to church discipline (self-exclusion) or who sever their connections with this church for other reasons.

ARTICLE VIII — PASTORS

The pastoral office of this congregation shall be conferred only upon such ministers and candidates who:

- A. Declare their acceptance of and adherence to all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God, and all the confessions of the Lutheran Church as enumerated in Article IV of this Constitution;
- B. Possess in a sufficient measure the qualifications of ministers of the Gospel as prescribed in I Timothy and in Titus;
- C. Have been declared qualified by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; and
- D. Are properly called by this congregation.

For the election of pastors, a unanimous vote is desirable. In case of vacancy the congregation shall consult with the proper district officials in calling a pastor without relinquishing its rights.

ARTICLE IX — TEACHERS

- A. The office of teacher of this congregation, as well as that of Minister of Education/Principal in the parochial school, shall be conferred only upon such ministers, teachers, and candidates who:

1. Declare their acceptance of and adherence to all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God, and all the confessions of the Lutheran Church as enumerated in Article IV of this Constitution; and
 2. Possess in a sufficient measure the qualifications of ministers of the Gospel as prescribed in I Timothy and in Titus.
- B. The office of "Minister of Religion, Commissioned" teacher shall be conferred only upon those who:
1. Have been "declared qualified" by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; and
 2. Are called by the Ministry of Christian Day School Education.
- C. The office of "Non-Commissioned Lay" teacher shall be conferred only upon those who:
1. Have not been "declared qualified" by the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; and
 2. Are called by the Ministry of Christian Day School Education.

ARTICLE X — OTHER PROFESSIONAL CHURCH WORKERS

According to its changing needs, this congregation may seek the services of other professional church workers, joining them in team ministry with its pastors and teachers. This office shall be conferred upon such candidates who:

- A. Declare their acceptance of and adherence to all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God, and all the confessions of the Lutheran Church as enumerated in Article IV of this Constitution;
- B. Possess in a sufficient measure the qualifications of ministers of the Gospel as prescribed in 1 Timothy and in Titus;
- C. Have been declared qualified by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; and
- D. Are properly called by this congregation.

ARTICLE XI — ADMINISTRATIVE POWER VESTED IN THE CONGREGATION

This congregation, incorporated under the laws of the State of Kansas as a nonprofit organization, shall have the rights and privileges of a religious organization to establish a place or places of worship; to purchase, maintain, and/or sell real and personal property; to do all the acts consistent with a religious organization; and to carry on a charitable work.

The congregation, through its voting members, shall have supreme power to administer and manage all its internal and external affairs. It may delegate powers to its administrative body commensurate with its duties and responsibilities as provided for in the Bylaws; but such decisions shall always be in accord with the Word of God.

ARTICLE XII — REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

Any officer, pastor, principal, or person holding a position of responsibility in this congregation, either elected or appointed, may in Christian and lawful order be removed from office by action of the congregation. Justifiable causes for removal are:

1. Persistent adherence to false doctrine;
2. Leading an offensive life;
3. Unfaithfulness or inability in reference to the performance of duties; and

4. Willful neglect of his official duties.

If a pastor is to be removed, officers of Synod or of the Kansas District of Synod shall be consulted and requested to act as advisors. Any person considered for removal must first be approached in accordance with the procedure outlined in Matthew 18:15-20.

If satisfactory results cannot be obtained, then at a meeting addressing the issue a two-thirds majority vote of the voting membership of the congregation present shall be required for removing any one from office.

Tenured or non-tenured teachers may be dismissed by the Church Council upon recommendation of the Ministry of Christian Day School Education.

ARTICLE XIII — DIVISION

In case of dissension or division on account of doctrine, which we pray God in his mercy to prevent, all property of the congregation and the benefits therewith connected shall remain with and belong to those members, even though in a minority, who abide by the confessional standards set forth in Article IV of this Constitution. The final decision in relation to Article IV shall be made by the Board of Appeals of Synod. If a division shall occur for any other reason and no peaceable settlement can be reached, the property shall remain with the majority of the membership. In case of dissolution, the property shall be deeded to the Synodical District of which this congregation is a member.

ARTICLE XIV — BYLAWS

The congregation shall adopt such Bylaws as the accomplishment of its purpose may demand.

ARTICLE XV — AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Article IV of this Constitution shall never be changed with respect to intent or content. Minor changes to wording, which clarify but do not alter, may be considered.

Any other article of this Constitution may be amended provided such amendment does not conflict with the inspired Word of God, the only rule of faith and standard of life, and is in harmony with the *Book of Concord*.

The proposed amendment must be presented to the Church Council in writing at least four weeks prior to its consideration at regular or special meeting of the congregation. Verbal or written announcement of the consideration of a constitutional amendment shall be made to the congregation at least two weekends preceding the congregational meeting. If the amendment is put to a vote at the congregational meeting, a three-fourths majority of the votes cast is required for adoption.