

Revised June 1985

Approved revision June 2014

**Revised Constitution of  
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Of  
Cleveland, Ohio**

***Preamble***

WHEREAS Christians should practice fellowship with those who profess the true faith (Acts 2, v 42; Hebr. 10, vv. 24-25); and

WHEREAS they should endeavor to keep unity of faith (Eph. 4, vv. 3-6; 1 Cor. 14, v.10); and

WHEREAS in such a body all things should be done decently and in order (I Cor.14 v40)

THEREFORE, we, the undersigned, herewith adopt the following Constitution and its By-Laws according to which all affairs of this congregation, both spiritual and material, shall be conducted.

**CONSTITUTION**

Article 1

**NAME**

The name of this congregation shall be Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cleveland, Ohio.

Article 2

**DECLARATION OF CREED**

This congregation as a body and all its members as individuals declare unreserved acceptance of and adherence to all canonical books of the Old and New Testament as the inspired word of God and the only rule of faith and life; and to all Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, as the true and sound exhibition of the Word of God. These Symbolical Books are the Ecumenical Creeds, viz: the Apostolic Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasion Creed; the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology thereof; the Smalcald articles, Luther's Large Catechism; Luther's Small Catechism; and the Formula of Concord.

Article 3

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Our purpose and mission is to strengthen members in giving witness by word and deed to the love and work of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to one another and to the people in the community.

Further, to provide opportunities through which members may express their Christian concern, love and compassion in meeting human needs.

#### ARTICLE 4

### MEMBERSHIP

#### A. Baptized Members

All those, but only those, of any age who have been baptized in the Name of the Triune God, who meet together for worship and study of the Word, and who accept the pastoral ministry of this congregation shall be recognized as baptized members.

#### B. Communicant Members

A person may hold Communicant Membership of the congregation who:

1. Is baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. Confesses his or her faith in the Word of God as the only Divine rule of faith and life and declares his or her acceptance of the Declaration of Creed contained in Article 2 and is familiar with Luther's Small Catechism.
3. Does not live in manifest works of the flesh (Gal. 5, vv19-21) but leads a Christian life.
4. Is not an active, participating member of a secret society or of any other organization conflicting with the Word of God and the conduct of a Christian (II Cor. 6 vv. 14-18).

#### C. Admission of Members

Applicants for baptized and/or communicant membership presenting a letter of transfer from a sister congregation, or a congregation in fellowship with the LCMS shall be accepted as baptized and/or communicant members.

Applicants for communicant membership not affiliated with a recognized sister church of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod shall give satisfactory evidence of their qualification for membership in an interview with the pastor, and, if necessary, receive an adequate course of instruction in the chief parts of the Christian doctrine, having declared in the presence of witnesses their acceptance of the doctrines of the Lutheran church, shall be received as communicant members.

The admission of communicant members shall be announced by the pastor.

#### D. Privileges and Responsibilities of Membership

It shall be the privilege and responsibility of every communicant member:

1. To attend public worship regularly and to partake of Holy Communion frequently.
2. To accept and receive willingly all ministrations as well as private admonitions of the office of the Holy Ministry.

3. To attend the congregational meetings. It shall be the special responsibility of all voting members to attend such meetings.
4. To supplement training in the Christian faith received in the home and to provide for continued growth in Christian knowledge and life by the regular attendance of family members in educational opportunities provided by the congregation, including worship services, Sunday School, Nursery and Christian Day School, Bible Study Classes, Catechetical Instruction, and/or other opportunities provided.
5. To contribute a percentage of income, according to his or her ability, toward the maintenance of church and school and toward defraying other expenses of the congregation.

#### Article 5

### **SUFFRAGE AND ELIGIBILITY TO OFFICE**

1. All members as have attained the age of 18 years and have declared their acceptance of this Constitution and its By-Laws and have signed it in a regular meeting of the Voters' Assembly shall be entitled to vote.
2. Men may serve as officers and as members of boards and committees of this congregation. Women may serve as officers and as members of boards and committees of this congregation which do not call upon them to carry out the specific functions of the pastoral office (preaching in or serving as the leader of the public worship service, the public administration of the sacraments, the public exercise of church discipline). Accordingly, a woman shall not serve as pastor of this congregation.
3. Only such members who have been worshipping, communing members of this congregation for a period of at least one year shall be eligible to the office of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, or Board of Directors.

#### Article 6

### **TRANSFER, RELEASE, OR WITHDRAWAL**

Members desiring a letter of transfer to join a sister congregation or a release of membership, shall make a request for the same from the pastor, who, in turn, shall report to the congregation.

#### Article 7

### **TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

1. It shall be the duty of an erring member to submit to brotherly admonition and correction. In cases of church discipline the various grades prescribed in Matthew 18: 15-17 shall be observed.
2. Members who have separated themselves from the pastoral care of the congregation by protracted absence from worship and Holy Communion, or whose place of residence makes it impractical, if not impossible, to receive personal pastoral care, shall be judged to have

terminated his or her membership. Where possible, they shall be commanded to the spiritual care of a sister congregation.

3. Persons who repent and ask forgiveness shall be reinstated into membership.

#### Article 8

### **AUTHORITY OF THE CONGREGATION**

The Voters' Assembly as a body shall have supreme authority and power to manage and adjust all spiritual and material affairs of the congregation. Any enactment or decision, whether it proceed from an individual or from a body within the congregation, shall be invalid unless it is enacted or performed in the name of the Voters' Assembly and according to the authority conferred by it.

Any enactment or decision of the Voters' Assembly contrary to the Word of God and to the Confessions of the Church, as in Article 2, shall be null and void.

#### Article 9

### **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

This congregation shall maintain a Sunday School and other appropriate agencies of Christian education for all ages approved and authorized by the Voters' Assembly.

#### Article 10

### **THE OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL CHURCH WORKERS**

- A. The Office of Professional Church Worker shall be conferred upon such pastors, teachers, or candidates only as:
  1. Those who unreservedly pledge their acceptance of and adherence to the Declaration of Creed contained in Article 2 of this Constitution.
  2. Are members of, or have applied for membership in a Lutheran Church of the Missouri Synod to which the congregation belongs.
  3. Have been properly and rightfully called by the congregation.
- B. A Pastor, Teacher, Elder or other Professional Church Worker can be removed from office only in a rightful and Christian manner ~~only~~. Sufficient and urgent causes for removal are persistent adherence to false doctrines, scandalous life, willful neglect of official duties, or evident and protracted incapacity to perform the functions of the sacred office. This rule applies as well to other officers of the congregations.

#### Article 11

### **SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP**

This congregation shall hold membership in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod as long as this Synod remains true to the Word of God and Lutheran Confessions. It shall send its pastor(s), Called teacher(s), and a lay delegate to the District conventions of the Synod.

It shall be the duty of the congregation and its individual members to support the work of their Synod in all its activities according to their ability.

#### Article 12

#### **SOCIETIES**

1. Organized societies within the congregation shall exist only by the consent and approval of the Voters' Assembly.
2. Only members or prospective members of this congregation or of a sister congregation shall be eligible to membership in such societies.
3. Any decisions, enactment, or performance of such society shall be invalid if it shall meet with disapproval of the Voters' Assembly.
4. The Pastor, by virtue of his office, shall exercise supervision over any and all societies with the congregation.
5. Only members of this congregation may hold office in such societies.

#### Article 13

#### **OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY IN CASE OF SEPARATION OR DISSOLUTION**

1. Should separation on account of doctrine take place – which God forbid – the property of the congregation shall remain in the possession of those members who constitute the majority after consideration in three properly called meetings of the congregation, one of which shall involve the President of the Ohio District or his representative.
2. In the event of a dissolution, the property shall be deeded to and become the property of the Ohio District, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

#### Article 14

#### **BOOKS AND FORMS**

1. Only Lutheran hymn books, or material not contrary to the Lutheran faith and confession, shall be used in public worship.
2. For all religious instruction, Lutheran books and literature, not contrary to Lutheran faith and confession shall be used.

#### Article 15

#### **AMENDING THIS CONSTITUTION**

Alteration or repeal of any alterable or repealable article or section of this constitution and its by-laws shall require:

1. Readings of all proposed alterations or repeal at two properly called Voters' Assembly meetings;
2. Prior to the Voters' Meetings, any proposed alterations and repeal shall be made available to the members; and
3. All the proposed amendments or repeal must be approved with a two-thirds majority vote of those present in the second Voters' Assembly.

## **BY-LAWS**

### **ARTICLE 1**

#### **VOTER'S ASSEMBLY**

- A. A REGULAR MEETING OF THE Voters' Assembly shall be held in the month of June, the annual meeting, at which the election of officers shall be held. Other meetings may be held at the discretion of the Church Council after being duly announced in two preceding services or by mail or a combination thereof.
- B. Special meetings may be called when necessary by the Pastor, the Chairman, the Church Council or by any twenty voting members of the congregation. Time, place, and purpose of such meetings shall be duly announced in two preceding services or by mail or a combination thereof.
- C. Order of Business:
  - 1. Opening Prayer
  - 2. Roll call
  - 3. Admission of any new voting members
  - 4. Presentation of minutes
  - 5. Reports of Church Council, Elders and Ministries
  - 6. Financial reports
  - 7. Unfinished business
  - 8. New business
  - 9. Adjournment with prayer.

#### Article 2

#### **OFFICERS**

- A. Church Council
  - 1. The Church Council shall ordinarily meet bi-monthly and as needed. The officers of the Church Council shall consist of five (5) Council-at-Large members, the Pastor, the Chairman of the congregation, Financial Secretary, Treasurer and Secretary of the congregation. The Chairman of the congregation shall preside at meetings of the Church Council. The Chairman shall provide an agenda for the meeting.
  - 2. The-Council-at-Large shall consist of five (5)-members.
  - 3. The Council shall have the authority to appoint communicant members of the congregation to serve on ad hoc committees.
  - 4. The Council shall elect a vice-chairman from its membership. The Vice-Chairman shall preside in the absence of the Chairman.
  - 5. Term of office

The Chairman, Secretary, Financial Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected for a term of one year. The Council-at-Large members shall be elected for a term of two years, elected in even years, or three years, elected in odd years.

Duties

It shall be the duty of the Church Council to consider and discuss all administrative matters pertaining to the congregation, to review any and all reports, and to present recommendations to the congregation. The Church Council shall act in matters committed to it by the Voters' Assembly. Within the budget or in cases of emergency it shall have power to act on behalf of the congregation between meetings of the Voters' Assembly.

B. Election of-Council

At the June meeting a nominating committee previously appointed by the Chairman shall submit a list of candidates for each office. The list of nominees may be added to by the Voters' Assembly, whereupon the election takes place. Candidates receiving a majority number of votes shall be elected. In the event no one has a majority, the person with the lowest number of votes shall be dropped from the next ballot. Newly elected officers take office July 1<sup>st</sup>.

C. Appointment of Delegates and other Officers

The Church Council may appoint the following as necessary:

Lutheran High School Association	(3)	2 Years	In addition to Pastor
Lutheran Home	(2)	2 Years	
Lutheran Cemetery Association	(2)	2 Years	
Lutheran Chaplaincy Service	(2)	2 Years	
Auditing Committee	(3)	3 Years	
Lutheran Council of Greater Cleveland	(4)	2 years	In addition to Pastor
Alternate to Circuit Forum	(1)		
Lutheran Urban Community Ministry	(2)	2 Years	In addition to Pastor
District Convention	(1)		In addition to Pastor
Alternate to District Convention	(1)		
Circuit Meeting to elect Delegates			
to Synod	(1)		In addition to Pastor
Alternate to Circuit Meeting to			
elect Delegates to Synod	(1)		

Article 3

**DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

*The Chairman of the Congregation*

is the "Executive Director" of the congregation's total program, responsible to oversee that all elected and appointed officers, boards, and committees are carrying out their respective



responsibilities. Shall prepare an agenda and facilitate Church Council meetings and Voters' Meetings. Shall be an ex-officio member of all standing committees and shall attend or designate the vice-chairman to attend committee meetings as necessary or advisable Shall see that meetings are conducted in accordance with good rules of order.

*The Secretary*

Shall record the proceedings of the Voters' Assembly and Church Council, register all members attending the meeting, and submit minutes for adoption at the following regular meeting, and fulfill all corporate and governmental requirements and answer correspondence.

*The Financial Secretary*

Shall be responsible for accurate recordings of contributions by the congregation, shall be responsible for the safe deposit and keeping of all funds, shall be responsible for issuance of periodic statements to members and for preparation of reports of congregational giving for analysis by authorized personnel.

*The Treasurer*

Shall be responsible for the monthly remittance of offerings for missions and church agencies and prompt payment of salaries and bills as authorized by the congregation, accurate recordings of receipts and disbursements, present a financial report at Council and Voters' meetings, and submit permanent records for annual audit, and fulfill all corporate and governmental requirements.

Article 4

**BOARD OF ELDERS:**

*Board of Elders*

It shall be the duty of the Board of Elders to assist the Pastor in the oversight of the spiritual welfare and activities of the congregational members, individually and corporately. The Board of Elders shall lead the congregational members to faithful and fruitful involvement in ministries that build up the Body of Christ.

Board of Elders eligibility is as follows:

1. Candidate must have been a participating member of Trinity Lutheran for at least three (3) years.
2. Candidate must have participated in a small group/house church or served as a volunteer role for at least one (1) year, preferably in a leadership role.

The Board of Elders shall consist of a minimum of four (4) male members of the congregation, nominated by the Pastor and elected by the Voters Assembly.

Article-5

**AMENDMENTS**

These By-Laws may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the Voters' Assembly by a majority of all voting members present, provided the proposed change has been announced at least two weeks prior to the meeting in which the amendment is voted upon.

