

**THE CONSTITUTION**  
**CONCORDIA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**OF**  
**WILMINGTON DELAWARE**

**PREAMBLE**

Whereas the Word of God demands that a Christian Congregation not only conform to the Word of God in doctrine and practice (Psalm 119:105; Galatians 1:6-8; 2 Timothy 4:1-5) but also that all things be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40); therefore, we, the members of Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church of Wilmington Delaware, set forth by this present document, signed by ourselves, the Constitution and the By-Laws in accordance with which our congregational affairs, spiritual and material, shall be conducted.

**ARTICLE I - NAME**

Section 1 The name of this Congregation shall be Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church of Wilmington Delaware.

Section 2 This Congregation shall be incorporated in the State of Delaware.

Section 3 The Corporate Trustees shall constitute the officers of this Congregation.

Section 4 This Congregation shall be a member of the Southeastern District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LC-MS).

**ARTICLE II - PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Congregation shall be that of a religious organization; more specifically, that of a Christian Congregation, established and maintained for the express purpose as a congregation to:

- Tell others of God's love in Christ (Witness).
- Serve others as Christ served us (Service).
- Keep each other strong in the faith (Nurture).
- Rejoice with one another over Christ's meaning in our lives and offer praise to God for His goodness (Celebration, Worship).
- Manage, both as individuals and as a group, our lives and resources in such a way that we serve God's purpose for us (Stewardship).
- Care for and serve one another as we share our gifts (Fellowship).

## **ARTICLE III - CONFESSIONAL STANDARD**

This Congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testament as the revealed Word of God, verbally inspired, and acknowledges and accepts all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the Book of Concord 1580, to be a true and genuine exposition of the doctrine of the Bible. These Symbolical Books are: the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the same, the Smallcald Articles, Luther's Large and Small Catechism and the Formula of Concord.

This congregation, as a member of the LC-MS, subscribes to the Biblical guidance and related policies issued from time to time by the governing body of the LC-MS.

## **ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of this Congregation shall consist of:

### **A. Baptized Members**

The baptized membership shall comprise all persons, including children, who are baptized in the name of the Triune God, and for whose spiritual well-being the Congregation has assumed direct responsibility.

### **B. Communicant Members**

The communicant membership shall include all baptized members who:

1. believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior;
2. accept all the canonical books of the Old Testament and the New Testament as the only divine Word and standard of faith and life;
3. are acquainted with and declare their acceptance of Luther's Small Catechism;
4. lead a Christian life and abstain from manifest works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-26);
5. attend divine service and partake faithfully of the Lord's Supper;
6. submit, for the sake of love and peace, to the ordinances of the Congregation, provided they do not conflict with the word of God, and accept brotherly admonition when having erred or offended;
7. do not support nor adhere to any organization whose teachings or practices conflict with the Word of God;
8. have been received into communicant membership in accordance with the By-Laws.

Only communicant members may hold elected office or vote.

## **ARTICLE V - OFFICERS, BOARDS, AND COMMITTEES**

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES - THE OFFICERS**

#### **The Officers**

The Board of Trustees of this Congregation shall consist of Communicant Members who are at least twenty-one years of age. Each Trustee shall be nominated and elected specifically to any one of the following offices:

1. President
2. Vice President of Deacons
3. Vice President of Business
4. Vice President of Administrators
5. Treasurer
6. Financial Secretary
7. Secretary
8. Additional Trustees as needed.

Pastor, other called servants, and Preschool Director are non-voting, ex-officio members of the Board of Trustees.

#### **Nomination and Election of Officers**

Officers shall be nominated and elected at the regular March Congregational meeting. A simple majority of those present and eligible to vote is necessary for election. Election of Trustees should be staggered annually so there is continuity during the transition years.

#### **Terms and Term Limits for Officers**

Officers shall be elected for a term of two years. Officers may be elected for two consecutive terms of two years each - a total of four consecutive years. Officers who have served two terms may run for a different office. No member may serve as President or Treasurer for more than four years total.

#### **Assumption of Duties and Corporate Powers**

Officers elected in the March meeting shall assume the duties of their office on June first following. These Trustees shall have the corporate powers provided for in the Laws of the State of Delaware, and shall constitute the Officers of the Congregation.

#### **Election of Additional Temporary Officers**

The President may nominate such other temporary officers as may be deemed necessary to meet the needs of the Congregation. Such nominations may be proposed by the President at any regular or special Congregational meeting. Nominations shall include the special need and intended purpose for the temporary officer. No temporary officer shall serve for more than one year from the date of his/her election. Upon election by the Communicant Members, these additional officers shall become members of the board of Trustees and shall have the standing of a permanently established member of that Board. The election of temporary officers does not amend this Constitution.

## **OTHER BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

There shall be a Board of Deacons, an Administrative Board, a Business Management Board, a Nominating Committee, and an Audit Committee, and such other boards and committees as the By-Laws of this Congregation may prescribe, or as the Communicant Members may elect or appoint in accordance with its needs. The Pastor, other called servants, and the President shall be ex-officio members of all boards and committees of this Congregation.

## **BOARD OF DEACONS**

### **Number of Deacons**

The Board of Deacons shall consist of the Vice-President (Deacons), and as many additional Deacons as the Vice President of Deacons and the Pastor may determine are required to appropriately serve the congregation.

### **Election of Deacons**

Deacons shall be nominated and elected at the regular March Congregational meeting. A simple majority of those present and eligible to vote is necessary for election.

### **Terms and Term Limits for Deacons**

The term of office for Deacons shall be two years with at least thirty percent (30%) of the terms expiring annually. Deacons may serve for six terms of two years each for a total of twelve years.

### **Governance of the Deacons**

The Vice-President (Deacons) shall serve as Chairperson of the Board of Deacons and ensure that a record is kept of each meeting.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD**

### **Composition of the Board**

The Administrative Board shall consist of the Vice-President (Administrators), and eight Administrators.

### **Number and Election of Administrators**

Eight Administrators shall be nominated and elected at the March regular Congregational Meeting, each to be responsible for one of the areas of the Congregation's Ministry as specified in the By-Laws. A simple majority of those present and eligible to vote is necessary for election.

### **Terms for Administrators**

Administrators may serve for two terms of two years each. Election of Administrators should be staggered annually so there is continuity during the transition years

### **Governance**

The Vice-President (Administrators) shall serve as Chairperson and ensure that a record is kept of each meeting.

## **BUSINESS MANAGEMENT BOARD**

### **Composition of the Board**

The Business Management Board shall consist of the Vice-President (Business), the Financial Secretary, the Treasurer, the Property Administrator, and the Administrator for Stewardship. Since this Board is comprised of elected officers and administrators, there is no additional requirement for election to the Board or for terms and term limits.

### **Governance**

The Vice President of Business shall serve as Chairperson of this Board and ensure that a record is kept of each meeting.

## **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

### **Composition, Appointment and Ratification**

The Audit Committee shall consist of two or more members nominated by the Nominating Committee and ratified by a simple majority of eligible voters present at the Annual Meeting in March.

### **Term and Term Limits**

Audit Committee appointments shall be for one year beginning June first following their ratification. Audit Committee members ratified for the first time may serve for two consecutive one year terms. Audit Committee members may serve additional one year terms after a gap of two years between each successive one year term.

## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

### **Composition, Appointment and Term Limits**

The Nominating Committee shall consist of three or more members appointed by the President by February first. Nominating Committee members may serve multiple terms without limit.

## **AUTHORITY FOR APPOINTMENTS**

All appointments shall be made by the President with the guidance of the appropriate Vice-President unless otherwise stated.

## **ARTICLE VI - PROPERTY RIGHTS OF CONGREGATION**

This Congregation may receive, acquire, hold title to, and manage such real estate and other property as it may need to accomplish said purpose and may sell or dispose of such real estate and other property or any part hereof; and this Congregation shall have all rights and the powers that are granted by the laws of the State of Delaware to religious corporations.

## **ARTICLE VII - POWERS AND RIGHTS**

The Communicant Members as a body shall represent the Congregation and have full and final authority to act in the administration of all congregational affairs, or to delegate administration or congregational affairs except as provided in this article. The Communicant Members shall never enact or decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the Symbols of the Lutheran Church; and all actions or enactments contrary to Article III of the Constitution shall be null and void.

## **ARTICLE VIII - PASTORS AND SERVANTS**

Only such pastors and servants shall be called by this Congregation as are in accord with the confessional standards of this Congregation (Article III) and as have been prepared and are well-qualified for their work. The right of the calling or dismissing of pastors and servants shall be vested in the Communicant Members and shall never be delegated to a smaller body or to an individual.

Reasons for dismissing a pastor or servant shall be: persistent adherence to false teaching, an ungodly life, unfaithfulness or inability in reference to the performance of duties. For the election or dismissal of pastors and servants an eighty percent (80%) majority vote of the meeting is required. Only males shall be called to be Pastor of this Congregation.

## **ARTICLE IX- BY-LAWS**

This Congregation may adopt such By-Laws as the accomplishment of the purpose of its organization may demand.

## **ARTICLE X - AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to this Constitution require three steps as follows:

1. Amendments must be proposed in writing by the President at a regular meeting of the Communicant Members .The Amendments will be submitted by the President and discussed by voting members present.
2. Proposed Amendments shall be voted on at the next regular meeting of the Communicant Members. Adoption of an Amendment requires approval by at least two-thirds of the voting members present at this meeting with the exception of amending Article VIII, which requires 80%.
3. Approved Amendments shall be presented to the district committee designated for that purpose. Upon receipt of written approval from the district, the Amendments will become effective and will become a part of this Constitution,