

Constitution of Salem Lutheran Church of Orange, California

Preamble

Whereas the Word of God demands that a Christian congregation conform to the Word of God in doctrine and practice (Ps. 119:105; Gal.1:6-8; 2 Tim. 4:1-5) and that all things be done decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40), therefore we, the members of Salem Lutheran Church of Orange, California, set forth and subscribe to this document as our Constitution in accordance with which our congregational affairs, spiritual and material, shall be conducted and regulated.

Article I Name

The name of this congregation shall be Salem Lutheran Church of Orange, California (“Salem”).

Article II Mission

Being taught by God’s Word and led by His Holy Spirit, our mission at Salem Lutheran Church and School is to train and nurture one another while thoughtfully reaching out to our neighbors with the love of Christ, involving everyone in a Christian life journey that is marked by meaningful growth and vocational calling.

Article III Confessional Basis

This congregation and all its members accept without reservation the canonical books of the Old and New Testament as the only rule and norm of faith and practice. We believe in the Triune God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We accept all of the Symbolic Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in The Book of Concord of the year 1580, to be the true and genuine expositions of the doctrines of the Word of God. These confessional writings are:

- A. The three Ecumenical Creeds: The Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian;
- B. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession;
- C. The Apology of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession;
- D. The Smalcald Articles;
- E. Luther’s Large Catechism
- F. Luther’s Small Catechism; and
- G. The Formula of Concord.

Article IV Synod Membership

This congregation shall hold membership in, honor, and abide by the Constitution, Bylaws, rules, and regulations of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, as long as such Synod remains true in doctrine and practice to the Word of God and the Lutheran confessions enumerated in Article III. It is understood, however, that such synod or its representatives shall exercise only advisory influence over this congregation.

Article V Membership

The membership of this congregation includes the Baptized Members; Confirmed Members, and Voting Members as defined in the Bylaws.

Article VI Organization

A. Voters Assembly

The Voters Assembly shall consist of all voting members present at a regular or special meeting of the congregation. The Voters Assembly, through the Ministry Leadership Council, shall have final authority in managing its internal and external affairs.

B. Ministry Leadership Council

The Ministry Leadership Council shall be the governing body of the congregation and is responsible to administer all the congregation's affairs except the following matters for action only by the Voters Assembly:

1. Call or remove a called worker;
2. Purchase sell or encumber church property or buildings valued over 10% of the annual operating budget;
3. Adopt the annual operating budget;
4. Dissolve the congregation; and
5. Elect Officers of the congregation and Members at Large of the Ministry Leadership Council.

C. Deacons or Deaconesses

Working with and through the Senior Pastor, deacons or deaconesses shall help provide for the spiritual health and welfare of the congregation and its members. This congregation shall follow the guidelines of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod which state that those assisting the Pastor(s) in the public exercise of the distinct functions of the pastoral office shall be male only.

D. Authority of Elected Officials

Those elected by the Congregation shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them in the Constitution or Bylaws.

E. Committees

Committees shall perform their ministry functions within the guidelines established by the congregation in its Constitution, Bylaws and adopted policies, under the guidance, counsel and support of the Ministry Leadership Council and the Senior Pastor.

Article VII Property Rights

The property of this congregation is irrevocably dedicated to religious and charitable purposes and no part of net income or assets of this organization shall ever inure to the benefit of any director, officer or member thereof or to the benefit of any private individual.

If, at any time, a separation shall take place within this congregation, the dispute resolution resources of the District this congregation is placed in shall be utilized.

If, at any time, a division of the congregation should take place for any reason, the following principles will govern:

1. The property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those communicant members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to the confessional standards set forth in this constitution.
2. In the event that the congregation dissolves, all property shall be disposed of by the final Voters Assembly for the payment of debts and all just claims against the congregation, and any and all surplus and all rights connected therewith shall be conveyed to and become the property of the District in which this congregation has been placed.

Article VIII Authority of and within the Congregation

All congregational matters decided by the Voters Assembly shall be decided by a majority of the voting members present at a properly convened meeting of the Voters Assembly, except as otherwise provided in this Constitution and Bylaws.

Article IX Unalterable Articles and Amendments

Article III (Confessional Basis) of this Constitution may only be amended by unanimous vote of the Voters Assembly. Any changes to this article shall not change its essential meaning. Whether this has occurred shall be decided by District dispute resolution procedures.

This Constitution, except Article III, may be amended by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in a meeting of the Voters Assembly.

The wording of the proposed amended Constitution shall be distributed to all members either electronically or in a mailing as far in advance as possible, but no less than two Sundays in advance of the Voters Assembly. In addition, the revisions will be distributed to the congregation assembled for worship on two different Sundays prior to the date upon which the amendment is presented for action.