

CONSTITUTION
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
Winfield, Kansas
A member congregation of
The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS)

PREAMBLE

The Word of God requires that a Christian congregation shall conform to this divine Word in doctrine and practice (Ps.119:105; Matt. 28:18-20; 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 undersigned, herewith adopt this Constitution and its Bylaws by which all affairs of this congregation shall be conducted.

ARTICLE I – NAME

The corporate legal name of this congregation shall be **TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, Inc.** (commonly known as **Trinity Lutheran Church - LCMS**) of Winfield, Cowley County, Kansas.

ARTICLE II – SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

This congregation shall hold membership in The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod as long as the Synod conforms to the congregation’s confessional standards as set forth in this constitution.

ARTICLE III – PURPOSE

The purpose of this congregation shall be to serve its members and to spread the kingdom of God by the preaching of the Word of God, by the administration of the sacraments, and by the religious instruction of youth and adults, according to the confessional standards of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Article IV), and to foster Christian fellowship and welfare.

ARTICLE IV – CONFESSIONS

This congregation accepts without reservation all the canonical books of the Old and New Testament as the inspired Word of God. This congregation also accepts without reservation as a true interpretation and explanation thereof the confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. These are contained in the Book of Concord of the year 1580, namely: the three Ecumenical Creeds - The Apostles’ Creed, The Nicene Creed, and The Athanasian Creed; 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 V – MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this congregation consists of the following:

- A. **Baptized Membership**
Baptized members are all who have been baptized with water in the name of the Triune God and who are under the spiritual care of the Pastor of this congregation.

- B. **Communicant Membership**
 - 1. Communicant members of this congregation are those
 - a. *Who are baptized in the name of the Triune God;*
 - b. *Who accept without reservation the confessional standards of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as described in Article IV of this Constitution, and who have been instructed in and are familiar with Luther's Small Catechism and declare their acceptance of it;*
 - c. *Who lead a godly life and avoid works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21);*
 - d. *Who attend divine services faithfully;*
 - e. *Who partake of the Lord's Supper on a frequent and regular basis;*
 - f. *Who permit themselves to be fraternally admonished and corrected when they have erred;*
 - g. *Who contribute regularly and faithfully of their time, talents, and treasure as God has prospered them, toward the building of Christ's kingdom in the congregation and throughout the world;*
 - h. *Who do not hold membership in any organization whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God.*

 - 2. *If an erring member has been duly admonished with the Word of God according to Matt.18:15-20, but stubbornly resists all efforts to bring him/her to repentance, he/she shall be excommunicated. He/she thereby forfeits all claims on the church property and all privileges of membership. This latter clause also pertains to those who voluntarily sever connections with the congregation (Bylaws Article I.C.4 and D).*

- C. **Voting membership**
Voting membership is determined by the Bylaws.

- D. **Guest Membership**
Guest membership is determined by the Bylaws.

ARTICLE VI - ORDAINED AND COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

- A. Only such men shall be called as Ordained Ministers who accept all the books of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God, who are in full agreement with the

Confessional Standard (Constitution Article IV), and who have the qualifications for such calls according to the standards and teachings of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. The Ordained Minister in the call extended to him and accepted by him pledges himself to this confessional standard.

- B. Only such men and women shall be called as Commissioned Ministers who accept all the books of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God, who are in full agreement with the Confessional Standard (Constitution Article IV), and who have the qualifications for such calls according to the standards and teachings of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. The Commissioned Minister in the call extended to him/her and accepted by him/her pledges himself/herself to this confessional standard.

ARTICLE VII – POWERS VESTED IN THE CONGREGATION

- A. The congregation as a body, through the Voters' Assembly, shall have supreme power through the Administrative Council, to administer and manage its external and internal affairs. The establishment and conduct of all institutions and societies within the congregation, such as the Christian day school, Sunday school, youth societies, ladies organizations, choir, etc. at all times shall be subject to the approval and supervision of the congregation.
- B. *The right of calling Ordained or Commissioned ministers shall be vested in the Voters' Assembly of the congregation and shall never be delegated to a smaller body or to an individual.*
- C. *The matters of doctrine shall require unanimity for the final decision. The congregation, however, shall not be empowered to decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Article IV). Any such decision shall be null and void. Other matters shall be disposed of by the vote of a majority of the voting members present at a duly called meeting, except as otherwise stated in the Constitution or Bylaws.*
- D. Any Ordained or Commissioned Minister, or officer of the congregation may be removed from office by the Voters' Assembly, by a two-thirds majority vote, by ballot, in Christian and lawful order for any of the following causes: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of or inability to perform his or her official duties (Bylaws Article VII).
- E. When a vacancy occurs in the office of an Ordained Minister, the appropriate Call Committee (Bylaws Article VI.) shall notify the Circuit Visitor and the president of the District to receive assistance in temporarily filling the vacancy and to receive counsel in calling a new Ordained Minister.
- F. When a vacancy occurs in the office of a Commissioned Minister, the appropriate Call Committee (Bylaws Article VI.) shall notify the appropriate District Official for assistance in temporarily filling the vacancy and to receive counsel in calling a new Commissioned Minister. As a matter of courtesy, the Circuit Visitor shall be kept informed of this process.

ARTICLE VIII – PROPERTY RIGHTS

In case of dissensions in doctrinal matters or divisions in the congregation the counsel of the District President shall be sought. All property of the congregation shall remain with those who remain faithful and strictly adhere to all the Evangelical Lutheran Confessions (Article IV).

ARTICLE IX – DISSOLUTION OF THE CONGREGATION

In the event that the congregation dissolves, all property shall be disposed of by the final Voter's Assembly for the payment of debts and all just claims against the congregation. Any and all surplus items, and all rights connected to the remaining property shall be dispersed by the Church Council, with special consideration being given to the LCMS Kansas District.

ARTICLE X – AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- A. *Proposed amendments to the provisions of this Constitution not identified in the following paragraph shall be submitted in writing to a member of the Executive Board prior to a duly called meeting of the Voters' Assembly and announced to the congregation by public posting and/or mail to all communicant members at least 30 days prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the voters present shall be required for adoption. The date of approval shall be referenced in any amendment adopted. (Please consult the Manual of Duties, Policies, and Procedures, IV.D., Constitution and Bylaw Committee.)*
- B. *Amendments to Articles IV; V.B.1.a,b,c,g,h; V.B.2; VI; VII.B,C; VIII; and X shall not destroy their essential meaning. (The listed Articles are italicized.) Proposed amendments to these articles shall follow the same procedure as noted in Article X.A.*
- C. *The revised Constitution shall, as a condition of continued membership in The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, be submitted to the President of the District for review by the District's Constitution Committee and favorable action by the District's Board of Directors before being implemented by the congregation.*

Revised and adopted 6/8/2010
Revised and adopted 6/16/2019

BYLAWS TO THE CONSTITUTION
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
Winfield, Kansas
A member congregation of
The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS)

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP

- A. Acceptance into membership
1. Baptized membership – persons are received into baptized membership:
 - a. By the sacrament of Holy Baptism, or
 - b. By transfer from another Lutheran congregation, or
 - c. By consent of one or both parents or legal guardians in the case of children who have been baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity in another Christian congregation.
 2. Communicant membership – persons are received into communicant membership
 - a. By the rite of confirmation, or
 - b. By letter of transfer from a congregation in fellowship with The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, provided they conform to the requirements of communicant membership of this congregation (Constitution V.B.), or
 - c. By public profession of faith, submitting a request for membership to the Pastor, and giving satisfactory evidence of meeting qualifications for communicant membership as stated in Article V.B. of the Constitution.
 3. Guest membership – Lutherans who are members in good standing of another Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod congregation and are residing locally for educational, business, or other reasons. Guest members shall have such basic rights as:
 - a. Reception of the Sacraments, Pastoral care, and congregational concern,
 - b. Use of their time, talents, and treasure in the service of the Lord through our congregation, and
 - c. Attendance and participation in Voters' Assemblies but without voting privileges.
 4. Each transfer in or confession of faith request shall be approved by the Pastor and the Board of Elders and reported to the Administrative Council and the Voters' Assembly.

- B. Voting membership – any communicant member may become a voting member. Voting members:
1. Have reached their 18th birthday,
 2. Have read and signed the Constitution and Bylaws of this congregation, and are encouraged to
 - a. Attend the Voters' Assembly meetings,
 - b. Exercise the right to vote,
 - c. Be willing to accept nomination for office, committee appointments and other services necessary to the functioning of the congregation, and
 - d. Participate in the mission and business activities of the congregation.
- C. Termination of membership – persons terminate their baptismal and communicant membership in Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church by:
1. Transfer to a Lutheran congregation in fellowship with The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.

Persons desiring such a transfer shall present their request to the Pastor to whom authorization is granted to issue such transfers. The Pastor shall report each request to the Board of Elders.
 2. Release to other congregations.

Members desiring to join a congregation outside this fellowship shall request from the Pastor a release from membership. Upon recommendation of the Pastor and the Board of Elders, such release shall be granted and their names removed from Trinity's membership list. Those who join a congregation outside the fellowship of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod and do not request a release from membership shall have their membership removed by action of the Voters' Assembly.
 3. Self exclusion.

Members who exclude themselves from active participation by absenting themselves from worship services and Holy Communion over an extended period of time as determined by the Pastor and the Board of Elders, or whose whereabouts are unknown and cannot be established after exhaustive efforts to locate them, shall be reported by the Elders or Pastor at a regular Voters' Assembly. Their names shall be removed from Trinity's membership list by action of the Voters' Assembly.
 4. Excommunication.

Members who conduct themselves in an unchristian manner shall be admonished according to the Word of God using Matthew 18:15-20 as a guide. They shall be encouraged to meet with the Pastor and the Board of Elders. Refusal to amend their sinful life or stubborn resistance to all efforts of bringing them to repentance after Christian admonition shall result in their being excommunicated by a resolution adopted by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present at a regular Voters' Assembly.

D. Forfeiture of Rights.

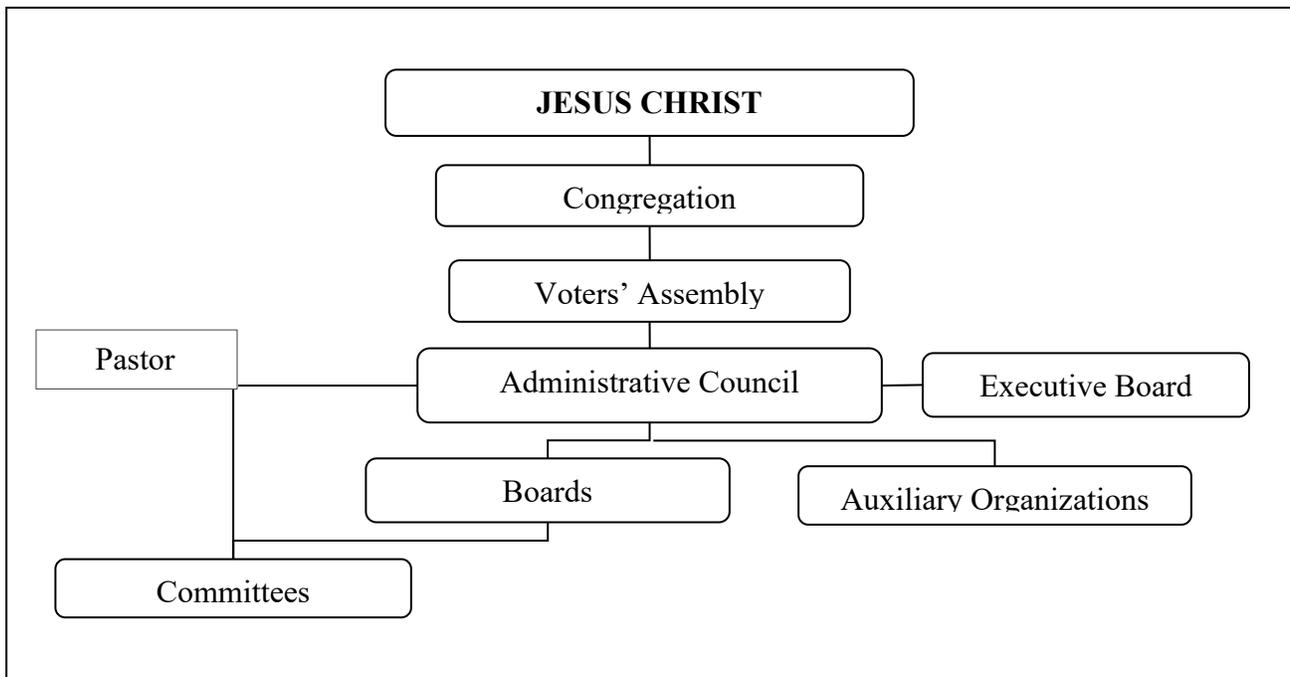
Persons whose membership has been terminated or who have severed association with Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church by release, self-exclusion, or excommunication forfeit all rights and privileges of communicant membership and all claims upon the congregation's property and services. Persons whose membership has been terminated in any of the above ways can become members by following the procedure outlined in Article I.A.2. of these Bylaws.

E. Reporting of Official Acts.

All actions by the Pastor and Board of Elders under this article shall be reported at the next regular meeting of the Administrative Council and Voters' Assembly in written form.

ARTICLE II – ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE CONGREGATION

The following chart shows the administrative structure of the congregation as well as the line of authority:



Each body shall have the powers as outlined in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Manual of Duties, Procedures, and Policies of the congregation (Constitution VII.A.).

ARTICLE III – VOTERS’ ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

A. Regular meetings

There shall be three regular meetings each calendar year. They will be held in the months of February, June, and October. The dates shall be determined by the Administrative Council. These shall be publicized and printed in the worship folder at least twice prior to the meeting.

B. Special meetings

1. A special meeting may be called by the President, Pastor, or upon written request of any three members of the Administrative Council.
2. A special meeting may be called by publicly announcing it and its agenda during the regular Sunday morning worship services.
3. Only those items of business for which the meeting has been called and which were announced may be conducted at any special Voters’ Assembly.

C. The number of voting members present at a duly called meeting shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE IV – CONGREGATIONAL OFFICERS AND ELECTIONS

A. The officers and the Executive Board of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church shall consist of the President, President-elect, Secretary, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary who shall serve as legal trustees of the congregation and who shall be bonded (Manual III.A.1.b.).

B. The Administrative Council of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church shall include the officers of the congregation and:

Chairpersons of- Board of Buildings and Grounds
 Board of Education
 Board of Elders
 Board of Youth Ministry
 Board of Parish Life
 Safety and Security Committee (advisory only)

Members-at-large (2)

C. Nominations and Elections

1. Nominating Committee

- a. The committee shall consist of three communicant members: two to be elected by the Voters’ Assembly at the October meeting and the member-at-large with the non-expiring term.
- b. The Nominating Committee shall choose one of its members to be the chairperson at its first meeting. (The Nominating Committee shall never be appointed and the President-elect shall not be a part of the Nominating Committee.)
- c. Members elected shall be in good standing, be well acquainted with the membership, be informed of the duties of the offices to be filled, which

offices are to be filled, understand the purpose and mission of the congregation, and be willing to plan open-mindedly for the congregation's progress by seeking the best possible nominees for each and every office. The Pastor shall be an advisory member of the committee.

- d. Members of the congregation shall be invited and urged to share their ideas on prospective nominees with the committee by January 1. Any communicant member may suggest names to be considered by the Nominating Committee. These names are suggestions only, are confidential, and may not appear on the final ballot. The consent of the person being suggested is not needed at this time. Only male communicants shall be eligible for President, President-elect, and membership on the Board of Elders. (The request for suggested names from the congregation shall be published in the Sunday bulletin each week following the October Voters' Assembly until January 1.) No nominations are to be made from the floor at the election meeting.
- e. Regardless of the number of suggestions received, the Nominating Committee's major responsibility is to secure the best qualified person for each office whether that person was recommended/suggested or not. No nominee shall be selected for more than one office. (See Manual for additional guidelines.)

2. Elections

- a. From the ballot, the voting membership shall, at their February Voters' Assembly, elect by simple majority the officers needed. Paper ballots shall be used when there is more than one candidate for an office.
- b. Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church shall annually elect the following:

Even numbered years:	Odd numbered years:
President-elect	President-elect
Elders – 4	Elders – See Manual III.B.1.
Financial secretary	Secretary
	Treasurer
Board of Buildings & Grounds – 2	Board of Buildings & Grounds – 2
Board of Education – 3	Board of Education – 3
Board of Parish Life – Chairperson-elect	Board of Parish Life – Chairperson-elect
Board of Youth – 2	Board of Youth – 2
Member-at-large	Member-at-large
Church Endowment representative	School Endowment representative

- c. Each elected board of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church shall select from their members a chairperson and a secretary at the beginning of the fiscal year. The chairperson shall then make themselves and all members of their board familiar with the Bylaws, Duties, Procedures, and Policies which pertain to their particular board or committee. Duties of Officers and Boards are found in the Manual of Duties, Procedures, and Policies which follow these Bylaws. These actions shall be reported at each August meeting of the Administrative Council.

D. Terms of Office

1. The term of each office shall be two years, terminating on June 30th of the second year.
2. No person shall hold more than one elected office at a time.
3. The President-elect position shall be elected each year and shall serve the first year as President-elect and the second year as President.
4. The chairperson-elect position of the Board of Parish Life shall be elected each year and shall serve the first year as chairperson-elect and the second year as chairperson.

E. Installation of Officers

1. The newly elected officers and board members of the congregation shall be installed during a Sunday worship service prior to July 1.
2. They shall meet and train with their respective board or committee from March until June and shall assume the duties of office July 1.

ARTICLE V – SYNOD ELECTIONS

Names of proposed candidates or delegates for election to circuit, district, or Synod offices or other purposes may be made to the Voters' Assembly by the boards, Administrative Council, or by a voting member whenever required.

ARTICLE VI – DIVINE CALLS

The Board of Elders is the Call Committee of the congregation when Ordained Ministers are to be called and the Board of Education is the Call Committee of the congregation when Commissioned Ministers are to be called. Only rostered church workers of the Synod are to receive divine calls. Contracts are to be used for all other church and school workers. Throughout the call process the congregation shall be encouraged to be in prayer concerning the call to be made.

At the time of vacancy for an Ordained Minister, the President of the congregation shall contact the Circuit Visitor who will meet with the congregation to discuss the procedure for filling the vacancy, and the procedures for beginning the call process. The congregation shall also meet with the appropriate District Official to outline the process of issuing a call, including the nomination of candidates.

After asking the Lord for guidance in prayer, the Call Committee will review all profiles of potential candidates sent by the District President. Phone interviews may be conducted using this list of candidates. Any phone interview shall follow the pre-call interview guidelines established by the Synod.

At a regular or special meeting of the Voters' Assembly the Call Committee shall

a. submit the list of candidates obtained from the District President to the Voters' Assembly and ask them to select, by ballot and two-thirds majority, one candidate from the list (the Board may suggest three candidates they would prefer);

b. In case no candidate receives a two-thirds majority vote, another ballot shall be cast with the name having the fewest votes deleted from the ballot. This procedure shall be repeated until one candidate receives the required two-thirds majority. This candidate shall receive the divine call.

c. In consultation with the Circuit and District officials shall prepare terms of a call and promptly deliver it to the candidate. It shall be the duty of the President of the congregation to notify the candidate promptly in whatever manner the Voters' Assembly has decided.

d. If the candidate rejects the call, the Board shall request another meeting of the Voters' Assembly to select from the adopted list another candidate to whom a call will be issued.

e. It is the responsibility of the Board to do their utmost to see that the office of Ordained Minister does not remain vacant. As a matter of courtesy the calling body shall keep the Circuit Visitor informed during the process of finding a vacancy Pastor and during the call process.

At the time of a vacancy for a Commissioned Minister the President of the congregation shall contact the Circuit Visitor to inform him of the vacancy. The President of the congregation will contact the appropriate District Official to schedule a meeting to discuss the procedures for calling a Commissioned Minister.

After asking the Lord for guidance in prayer the Call Committee will review all profiles of potential candidates sent to it by the District Official.

At a regular or special meeting of the Voters' Assembly the Call Committee shall

a. submit the list of candidates obtained from the District Official to the Voters' Assembly and ask them to select, by ballot and two-thirds majority, one candidate from the list (the Board may suggest three candidates they would prefer);

b. In case no candidate receives a two-thirds majority vote, another ballot shall be cast with the name having the fewest votes deleted from the ballot. This procedure shall be repeated until one candidate receives the required two-thirds majority. This candidate shall receive the divine call.

c. In consultation with the District officials, the Call Committee shall prepare terms of a call and promptly deliver it to the candidate. It shall be the duty of the President of the Congregation to notify the candidate promptly in whatever manner the Voters' Assembly has decided.

d. If the candidate rejects the call, the Board shall request another meeting of the Voters' Assembly to select from the adopted list another candidate to whom a call will be issued.

e. It is the responsibility of the Board to do their utmost to see that the position of Commissioned Minister does not remain vacant. As a matter of courtesy the calling body shall keep the Circuit Visitor informed during the call process.

ARTICLE VII – REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

1. Any Ordained or Commissioned Minister or officer of the congregation may be removed from office by the Voters' Assembly by a two-thirds majority vote, in Christian and lawful order, for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of or the inability to perform his or her official duties.
2. Reasons for removal from office shall be submitted in writing at a meeting of the Voters' Assembly and announced to the congregation by public posting and/or mail to all communicant members at least one week prior to the meeting at which the removal from office will be acted upon.
3. The congregation may request the resignation of any Ordained or Commissioned Minister or officer of the congregation from his/her position in the congregation in the case of persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of or the inability to perform his or her official duties.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

Proposed amendments to these Bylaws shall be submitted in writing to a member of the Executive Board prior to a duly called meeting of the Voters' Assembly and announced to the congregation prior to the Voters' Assembly at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the voters present shall be required for adoption. The date of approval shall be referenced in any amendment adopted. (Please consult the Manual of Duties, Policies, and Procedures, IV.E, Constitution and Bylaw Committee.)

The revised Bylaws shall, as a condition of continued membership in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, be submitted to the President of the Kansas District for review by the District's Constitution and Bylaw Committee, and favorable action by the District's Board of Directors, before being implemented by the congregation.

Revised and adopted 1983
Revised 2/11/86
Revised 2/15/87
Revised 9/20/87
Revised 3/14/93
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Revised 9/29/02
Revised 10/21/07
Revised 10/12/08
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Revised 6/12/11
Revised 2/17/13
Revised 2/15/15
Revised 6/7/15
Revised and adopted 6/16/2019