

CONSTITUTION
ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
Kansas City, Kansas

PREAMBLE

It is the will of our Lord Jesus that his disciples be witnesses for the Gospel and make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching them to obey everything he taught (Mt 28:18-20; Lk 24:44-49; Acts 1:8). In order that Jesus's mission might be carried out and to maintain good order, we, a number of Christians living in and near Kansas City, Kansas, accept and subscribe to the following constitution, in accordance with which all affairs of our community shall be governed (1 Cor 14:40).

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this community is St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kansas City, Kansas.

ARTICLE II: CONFESSION

This community confesses the crucified and resurrected Jesus of Nazareth, as testified to in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke-Acts, and John, as the image of our heavenly Father, the giver of the Holy Spirit, and the only Lord and Savior to be listened to and obeyed. As such we accept all the canonical books of the Holy Scriptures, which point to this Jesus, as the inspired Word of God and as the only norm of all faith and life. We also accept all the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the 1580 Book of Concord, as a model and example of faithful confession. No teaching or practice in conflict with the above norm will be taught or tolerated in this community.

ARTICLE III: WAY OF LIFE

This community uses this Way of Life to guide and shape its practices and its growth as it daily embraces the life of complete trust and Baptism into the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:

A. Letting Go...

- ...of obedience to self, family, or world (Lk 9:23-25, 14:7-26; Acts 5:29; Jn 12:25; 1 Jn 2:15).
- ...of violence (Lev 19:18; Mt 5:21-22, 5:38-39; Rom 12:17-19; Phil 2:14; Col 3:8-9; Jas 1:19-20).
- ...of ownership (Ps 24:1; Mt 6:19-21, 19:23-24; Lk 12:13-21, 14:33; 1 Tim 6:9-10; Jas 5:1-6).
- ...of competition (Lk 4:5-8, 14:7-11, 18:9-14, 22:24-27; 1 Cor 13:3-4; Jas 2:1-6, 3:14-16, 4:13-16).
- ...of self-indulgence (Prov 23:20; Mt 5:27-32; Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 6:15-20; 1 Pet 4:3).
- ...of fear of death and worry over security (Mt 6:25-34, 10:26-31; Lk 12:22-30).

B. Listening...

- ...to the Father in prayer and waiting on him (Mk 11:22-24; Lk 5:16, 11:5-13, 18:1-8).
- ...to Jesus in the Scriptures, obeying his word, and trusting he will transform us in Baptism and raise us from the dead (Mt 7:21-27; Lk 10:38-42; Jn 5:25-29; Rom 6:3-13).
- ...to the Spirit in the rebuking, confessing, and forgiving of this community shaped by the Lord's Supper (Mt 16:19, 26:26-28; Jn 20:21-23; 1 Cor 10:16-17, 11:23-34; Heb 10:23-25).

C. Following...

- ...with your cross (Mt 5:10-12, 10:16-23, 10:38-39, 16:24-26; Lk 6:22-23, 14:27).
- ...with self-control (Mt 4:2, 6:16-18, 9:15; Acts 14:23; 1 Cor 9:24-27; Phil 4:11-12; 1 Tim 6:8).
- ...with humility (Mt 23:11-12; Mk 10:42-44; Lk 17:10-19; Eph 4:2; Col 3:12; Jas 4:10).
- ...with generosity (Mt 14:15-21; Mk 10:17-31; Lk 6:30, 11:41, 12:33, 14:12-14, 19:1-10).
- ...with love (Mt 5:7, 5:39-48; Lk 6:27-36, 10:29-37; Rom 12:14; 1 Cor 13:1-13; Jas 2:13).
- ...with the community of Jesus by sharing life and resources with them (Mt 12:46-50, 25:31-46; Jn 13:34-35; Acts 2:44-47, 4:32-35; Rom 12:4-21; Gal 6:2-10; 1 Jn 3:14-18).

ARTICLE IV: ORGANIZATION

A. Communal Members

This community is comprised of Communal Members—those who are Baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who publicly adhere to the Confession, and actively pursue the Way of Life. The Communal Council (see below) determines who qualifies for and maintains Communal Membership and is responsible for overseeing their faithful walk and growth in the Way of Life. Those who deviate from the path of faithfulness will be rebuked and corrected by the Communal Council. Those who refuse to repent, despite the continued and loving corrections of the community, will be publicly removed from Communal Membership (Matthew 18:15-20). However, no matter the gravity of the error, genuine repentance and transformation of life will always allow for full forgiveness and reinstatement into the community.

B. Communal Assembly

The community administers its authority through the assembled Communal Members (Communal Assembly), which delegates responsibility for oversight and leadership to the Pastor, Called Workers, Stewards, and Deacons (Communal Council). No Pastor, Called Worker, Steward, or Deacon has any power or authority beyond that conferred upon them by the Communal Assembly.

The Communal Members have a Communal Assembly at least once per year. The Pastor, Called Workers, Stewards, and Deacons report on and update the Assembly on their activities and vision for the coming year and ask for approval of their general plan for the communal resources and any other needed items. Steward appointments take place at this meeting, with nominations being accepted during the prior month (the installation of the new Stewards and Deacons then takes place at the next appropriate worship gathering). All decision making within the community must strive towards consensus—if consensus cannot be achieved, the Stewards have the option of calling for a two-thirds majority vote to decide an issue at a subsequent meeting. The Pastor or a Steward will facilitate discussion and the consensus-building. A quorum is defined as 20% of the Communal Members. A special meeting of the Communal Members may be called by the Communal Council or at the request of ten Communal Members. Notice of the date and time of such a meeting, and the nature of the business to be transacted, will be given at the Sunday worship gathering at least a week before the time of the meeting.

C. Communal Council

The Communal Council is the leadership of the community and is composed of the Pastor and Stewards, who are the decision-making members of the Council, and any other Called Workers and Deacons, who are the advisory members (offering input and insight while receiving direction and guidance). The Communal Council has two main tasks:

- 1) Serving as spiritual leaders and gatekeepers for the Communal Members.
- 2) Discerning the Jesus-centered, faithful management and distribution of the communal resources for the care of, first, the Communal Members and then those on the outside.

The Communal Council meets monthly when able and all decisions of the Council must be by consensus. The first part of the meeting involves the whole Council, while the second part involves only the Pastor and Stewards.

a. Pastor & Called Workers

The Pastor is the head of the community, called by the Communal Assembly to represent the voice and presence of Jesus—he is the “overseer” of the Communal Members, the Stewards, the Deacons, and any other Called

Workers, doing so only in the example of Jesus's servant Way. His main focus and task is to continually lead and unite the community in the teaching, preaching, and living of the Way of Jesus—this is founded on his own lived example of following Jesus. Any other Called Workers partner with and support the Pastor in this role.

In the absence of adequate cause for dismissal, the tenure of a Pastor or other Called Worker is the remainder of his or her active life or until the Lord calls to another field of service. A Pastor or Called Worker may be removed from office by the Communal Assembly for one of the following causes: 1) persistent adherence to false teaching, 2) a life that does not reflect Jesus's teachings, or 3) inability to perform or willful neglect of the duties of the office. The Calling of a Pastor or Called Worker must be carried out at a special meeting of the Communal Assembly. At that meeting or at a subsequent meeting, the Communal Assembly will prayerfully choose one of the nominees by consensus or by casting lots. This community will only call a Pastor or Called Worker who is adequately trained and also pledges faithful adherence to the Confession and Way of Life of this community as set forth in Articles II & III of this constitution.

b. Stewards

The Stewards partner with the Pastor in leading and guiding the Communal Members in their faithfulness to Jesus—always by example first. This involves two tasks specific to the Stewards:

- 1) Holding the Pastor and Called Workers accountable in teaching and life to Jesus's standard.
- 2) Building relationships with their assigned Communal Members in order to help identify any physical and spiritual needs.

The Stewards are chosen from among the Communal Members by the Communal Assembly. A Steward is chosen based on faithful life, Scriptural knowledge, and passion for Jesus—he or she must lead the way in embodying the Way of Life of this community. The Stewards must also undergo specific Scriptural training with the Pastor as he sees fit. One Steward is appointed for about every twenty Communal Members and serves a two year term before possible reappointment by the Communal Assembly.

c. Deacons

The Deacons are appointed by the Communal Council from among the Communal Members in order to assist in carrying out the ministry of the community. It is usual to have the following four Deacons, but the Council can add or remove any Deacon position as they see fit.

- 1) Financial Deacon: Spearheads the accounting of all receipts and disbursements as well as the submitting of records for audit. Oversees those who count the worship offering.
- 2) Property Deacon: Spearheads the care and upkeep of the buildings and property.
- 3) Outreach Deacon: Helps spearhead the service, outreach, and work of the community in the neighborhood and city.
- 4) Hospitality Deacon: Spearheads coordination and execution of all community meals.

Each Deacon is chosen based on servant heart and giftedness to fill a specific role. Each Deacon serves a two year term before possible reappointment by the Council.

ARTICLE V: PROPERTY

If, at any time, a separation should take place within this community, the advice of the Synodical District will be sought. If, despite all efforts to reconcile differences in peace and love, a division into factions of the community occurs, the property of the community and all benefits therewith connected will remain with those Communal Members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Articles II & III of this constitution.

ARTICLE VI: AFFILIATION

This community will be affiliated with and walk with the Kansas District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as long as the confessions and constitution of said Synod are in accord with the confession of this community.

ARTICLE VII: VALIDITY OF RESOLUTIONS & AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be changed or amended by the Communal Assembly, provided that the intention to amend the constitution and the wording of the changes proposed will be read to the community gathered for worship at least 30 days before the amendment is presented for action.