

# CONSTITUTION

## EDINA COMMUNITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

### PREAMBLE

Inasmuch as the Word of God teaches that in every Congregation all things shall be done decently and in order, we, the Edina Community Lutheran Church of Edina, a religious corporation incorporated under the laws of the State of Minnesota, Chapter 317 Minnesota Statutes, known as the Minnesota Non Profit Corporation Act, do hereby adopt the following Constitution:

### I. CONFESSION OF FAITH

This congregation accepts the canonical books of the Old and New Testament as a whole and in all their parts as the divinely inspired and revealed Word of God and submits to this as the Authority in all matters of faith and life.

As brief and true statements of the doctrine of the Word of God, this congregation accepts and confesses the following symbols, subscription to which shall be required of all its members:

- 1) The ancient and ecumenical creeds: The Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian.
- 2) The Unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism.

As further elaboration of and in accord with these Lutheran symbols, this congregation also receives the other documents in the Book of Concord of 1580: The Apology, Luther's Large Catechism, the Smalcald Articles, and the Formula of Concord; and recognizes them as normative for its theology.

This congregation accepts the Symbolical books of the evangelical Lutheran Church as the presentation and explanation of the Word of God and a summary of the faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

### II. STATEMENT OF MISSION AND PURPOSE

Edina Community Lutheran Church is a community of people baptized into Christ. Through God's grace we struggle corporately and individually to live, grow and develop as Christ's followers through worship, confession, forgiveness, service, advocacy, study, mutual support and peacemaking.

To pursue and fulfill this mission we agree:

- \* to worship regularly and inclusively as a gathered community, around Word and Sacraments,
- \* to witness, as redeemed persons whose lives have been filled with God's grace and who are called to invite all others to share that grace,
- \* to serve, in Christ's name, working to bring healing to the brokenness and separation in our lives and in society,
- \* to study, sharing critical inquiry as we grow in understanding of God's will for our lives, and the life of the world, and to meet new challenges and gain new perspectives on our faith,

\* to advocate mercy, justice, liberation and peacemaking in our lives, communities, nation and the world, committing ourselves to nonviolence in all relationships, striving to increase awareness of issues of hunger, oppression, war and peace,

\* to care for one another, to resolve conflict with love, honesty, directness, openness and gentleness, and support those in need beyond our community, affirming that all persons are created in God's image to be whole and to be treated with respect and dignity,

\* to encourage one another to witness and serve in our daily lives by developing and using our gifts, time, money and resources; inviting all persons to share in God's grace,

\* to support ministries in our community, work cooperatively with other churches and organizations, and through benevolence giving, the programs of the Minneapolis Area Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

\* to welcome all persons, without regard to sex, marital status, age, race, sexual orientation, abilities, or other human conditions, inviting all into membership, mission, and leadership.

### III. LITURGY AND RITUAL

The public worship of the congregation shall be conducted in conformity with the general usage of the synodical church body with which this congregation is affiliated.

### IV. AFFILIATION

This congregation shall be affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and shall be subject to the polity and discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor organization.

### V. MEMBERSHIP

Members of this congregation shall be those persons who are defined as members at the time this Constitution is adopted, or who are admitted hereafter, and who maintain membership in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and By-laws.

All members shall be classified as (1) Baptized members, (2) Confirmed members, and (3) Voting members.

1) Baptized shall be those who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and who have been received by the congregation.

2) Confirmed members shall be those baptized members who have been confirmed in the Lutheran faith and as such recognized by the congregation.

3) Voting members shall be those baptized and confirmed members of this congregation who have been duly accorded this status by the congregation in accordance with its Constitution and By-laws.

All members of this congregation shall be required:

- 1) To make diligent use of the Means of Grace,
- 2) To live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Christian church,
- 3) To support the work of the congregation and the parent or synodical group to which it is affiliated.

Discipline in the congregation shall be exercised in accordance with Matthew 18:15-18.

#### VI. PASTORAL CALL

- 1) Authority to call a pastor shall rest in the congregation. Such authority to call shall be exercised by at least a two-thirds majority vote of a congregational meeting duly called for that purpose. Before any call is issued, the Council of Ministers may appoint a call committee for the purpose of screening and locating candidates, and such call committee may seek the advice and assistance of the district or national officers of the synod or parent group to which the congregation belongs.
- 2) The pastor, as spiritual leader of the congregation, shall be an ex-officio member of the Council of Ministers and an advisory member of all other boards, committees, and auxiliary organizations existing within the framework of the church.
- 3) No one shall be called to, or permitted to officiate in, the pastoral office of this congregation who is not acceptable according to the standards of the synodical or parent group to which this church is affiliated, except this provision may be waived in the congregation's sole discretion, upon a two-thirds vote at an annual or special congregational meeting.  
(Section 3 amended and ratified January 27, 2002, and January 26, 2003)
- 4) It shall be the privilege of the congregation to ask for the resignation of the pastor for any justifiable reason. Such request, however, shall be made only after a duly called congregational meeting casts a two-thirds majority vote for such requested resignation by written ballot.
- 5) The pastor shall be at all times responsible to the Council of Ministers and to the congregation. Matters involving discipline of the pastor for alleged defection on doctrine or for alleged conduct unbecoming a pastor shall be referred to the Council of Ministers for action, and, only if such alleged irregularities cannot be resolved at that level shall they be referred to the congregation as a whole or the district or synodical officers.

#### VII. POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

- 1) In all matters of Christian faith and life the authority of the Word of God shall be supreme.
- 2) In all matters left undecided by the Word of God and not subject to civil laws the congregation itself, and not any individual or any group of individuals within it, shall have the right of ultimate decision. The Council of Ministers shall at all times be completely and absolutely responsible to the congregation as a whole.

3) All schools, societies, organizations, committees, groups, operating within the usual framework of a church organization shall exist only with approval and sanction of the congregation and shall at all times be responsible to the congregation and the Council of Ministers. Such auxiliary organizations shall submit reports to the Council of Ministers and congregation when called upon and must operate in harmony with the policies of the church. The Council of Ministers may request reports from the church organizations at annual congregational meetings.

4) Where the Articles of Incorporation, the Constitution, and the By-laws of the congregation are otherwise silent on a matter, the following authorities shall be considered in their order named: the Word of God, the Civil Laws of the State of Minnesota, as they relate to incorporated religious organizations and finally Robert's Rules of Order and parliamentary procedures.

#### VIII. LEGAL OWNERSHIP

1) Title to all real or personal property acquired by the congregation, its organizations or individuals for use by the congregation and its organizations shall be held by and in the name of the congregation as a corporation.

2) Real property shall not be purchased, conveyed or sold, or encumbered in any manner except by resolution adopted by a two-thirds vote at a properly called congregational meeting.

3) Should the congregation for any reason be dissolved or its property fall into disuse title to its assets, including real and personal property, shall pass to the synodical group to which the congregation was last affiliated, except that if dissolution should occur, it shall be the privilege of the dissolving congregation to grant all its assets, real, personal, or intangible, to another church organization.

#### IX. CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

1) The power and the authority of the congregation shall be exercised through the congregational meeting, called and held in conformity with civil law, this Constitution, the constitutional By-laws, and Robert's Rules of Order.

2) The annual congregational meeting shall be held in the first calendar quarter of each and every year, as decided by the Council of Ministers. Notice of call for the meeting shall be in conformity with the rules set forth in the By-laws.

3) Special meetings of the congregation may from time to time be held, and such meeting may transact any business which could be transacted at any annual meetings. Notice of call for the special meetings shall be in conformity with the rules set forth in the By-laws.

#### X. THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

The congregation at its annual meeting shall elect in the manner provided by the By-laws, a council known as the "Council of Ministers," consisting of a president, a vice-president, a secretary, a treasurer, and nine ministers. Ex officio the pastor or pastors shall be members of the Council of Ministers without vote. The Council of Ministers shall have the following authority:

1) Such authority as may be delegated to it by the congregation, the Constitution, and the By-laws.

- 2) Work with the pastor in providing for the spiritual care of the congregation and promoting its material welfare.
- 3) Act upon such disciplinary matters as may be referred to it, provided however, that no members shall be excommunicated without action of the congregation.
- 4) Manage the financial affairs of the congregation.
- 5) Appoint such pro tem committees as may be necessary or advisable to aid in the discharge of its duties.
- 6) To select and employ such persons as necessary to supply the need and functions of the church in its activities, including that of any assistant pastor or pastors.
- 7) Meetings of the Council of Ministers shall be held as prescribed in the By-laws.

#### XI. BY-LAWS

The congregation shall adopt such By-laws as it may deem necessary or expedient to more orderly conduct its affairs in accordance with this Constitution. By-laws may be amended by a duly called congregational meeting by a simply majority vote.

#### XII. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

This Constitution may be amended provided such amendment does not conflict with the Articles of Incorporation or Laws of the State of Minnesota in the following manner:

The proposed amendment must be described in the call for the annual congregational meeting. The proposed amendment must then be passed by a two-thirds vote of two successive annual meetings of the congregation. Upon passage at the second annual meeting, the amendment shall become effective forthwith.

*Updated January 31, 2016*