

CONSTITUTION

1.0 NAME

The name of this Congregation shall be St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Inc. of Slavia Florida.

2.0 PURPOSE & MISSION

The purpose of this Congregation shall be to give honor and glory to God, to carry out His will, to assist in preaching 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 to 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.

Believing the call of God to make disciples is our greatest privilege and responsibility, the mission of this Congregation is to:

- reach out through worship, visitation, Christian education, special activities/events and a variety of media to those locally and others serviced by St. Luke's agencies who have no active relationship with Christ and His Church.
- Conduct nurturing ministries, confirmation instruction and outreach training within;
- provide participation opportunities, prayer and financial support for local, district, synodical and worldwide ministry . . .

so that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ's Body, the Church, may grow and serve.

3.0 CONFESSIONAL STANDARD

This Congregation accepts without reservation:

- 3.1 The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the inspired and inerrant Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and 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. (All of the above may be found in *The Book of Concord* located in the Church Library.)

4.0 **MEMBERSHIP**

4.1 **Membership:**

- 4.1.1 *Baptized* members are all who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and who are under the spiritual care of the Pastoral Staff of this Congregation, including the children who have not yet been confirmed.
- 4.1.2 *Communicant* members are those baptized members who have been confirmed in the Lutheran faith, accept the confessional standard of Section 3 of this Constitution, are familiar at least with the contents of *Luther's Small Catechism*, and are not members of organizations whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God.
- 4.1.3 *Voting* members are communicant members who have reached the age of eighteen years, have been received by the Voters' Assembly, and have read and signed the Constitution and the By-Laws of the Congregation.

4.2 **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, through profession of faith or reaffirmation of faith. The reception shall be approved by the Voters' Assembly. Eligible communicant members may be received as Voting Members upon application for such privilege, upon approval by the Voters' Assembly, and upon reading and signing the Constitution and By-Laws of the Congregation.

4.3 **Duties:**

Members of the Congregation shall conform their entire lives to the rule of God's Word, and to that end make diligent use of the means of grace (the Word and Sacraments), exercise faithful stewardship of God's many gifts and talents, impart and accept fraternal admonition as the need of such admonition becomes apparent, and be readily available for service in the kingdom of Christ within and beyond the Congregation.

4.4 **Termination:**

- 4.4.1 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.
- 4.4.2 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. Each case shall be presented individually to the Voters' Assembly for a decision.

5.0 **CALLED PROFESSIONAL CHURCH WORKERS**

- 5.1 This Congregation shall establish the Pastoral Offices, which shall be conferred only on such pastors or candidates who profess and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in Section 3 of this Constitution, who is qualified for his work, who has been certified by the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, and who are members of the Synod. (The same shall apply to all other called professional church workers.)
- 5.2 Any called professional church worker may be removed from office by the Voters' Assembly by a two-thirds majority ballot vote, in Christian and lawful order, for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect, or inability to perform the duties of the office.
- 5.3 The Congregation may request the resignation of any called professional church worker from his position in the Congregation in the case of prolonged incapacity or incompetence.

6.0 **AUTHORITY OF THE CONGREGATION**

- 6.1 The Voters' Assembly shall be the governing body of this Congregation and shall be empowered to administer and manage all its affairs including the sale or purchase of real estate. 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.
- 6.2 All matters shall be decided by a majority vote of those present at the meeting of the Voters' Assembly unless otherwise specified by this Constitution or By-Laws, including matters of doctrine and conscience, which shall be decided only on the basis of the Word of God.
- 6.3 The right of calling professional church workers shall be vested in the Voters' Assembly and shall not be delegated otherwise. (Reference By-Laws 5.2.13)

7.0 **OFFICERS AND BOARDS**

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

7.1 **Officers:**

- 7.1.1 A President, who shall conduct meetings of the Voters' Assembly and perform other specific duties listed in the By-Laws.
- 7.1.2 A Vice-President, who is to fill the role of the President in his absence or inability to act and perform other specific duties listed in the By-Laws.
- 7.1.3 A Secretary, who is to keep the minutes of the Voters' meetings and perform other specific duties listed in the By-Laws.
- 7.1.4 A Treasurer, who shall be responsible for the financial records of the Congregation and perform other specific duties listed in the By-Laws.

7.2 **Boards:**

- 7.2.1 A Board of Elders which shall assist the Pastoral Staff in providing for the spiritual life of the Congregation.
- 7.2.2 A Board of Trustees which shall be responsible for the physical properties of the Congregation.
- 7.2.3 A Board of Christian Education which shall promote and provide for the nurture and Christian growth of members of the Congregation.
- 7.2.4 A School Board which shall be responsible for the administration of the Congregation's Christian day school.
- 7.2.5 A Board for Evangelism which shall lead the members of the Congregation in outreach to others.
- 7.2.6 A Board for Stewardship which shall be responsible for nurturing the spiritual development and use of Congregation members' time, talent and treasures.
- 7.2.7 A Board for Human Care Ministry which shall be responsible for providing assistance to members' temporal needs.
- 7.2.8 A Board for Worship which shall be responsible for forms of worship.

7.3 **Termination:**

7.3.1 Any officer may be removed from office by the Voters' Assembly by a two-thirds majority vote, in Christian and lawful order, for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect, or the inability to perform the duties of the office.

7.3.2 The Congregation may request the resignation of any officer from his or her position in the Congregation in case of prolonged incapacity or incompetence.

8.0 **SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP**

This Congregation shall be a member of the SELC District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod as long as the Synod conforms to the Congregation's confessional standard set forth in Section 3 as determined by a majority vote of the Voters' Assembly at a meeting called for that purpose.

9.0 **DIVISION**

9.1 If at any time a division should take place on account of doctrine, the property of the Congregation and all the benefits connected therewith shall remain with those voting communicant members, however many, who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Section 3 of this Constitution, as determined by the adjudication procedures of the Synod.

9.2 If division takes place for any other reason, the property shall remain with the majority of the voting communicant members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Section 3 of this Constitution, as determined by the adjudication procedures of the Synod.

9.3 In the event the Congregation should dissolve, the property and all the rights connected therewith shall be transferred to that District of the Synod in which the Congregation held membership at the time of dissolution.

10.0 **MEETINGS**

Regular meetings of the Voters' Assembly shall be held as determined in the By-laws. Announcement of the meeting shall be made in services of two previous Sundays. Special meeting require announcement in services in the two previous Sundays or notification by mail and announcement in the services of one previous Sunday. Such special meeting may be called at the request of three officers or ten voting members.

11.0 **QUORUM**

All members present at a validly called Voters' Meeting shall constitute a quorum.

12.0 **LIMITATIONS OF HOLDING OFFICE**

Women may serve as officers and as members of boards and committees as long as these positions are not directly involved in the specific functions of the Pastoral Offices (e.g. preaching, the public administration of the sacraments, church discipline).

13.0 **AMENDMENTS**

13.1 Amendments to provisions of this Constitution except Sections 2, 3, 5, 8 and 13 may be adopted at a regular Voters' Meeting, except as hereafter otherwise provided:

1. That the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at a previous meeting of the Voters' Assembly and published by posting in a conspicuous place in the Church or by mail prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon.

2. That an affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the voters present is secured.

13.2 In addition to the above requirements, proposals to amend Section 2, 3, 5, 8 and 13 shall require the previous notice of such amendment and discussion of the same shall be presented at two regular meetings of the Voters' Assembly before the meeting at which the proposed amendment is to receive action. Due notice of the fact that a vote will be taken shall be given to all voting members of the Congregation. Any changes in these articles shall not destroy the essential meaning of the same. Whether or not this has occurred shall be decided, if challenged, through the Adjudication process of the Synodical District in which the Congregation holds its Synodical Membership.

14.0 **BY-LAWS**

This Congregation may formally define and adopt such By-Laws as may be desired for the accomplishment of its mission and purpose.