



Saint John Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
6950 Ward Road
North Tonawanda, New York 14120

Constitution and Bylaws

Constitution Revision: 7/27/2014
Bylaw Revision: 12/10/2023

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

The word of God requires that a Christian congregation shall conform to the divine word in doctrine and practice (*Ps. 119:105; Matt. 28:18-20; Gal 1:6-8; 2 Tim. 4:1-5*) and that all things be done decently and in order (*1 Cor. 14:40*). Therefore, we a congregation of Lutherans in North Tonawanda (St. Johnsbury), Town of Wheatfield, Niagara County, New York accept and subscribe to the following Constitution and Bylaws by which all spiritual and material affairs of our congregation shall be governed.

ARTICLE I. NAME

- A. The name of this congregation shall be St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, U.A.C. (Unaltered Augsburg Confession), of North Tonawanda (St. Johnsbury), Town of Wheatfield, Niagara County, New York.

ARTICLE II. SYNODICAL AFFILIATION

- A. This congregation shall be affiliated with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod as long as the confessions and constitution of the Synod are in accord with the confessions of this congregation as laid down in Article III of this constitution. It shall be the duty of the congregation and its individual members to support, collaborate with and assist the Synod in effecting all sound measures intended for the building up of the kingdom of God.

ARTICLE III. CONFSSIONAL STANDARDS

- A. This congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testament as the revealed and inspired Word of God, and the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, as the true and pure exposition of Christian doctrine as it is revealed in holy scripture. according to which, therefore, all Christian doctrine shall be taught in our midst and doctrinal controversies, should such arise among us, be judged and decided.
- B. These symbolical books are:

1. The three Ecumenical Creeds (The Apostles' Creed, The Nicene Creed, The Athanasian Creed)
2. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession (U.A.C.)
3. The Apology of the U.A.C.
4. The Smalcald Articles
5. Luther's Small Catechism
6. Luther's Large Catechism
7. The Formula of Concord

ARTICLE IV. MISSION

- A. The mission of the congregation is to serve its members and to spread the kingdom of God by the preaching of his word, by the administration of the sacraments, and by the religious instruction of youth and adults according to the confessional standards of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (Article 3), and to foster Christian fellowship and charity.
 1. In furtherance of these purposes, the congregation may acquire, hold, or sell real and other property as needs arise.

ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP

- A. The membership of this congregation consists of the following:
- B. Baptized Membership: Baptized members are all the members who have been baptized name of the Triune God, including infants and children on the membership rolls who have not yet confirmed their baptismal vows.
- C. Communicant Membership: Candidates for Communicant members are those:
 1. Who are baptized in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
 2. Who accept all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the only divine rule and standard of faith and life and give evidence of continued spiritual growth.
 3. Who are familiar at least with Luther's Small Catechism and declare their acceptance of it.
 4. Who are not members, affiliates, or supporters of secret societies or other organizations conflicting with the word of God.
 5. Admission into Communicant Membership:
 - a) By Confirmation, all who have been received by the sacred act of Confirmation.

- b) By transfer, all persons coming with a communicant letter of transfer from a congregation in church fellowship, provided they conform in all respects to the requirements of membership, shall be received the Pastor and/or Elders whose actions shall be reported at the next meeting of the Voters Assembly.
- c) By profession of faith and/or adult baptism: These persons shall submit their application to the Pastor and having given satisfactory evidence of qualifications for communicant membership to the Pastor and at least one elder, they shall be received as communicant members upon approval at the next meeting of the voter's assembly.

D. Termination of Membership

1. By transfer to other Missouri Synod congregations

- a) Members desiring to join a congregation in church fellowship shall present their request for transfer in writing to the Pastor and Elders. Such a transfer of membership request shall be reported at the next voter's meeting.
- b) Joining other churches: in cases where members have joined another congregation outside our own fellowship, they shall, upon recommendation of the Pastor and Elders, be considered to have terminated their membership and their names shall be removed from the membership list by a resolution at the next voter's meeting.

2. Disregard of the Sacrament of the Altar:

- a) Any member who has not communed at least once in the past year, but is able, shall be placed on the mission or inactive list and is to be admonished by the Elders according to Matthew 18:15-20. In the event such admonishment is refused or ignored, the member shall be requested in writing to attend the next voter's meeting to determine membership status according to Matthew 18:15-20.

3. Whereabouts unknown:

- a) The names of members whose whereabouts are unknown and cannot be established shall be removed from membership upon recommendation of the Pastor and Elders at the next voter's meeting.

4. Excommunication:

- a) Public and impenitent sinners are, after conscientious but fruitless admonition according to the order prescribed in Matthew 18:15-20, to be excommunicated from the congregation. On account of this excommunication, such persons forfeit all privileges of a communicant member as long as they do not repent.
- b) Likewise, they have no claim upon the property of the congregation during their separation.
- c) A unanimous vote at the voter's meeting shall be required for every resolution for excommunication, which terminates membership.
- d) When the excommunicated person shows himself/herself penitent and desires to be reinstated, and accordingly confesses his/her sin before the Pastor or any member of the congregation, he/she is to be received again as a brother and this is to be reported to the church at the next divine service.

E. Expectations of Communicant Members

1. It is expected that Communicant Members:

- a) Attend divine services faithfully (**Hebrews 10:25**)
- b) Lead Christian lives and do not manifest works of the flesh (**Galatians 5:19-21**)
- c) Partake of the Lord's Supper regularly after their confirmation (**1 Corinthians 11:26**)
- d) Contribute regularly and faithfully, as God has prospered them, toward the building of Christ's kingdom in the congregation and throughout the world (**Matthew 22:21**)
- e) Devote their time and talents to the extension of the kingdom of God.
- f) Permit themselves to be fraternally admonished and corrected when they have erred.
- g) Parents obligation is to provide adequate instructions in the true Christian doctrine to their children.

F. Voting Members

1. Voting membership: all confirmed members who have reached their 18th year, have read, agreed to, and signed the constitution and bylaws of the congregation, and have been accepted by the voters assemble shall be entitled to vote and hold office unless otherwise excluded from doing so in accordance with the Constitution and bylaws of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church.

ARTICLE VI. THE OFFICES OF PASTOR AND TEACHER

- A. The Office of Pastor shall be conferred on men who have been ordained in the LCMS and profess and adhere to the Confessional Standard set forth in Article 3 and are well qualified for the position.
- B. The Office of Teacher in the Parochial School shall be conferred on qualified individuals who profess and adhere to the Confessional Standard set forth in Article 3 and are well qualified for the position.
- C. The Pastor or any Teacher may be removed from office by the congregation by secret ballot, in Christian and lawful order.
- D. Causes for Removal
 1. Persistent adherence to false doctrine
 2. Scandalous life
 3. Criminal activity
 4. Inability to perform official duties.
 5. Shameful neglect of official duties
 6. Synod may demand removal from office if any of these conditions have been found to be manifest following lawful investigation.

ARTICLE VII. POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

- A. General: The congregation as a body, through the voting members, shall have supreme power to administer and manage all its external and internal affairs. The establishment and conduct of all institutions and societies within the congregation, such as the parochial school, Sunday School, youth societies, ladies' organizations, men's club, etc. shall at all times be subject to the approval and supervision of the congregation in accordance with Article 3.

- B. Right of Calling: The right to call Pastors, teachers, or co-workers shall be vested in the voter's assembly of the congregation and shall never be delegated to a small body or to an individual. The candidate receiving the majority of all votes cast shall be considered elected by the congregation. Final action of such an election is to be made unanimous.
- C. Decisions: Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided in accordance with the terms of Article 3. Other matters shall be decided by the voter's assembly by a majority vote unless otherwise specified by the constitution or bylaws.

ARTICLE VIII. OFFICERS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

- A. Powers of congregational officers or committees, elected by the Voters Assembly or otherwise appointed in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them by the Constitution and Bylaws or the specific instructions to appointed ad-hoc1 committees.
- B. Whatever power may have been conferred to them may at any time be altered or revoked by the voters for cause.
- C. Removal from office: any officer, Pastor, teacher, or co-worker may be removed from office by the congregation by ballot, in Christian and lawful order, for one of the following causes; persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life and inability to perform his official duties or willful neglect of them. Or synod may demand the demotion of the same when these causes are, following investigation, found to be manifest.

ARTICLE IX. PROPERTY RIGHTS

- A. Any gifts or bequests to the congregation shall be the sole property of St. John Evangelical Lutheran church.
- B. If at any time a separation shall take place on account of doctrine, the property of the congregation and all benefits therewith connected shall remain with those members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Article iii of this constitution.
- C. In the event the congregation shall totally disband, the property and all rights connected therewith shall be transferred to the Eastern District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri synod.

ARTICLE X. DOCTRINAL LITERATURE AND CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION

- A. Hymns, prayers, and liturgies used in the public services of the congregation and in all ministerial acts shall be in accordance with the confessional standard of Article 3.
- B. Literature and books for classes in Christian doctrine shall be in accordance with Article 3.

ARTICLE XI. BYLAWS

- A. The congregation may adopt such bylaws as may be required for the accomplishment of its mission.

ARTICLE XII. CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

- A. Unalterable Articles: The following Articles of this constitution or sections can be neither altered nor repealed under any circumstance:
 - 1. Articles 2, 3, 4, 5-a, 5-b, 6, 7-b, 7-c, and 10.
- B. Any communicant member has the right to submit changes or amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws. Proposed changes must be submitted first to the Council for review.
- C. Amendments or changes to this constitution and the bylaws may be adopted at a regular or special voter's assembly, provided:
 - 1. That they do not conflict with provisions laid down in Article 3 or with any section of any other Article that pertains to scriptural doctrine and practice.
 - 2. That the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at a previous voter's assembly to be voted on at the next regular or special meeting.
 - 3. A two-thirds affirmative majority of the voting membership present shall be required for the adoption of an amendment.

END OF CONSTITUTION

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I. VOTER'S ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

- A. Regular voter's meetings shall be following a Sunday church service to be announced in April, June, September, and December.
- B. The annual reports of the congregation shall be submitted at the December meeting.
- C. The annual elections shall be held at the June voter's meeting with terms to begin September 1st.
- D. Special meetings shall be held subject to the call of the President, the Pastor or at the written request of seven (7) voting members. Such requests shall specify the purpose of the meeting. No other business shall be transacted.
- E. Regular Voter's meetings shall be announced twice in the church bulletin, on two different Sundays and at least once in church. Special meetings shall be announced once in the bulletin, a week in advance, if possible, and the same Sunday in church.
- F. When a meeting has been properly called, those attending such meeting shall represent the congregation and shall be capable of transacting business and adopting valid resolutions.
 - 1. In matters pertaining to doctrine and conscience, unanimous consent is required to adopt valid resolutions, while in all routine external matters a majority of those present shall prevail.
 - 2. A quorum shall consist of at least fifteen (15) members for voter's meetings and 50 percent of filled offices for council meetings.

ARTICLE II. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- A. In the June Voter's Meeting, the Nominating Committee shall submit nominees for the following offices:
 - 1. 1 President for a term of 2 years
 - 2. Recording Secretary for a term of 1 year
 - 3. Financial Secretary for a term of 2 years
 - 4. Treasurer for a term of 2 years

5. Property and benefits administrator for a term of 2 years
 6. Assistant to treasurer for a term of 2 years
 7. 2 Elders for a term of 2 years
 8. 3 trustees for a term of 2 years
 9. 2 Board of Christian education members for a term of 2 years
 10. 2 Board of stewardship members for a term of 2 years
 11. 1 chairman of the Board of Social ministry for a term of 2 years
 12. 1 chairman of the Board of youth ministry for a term of 2 years
 13. Cemetery superintendent for a term of 2 years.
- B. Any voting member can nominate additional candidates from the floor. The nominee must accept the nomination verbally at the voter's meeting or, if not present, in writing prior to the meeting.
- C. If two or more candidates are to be elected for a particular office, the plurality rule of election shall be in effect and the candidates receiving the largest number of votes shall be declared elected even though they may not have received the majority vote. In the event of a tie, another ballot shall be cast for the candidates involved. Voting is to be by secret ballot. In the event of a vacancy of an elected office, a temporary appointment shall be made until the next election.

ARTICLE III. APPOINTMENTS

- A. The following are to be appointed by the President during the June meeting with the effective date of office being September 1st:
1. 1 delegate and 1 alternate for Eastern District conventions.
 2. 1 Lutheran Hour representative.
 3. 1 property and benefit administrator for a term of 2 years.
 4. 2 members for youth ministry for a term of 2 years.
- B. All appointments are subject to approval at the next voter's meeting.

ARTICLE IV. THE CHURCH COUNCIL

- A. The Church Council shall consist of the following members or their designee in the event they can't attend:
1. President
 2. Vice-President (an Elder who shall serve as chairman of the church council)
 3. The Board of Elders
 4. Recording Secretary

5. Treasurer
 6. Assistant to the treasurer
 7. Financial Secretary
 8. Property and benefits administrator
 9. Chairman of the Board of trustees
 10. Chairman of the Board of Christian education
 11. Chairman of the Board of stewardship
 12. Chairman of the Board of evangelism
 13. Chairman of the Board of Social Ministry
 14. Chairman of Youth Ministry
 15. Property and Benefit Administrator
 16. Head Usher.
 17. Chairman of the Building Committee
- B. The Pastor, school principal, and Sunday School Superintendent shall serve as non-voting advisors to the council.
- C. A quorum shall consist of 50% of the filled offices and board and committee representatives. Attendance via electronic communications will be permitted.
- D. Attendance in person is preferable, but attendance via electronic communication means is permitted. (i.e., Skype, Zoom or equal)
- E. Additional members may be added to any board or committee of the council as needed. These additional members shall serve as long as needed but shall not become members of the church council.
- F. The church council is to appoint a chairperson of the counting teams.
- G. In general, all matters that are presented at the voter's meeting should be discussed first by the church council and then submitted with the council's recommendation to the voter's assembly.
1. In any event, no voting member of the congregation shall be deprived of the right to present any matter directly to the voter's assembly with the exception of changes to the Constitution or Bylaws. The Church Council must review these proposals.

ARTICLE V. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

A. All Officers and Boards

1. As we as members of Christ's Church here on earth it is the duty of everyone to be mindful of evangelism opportunities and promote them within the scope of each office in the spirit of bringing salvation to the sinners and un-churched.

B. The President shall:

1. Preside over all council, regular, and special voter's meetings.
2. Be an ex-officio non-voting member of all other boards and committees.
3. Be authorized to sign any contracts related to real estate property of the congregation along with the chairman of the trustees.

C. The Vice-President shall:

1. Be selected by the Board of Elders.
2. Assist the President in the performance of his duties.
3. Take the President's place and discharge the duties of the President's office during the President's absence or until a successor to the office has been elected.
4. Be the chairman of the church council.
5. If both the President and the Vice-President are absent for a regularly called meeting, the assembly shall appoint a chairperson to preside.
6. Be authorized to sign any contracts related to real estate property of the congregation along with the chairman of the trustees in the event of the President's absence.

D. The Recording Secretary shall:

1. Maintain all legal documents and contracts.
2. Keep minutes of all council, voters, and special meetings as well as a roll of all its members in attendance for each meeting.
3. Publish the minutes of the voter's meeting in the manner which determines the most effective way to reach all members.

E. The Treasurer shall:

1. Receive and disburse all budgeted monies of the congregation including the school at his/her discretion or by special direction of the church council.
2. Keep account of all money received and money disbursed.

3. Present a report of such transactions at all church council and voter's meetings.
4. Present all account books and pertinent papers to the Auditing Committee for review within 30 days of the close of the fiscal year.
5. Be a member of the Board of Finance.

F. The Assistant Treasurer shall:

1. Be a member of the Board of Finance
2. Assume the role of Budget Director.

G. The Financial Secretary shall:

1. Be a member of the Board of Finance.
2. Keep records of all member contributions received by the congregation.
3. Prepare contribution records for each contributing member at the close of the calendar year.

H. The Property and Benefits Administrator shall:

1. Be a member Board of Finance
2. Work with professional providers to obtain church and school insurances and employee benefit plans and procedures.
3. Act as point of contact for staff and volunteers for benefit concerns.
4. Perform similar duties for property and business-related insurance coverages.

ARTICLE VI. THE BOARD OF ELDERS

A. The Board of Elders shall consist of 6 male voting members (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1: 5-9) two (2) members to be elected in rotation for a term of 2 years. The board shall organize itself.

B. The duties of this board shall be to:

1. Assist the Pastor in caring for the spiritual welfare of the congregation. The board shall, together with the Pastor, discuss and deliberate the spiritual condition of the congregation and explore means of improving church and communion attendance. It shall consider the work among the young and cooperate with the evangelism committee in carrying on an energetic missionary program. It shall consider the work of the church at large and the role which the congregation shall take in it.

2. Show concern for the congregation's welfare by speaking to members about the work of the church, by counseling the erring and reaching out to the unchurched.
 3. Fulfill its duties relating to the budget process (Article 18).
 4. Initiate corrective action if the Pastor(s), teachers(s) or any other called servant of the congregation gives offense in doctrine or life,
 5. Relieve the Pastor of attending to minor details, so that he may devote himself to more important work, such as the preparation of his sermons, etc.
 6. In love, admonish those that are frequently absent from attending church services and the Lord's Table and/or give offense by their manner of life. Matthew 28:15-20.
 - a) Sins which are not generally known shall not be made public.
 - b) Matters of a personal and or private nature discussed at the meetings of the board shall be kept strictly confidential.
 - c) Admonitions shall be lovingly given in a friendly, brotherly, Christian spirit, so that the one who is being admonished shall understand that it is his own spiritual welfare that is being sought.
 7. Make provision that good order is preserved at the church services, creating an atmosphere of devotion.
 8. Assist the Pastor at all communion services and be present or be represented at all other services.
- C. In no case shall the board supersede the authority of the voter's assembly. If for reasons of charity and prudence, matters which might be presented to the voter's assembly are investigated, discussed, and decided upon by the board but not satisfactory to those concerned, an appeal may be made to the voter's assembly.
- D. The board shall not unduly interfere with Pastor's official duties.
- E. The board shall be responsible for the wellbeing of the Pastor.
- F. Assist the Pastor at all communion services and be present or be represented at all other services.

ARTICLE VII. THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

- A. The Board of Christian Education shall consist of six voting members, two (2) members to be elected every year for a term of two (2) years. The board shall organize itself.
- B. The board shall oversee all educational activities for the congregation and the Christian day school.
- C. The duties of the Board of Christian Education shall be to:
 - 1. Fulfill its duties and responsibilities outlined in The Board of Christian Education Policy Manual within the authority given through the Constitution and Bylaws of this church.
 - 2. Follow the policy-based governance model defined within The Board of Christian Education Policy Manual.
 - 3. Interview prospective teachers and administrator applicants, recommend the candidates to the church council and voter's assembly and, upon approval, have the President of the congregation execute the call or contract. Specific details are contained within the board policy manual.
 - 4. Submit regular reports and recommendations to the church council and voter's assembly.
 - 5. Assist the administrator, teachers and staff in their work by word and deed wherever possible and, if necessary, remind them of their duty.
 - 6. Fulfill its duties relating to the budget process as contained in Article 18 of the Bylaws.

ARTICLE VIII. BOARD OF PARISH EDUCATION

- A. The board shall consist of five or more voting members, two members to be elected every year for a term of 2 years. The board shall organize itself.
- B. The Board of Parish Education shall assist the Pastor and Council by overseeing the following:
 - 1. Sunday School
 - 2. Vacation Bible School
 - 3. Bible Studies
 - 4. Youth Activities

- a) Supervise the youth program and all activities of the youth to ensure that the goals of spiritual growth, Christian service and fellowship are actively promoted.
 - b) Formulate policies for youth activities and involvement that are consistent with Christian faith and principles.
 - c) Recruit and provide the training of youth counselors to meet the needs of the youth program.
5. Counselors shall be recruited by the board with the responsibilities to:
- a) Set an example of Christian faith, responsibility and maturity for the youth.
 - b) Work with and assist the youth in planning, promoting, and implementing group activities.
 - c) Learn how to minister to and with the youth on an individual and group basis.
 - d) Help the youth grow in their ministry to one another and in their participation in the total life of the congregation.
 - e) Promote the goals and purpose of youth ministry and be supportive of policies of the Board of youth.
 - f) Actively encourage and reach out to youth to develop greater participation in youth programs.
 - g) Periodically review the youth program and activities and provide suggestions for improvement and growth.
 - h) Seek ways to integrate the youth more fully into the total life and ministry of the congregation.
- C. Submit regular reports and recommendations to the church council and voter's assembly.
- D. Fulfill its duties relating to the budget process as contained in Article 18 of the Bylaws.

ARTICLE IX. THE BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

- A. The board shall consist of five or more voting members, two members to be elected every year for a term of 2 years. The board shall organize itself.
- B. The Board of Stewardship shall:
 - 1. Consider, plan, direct and review at least annually a total stewardship program.
 - 2. Encourage a full life of Christian stewardship on the part of every member of the congregation through personal contact, printed matter, etc.
 - 3. Encourage members of the congregation eighteen years of age or over to become voting members and participate in the life of the congregation. In general, encourage the use of special abilities and interest of all members in the work of the kingdom.
- C. The Board shall serve as a permanent member of the budget committee.
- D. The Board of stewardship shall report to the church council and the voter's assembly.

ARTICLE X. THE BOARD OF FINANCE

- A. The Board of finance shall consist of the treasurer, the Financial Secretary, the assistant to the treasurer, the assistant to the Financial Secretary, property and benefit administrator and any additional members deemed necessary by the church council for the proper function of the board. Bonding shall be determined by the church council. The board shall organize itself.
- B. The duties of the board shall be:
 - 1. Promote and supervise the financial support of the congregation including the school.
 - 2. Serve as a permanent member of the budget committee.
 - 3. Supervise the distribution of the annual contribution envelopes and the sending of a statement of all contributions to all communicant members at least annually.
 - 4. Assist the Board of Stewardship in planning long range financial programs, special appeals, and collections.

ARTICLE XI. THE BOARD OF SOCIAL MINISTRY

- A. The Board of Social ministry shall consist of three or more voting members, two members to be elected every year for a term of 2 years. The Board shall organize itself.
 - 1. The Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the board.
- B. The Board shall promote the life together we have in Christ (Romans 12:15) as we mutually support each other and our community through the love of Christ shown to us.
- C. The Board shall assess, plan, and oversee such activities that promote a genuine love for our neighbor. (John 13:34-35, Galatians 5:14):
 - 1. Discover the social welfare needs of individuals and families within the Congregation especially of the aged, the sick, and of the poor and report these needs to the Pastor and/or Elders with suggestions for action by the Congregation,
 - 2. Plan, organize, and facilitate activities or ongoing programs to promote the care and well-being of the Congregation based on assessed needs.
 - 3. Call to the attention of the Congregation the social needs of the community and solicit its cooperation with worthy community-based agencies that are endeavoring to meet those needs.
 - 4. Coordinate the management and distribution of Congregational funds with oversight by the Pastor and Elders to help individuals, members, and community with urgent financial needs.
 - 5. Maintain a standing emergency fund of \$500.00. The Pastor shall be permitted to spend up to \$500.00 at his discretion.

ARTICLE XII. THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- A. The Board of trustees shall consist of nine voting members, two voting members elected every year for a term of two (2) years. The board shall organize itself.

- B. As primary property managers the duties of the Board of trustees shall be:
- C. To administer all property belonging to the congregation, to make and sign contracts, except for real estate property, and to transact all other business of the congregation assigned to them by the voter's assembly.
- D. Make frequent inspections of all church property and be on the alert for improvements and repairs.
- E. Make provisions for fuel and other necessary utilities.
- F. Enlist the aid of competent members of the congregation to assist in making repairs, alterations, improvements and care of the church grounds and equipment and make necessary recommendations to the church council.
- G. The chairman of the board shall supervise the janitorial services and shall fulfill its duties relating to the budget process (Article 18).
- H. The board shall have the authority to spend up to one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) for necessary repairs.
- I. In all transactions and recommendations to/for the congregation sound business practices such as submission of bids and astute economical consideration should be followed.
- J. Any contracts related to real estate property belonging to the congregation must be signed by the chairman of the trustees and the President or Vice President of the congregation.

ARTICLE XIII. USHER'S STAFF

- A. The usher's staff shall consist of as many members of the congregation as are necessary to carry out the proper function of the office. The head usher shall be elected for a term of 2 years. The head usher shall appoint the usher's staff.
- B. The duties of the ushers shall be:
 - 1. Welcome visitors to the church services and provide for the physical comfort of all in attendance.
 - 2. Make proper seating arrangements for all in attendance.
 - 3. Collect the offerings at each church service.

4. Assist at all communion, baptismal, or other special services as the Pastor directs.
5. Keep an accurate record of the number in attendance at each church service.

ARTICLE XIV. STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Nominating Committee

1. All members of the church council, the Board of stewardship and the Pastor.
2. It is to be called by the President to meet approximately 90 days prior to election date.
3. A list of selected candidates shall be asked personally to serve in the office for which they have been nominated.
4. Each candidate shall receive a written confirmation of selection and job description.
5. Each candidate should notify the nomination committee of his/her intentions within 30 days of receipt of this letter.
6. The slate of candidates shall then be presented to the voter's assembly.

B. Auditing Committee

1. To be appointed annually by the President.
2. Three voting members who are not members of the church council.
3. The committee shall review the books of the congregation and all its' organizations.

C. Budget committee

1. To be appointed annually by the church council
2. Shall consist of the Board of finance and the Board of stewardship.
3. The church council may also appoint any other members of the congregation as the need may arise.
4. The duties of this committee are outlined in Article 18 of these bylaws.

D. Building Committee

1. To be appointed by the President
2. Shall consist of five (5) voting members, including at least one member of the Board of Trustees.
3. Shall organize itself.
4. Shall identify, prioritize, plan, implement, and manage capital improvement projects for the buildings and grounds.

5. Shall coordinate with the Budget Committee to plan for and secure funding for current and projected capital improvement projects.

E. Fellowship Committee

1. To be appointed by the President
2. Shall consist of five (5) voting members.
3. Shall organize itself.
4. Shall plan, implement, and coordinate congregational fellowship activities i.e. family picnic, Sunday hospitality hour, Easter breakfast, and other events.

ARTICLE XV. AMMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

- A. Amendments to any Article of the bylaws may be made in a regularly called meeting of the voter's assembly after it has been presented in writing at a previous voter's meeting. The proposed amendment shall be announced at least twice before the next voter's meeting. A two-thirds majority of the voting members present is required for the amendment to be approved.

ARTICLE XVI. CHURCH BUDGET

- A. The Voters Assembly shall adopt an annual budget in accordance with the Constitution and other applicable Bylaw Articles to be good stewards of the blessings God has given the congregation.
 1. The adopted budget shall be the guide for all financial activities of the Church and School.
- B. Budget Committee Responsibilities: The Budget Committee, appointed per Article 15C, shall solicit spending requirements from each board and committee.
 1. Each board and committee shall be responsible for providing projected general expense requirements to the Budget Committee.
 2. Compile income requirements and estimates for the next budget year.
 3. Compile all expenditure requirements.
 4. Present the balanced budget draft to the church council for review and approval.
 5. Assist the council in the presentation of the budget to the voter's assembly.
- C. Additional Board and Committee responsibilities relative to the budget:

1. Board of Elders shall propose fair and appropriate levels of pay for the Pastor, called servants of the church, church secretary, and church organist and submit to the Budget Committee any special requests from the Pastor.
 2. The Board of Christian Education shall propose fair and appropriate levels of pay for the administrator, school secretary, teachers, and the support staff.
 3. The Board of Parish Education shall propose expense requirements.
 4. The Board of Trustees shall also propose anticipated expenditures for regular maintenance activities. (e.g., snow plowing, janitorial, etc.)
- D. Reporting: The Finance Committee shall submit quarterly comparison reports to the Church Council showing budget vs. actual receipts and expenditures.

ARTICLE XVII. MEETING AGENDA

- A. To help maintain proper order in all things the Regular Quarterly Voter's Assembly and the Church Council meetings shall follow this agenda:
1. Call to order
 2. Opening Prayer/Devotion
 3. Success stories/Good news
 4. Reading and approval of last meeting minutes
 5. Pastor's report
 6. Officer's reports
 7. Committee reports
 8. Old business
 9. New business
 10. Announcements

ARTICLE XVIII. AFFIRMATION AND EXPLANATION OF SYNOD AFFILIATION

- A. St. John Lutheran Church (The Congregation) is part of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS or Synod). The LCMS is a mission-oriented and Bible-based denomination that confesses the historic, orthodox Christian faith in the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a faith built on “the foundation of the apostles

and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone” (Eph. 2:20). With the universal Christian Church, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod teaches and responds to the love of the Triune God, who created all that exists; became man to suffer, die, and rise again for the world’s redemption; and brings people to faith and new life through His Word and Sacraments. The three persons of the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – are coequal and coeternal, one God.

- B. LCMS congregations voluntarily choose to belong to the Synod, and, although diverse in many ways, all hold to a shared confession of Jesus Christ as taught in Holy Scripture. We believe without reservation that the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament are the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice. In addition, the Synod accepts without reservation the writings contained in the Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.
- C. Believing in the authority of Holy Scripture and that the Lutheran Confessions are a correct interpretation and presentation of biblical doctrine; our congregations agree to conform all their teaching and practice to the Scriptures and the Confessions.
- D. The Synod “is not an ecclesiastical government, exercising legislative or coercive powers” (LCMS Constitution, Article VII) concerning its member congregations and ministers. However, the voluntary association of member congregations and ministers includes their agreement to respect and honor and uphold (Bylaw 1.7.2, 1.8.1) decisions (resolutions) made by the Synod in its national conventions regarding the understanding of the teachings of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions and practices that are consistent with such teaching. The Synod in convention is the “principle legislative assembly” of the LCMS (Bylaw 3.1.1) and its resolutions and statements are the position of the Synod in matters of doctrine and life. The Constitution and Bylaws of the LCMS provide specific guidance for the implementation and supervision of the teaching and practice of its members (congregations and rostered church workers).
- E. Congregations of the LCMS, while upholding teachings and practices that are consistent with Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions and while honoring Synod convention resolutions, are self- governed and establish policies based on local circumstance and expediency. An LCMS congregation or ministry operates

according to its own constitution and bylaws – which are required by the Synod Bylaws to be reviewed by the District through which the congregation holds membership in the Synod – and therein establishes an orderly way of making decisions and determines which individuals or entities in the congregation (e.g., the Pastor, church council, Board of Elders) shall have authority to act on behalf of the congregation in specific circumstances. The Constitution and Bylaws of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church governs our decision-making and policies. A copy is available upon request.

ARTICLE XIX. AFFIRMATION AND EXPLANATION OF BELIEFS ON MARRIAGE, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY

- A. Marriage matters. God, in creating the world, created humanity in His image, as male and female, and gave marriage to be the lifelong union of one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24), a gift to be held in honor and kept pure (Heb. 13:4; 1 Thess. 4:2-5). Marriage between one man and one woman for life uniquely reflects Christ’s relationship with His Church. (Eph. 5:21- 33). The LCMS believes that God gave marriage as a picture of the relationship between Christ and His bride the Church (Eph. 5:32) and believes that “on the basis of Scripture, marriage [is] the lifelong union of one man and one woman” (Gen. 2:2-24; Matt. 19:5-6) (2004 Res. 3-05A).
- B. In creating humanity as male and female, God enables human sexual expression to serve His purposes. Sexual intercourse and all genital sexual activity, the most intimate gifts of human sexual expression, are intended by God to be enacted only within marriage, the lifelong union of man and woman, so that they may be “fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 1:28) as they “become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). Marriage cannot be understood apart from the gift of children. The result of this marriage union, when it is God’s shall, is the conception and birth of a child. The optimal setting for the care of children is the loving marital unity of a man and woman; thus, marriage also serves as the foundational unit of a stable society. It provides the best chance that children shall grow up in the same home with both a mother and father. Among many other negative cultural developments over the last several decades, the general acceptance of sex outside of marriage and other sexual sins, including homosexual behavior, constitute direct attacks upon this divinely established, universal institution.

- C. Gender likewise matters. God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female, and these distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27). But some individuals reject their biological sex and often present as the opposite sex. In so doing, these confused individuals reject God's design and the person He created them to be.
- D. Because the Congregation believes that genital sexual activity is intended by God within the one-flesh union of the marriage of man and woman, it does not accept or condone marriages between people of the same sex and it believes that homosexual behavior is prohibited in the Old and New Testaments (Lev. 18:22, 24, 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9-20; 1 Tim. 1:10) as contrary to the Creator's design (Rom. 1:26-27). The LCMS affirms that such behavior is intrinsically sinful and it has also urged its members "to give a public witness from Scripture against the social acceptance and legal recognition of homosexual 'marriage' (LCMS 2004 Res. 3-05A). It is, therefore, the policy of the Congregation that marriages performed in our facility will be limited to one-man/one-woman unions exclusively.
- E. At the same time, the Congregation firmly believes "the redeeming love of Christ, which rescues humanity from sin, death, and the power of Satan, is offered to all through repentance and faith in Christ, regardless of the nature of their sinfulness" (LCMS 1992 Res. 3-12A) and that sexual sin is only one of the countless ways that human beings turn away from God's shall and design. The Congregation has access to a LCMS Law/Gospel ministry plan for use in ministry to those who are troubled by homosexual desires, Ministry to Homosexuals and Their Families.

ARTICLE XX. AFFIRMATION AND STATEMENT OF BELIEF ON MARRIAGE, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY

- A. We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.
- B. We believe that the term marriage has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

- C. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).
- D. We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the Congregation as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Congregation members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the Congregation in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 5:22).
- E. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).
- F. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of The Congregation.

ARTICLE XXI. AFFIRMATION OF BELIEFS ON THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

- A. Human life is because God created us in his own image and likeness (Gen.1:26-28). He intends us to be in a relationship with him. As our Creator, he alone is the Lord of Life; therefore, no one can claim the right to intentionally destroy another human being.
- B. Every person must be respected. Human life must be protected absolutely from the moment of creation — the moment of conception. From this moment on, every human being has the rights of a person, including the most important right of every person — the right to life. Scripture says, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you” (Jer. 1:5). The miracle of life is something to be greatly respected and praised: For thou didst form my inward parts, thou didst knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise thee, for thou art fearful and wonderful. Wonderful are thy works! Thou knowest me right well; my frame was not hidden from thee, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth (Ps 139:13-15).

- C. Abortion, therefore, is contrary to the moral law. This has been the teaching of the Church since the first century. At the moment of conception, God creates a human person, with the dignity and rights of every human person, in his image and likeness. He calls us to protect and defend life. "For your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning... Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image" (Gen. 9:5-6).
- D. Just as we are called to protect, care for, and respect the unborn, we are also called to protect, care for, and respect those who are sick or handicapped. Euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons. It, too, is contrary to the moral law. The dignity of the human person and the right to life is not limited to those who are healthy or "perfect."
- E. Directly acting or omitting care in such a way as to cause death is a grave offense. However, discontinuing medical procedures that are dangerous or extraordinary can be legitimate. Here, the intention is not to cause death, but rather it is an acceptance of the inability to prevent death.
- F. From the moment of conception until the moment of natural death, every person must be defended, protected, cared for, and healed to the best of our ability. Abortion and euthanasia, therefore, are abhorrent crimes. Cooperation in either is a sin, a grave offense against God.
- G. Suicide is also a grave offense against the sanctity of human life. We are responsible to accept the gift of life from God and respect him as the author of life who alone decides when life begins and when life ends. God has placed us as stewards over life; we do not own it and so it is not ours to dispose of.
- H. However, we with compassion on those persons who, under the weight of extreme psychological illness and depression, are driven to the point of taking their own life. Such persons we commend to the mercy of God, who alone has means unknown to us to bring them to repentance and a share in Christ's mercy and forgiveness.
- I. Individuals can forfeit their right to absolute protection of human life. Situations that can justify killing another human being involve the legitimate defense of persons and societies, since these are founded on respect for the sanctity of one's own life. Thus, for example, the use of appropriate force to defend one's own life against deliberate attack, the use of the death penalty by the state as punishment for heinous crimes when lesser means are ineffective to protect society, and the use of warfare to defend a society against an aggressor when all other forms of defense have failed, are all legitimate reasons.

- J. In all cases, however, deliberate murder is never condoned. Abortion, euthanasia, and suicide are all tragic effects of a society that has ceased to value the intrinsic worth of the person. It is the responsibility of all Christians to preach the Gospel of life to all who are searching and struggling for life's meaning and fulfillment. Only through our words and actions will Christ's message be heard: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn 10:10)

ARTICLE XXII. AFFIRMATION OF BELIEFS REGARDING SUFFRAGE AND THE WOMAN'S ROLE IN THE CONGREGATION

- A. We find nothing in Scripture which prohibits women from exercising the franchise in voters' assemblies.
- B. Those statements of Scripture which direct women to keep silent in the church, and which prohibit them to teach and to exercise authority over men, we understand to mean that women ought not to hold the Pastoral office.
- C. Such passages, we hold, indicate that women ought not to hold any other office in the church whose function it is to assist the Pastor in the exercise and administration of the Office of the Keys. (i.e., Board of Elders)
- D. We find no statement in Scripture which prohibits women from holding office on the boards and committees of St. John whether such offices are filled by election or by appointment.
- E. We conclude that we are at liberty to alter the constitution and our practices to conform to these declarations if we believe that such changes are in the best interest of the congregation and of the church at large.

ARTICLE XXIII. ADOPTED STANDARDS FOR FACILITY USE

- A. The Church Council must approve all uses of church property and facilities. Generally, priority shall be given to church members, their immediate families, and organized groups that are part of the ministry, organization, or sponsored activities of the church.
- B. The church believes that its property and facilities are to be used for the fellowship of the Body of Christ and to bring glory to God. Although the facilities are not generally open to the public, we sometimes make our facilities available to approved non-members as a witness to our faith, in a spirit of Christian service that

is consistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But facility use will not be permitted to persons or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs or practices that conflict with the church's faith or moral teachings, which are summarized in, among other places, the church's constitution and bylaws, and in various places on its website www.stjohnnt.com and on the website of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod www.lcms.org.

- C. This facility use policy is consistent with our belief that allowing our property and facilities to be used for purposes that we determine are contrary to this church's beliefs would be an endorsement of those purposes and a contradiction and grave violation of the church's faith and religious practice (2 Cor. 6:14; 1Thess. 5:22). Further, it is important that the church present a consistent message to the community and that the church staff and members conscientiously maintain that message as part of their Christian life and as a witness to others that is consistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- D. Therefore, in no event shall persons or groups who hold, advance, or advocate beliefs, or advance, advocate, or engage in practices that contradict the church's faith use any church facility. Nor may church facilities be used in any way that contradicts the church's faith. This policy applies to all church facilities, regardless of whether the facilities are connected to the church's sanctuary, because the church understands all of its property as a gift from God to be received with thanksgiving and to be set apart and used to the honor of Jesus' name in ways that are consistent with our faith in Him (Col. 3:17).
- E. Consistent with this policy, church property, facilities and equipment including the school will be made available to non-members or outside groups which affirm that their beliefs and practices and planned uses of the facilities are consistent with the church's faith and practice.
- F. While no fee will be charged for the use of the facility, a \$100.00 security deposit for damages will be required, fully refundable within a week from the end of the event.
- G. Facility Use Hours: Facilities are available between the hours of a.m. and p.m. Use outside these hours may be approved by the Pastor or official designee.
- H. Facility use requests shall be made to the Church office by submitting the "Church Facility Reservation Request and Agreement" form. The event will be reserved and placed on the church calendar only when the Pastor or official designee approves the use.

- I. Use of church facilities is subject to a use and maintenance fee of \$100.00 security deposit. Church members are not required to pay a fee for usage because maintenance of the facilities is derived from member offerings.

ARTICLE XXIV. SPECIFIC FACILITY USE GUIDELINES

- A. Alcohol Policy: No alcohol may be served in church facilities.
- B. Smoking Policy: Smoking in any indoor church facilities is prohibited.
- C. Groups are restricted to only those areas of the facility that the group has reserved.
- D. Food and beverages in classrooms, worship space, and corridors are not allowed.
- E. Church equipment, such as tables and chairs, must be returned to original placement, unless arranged otherwise prior to the event.
- F. All lights must be turned off and doors locked upon departure.
- G. Clean-up back to the state found is required by the group using the facility.
- H. Abusive or foul language, violent behavior, and drug or alcohol abuse are strictly prohibited on church premises. Any person exhibiting such behavior will be required to leave the premises. Any incidents of illegal substance use will be reported to the Sherriff Department.
- I. Any person or group must sign the "Church Facility Reservation Request and Agreement" form prior to reservation of church facilities.
- J. Facility usage requires the presence of adult supervision at all times.
- K. Note that certain unanticipated events may require your event to be relocated (i.e., funerals).
- L. The congregation is not responsible for theft or damage to personal property brought on to the property or into the building.
- M. The group acknowledges that they will not bring or allow dangerous items, including firearms, to be brought into the facility.
- N. This document constitutes the entire agreement between the parties and is not assignable.

- O. Insurance: For all non-church-sponsored events, the group or person using the facilities must obtain liability insurance coverage in the amount of one million dollars. (\$1,000,000.00). The user must also sign the “Facility Use and an Indemnity and Hold Harmless Agreement.”

END OF BYLAWS

Attachments: St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church and School Facility Use Agreement

Name of person or organization requesting use of facilities: _____

Please indicate whether you are a:

Church Member Church-Sponsored Ministry Non-Member Individual

Non-Member Group/Organization: _____

Contact Information: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

If the requested use is by an organization not affiliated with the church, please briefly state the organization's purpose and mission: _____

Please list the organization's website, if any: _____

Please list the names and phone numbers of the organization's officeholders and leaders:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Please describe the purpose for which you intend to use the facilities: _____

What date(s) and time(s) are you requesting to use the facilities: _____

I affirm that:

1. I understand that the church does not allow its facilities to be used in a way that contradicts its faith or by persons or groups holding beliefs that contradict the church's faith.
2. To the best of my knowledge, the purpose for which I am requesting use of church facilities will not contradict the church's faith, and I commit to promptly disclose any potential conflict of which I am aware or become aware to church staff.
3. I am not aware of any beliefs that are professed by me or the organization I represent and which is requesting use of the church's facilities that contradict the beliefs of the church. I agree to promptly disclose any potential conflicts in belief to church staff.
4. I understand that upon approval of my facilities use request, I will need to provide a security deposit in the amount of \$100.00 , a certificate of insurance for at least \$1,000,000.00 of coverage, and any other fees required by the church.
5. I understand that the church does not allow its facilities to be generally available to the public, and that my use of these facilities is subject to the Congregations approval, which is conditioned in part on my agreement to the requirements in the "Church Facility Use Policy," a copy of which I have read and understood.
6. I understand that I will be responsible for any damages to the church facilities resulting from this proposed use of facilities.
7. The church believes disputes are to be worked out between parties without recourse to the courts. See, generally, Matt. 18 and 1 Cor. 6. Accordingly, users of the facility agree to attempt resolution of any disputes through Christian mediation.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT

ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

By agreeing to and signing St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church (the Church) Facility Use Policy, Guidelines and Facility Use Agreement the undersigned renter hereby agrees to defend, indemnify and hold harmless the Church, its officers, employees, and members against any and all claims, lawsuits, causes of action, judgments, or other liability, arising from injury to person or property, sustained by any person, association, partnership, corporation, or other entity, arising directly or indirectly from the acts or neglect of the Renter, its officers, agents, employees, or members, participants, guests, invitees, or persons under the control of the Renter.

In furtherance of the foregoing indemnification, the Renter also hereby agrees to provide evidence (in the form of an ACORD certificate of liability insurance) of insurance policies of General Liability and/or Special Event Liability and agrees to maintain said policies of insurance in force during the course of the permitted event, including the start time, ending time, set-up time and breakdown time. Said policies of insurance shall protect against liability arising from all matters in connection with the event and or in any way relating to Renters activities in connection therewith. Said policies of General Liability and/or Special Event Liability insurance coverage shall each be maintained in the sum of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence (or higher amount at the sole discretion of the Church).

The Church shall be named as an additional insured and certificate holder under the General Liability, including any Excess/Umbrella Liability policy, and/or Special Event Liability policies (with the permitted event being set forth or described in the description of operations box of the certificate of insurance).

At its own expense, the Renter shall indemnify, defend and hold harmless in any and all causes of action, lawsuits or claims brought against the Church, its officers, employees, or members.

Renter Name: _____

Signature: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Date: ____/____/20____