

# St. Timothy Lutheran Church

## The Constitution

### **PREAMBLE**

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

For as much as the Lord commanded his children to gather regularly for public worship, the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments by the establishing of the Church and the office of the Holy Ministry, this constitution presents the visible format under which these present day disciples would accomplish these purposes and provide for Christian growth in the Body of Christ in our midst.

### **1.0 NAME**

The name of this congregation shall be Saint Timothy Lutheran Church of Edmonds, Snohomish County, Washington, a religious corporation chartered by the state of Washington.

### **2.0 MISSION**

The purpose of this congregation shall be to give honor and glory to the Triune God, to carry out his will, to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world, to manifest the unity of our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior, to foster Christian fellowship and love, to extend a helping hand in human need, and to achieve our objectives by the preaching of the Word of God, by the administration of the sacraments, and by the religious instruction of all its members according to the confessional standard of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as explained in Article III.

### **3.0 CONFSSIONAL STANDARD**

This congregation accepts without reservation:

3.1 The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice;

3.2 All the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, to wit: the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord.

## **4.0 SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP**

This congregation shall be a member of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod as long as the Synod conforms to the congregation’s confessional standards set forth in this constitution as determined by a majority vote of the congregation at a meeting called for that purpose.

## **5.0 MEMBERSHIP**

### **5.1 Membership**

The membership of this congregation includes the following:

5.1.1 *Baptized* members are all who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and who are under the spiritual care of the pastor of this congregation, including the children who have not yet been confirmed.

5.1.2 *Communicant* members are those baptized members who have been instructed in the Lutheran faith, accept the confessional standard of Article III of this constitution, are familiar with the contents of *Luther’s Small Catechism* and are not members of organizations whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God.

5.1.3 *Voting* members are communicant members who have reached legal age who have agreed to accept the constitution of the congregation.

### **5.2. Reception**

Baptized and communicant members are received through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, through the consent of one or both parents in the case of children who have been baptized in another Christian congregation, through the rite of confirmation, through transfer from a sister congregation, or through profession of faith or reaffirmation of faith. The reception shall be approved by the Board of Elders.

### **5.3. Duties**

Members of the congregation shall conform their lives to the rule of God’s Word and to that end make diligent use of the means of grace, exercise faithful stewardship of God’s many gifts and talents, impart and accept fraternal admonition as needed, and be readily available for service in the kingdom of Christ within and beyond the congregation.

## **5.4 Termination**

5.4.1 Membership shall be terminated by transfer to a sister congregation, by death, by joining a congregation outside the fellowship of this congregation, by excommunication, or by self-exclusion. Each case shall be decided by the Board of Elders with concurrence of the Pastor.

5.4.2 In cases of members joining a fellowship outside this congregation or by self-exclusion, members would request in writing or verbally to the Pastor or an Elder for a “Peaceful Release”. Such release would be given after review and approval of the Pastor.

5.4.3 In all other cases, the Board of Elders, with guidance of the Pastor, will attempt to contact the members who have been absent for an extended period and confirm their intentions. In cases when contact is not possible, the Board of Elders with concurrence of the Pastor will terminate their membership.

5.4.4 Communicant members who conduct themselves in an un-Christian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20. If they remain impenitent after proper admonition, they shall be excommunicated. In all disciplinary cases, the congregation will follow its stated and adopted guidelines.

## **6.0 CALLED CHURCH WORKERS**

6.1 The Voters of this congregation have the exclusive right to call ordained and commissioned ministers.

6.2 Only those commissioned ministers shall receive a call who adhere to the confessional standard set forth in this constitution, who are qualified for the work of the ministry to which they are called, and who have been endorsed by and are members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, who are candidates of LCMS colleges and universities who have satisfied the qualifications and requirements for assignment of first calls, and who are commissioned ministers in good standing from church bodies that are in altar and pulpit fellowship with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

6.3 The right of calling ordained or commissioned ministers shall be vested in the voter’s assembly and shall not be delegated otherwise.

6.4 Called ordained or commissioned ministers may be removed from office in Christian and lawful order by a two-thirds majority ballot vote of the voter’s assembly for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of the duties of office, the inability to perform those duties, or domineering in office.

6.5 In case of a vacancy in the office of an ordained or commissioned minister, the congregation shall notify the president of the District so that he may assist in temporarily

filling the vacancy and also give assistance in regard to the calling of a new pastor, teacher, or other church worker.

## **7.0 AUTHORITY OF THE CONGREGATION**

7.1 The voter's assembly shall be the governing body of this congregation and shall be empowered to administer and manage all its affairs.

7.2 The establishment and conduct of all organizations and societies within the congregation or related directly to it shall be subject to the approval and supervision of the voters assembly.

7.3 All matters shall be decided by majority vote of the voter's assembly unless otherwise specified by this constitution or bylaws; matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided only on the basis of the Word of God.

## **8.0 MEETINGS**

Regular meetings of the voter's assembly shall be held as determined in the Bylaws.

8.1 Announcement of the meetings shall be made in the worship services of the two previous Sundays.

8.2 Special meetings require announcement in the worship services and publication in the worship bulletins of the two previous Sundays or notification by mail and announcement in the worship service and publication in the worship bulletin on the previous Sunday. Such special meetings may be called at the request of the pastor, the president, the church council, or ten (10) voting members.

8.3 All voting members present at a properly called meeting shall constitute a quorum.

## **9.0 OFFICERS AND BOARDS**

This congregation may have the following officers and boards in addition to any which the congregation shall authorize from time to time.

### **9.1 Officers**

9.1.1. A president, who shall conduct the meetings of the church council and voter's assembly, and shall be authorized to sign all legal documents.

9.1.2. A vice-president, who is to fill the role in the president's absence or inability to act, and is authorized to sign all legal documents.

9.1.3. A secretary, who shall keep the minutes of the church council and voters meetings and is authorized to sign all legal documents.

9.1.4 A treasurer, who shall be responsible for the financial records of the congregation, and is authorized to sign all legal documents.

9.1.5 A financial secretary, who shall oversee the receipt and deposit of all monies in an account established in the name of the congregation.

## **9.2 Boards**

9.2.1 A board of elders, which shall assist the pastor in the spiritual life of the congregation.

9.2.2 A board of trustees, which shall be responsible for the physical properties of the congregation. The chairperson shall be authorized to sign all legal documents.

9.2.3 A board for Christian Education, which shall be responsible for the nurture and Christian growth of the members of the congregation.

9.2.4 A board for Preschool, which shall be responsible for the Preschool.

9.2.5 A board for evangelism, which shall lead the members of the congregation in outreach to others in the community and around the world.

9.2.6 A board for youth, which shall be responsible for ministry to and with youth.

9.2.7 A board for stewardship, which shall encourage the members in proper stewardship of time, talents and treasures.

9.2.8 A board for fellowship, which shall seek to nurture relationships in the congregation.

9.2.9 A board for finance, which shall oversee the finances of the congregation.

9.2.10 A board for social ministry, which shall encourage members to care for the physical needs of others.

## **9.3 Removal from Office**

9.3.1 Any officer or board or committee member who fails to perform the duties of office or the responsibilities of confirmed membership may be removed from office by the voter's assembly by a two-thirds majority ballot vote, in Christian and lawful order. Matthew 18 should be followed under such circumstances.

## **10.0 DIVISION**

10.1 If at any time a division of the congregation should take place for any reason, the property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those communicant members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to the confessional standards set forth in this constitution.

10.2 In the event the congregation should dissolve, the property shall be disposed of by the final voter assembly for payment of debts and all just claims against the congregation, and any and all surplus and all rights connected therewith shall be conveyed to the Northwest District of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

## **11.0 AMENDMENTS**

This constitution may be amended in the following manner;

11.1 Amendments to the provisions of this constitution not identified in the following paragraph shall be submitted in writing at a meeting of the voter's assembly and announced to the congregation by public posting and/or mail to all communicant members prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the voters present shall be required for adoption.

11.2 Amendments to Articles 2,3,4,6, and 11 shall not destroy their essential meaning. Amendments shall be submitted in writing at a meeting of the voter's assembly and made public to the congregation by public posting and/or by mail to all communicant members. Notice of the discussion of such amendments shall be given prior to two regular voter's assemblies when the proposed action will be discussed. Notice that action will be taken on proposed amendments shall be provided to all voting members prior to the meeting when a vote will be taken. The date of approval shall be referenced in any amendment adopted.

11.3 The revised constitution shall, as a condition of continued membership in good standing in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, be submitted to the president of the district for review by the district's constitution committee and favorable action by the district's board of directors before being adopted by the congregation.