

CONSTITUTION

and

BY-LAWS



FIRST LUTHERAN CONGREGATION

KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS  
OF  
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OF  
KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

Constitutional Revision Committee Named  
January 25, 1963

Ralph Duncan

A. G. Heins, Sr.

William E. McConnell

Revised April 11, 1965

Approved by Voters' Assembly

May 10, 1965; July 12, 1965 and September 13, 1965

**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**  
**OF**  
**FIRST LUTHERAN CONGREGATION**  
**OF**  
**KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE**

APRIL 1966

**PART I—CONSTITUTION**

The name of the congregation shall be THE FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH U. A. C. (Unaltered Augsburg Confession) of Knoxville, Tennessee.

— 2 —

This congregation accepts and acknowledges all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God, and all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord as a true and sound exposition of Christian doctrine taken from and in full agreement with the holy Scriptures; and in this congregation no doctrine shall be taught or tolerated which is at variance with these Symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, viz.: 1, the three Ecumenical Creeds, the Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian; 2, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession; 3, the Apology of the same; 4, the Smalcald Articles; 5, Luther's Large Catechism; 6, Luther's Small Catechism; and 7, the Formula of Concord. According to this form of doctrine all doctrinal controversies which may arise in this congregation shall be decided and adjudicated.

— 3 —

No one can be or remain a member of this congregation, or hold office in the same, or enjoy and exercise the rights and privileges of a member, but such as

- a. Are baptized;
- b. Declare their adherence to all the canonical books of the Old and the New Testaments as the only divine rule and form of faith and life, and
- c. While they may perhaps be yet deficient in the knowledge of all the Lutheran Symbols, are familiar at least with Luther's Small Catechism and declare their acceptance thereof;
- d. Do not live in manifest works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21), but lead Christian lives;
- e. Together with the congregation partake of the Lord's Supper with due frequency, if they be able to examine themselves;

- f. Permit themselves to be fraternally admonished and corrected when they have erred, and
- g. Are not members of any society or organization whose principles are incompatible with Lutheran teachings and practice.

— 4 —

It shall be the duty of every member of this congregation to contribute according to his ability toward the maintenance of church and school and in general to assist in bearing the burden of the congregation.

— 5 —

It shall be the duty of such members of the congregation as have the parental care of unconfirmed children incumbent upon them, to commit such children to the parochial school of the congregation, or otherwise to provide for their proper training in pure Christian doctrine.

— 6 —

Only such male members of this congregation as have completed their twenty-first year and have signed this constitution shall be entitled to vote, and only such as have completed their twenty-second year and have been members of the congregation for one year shall be eligible to an office in the congregation.

— 7 —

It shall be the duty of every voting member to attend the meetings of the congregation, and by failing to attend a meeting, a member waives the right of casting his vote during such meeting.

— 8 —

Every voters' meeting shall be announced at a Sunday Public Service previous to its date; irregular meetings must, in addition, be called by mail. All meetings properly called shall be valid and legal meetings, capable of transacting business, provided that at least one-fourth the voting members of the congregation are in attendance.

— 9 —

In matters of doctrine and conscience unanimity shall be required for a final decision; other matters shall be disposed of by the votes of a majority of the voting members present at a meeting as provided in Section 8.

— 10 —

The rights of choosing ministers and school teachers and of electing all other officers of the congregation shall be vested in the voting membership of the congregation and shall never be delegated to an individual or to a minor body or circle within the congregation.

In the event of a vacancy a meeting of the voting members of the

congregation is to be called within two weeks for the election of a successor. Every voting member is to be notified, in advance, in writing, of the date and purpose of this meeting.

A pulpit committee consisting of the Church Council shall prepare and submit a list of pastoral candidates to the voting membership. Voters may make nominations from the floor. This Committee must meet within two weeks of the vacancy.

In the event of a teacher vacancy, the Church Council may request the assistance of the Board of Education in securing names of candidates.

— 11 —

The pastoral office in this congregation shall be conferred upon such ministers or candidates only as profess their acceptance of and adherence to all the canonical books of the Old and the New Testaments as the inspired word of God, and all the Symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church enumerated in paragraph 2, as derived from such word of God, and pastors as well as school teachers shall be pledged to faithful adherence to the word of God and the Symbols of the Lutheran Church by the call extended to and accepted by them.

— 12 —

In the regular public services of this congregation truly Christian hymns, and music, and in all ministerial acts purely Lutheran forms only shall be used. Thus, also, in the parochial school, beside the holy Scriptures and Luther's Small Catechism, such books only as are purely Lutheran shall be introduced and used for instruction in Christian doctrine, and in so far as possible, all other books used in the school shall be free from everything which is at variance with Lutheran doctrine.

— 13 —

The voting membership of the congregation as a body shall have the supreme power in the external and internal administration and management of its own ecclesiastical and congregational affairs. No decision, enactment, or performance in behalf of the congregation or with reference to a member thereof as such shall be valid, whether it have proceeded from an individual or from a body within the congregation unless it shall have been enacted or performed according to a general or special power conferred by the voting membership and whatever may have been ordered or decided by individuals or minor bodies within the congregation under a power conferred by the voting membership shall always be subject to revision and final decision by the voting membership. But not even the voting membership shall be empowered to order, enact, or decide anything contrary to the word of God and the Symbols of the Lutheran Church, and any such ordinance, enactment, or decision shall be null and void.

— 14 —

The elected officers at any time during their tenure in office shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them by the voting membership and whatever power may have been delegated to them shall be at all times liable to change or rescision by the voting membership.

— 15 —

All the officers of the congregation may, in Christian and lawful order, be removed from office. Sufficient and urgent causes for deposing a pastor or school teacher are, persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, and wilful neglect of official duties.

— 16 —

When a member of this congregation, after fruitless admonition in the various grades prescribed by the word of God (Matt. 18:15-20), where the observance of such grades has been possible, shall have been expelled from the congregation, such excommunicated person shall then have forfeited all rights of a member of this congregation and all claims upon the property of the congregation as such or upon any part thereof. The same shall also hold good with reference to such members as may have refused to submit to church discipline and thus excommunicated themselves, as also of those who may sever their connection with the congregation by removal to another place.

The names of members whose whereabouts are unknown and cannot be established shall be removed by the Voters' Assembly and placed on the inactive membership list.

— 17 —

If at any time a separation should take place in this congregation on account of doctrine, the property of the congregation and all the benefits therewith connected shall remain with those members who shall continue to adhere to paragraph 2 and 11 of this Constitution.

— 18 —

To alter or repeal any alterable or repealable paragraph of this Constitution, it shall be requisite that in two consecutive constitutional meetings of the voting membership two-thirds of all the voting members present cast their votes in favor of such alteration or repeal.

— 19 —

Of this Constitution, paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 19, shall be unalterable and irrevocable.

## PART 2—BY-LAWS

### ARTICLE 1

Admission to membership in this organization shall be effected as follows:  
Applicants coming with letter of dismissal from any congregation in

doctrinal agreement with this congregation shall, after presenting such letter to the pastor, be accepted as communicant members. All other applicants shall be instructed by the pastor in the doctrines and principles of Lutheranism so as to meet the qualifications for membership as outlined in paragraph 3 of the Constitution, and then upon declaring their acceptance of these doctrines and principles, either in the presence of the congregation or at least two of the elders, they shall be accepted as communicant members. The pastor shall present the names of the new communicant members to the Church Council, whose secretary shall maintain a roll of all members.

Male members, who are eligible, may apply for voting membership in any meeting of the congregation, and upon acceptance, shall sign the Constitution as specified in paragraph 6 of the Constitution.

A voting member who is absent from the meeting of the Voters' Assembly for a full year without offering valid excuse shall have his name removed from the roster of voting members; however, he may be reinstated at any subsequent meeting.

### ARTICLE 2

MEETINGS: Six regular voters' meetings of the congregation shall be held each year, on the second Monday of January and alternate months thereafter. Additional meetings may be called by the Church Council.

#### ADMINISTRATION:

##### A. Officers:

The elected officers of the congregation shall be:

- (a) The President
- (b) The Vice-President
- (c) The Recording Secretary
- (d) The Treasurer
- (e) The Financial Secretary
- (f) The Superintendent of the Sunday School
- (g) The Board of Trustees, six elected members
- (h) The Board of Elders, one member per each 50 communicant members or fraction thereof, but in no event less than three.
- (i) The Board of Christian Education, six elected members
- (j) The Board of Finance, three elected members

##### B. Elections:

- (a) All elections shall take place at the last regularly called or special meeting of the voters during the year and shall be by ballot.
- (b) Unexpired terms shall be filled by election by ballot at any meeting of the voters unless the term is within two months of expiration.
- (c) No member may hold more than one elected office at one time.

##### C. Period of Office:

- (a) The President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and the Superintendent of the Sunday School shall

be elected annually for periods of one year.

(b) Trustees, Elders, members of the Board of Finance, and members of the Board of Christian Education shall be elected for a term of three years each and may succeed themselves one term. Such members shall be classified so that the term of office of one-third of them shall expire each year, when their successors take office.

(c) All elected officers, unless filling a vacancy, shall begin their term with the fiscal year, and end with the fiscal year.

#### **D. Administration:**

The administration of the church shall rest in the Church Council, to which all boards and elective officers are responsible.

#### **E. Definition of Officers and Duties:**

(a) The Council shall consist of the President, the Vice-President, the Recording Secretary, the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, and the Chairman of the Boards of Trustees, Elders, Christian Education and Board of Finance. The Pastor and the Principal of the Christian Day School shall be members ex officio.

The duties of the President and of the Vice-President shall be those customary of the office. They shall be eligible to succeed themselves one time.

The duties of the Recording Secretary shall be to keep the minutes of the Council, and of the meeting of the Voters assembled in any duly called meeting and to attend to all correspondence. He may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

The duties of the Treasurer shall be to keep the monies obtained from the Financial Secretary on receipt, and make disbursement of duly authorized bills, such authority coming from the Board of Trustees or from the voters in duly called meetings. Approval of all bills payable in duplicate copy, other than routine bills must be made by signature of the Pastor, the Principal of the Christian Day School, or by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, in whosever province the bills fall. He shall furthermore, together with the Financial Secretary, count the loose offerings, jointly record, and obtain them from the Financial Secretary or his duly authorized representative on receipt. He shall make a monthly report to the Board of Trustees and to the Council, and a bi-monthly and an annual report to the voters in regular meetings. He may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

Duties of the Treasurer: All money and/or monies received from whatever source and specified for special funds, shall be used exclusively for that particular purpose and no other. This fund shall and must not be appropriated, moved or transferred to and for any other fund for any purpose without the express approval in writing of the donor, or donor's estate.

The duties of the Financial Secretary shall be, in addition to the

stated above, to receive, and give receipt upon request for all moneys received in the name of the congregation, and upon receipt turn them over to the Treasurer. He shall make a monthly report to the Board of Trustees and to the Council, and a bi-monthly and an annual report to the voters in regular meeting. He shall have assistance to the number of one person to each 100 (one hundred) envelopes assigned, to aid in recording the moneys regularly contributed by members through envelopes. Assistants shall be named and authorized by the Council upon recommendation by the Board of Finance. Duly designated assistants for the handling of special moneys may be made in like manner. He may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

The chairman of the Board of Elders shall be Constitutional Secretary as well. It shall be his duty to keep the Constitutional Record, a book in which the Constitution, its by-laws, and amendments, are entered, and also the signatures of the voting members. He shall keep the voting membership informed of the contents of the Constitution and its by-laws.

The principal duties of the Council shall be to meet monthly to discuss the need of the congregation and make recommendations to the congregation and the church at large. All recommendations of the Council shall be made in writing.

Council shall appoint upon recommendation of the Board of Elders head usher and assistant head ushers, who will select the ushers. Their duties are to see that sufficient ushers are always present at every church service or special service when needed. They shall serve for a period of one year and be under the supervision of Elders.

(b) The Board of Trustees shall administer the physical needs of the congregation. It shall meet monthly, and make recommendations in writing to the Council. Except in case of emergency it shall be entitled to spend up to but not exceeding the sum of one hundred dollars for any one expenditure. The board shall be composed of six elected members each serving a three year period. The Recording Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Financial Secretary, and the Pastor shall be members ex officio. They shall organize annually and elect a chairman in the third year who shall represent them on Council.

(c) The Board of Elders shall be assistants to the Pastor, and shall meet with him monthly. The Board shall administer the spiritual needs of the congregation and maintain discipline in and on the property of the Church. Each member shall supervise the church attendance of fifty communicant members of the congregation, as well as the spiritual needs of those given into his charge, and to strengthen, admonish, or visit, as needs be, together with fellow board members or at their direction, any member of the congregation. The Board shall designate one or more from among them to attend the Pastor's adult doctrinal discussions. The Board shall be composed of one member for each fifty com-

municants or fraction thereof, but in no event less than three. They shall organize annually and elect a chairman who shall represent them on Council.

They shall consider complaints and grievances of members of the congregation if Matt. 18:15-16 has been fully observed, and they shall report to the congregation those which cannot be otherwise adjusted, in accordance with Matt. 18:17-18.

They shall make every effort to induce members who have been negligent in their attendance of services, in the use of the Sacraments, and the financial support of the church, to mend their sinful ways and fully enjoy the rights and privileges of their membership.

They shall see to it that all services are conducted in such a manner as to avoid needless disturbance and to foster an attitude conducive to worship among those in attendance.

They shall assist the pastor in arranging for pulpit assistances, special services and guest speakers.

Recommend names for ushers and the head usher and assistant head usher to Council.

Be an example of Christian conduct and conversation.

(d) The Board of Christian Education shall administer the spiritual and physical needs of the Christian Day School and the Sunday School. It shall make recommendations regarding the building in writing to the Board of Trustees, and in all other matters as the needs of the school, employment, release, and replacement of teachers to the Church Council. It shall be empowered to spend its budgetary allotment in sums not exceeding one hundred dollars with no additional authority. It shall institute and maintain an adequate accounting of all moneys received and spent on behalf of the Christian Day School, and toward this end appoint a treasurer. The treasurer shall make periodic remittance to the financial secretary. The Board shall demand that the Superintendent of the Sunday School maintain adequate records of enrollment, finance, and progress. The board shall meet monthly. It shall consist of six elected members, each serving a period of three years. They shall organize annually and elect a chairman who shall represent them on Council. The Pastor, the Principal of the Christian Day School, and the Superintendent of the Sunday School shall be members ex officio. All other teachers and the appointed treasurer of the Christian Day School shall be present by invitation only.

(e) The Board of Finance shall work for the financial betterment of the congregation. It shall meet monthly. It shall, together, with the Treasurer, Secretary and Financial Secretary supervise the annual budget and all expenditures; audit or have audited all ordinary and extraordinary books of account, including those of the Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Treasurer of the Christian Day School, the Sunday School, and the Bible Class; and shall recommend assistants of the Financial

Secretary. He may meet with the Council or with other boards on invitation, or request such attendance if he has matters pertaining to that board. The board shall be composed of three members, each elected for a period of three years. They shall organize annually and elect a chairman who shall represent them on Council.

(f) The Board of Nominations shall consist of all members in their first and second years on the Boards of Trustees, Elders, and Christian Education. The Board shall hold two regular meetings, one in winter to elect from among those members in their second year a chairman, and the second in summer to prepare for the September meeting of the voters a slate of candidates for all elective offices. The Pastor shall be a member ex officio and meet with the Board at the second meeting. It shall be mandatory to present two candidates to each elective office, with the exception of the office of Superintendent of the Sunday School, who shall be designated as directed below. In case of vacancy among the elected officers of the congregation, said vacancy of more than two months' duration, the Board shall make nominations in duplicate at the meeting of the voters following the date in which the vacancy occurs. Nominations may be made from the floor.

(g) The Superintendent of the Sunday School shall be elected by the voters in annual meeting upon nomination by the Board of Christian Education. He shall be a member ex officio of the Board of Christian Education, and shall be eligible for re-election. His duties shall consist of supervision of teaching staff, instruction, discipline, supplies, accounts, and records of the Sunday School.

#### ARTICLE 4

THE ORDER OF BUSINESS: The order of business of the Council and of the meeting of the voters shall be:

- A. Opening prayer
- B. Roll call
- C. Reading of the minutes
- D. Reception of new members
- E. Spiritual address by the Pastor, optional
- F. Reports of the Financial Secretary and of the Treasurer
- G. Reports of boards and committees
- H. Unfinished Business
- I. New Business
- J. Adjournment with prayer.

#### ARTICLE 5

ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CHURCH: No groups may organize within the church without first petitioning the Church Council and obtaining the sanction of the voting membership. Any group now in existence, or any group coming into existence, shall abide by all provisions of orthodox conduct, and shall maintain adequate records in the form of permanently

bound secretarial books which shall become the property of the church if the organization passes out of existence, and shall be restored to that group if the organization is reactivated. Failure of any group to maintain discipline within itself, or to keep such adequate records shall, after due warning, be just cause for dissolution of such group.

#### **ARTICLE 6**

**FISCAL YEAR:** The fiscal year of the congregation shall commence on the first day of January and shall close on the 31st day of December of each year.

#### **ARTICLE 7**

**AMENDMENTS:** Suggested amendments to these By-Laws must be presented in writing at a regularly convened meeting of the voters. The passing of such amendments requires a vote of two-thirds of the voting members present at two consecutive regular meetings held in accordance with Section 8 of the Constitution. Votes upon amendments to By-Laws shall not be made at meetings specially called.