

CONSTITUTION

Preamble

Whereas the Word of God demands that a Christian congregation conform to the Word of God in doctrine and practice (Psalm 119:106; Galatians 1:6-8; 2 Timothy 4:1-5), and that all things be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40);

Therefore, in order that we may publicly worship the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; that the Word of God may be preached among us in its purity and truth and His Sacraments be administered according to the institution of our Lord, Jesus Christ; and that we may fulfill our Lord's command to preach the Gospel to all nations, we, the members of The Emmanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church of Fresno, California, set forth by this present document, the Constitution, signed by ourselves, the manner in which our congregation's spiritual and material affairs shall be conducted.

Article 1: Name

The name of this congregation shall be: The Emmanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church of Fresno, California. Where the word "congregation" is used in this Constitution and in the By-Laws, it shall also refer to and be synonymous with the word "corporation".

Article 2: Purpose

We, as redeemed children of God, acknowledge that it is the will of our Lord Jesus Christ that His disciples should preach the Gospel to the whole world (Mark 16:15, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8). That Christ's mission for His Church might be carried out according to His will, He has commanded that Christians unite in worship (Hebrews 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 (Ephesians 4:11-14), serve the needs of all men in Christian love (Ephesians 4:7-16, Mark 10:42-44, John 13:35, Galatians 6:10), administer the Office of the Keys as His Church (John 20:21-23, Matthew 18:15-20), and maintain decency and order (1 Corinthians 14:40) in His church. In order that we may carry out this mission effectively, we, gathered in this common bond of love, accept this constitution and bylaws, in accordance with which all spiritual and material affairs of our congregation shall be governed.

Article 3: Confessional Standard

This congregation accepts without reservation:

- A. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the inspired, inerrant, infallible and written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and practice.
- B. 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 Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, Luther's Large Catechism, Luther's Small Catechism, and the Formula of Concord.

Article 4: Synodical Membership

This congregation shall be affiliated with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) so long as the confessions of said Synod conforms to the confessional standard set forth in Article 3 of this constitution. This congregation shall, to the best of its ability, collaborate with said Synod and assist it in effecting all sound measures intended for the building up of the Kingdom of God.

Article 5: Membership

There shall be three classifications of membership: baptized, confirmed, and voting.

Article 6: Office of the Pastor and Other Called Workers

Only such candidates shall be called and elected to serve as Pastor(s), or other Called Workers, who profess acceptance of, and pledge faithful adherence to the confessions of this congregation as set forth in Article 3 of this constitution and are either ordained or commissioned members of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

In the absence of adequate cause for dismissal, as defined in the bylaws, the tenure of office of a called or elected Pastor or other Called Worker shall be the remainder of his active life, or until the Lord calls him into another field of service.

Article 7: Authority of the Congregation

- A. The congregation shall administer and manage all substantive powers, external and internal, in the church. This congregation shall be represented by, and administer all of its affairs through the Governance Board.
- B. Congregational officers and the Governance Board, whether elected or appointed, shall exercise only that authority delegated to them by the Bylaws of the Congregation.

Article 8: Property Rights

- A. All property of this congregation shall be held in the corporate name as stated in Article 1.
- B. This congregation, through the Voters Assembly, may receive, acquire, hold title to, and manage real and personal property, and may erect structure(s) thereon, mortgage, sell, or convey such real or personal property or any part thereof. A two-thirds majority vote of the voters present at Voters Assembly shall be necessary for the purchase or sale of real property or erection of buildings.
- C. If at any time a separation should take place because of doctrine, the property of the congregation and all benefits therewith connected shall remain with those members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Article 3 of this constitution. In the event the congregation should totally disband, all property shall be disposed of by the final congregational meeting for the payment of debts, and any and all surplus, after due settlement of just claims against the congregation, shall be conveyed to and become the property of the California-Nevada-Hawaii District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, or its successor.

Article 9: Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution shall be made in writing at least 60 days prior to a vote on such amendment. Amendments shall be announced and distributed to the Congregation. They will be presented to a Congregational Voting Assembly 30 days prior to action. A two-thirds vote of the quorum is necessary for passage. Such amendments shall become effective upon approval by the California-Nevada- Hawaii District committee on constitutional matters.