

CONSTITUTION OF MOUNT OLIVE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF SHELTON, WASHINGTON

PREAMBLE

We are a Church, a community of believers in Jesus Christ as the long-awaited Messiah promised by the prophets of the Old Testament. He was and is the One who: "... was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53:5

We rejoice in the power of God:

"...that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all." Ephesians 1:20-23

We rejoice in His gracious call "come, follow Me" into life as "a new creation."
2 Corinthians 5:17

Since it is the Lord's will that all things be done decently and in order in the Christian Church (1 Corinthians 14:40; Colossians 2:5), therefore, we, the members of this congregation adopt the following Constitution by which all congregational affairs both spiritual and secular shall be conducted.

ARTICLE 1. NAME

The name of this congregation shall be Mount Olive Evangelical Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, of Shelton, Mason County, Washington. Hereinafter referred to as Mt. Olive Lutheran Church.

ARTICLE 2. MISSION

Bonded by faith in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, our calling and purpose as a congregation is:

To pursue the Great Commission as Jesus commands us in our daily lives to "...go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
Matthew 28:19-20

To obey the Great Commandment as Jesus instructed us, "...love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 22:37-39

Love for our neighbor not only focuses upon the fellow members of the Body of Christ, the Church, but also, upon the multitudes of people living separated from Christ:

Therefore, we endeavor to: bring people to Jesus Christ and fellowship in His Church, enable them to grow in Christ-like maturity, equip them to serve in the Church and evangelize the world, all in order to magnify and give praise to the Lord.

ARTICLE 3. CONFSSIONAL STANDARD

This congregation accepts without reservation:

3.1 The Scriptures of the Old Testament and the New Testament as the written Word of God, and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice.

3.2 All the Synodical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement 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 and Small Catechisms of Luther, and the Formula of Concord.

ARTICLE 4. 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 standard as set forth in this Constitution.

ARTICLE 5. MEMBERSHIP

5.1 The membership of this congregation includes:

5.1.1 *Baptized* members, 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.

5.1.2 *Communing* members, those baptized members who have been instructed and confirmed in the Lutheran faith, and desire to follow the confessional standard described in this Constitution.

5.1.3 *Associate* members, those baptized members who have been instructed and confirmed in the Lutheran faith, and desire to follow the confessional standard described in this Constitution, but are not in active fellowship with this congregation.

5.1.4 *Voting* members, communing members who have reached the age of legal majority in the State of Washington.

5.2 The members of this congregation are received in the following manner:

5.2.1 Baptized members are received through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

5.2.2 Communing members are received through the rite of confirmation, through transfer from a sister congregation, or through profession of faith or reaffirmation of faith.

5.2.3 Each request for acceptance into this congregation shall be presented to the Pastor and Board of Elders for acceptance on behalf of the congregation.

5.3 Empowered by the Holy Spirit, members of this congregation should strive to:

5.3.1 Conform their lives to the authority of God's Word.

5.3.2 Walk with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. (Galatians 5:16-26)

5.3.3 Diligently attend divine services and frequently partake of Holy

Communion.

5.3.4 Exercise faithful stewardship of God's many gifts and talents.

5.3.5 Be ready and available for service in the kingdom of Christ both within and beyond the congregation.

5.3.6 Give and accept fraternal encouragement and admonition as the need becomes apparent. (Galatians 6:1-2)

5.3.7 Associate only with those organizations whose principles and conduct do not conflict with the Word of God.

5.4 Discipline and restoration within the congregation:

Members who conduct themselves in an un-Christian manner shall be admonished according to the evangelical principles of Matthew 18:15-20.

5.5 Membership in this congregation shall be terminated as follows:

5.5.1 Membership in this congregation may be terminated by transfer to a sister congregation, by joining a congregation outside the fellowship of this congregation, by joining a congregation not in fellowship with the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, by peaceful release, or by excommunication or self-exclusion (denying Jesus Christ as Son of God and Savior and rejection of the Holy Spirit's guidance), or by death.

5.5.2 Each request for termination of membership in this congregation shall be presented to the Pastor and Board of Elders for acceptance on behalf of the congregation.

5.5.3 Each case of excommunication or self-exclusion shall be presented to the voters' assembly. A two-thirds majority vote of the voters present shall be required.

ARTICLE 6. CALLED CHURCH WORKERS

6.1 The voters' assembly of this congregation shall have the exclusive right to call ordained or commissioned ministers. This shall not be delegated to a smaller body and never to an individual.

6.2 Ordained Ministers

The pastoral office shall be conferred only upon pastors or candidates who profess and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in this Constitution, who are qualified for the work of the pastor, and who have been endorsed by the synod and are members of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

6.3 Commissioned ministers

Only those commissioned ministers 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 shall receive a call.

Any called worker may be removed from office 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. Such removal shall be conducted in a Christian and lawful order by a two-thirds majority ballot vote of the voters' assembly.

6.4 When a vacancy occurs in the office of the pastor or a called worker, the congregation shall notify the president of the district to receive assistance in temporarily filling the vacancy, and to receive his counsel in calling a new pastor, teacher, or other called church worker.

ARTICLE 7. OFFICERS AND BOARDS

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

7.1.1 Officers: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer.

7.1.2 Boards: governance, schools, and elders.

7.2 Boards may organize and appoint committees to help them accomplish their mission.

7.3 The officers, boards, and committees, whether elected or appointed, shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them.

7.4 The **legal officers**, as identified by state law, consisting of president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer, shall serve as the elected officers of the corporation. They are empowered to make contracts, sign legal documents, appear in court and represent the congregation in any legal matters.

7.5 The **Governance Board** shall consist of seven elected members, each to serve a three-year term. Two members shall be elected each year, with three members elected every third year to maintain four or five carryover members on the Board at any given year. The Board shall elect from its seven members the officers; the president, the vice-president, the treasurer, and the secretary. The Pastor shall serve as an advisory member. The Board shall present recommendations to the voters' assembly and act on behalf of the voters' assembly between meetings.

7.6 The Governance Board shall appoint one or more members to Property Management and to Finance. The Treasurer shall serve as an advisory member to Finance.

7.7 The **Board of Elders**, should consist of five or more elected members, including-deacons, and shall assist the pastor in the spiritual life and member care of the congregation, and provide spiritual care for the pastor and his family. The Board of Elders will select a Head Elder. Elders shall serve a three-year term, with no term limits.

7.8 The **Board of Schools** should consist of three or more elected members, plus teachers and director of the schools serving as non-voting advisory members, and shall be responsible for operation of the daycare, preschool and elementary school. Board

members shall be elected to a three-year term.

7.9 No member of the congregation may hold two elective offices simultaneously. With the exception of the Board of Elders, members of the congregation may not be elected to the same board for more than two consecutive terms.

7.10 Only Voting Members of the congregation will be eligible for elective office.

ARTICLE 8. POWER OF THE CONGREGATION

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

8.1 The establishment and conduct of all organizations and societies within the congregation or related directly to the congregation shall be subject to the overall authority and general oversight of the voters' assembly.

8.2 All matters before the voters' assembly shall be decided by a majority vote of the voters present 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.

ARTICLE 9. PROPERTY RIGHTS

9.1 The congregation may receive, acquire, hold title to, and manage such real estate and other personal and mixed property as is needed to accomplish the purpose of the congregation. It may sell, transfer or dispose of such real estate and other personal and mixed property or any part thereof. It shall have all the rights and the powers that are granted by the laws of the State of Washington to religious corporations.

9.2 If division of the congregation takes place for any reason the following will govern:

9.2.1 If a division should take place on account of doctrine, the property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those members who continue to adhere to the confessional standard as set forth in this Constitution.

9.2.2 If division takes place for any other reason, the property shall remain with the majority of the members.

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

ARTICLE 10. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the provisions of this Constitution shall be submitted in writing to the congregation four consecutive Sundays prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be discussed. The final recommendation from the voters' assembly will be distributed in writing to the congregation four consecutive Sundays prior to the meeting at which the recommendation will be acted upon. Distribution at the church is considered adequate notification. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the voters present shall be required for adoption.

BYLAWS

11. Voters' assembly meetings

11.1 The regular voters' assembly shall meet annually. The time and date this meeting shall be announced for two consecutive Sundays prior to the day of the meeting.

11.2 Special meetings may be called by the president or the Governance Board, either by having them announced in the manner prescribed for regular meetings, or by issuing notice to the voting members one week prior to the meeting, advising of the purpose of the special meeting. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose of which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.

11.3 Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.

12. Election of church officers and board chairs with terms of office

Governance, Schools, and Elders boards are elected by the voters' assembly. New terms commence January 1, and expiring terms end December 31.

12.1 The presider of each Board shall have the authority to appoint a successor to fill any unexpired term with the approval of their respective Board. Appointees are subsequently eligible to be elected to two consecutive terms of that same office, with the exception of the Board of Elders.

12.2. Nominating committees for the Governance, Schools, and Elders Boards, appointed together by the President and the Pastor shall present a slate of eligible candidates for each expiring position at the October voters' assembly meeting with additional nominations allowed from the floor. No person shall be elected without consent.

12.3. Women may hold any elected office in the congregation, except for elder.

12.4 In addition to the officers and boards listed in the constitution above, the Pastor shall appoint a team leader to various Ministry Teams, that may include, but are not limited to:

12.4.1 The **Christian Education Ministry Team**, to coordinate programs for the nurture and Christian growth of the members of the congregation.

12.4.2 The **Outreach Ministry Team**, to coordinate the outreach ministries of the congregation in the community and the world at large.

12.4.3 The **Fellowship Ministry Team**, to coordinate the fellowship and social ministries of the congregation.

12.4.4 The **Youth Ministry Team**, to coordinate the congregation's youth activities.

12.4.5 The **Worship Ministry Team**, to assist the Pastor in coordinating the worship and music of the congregation.

12.5 Each appointed Ministry Team leader shall be responsible for selecting members of their team.

12.6 Board and Ministry Team meetings.

12.6.1 The legal officers of the congregation shall meet monthly. They may also meet at the call of the president of the congregation.

12.6.2 The boards and ministry teams shall meet as often as necessary to conduct their business.

13. Duties of officers and boards

The duties of the officers and boards are contained in the current church job descriptions.

14. Organizations within the congregation

14.1 All organizations within this congregation shall exist to support the mission of this congregation.

14.2 Organizations and special interest groups that represent Mt. Olive Lutheran Church may be organized only after authorization by the Governance Board.

14.3 As outgrowths and expressions of this congregation's life, the organizations shall have their policies and activities approved by the Governance Board.

15. Amendment to bylaws

15.1 These bylaws may be amended in any properly convened meeting of the voters' assembly by a majority of all voting members present, provided the proposed change has been published and announced at services on four consecutive Sundays prior to the voters' meeting.

15.2 The date of adoption shall be included in the amendment.

16. Procedures for calling pastors and other called workers

16.1 When a pastor or other Called worker is to be called, every member of the congregation shall have the privilege of making one or more nominations. The congregation shall also ask the president of the synodical district for recommendations. The Governance Board shall appoint the screening committee with the president or president's designee as the chair of the committee.

16.2 In the screening process, the committee shall submit all names to the district president for information and evaluation. After receiving information and recommendations from the district president, the committee shall present to the congregation, by means of a public announcement, at least three preferred candidates, together with a biographical sketch of each. The committee shall then schedule a Call meeting of the voters' assembly.

16.2.1 In the event that the committee wishes to extend a call to a seminary graduate or pastoral candidate accepted by colloquy, a meeting of the voters' assembly shall be called. If approved by a majority at the voters meeting, the committee will proceed in accordance with District and LCMS guidelines.

16.3 At the Call meeting, the preferred list may be amended by means of a two-thirds vote of those present.

16.4 Voting shall proceed by secret ballot. At the point where one candidate receives a majority vote; the assembly shall be asked to unanimously accept that candidate.

17. Scholarship fund

17.1 Motivated by love in response to the gracious abundance of God's blessings, and mindful of the need and importance of Christian education, this congregation has established the Mt. Olive Scholarship Fund to provide financial assistance for members who are enrolled in an approved Lutheran educational institution as defined by the Mt. Olive Scholarship Fund Policy Manual and also meet the requirements of that manual.

17.2 The Mt. Olive Scholarship Fund is administered by the Scholarship Committee, a subcommittee of the Finance Committee.

17.3 The voters' assembly shall approve the Mt. Olive Scholarship Fund Policy Manual and act upon all subsequent changes.

18. Endowments

18.1 Endowments, both restricted and unrestricted, shall be managed by the governing document for said endowment.

18.2 The voters' assembly shall approve and act upon all subsequent changes to the documents that are used to manage endowments.