

**The Mission of Concordia Lutheran Church is to  
Joyfully Proclaim the Love of Christ in Word and Service**

**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

**Concordia Lutheran Church  
Hoisington, Kansas**

**Preamble**

This congregation was established in 1955 as a merger in a unanimous vote, of Emmaus Lutheran Church Hoisington, Kansas (organized in 1910) and St. John's Lutheran Church, Rural Route 1, Hoisington, Kansas (organized in 1906). The name chosen for the new congregation was Concordia Lutheran Church. Concordia is the Latin for the Book of Concord (1580) containing our Lutheran confessions. Its English translation means "harmony" and shows our intention to work together in harmony as one congregation. We the members of Concordia Lutheran Church, Hoisington, Kansas, are grateful to Almighty God for the heritage left to us by our fathers.

Since it is the will of our Lord Jesus Christ that his disciples should preach the Gospel to the whole world, the purpose of this congregation shall be to spread the gospel truth according to the confessional standard of the Lutheran Church and that Christ's mission for his church might be carried out according to his will in doctrine and practice. He has commanded that Christians unite in worship (Heb 10:24-25), practice fellowship with one another (Acts 2:42), witness to all men (Acts 1:8), help each other grow in the Word (Eph 4:11-14), serve the needs of all men in Christian love (Eph 4:7-16, Mark 10:42-44, John 13:35, Gal 6:10), administer the Office of the Keys as His Church (John 20:21-23, Matt 18:15-20), and maintain decency and order in the Church (1 Cor. 14:20).

Therefore we, the members of Concordia Lutheran Church set forth this present document, signed by ourselves, the Constitution and By-Laws in accordance with which our congregational affairs, spiritual and material, shall be conducted.

**CONSTITUTION**

**Article 1 - Name**

The corporate name of this congregation shall be Concordia Lutheran Church, Barton County, Hoisington, Kansas.

**Article 2 - Confessional Standard**

This congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testament as the revealed Word of God, verbally inspired, and acknowledges and accepts all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the Book of

Concord of 1580, to be a true and genuine exposition of the doctrines of the Bible. These Symbolical Books are: the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the same, the Smalcald Articles, Luther's Large and Small Catechisms, and the Formula of Concord. All doctrines taught and proclaimed in this congregation are to be drawn and proved from the Word of God; and on the basis of the Word of God, all disputes and controversies on religion must be judged and settled.

### **Article 3 - Membership**

- A) Baptized membership in this congregation is held by all those who are baptized according to the command and ordinance of Christ and are under our pastoral care.
- B) Any person shall be eligible to become and remain a communicant member of the congregation who:
  - 1. is baptized according to the command and ordinance of Christ;
  - 2. declares adherence to all the canonical books of the Old and New Testament as the only divine rule and norm of faith and life;
  - 3. is acquainted with and accepts Luther's Small Catechism;
  - 4. leads a Christian life and abstains from manifest works of the flesh (Gal 5:19-21);
  - 5. attends divine services faithfully and partakes of the Lord's Supper frequently;
  - 6. submits, for the sake of love and peace, to the regulations that have been or that may hereafter be established by this congregation, provided such regulations do not conflict with the Word of God; and is willing to receive brotherly admonition when having erred or offended;
  - 7. is not a member of any secret or other organization whose doctrine and practice are in conflict with the Word of God (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

### **Article 4 - Organization**

The responsibility and authority for the daily administration of congregational affairs shall be delegated to the church council. The voting assembly of the congregation shall have final authority on matters of this congregation on church affairs. Every member may appeal to the church council in regard to any matters relating to the affairs and government of said church, if a satisfactory resolution is not reached, the voters' assembly of the congregation shall have the final decision and will be binding, but such decisions shall always be in accord with the Word of God and Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and, unless it is so, shall be null and void.

No duly elected officer of this congregation shall have any power or authority beyond that conferred upon them by the congregation acting through its voting assembly. Each board or committee shall be responsible for the performance of such duties as the Voters' Assembly may delegate to them by special resolution.

Congregational matters shall be decided by the church council by a simple majority of members present at a properly convened meeting of the church council, except as otherwise provided in the constitution and its associated by-laws for dealing with certain situations or matters therein specifically mentioned and defined.

#### **Article 5 - Right of Suffrage**

Suffrage, or the right to vote, shall be granted to any communicant member of this congregation who is at least eighteen years of age.

#### **Article 6 - Officers**

The officers of this corporate body shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and such other officers, boards, and committees as the By-Laws of this corporate body may prescribe or as the congregation may elect in accordance with its needs. The officers shall be elected at the Annual meeting of this corporate body, and the terms of office shall be as specified by the By-Laws.

#### **Article 7 - Pastors and Teachers**

Only such pastors and teachers shall be called by this congregation as are in accord with the confessional standard of this congregation (Article 2) and as have been prepared for their work and are well qualified for it. The right of calling pastors and teachers shall ever be vested in the congregation and shall never be delegated to a smaller body or to an individual. For the election of pastors and teachers a unanimous vote is required. Reasons for dismissing a pastor or teacher shall be: persistent adherence to false teachings, an ungodly life, unfaithfulness, or inability with reference to the performance of duties.

#### **Article 8 - Symbolical Membership**

The congregation shall be affiliated with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. The authority of the Synod shall be advisory in nature. The congregation shall, to the best of its ability, assist the Synod in effecting all sound measures intended for the building up of Christ's Kingdom.

#### **Article 9 - Church Discipline**

This congregation shall have the right to excommunicate members for sufficient Scriptural cause. Any person under church discipline shall not have the right of suffrage in any proceeding pertaining to his excommunication. When a member of the congregation, after fruitless admonition in the various stages prescribed by the Word of God (Matt 18: 15-20), shall have been expelled by unanimous vote from the congregation, such person shall have forfeited all rights of a member of this congregation and all claims upon the property of the congregation such, or upon any part thereof, as long as he is not again received into membership by the congregation. The same shall

apply to such members who refuse to submit to church discipline and thus excommunicate themselves, as also to those who sever their connection with the congregation.

### **Article 10 - Property Rights of the Congregation**

This corporate body may receive, acquire, hold title to, and manage such real estate and other property as it may need to accomplish its mission and may sell or dispose of such real estate and other property or any part thereof; and this corporate body shall have all the rights and the powers that are granted by the laws of the State of Kansas to religious corporations.

In the event of a separation in the membership of this congregation - which God may graciously prevent - the title to all property of this congregation and the rights of membership shall remain with those members who adhere to the provision of Article 2 of this Constitution.

In the event the congregation should totally disband, the property and all rights connected therewith shall be transferred to the Kansas District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.

### **Article 11 - By-Laws**

This congregation may adopt such By-Laws as are necessary to carry out the purposes of this organization.

### **Article 12 - Amendments**

The congregation may make amendments to any article of the Constitution except Article 2 - The Confessional Standard, which shall remain unalterable. Proposed amendments shall be presented in writing and read at any regularly called meeting of the Voter's Assembly. Efforts shall then be made to publicize the proposed amendments, either by including them in the bulletin or newsletter or by reading them to the congregation assembled for worship. Adoption of such proposed amendments shall require a two-third majority vote of those present at a subsequent regularly called meeting, provided that the congregation was informed beforehand that the proposed amendment would be on the agenda.

## **BY-LAWS**

### **I. MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of the congregation may be designated by three different terms: Baptized Members, Communicant Members, and Voting Members:

- a) Baptized members are all individuals of the congregation, both old and young, who have been baptized and who are under the spiritual care of this congregation.
- b) Communicant members are all baptized members of the congregation who have been confirmed and to whom the right and privilege of Holy communion maybe extended.
- c) Voting members are all communicant members of the congregation who have received the right of suffrage in accord with Article 5 of the Constitution.

### **II. ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBERS**

#### Section 1- Baptized Members

The following shall be received into and shall constitute the baptized membership of the congregation:

- a) Any baptized child of a communicant member;
- b) Any person baptized by the ministry of this congregation;
- c) Any person baptized according to the command and ordinance of Christ who desires membership in this congregation; and
- d) The entire communicant membership of the congregation.

#### Section 2 - Communicant Members

Any person eligible for communicant membership in this congregation, as provided in Article 3 of the Constitution, may obtain such membership by:

- a) Confirmation in this congregation;
- b) Presentation of a letter of release or transfer from a sister congregation, satisfactory to this congregation; or
- c) Proving to the satisfaction of this congregation, or its Board of Elders, full agreement with the doctrine of this congregation as set forth in Article 2 of the Constitution.

### Section 3 - Voting Members

Any communicant member age 18 or over shall be considered a member of the voters' assembly of this congregation and shall be eligible to exercise the privilege and assume the responsibility of voting on all matters. The congregation shall seek to provide a copy of its Constitution and By-Laws to each voting member so that they will know that God-given mission of the congregation and its Policies and procedures for carrying out that mission.

## **III. DUTIES OF MEMBERS**

### Section 1 - Communicant Members

It shall be the Christian duty of all communicant members of this congregation to:

- a) Give of their time and talents in the service of their church;
- b) Admonish erring members according to Matt. 18: 15-26;
- c) Bring their children to Baptism at an early age, teach them God's Word by word and example at home, and provide for their further training in pure Christian doctrine by committing them to the agencies for Christian education sponsored by this congregation;
- d) Contribute, according to their ability, to missions and to the maintenance and extension of the church and to the payment of all debts of the congregation; and
- e) Comply in all other respects with the provision of the Constitution, particularly Article 3 thereof.

### Section 2 - Voting Members

Every voting members shall feel a personal responsibility for the administration of the affairs of the congregation. It shall be his/her duty to attend the annual meeting or special meetings of the congregation. By failing to attend a meeting, a member waives the right to vote in such meeting. Voting members shall be prepared to place their talents at the service of the congregation.

## **IV. OFFICES OF PASTOR AND TEACHER**

The duties of pastors and teachers shall be in conformity with Article 7 of the Constitution.

## **V. OFFICERS**

### Section 1 - Delineation of Officers

A. Elective Officers - The elective offices of this congregation shall be:

- (1) The corporate officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer), who shall be elected for a term of one year;
- (2) A Financial Secretary, who shall be elected for a term of one year;

- (3) A Board of six Elders, who shall serve for a period of three years, their election being so arranged that one-third of their number is elected annually;
- (4) A Board of three Trustees, who shall serve for a period of three years, their election being so arranged that one trustee is elected annually;
- (5) Two Finance Board Members, who shall serve for a period of two years, their election being so arranged that one shall be elected each year.

B. Appointed Officers - The appointed officers of the congregation, appointed by the pastor and elders before the January installation, shall be:

- (1) A Sunday School Superintendent, who shall serve for two years, the appointment so arranged that the Sunday School Superintendent and the Sunday School Secretary shall be appointed in alternating years.
- (2) A Sunday School Secretary, who shall serve a period of two years, the appointment so arranged that the appointment is in the alternate year that the Sunday School Superintendent is appointed.

#### Section 2 - Eligibility For Office

Only those members who have been voting members for at least one full year preceding their election shall be eligible for the elective officers of the congregation.

The nature of the duties of the President, Vice-president, and Board of Elders requires that these offices be filled with men (males) noted for their Christian knowledge, zeal and experience in spiritual work of the kingdom of Christ.

#### Section 3 - Elections

All elections shall be by ballot. The nominee receiving the majority of all votes cast shall be declared elected.

#### Section 4 - Special Committees

The congregation shall appoint such standing and special committees as its needs demand.

#### Section 5 - Installation

All officers shall be installed in a public service, preferably on the first Sunday after the annual meeting.

### **VI. DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

- (a) The Church Council shall consist of all elective officers of the congregation and the pastor. The President of the congregation shall serve as the chairman of the church council, and the recording secretary of the voters' assembly shall serve as secretary on the church council. The church council shall meet quarterly (January, April, July, October) to conduct the affairs

of the congregation and prepare the agenda of the voters' assembly meeting. Special meetings of the church council may be called as the need arises. A report of all meetings shall be submitted to the congregation.

- (b) The duties of the President, the Vice-President, and the Secretary are specified in the congregational responsibility manual.
- (c) The President, the Secretary, and the Treasures shall serve as the legal corporate officers of the congregation. They shall make the necessary contracts, sign documents, appear before court, and transact all business which the congregation as owner of the property would have to transact.
- (d) The Financial Secretary shall keep an accurate record of all contributing members and shall give them proper credit for all offerings paid by envelope or check, excluding basket collections. If he/she requires assistance in the performance of his/her duties, he/she may at any time call upon other members of the Finance Board.
- (e) The Treasurer
  - (1) shall receive and deposit all monies, offerings, collections, etc.;
  - (2) shall keep an accurate record of all receipts and disbursements of the congregation;
  - (3) shall make disbursements only as authorized by the congregation, and shall make such disbursements by check;
  - (4) shall keep all receipts covering expenditures until his account have been examined by the auditing committee;
  - (5) shall be the custodian of all legal and commercial papers of the congregation; and
  - (6) shall give quarterly and annual financial reports to the council and/or voters' assembly.
- (f) The Board of Elders shall assist the pastor in all matters pertaining to the supervision and promotion of the spiritual welfare of the congregation and the furtherance of Christ's kingdom at home and abroad; and perform such other duties as the congregation may assign. Meetings of the Board of Elders shall be held as the welfare and promotion of the church and its program shall require.
- (g) The Board of Trustees shall care for the buildings, ground, and equipment of the congregation as property entrusted to their care. The trustees shall regularly inspect the building and grounds of the congregation for necessary repairs and improvements, and shall submit their recommendations to the council and/or voter's assembly for action. However, the Trustees are not permitted to proceed arbitrarily, but are to transact said business according to the resolutions and instructions given them by the congregation. In the event that emergency repairs or improvements are required, the trustees are authorized to spend at a given time, without congregational approval, an amount not to exceed the establish limit set by the voters' assembly. However, they are to submit a report of such action to the council and/or voters at the next regular meeting.

- (h) The Board of Finance and Stewardship shall consist of one elder, the treasurer, the financial secretary, and the two finance board members. This Board
- (1) shall keep itself well informed in reference to the financial condition of the congregation;
  - (2) shall supervise the canvass of annual pledges for the support of the church;
  - (3) shall see to it that all communicant members are annually supplied with envelopes for contributions;
  - (4) shall distribute regular informative reports to each member;
  - (5) shall submit a proposed budget for the coming year in the October meeting of the church council and to be submitted for ratification at the annual meeting. This Board shall meet at least quarterly to promote the financial and stewardship programs of the congregation and report any recommendation to the church council.
- (i) The Board of Education shall consist of three people
- (1) the Sunday School Superintendent;
  - (2) one member of the Board of Elders elected by them; and
  - (3) one member at large as elected by the voters.
- This board shall meet quarterly to assist the pastor in the supervision of the education activities of the congregation and in general seek to stimulate and maintain the proper interest in the Christian training of young and old.
- (j) The Board of Evangelism shall consist of one member of the Board of Elders elected by that board, along with two or more members as appointed by that elder. This Board shall be responsible for promoting the evangelism outreach of the congregation. It shall meet at least quarterly to carry out its work.
- (k) The Board of Youth Ministry shall consist of one elder and two or more members as appointed by that elder. This board shall be responsible for nurture of the youth and to involve parents and the congregation in youth programs. This board shall meet at least quarterly.
- (l) The Board of Welfare Ministry shall consist of one elder and two or more members as appointed by that elder. This Board shall show Christian concern for people in need. This board shall meet at least quarterly.

## **VII. USHERS**

A staff of ushers shall be appointed annually by the elder in charge of the ushering staff. This elder together with the other elders and pastor shall seek to maintain a current list of ushers to be called on. The ushers shall serve to welcome all worshipers and look after their comfort and well-being.

## **VIII. FINANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

A Finance Review Committee, consisting of three members, shall be appointed annually by the president and approved by the congregation.

## **IX. NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

A Nominating Committee of five members shall be elected by the congregation with 2 others as alternates in its regular Annual meeting and shall serve for a period of one year. The committee shall propose a slate of one or more names for each vacancy in all elected offices of the congregation. (This slate shall then be published at least two times in the Sunday bulletin.) Then this slate shall be presented to the voters' assembly in a duly announced special meeting which is to be held after a Sunday morning service during the month of December. In this meeting the congregation shall have the right to add to the slate proposed by the nominating committee provided they have the consent of the person they wish to nominate. There being no further nominations, nominations shall be closed; and the election of candidates to office shall take place in the regular Annual Meeting.

If, during the course of a year, a vacancy occurs or an additional office is created, candidates for such office shall be nominated by the nominating committee and shall be presented in the next regular meeting of the council. The election shall be by ballot at the meeting in which the nominations are received.

## **X. MEETINGS**

Section 1 - The regular voters' meeting of the congregation shall be annually in January. As occasion demands, special meetings may be called by the pastor or upon recommendation of the corporate officers of this congregation. As a general rule, every voters' meeting shall be announced on at least one Sunday previous to its date. However, in the event that an emergency meeting becomes necessary, all members must be notified if possible. When a meeting has thus been duly announced, it shall be a valid and legal meeting, capable of transacting business and of passing resolutions.

Section 2 - A quorum shall be required for all meetings. A quorum will consist of 50 percent of the church council for council meetings, and 20 percent of the average church attendance of previous year for meetings of the voter's assembly.

Section 3 - In all meetings of the congregation, the majority of votes cast shall decide all questions in matters of doctrine, unanimity shall be required for a valid decision.

Section 4 - The meetings of this congregation shall be conducted according to Robert's "Rules of Order", insofar as they are applicable and are not inconsistent with Christian love and practice.

## **XI. TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP**

If communicant members in good standing shall move out of the territory of the church, the pastor may grant them a transfer to a sister congregation. In all cases of doubt, he is to consult with the Board of Elders. In the case where a departing member is a voter, he shall receive his release from the voters' assembly.

## **XII. CEMETERY**

The church cemetery which, prior to the merger of Emmaus and St. John's congregations, was under the care and supervision of St. John's Lutheran Church, shall henceforth be under the care and supervision of Concordia Lutheran Church. Burial privileges shall be in accord with regulations and resolutions adopted by this congregation and recorded in its official book of minutes.

## **XIII. AMENDMENTS**

Suggested amendments to these By-Laws must be presented in writing at a regular meeting. The passing of such amendments requires a two-thirds majority vote by those present.