

**THE CONSTITUTION**  
**CONCORDIA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**OF**  
**NORTHERN DELAWARE**

**PREAMBLE**

Whereas the Word of God demands that a Christian Congregation not only conform to the Word of God in doctrine and practice (Psalm 119:105; Galatians 1:6-8; 2 Timothy 4:1-5) but also that all things be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40); therefore, we, the members of Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church of Northern Delaware, set forth by this present document, signed by ourselves, the Constitution and the By-Laws in accordance with which our congregational affairs, spiritual and material, shall be conducted.

**ARTICLE I – NAME**

Section 1 The name of this Congregation shall be Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church of Northern Delaware.

Section 2 This Congregation shall be incorporated in the State of Delaware.

Section 3 The Corporate Trustees shall constitute the officers of this Congregation.

Section 4 This Congregation shall be a member of the Southeastern District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

**ARTICLE II – PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Congregation shall be that of a religious organization; more specifically, that of a Christian Congregation, established and maintained for the express purpose as a congregation to:

- Tell others of God's love in Christ (Witness).
- Serve others as Christ served us (Service).
- Keep each other strong in the faith (Nurture).
- Rejoice with one another over Christ's meaning in our lives and offer praise to God for His goodness (Celebration, Worship).
- Manage, both as individuals and as a group, our lives and resources in such a way that we serve God's purpose for us (Stewardship).
- Care for and serve one another as we share our gifts (Fellowship).

## **ARTICLE III – CONFESSIONAL STANDARD**

This Congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testament as the revealed Word of God, verbally inspired, and acknowledges and accepts all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the Book of Concord 1580, to be a true and genuine exposition of the doctrine of the Bible. These Symbolical Books are: the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the same, the Smalcald Articles, Lutheran's Large and Small Catechism and the Formula of Concord.

## **ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of this Congregation shall consist of:

### **A. Baptized Members**

The baptized membership shall comprise all persons, including children, who are baptized in the name of the Triune God, and for whose spiritual well-being the Congregation has assumed direct responsibility.

### **B. Communicant Members**

The communicant membership shall include all baptized members who:

1. believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior;
2. accept all the canonical books of the Old Testament and the New Testament as the only divine Word and standard of faith and life;
3. are acquainted with and declare their acceptance of Luther's Small Catechism;
4. lead a Christian life and abstain from manifest works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-26);
5. attend divine service and partake faithfully of the Lord's Supper;
6. submit, for the sake of love and peace, to the ordinances of the Congregation, provided they do not conflict with the word of God, and accept brotherly admonition when having erred or offended;
7. do not support nor adhere to any organization whose teachings or practices conflict with the Word of God;
8. have been received into communicant membership in accordance with the By-Laws.

### **C. Assembly Members**

The membership of the Assembly shall be comprised of all communicant members who have signed the Constitution and By-Laws of the Congregation.

## **D. Associate Members**

1. Associate membership shall be extended to Lutherans who:
  - a. Expect to be in the Wilmington area for a limited period of time,;
  - b. Wish to retain membership in their home congregation;
  - c. Regularly attend worship services at Concordia;
  - d. Wish to be involved to some extent in Concordia's ministry.
2. Associate membership shall include all privileges except the right to vote or to hold an elected office described in this Constitution and By-Laws.

## **ARTICLE V – OFFICERS, BOARDS, AND COMMITTEES**

The Board of Trustees of this Congregation shall consist of seven assembly members who are at least twenty-one years of age. Such Trustees shall be elected at the regular May Assembly Meeting in odd-numbered years to serve for a term of two years commencing June first following. At the May meeting, the newly elected Board of Trustees shall elect from its members a President, a Vice-President (business Management), a Vice President (Deacons), a Vice-President (Administrators), a Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Financial Secretary. These Trustees shall have the corporate powers provided for in the Laws of the State of Delaware, and shall constitute the Officers of the Congregation.

There shall also be a Board of Deacons, an Administrative Board, a Business Management Board, a Nominating Committee, and an Audit Committee, and such other officers, boards and committees as the By-Laws of this Congregation may prescribe, or as this Congregation may elect or appoint in accordance with its needs. The Pastor and the President shall be ex-officio members of all boards and committees of this Congregation.

The Board of Deacons shall consist of the Vice-President (Deacons), and eight elected members plus one additional Deacon elected for each increase of twenty households in excess of 175 households. Term of office for the members shall be two years with at least forty percent (40%) of the terms expiring annually. The Vice-President (Deacons) shall serve as Chairperson of the Board of Deacons; the Board shall elect a Secretary from among its members.

The Administrative Board shall consist of the Vice-President (Administrators), the Secretary, and eight Administrators, each elected to be responsible for one of the areas of the Congregation's Ministry as specified in the By-Laws. The term of office for the Administrators shall be two years with at least forty percent (40%) of the terms expiring annually. The Vice-President (Administration) shall serve as Chairperson and the Secretary as Secretary.

The Business Management Board shall consist of the Vice-President (Business

Management), the Financial Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Administrator for Stewardship. The Audit Committee shall consist of two or more members whose appointment shall be ratified by the Assembly at the May meeting.

The Nominating Committee shall consist of three or more members appointed by February first.

All appointments shall be made by the President with the guidance of the appropriate Vice-President unless otherwise stated.

## **ARTICLE VI – PROPERTY RIGHTS OF CONGREGATION**

This Congregation may receive, acquire, hold title to, and manage such real estate and other property as it may need to accomplish said purpose and may sell or dispose of such real estate and other property or any part hereof; and this Congregation shall have all rights and the powers that are granted by the laws of the State of Delaware to religious corporations.

## **ARTICLE VII – POWERS AND RIGHTS**

The Assembly as a body shall represent the Congregation and have full and final authority to act in the administration of all congregational affairs, or to delegate administration or congregational affairs except as provided in this article. The assembly shall never enact or decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the Symbols of the Lutheran Church; and all actions or enactments contrary to Article III of the Constitution shall be null and void.

## **ARTICLE VIII – PASTORS AND TEACHERS**

Only such pastors and teachers shall be called by this Congregation as are in accord with the confessional standards of this Congregation (Article III) and as have been prepared and are well-qualified for their work. The right of the calling or dismissing pastors and teachers shall be vested in the Assembly and shall never be delegated to a smaller body or to an individual. Reasons for dismissing a pastor or teacher shall be: persistent adherence to false teaching, an ungodly life, unfaithfulness or inability in reference to the performance of duties. For the election or dismissal of pastors and teachers an eighty percent (80%) majority vote of the meeting is required. Only males shall be called to be Pastor of this Congregation.

## **ARTICLE IX – BY-LAWS**

This Congregation may adopt such By-Laws as the accomplishment of the purpose of its organization may demand.

## **ARTICLE X – AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to this Constitution must be proposed in writing and may be adopted at any regular meeting of the Assembly, provided that the proposed amendments have already been submitted in the preceding regular meeting and that two-thirds of the voting members present as such meeting cast their vote in favor of such proposed amendments.