

# **CONSTITUTION**

**and**

# **BY-LAWS**

**Hope Lutheran Church**

**Seattle, Washington**

June 2013

# CONSTITUTION OF HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH

## Preamble

It is the will of our Lord Jesus Christ that His disciples should preach the Gospel to the whole world (*Mark 16:16, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8*) that Christ's mission for His church might be carried out according to His will. The Lord has commanded that Christians unite in worship and fellowship (*Hebrews 10:24,25*), study and centering in the Word (*2 Timothy 3:16-17*), live Godly lives according to the apostolic example and the example of Christ (*1 Corinthians 11:1*), and serve the needs of all humankind in Christian love (*Ephesians 4:7-16, Mark 10:42-44, John 13:35, Galatians 6:10*).

Since Christians are also to administer the Office of the Keys as His church (*John 20:21-23, Matthew 18:15-20*) and to maintain decency and order (*1 Corinthians 14:40*) in church, therefore, we, as members of Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church in Seattle, Washington accept and subscribe to the following Constitution and Bylaws, in accordance with which all spiritual and material affairs of our membership shall be governed. To God Alone be Glory!

*The mission of Hope Lutheran Church is to bring Christ to the people of our local community so that they become disciples.*

## Article I: Name and Affiliation

The name of this congregation is Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church of Seattle, King County Washington, otherwise known as Hope Lutheran Church and School. This congregation will be further referred to in this document as the "church" or "congregation."

This church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs. It shall be the privilege of the church to hold membership in and support the work of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, so long as two thirds of the congregational assembly determines that the Synod adheres to the confession of Article II of this Constitution and is the best means to accomplish the mission of the church as set forth in the Preamble of this Constitution.

## Article II: Confessions - What We Believe

The congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God, verbally inspired, the only true and reliable authority for the faith and life of the Church. This congregation also accepts the following Confessional Writings contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 to be true declarations of the doctrines of the Bible: The three Ecumenical Creeds (Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, Luther's Large and Small Catechisms, and the Formula of Concord. The congregation shall decide all doctrinal and conscience matters on the basis of the above referenced documents. All worship services, doctrinal literature, and instructional materials used at this congregation shall adhere to this standard.

### **Article III: Membership**

The membership of this congregation includes baptized, confirmed and Congregational Assembly members. The admission of new members and termination of membership shall be set forth in the By-Laws of this Constitution. The types and duties of membership are as follows:

#### Baptized

Baptized members are all persons within the congregation who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God, whether children or adults, and who come under the pastoral care of this congregation.

#### Confirmed

Confirmed members are all baptized persons within the congregation who meet the following qualifications:

- 1) Personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior
- 2) Completion of a course of instruction in Christian doctrine which meets the approval of the Senior Pastor and the Elders.
- 3) Acceptance of the Confessional Standard articulated in Article II and the purposes and Mission Statement articulated in the Preamble.

#### Congregational Assembly

Congregational Assembly members are confirmed members who have reached 18 years of age.

Privileges and Responsibilities of Membership – Members of this church accept the privilege of church membership and submit themselves to its leadership and discipline. Members are expected to live a life which is in agreement with the Holy Scriptures (leading a Christian life and not manifesting works of the flesh...Galatians 5:19-21), and--within the context of a vital relationship with Jesus Christ--agree to be growing through Word and Sacrament in living out the following discipleship goals for members of the church as they are enabled by the Holy Spirit:

1. Acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord
2. Bible study attendance
3. Faithful worship attendance and participation in the Lord's Supper
4. Daily prayer and devotional life
5. Evangelistic attitude and action
6. Faithful use of personal spiritual gifts and treasures
7. Godly love expressed through Christian fellowship and service to others
8. Are not members of any organization conflicting with the Word of God
9. Attend meetings of the Congregational Assembly faithfully.

### **Article IV: Office of Pastors and Teachers**

The pastoral office of this congregation as well as that of a called teacher in the parochial school and other called workers shall be conferred upon such ministers, teachers, and candidates only as profess and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in Article II of this Constitution and are well qualified for their work. Pastors and teachers shall, in the call extended to and accepted by them, be pledged to this confessional standard.

## **Article V: Authority of the Congregation\_**

The Congregational Assembly members shall have the ultimate power to manage and administer all of the business and affairs of the church.

### **A. Delegation of Powers to Board of Directors.**

In the interest of expediency and efficiency, the Congregational Assembly delegates to its Board of Directors the right, power, authority and responsibility to govern, direct, oversee and control the business and affairs of the church, subject to the conditions and restrictions set forth in this Constitution and/or the Bylaws. The Board of Directors shall consist of such representatives of the church, and the members thereof shall be elected, be appointed, hold office and be replaced, as set forth in the Bylaws. The Congregational Assembly delegates its right, power, authority and responsibility in the business and affairs of the church to the Board of Directors, except in the following designated areas:

1. The calling and removing of the Senior Pastor;
2. The rights to be kept apprised of calling and removing of other called staff;
3. The power and authority to purchase, lease, mortgage, sell or otherwise dispose of real estate;
4. The power and authority to incur indebtedness secured by real estate;
5. The right to receive nominations for, elect, and remove from office, the members of the Board of Directors and the Board of Elders;
6. The right to receive and approve the annual budget of the church;  
and
7. The power to amend this Constitution and the church's Bylaws.

Any right, power, authority or responsibility delegated to the Board of Directors shall always be subject to review, revision and revocation by the Congregational Assembly.

## **B. Limitations on Leadership**

Staff are not eligible to serve on the Board of Directors. Women are eligible to serve in any capacity except for those which would call for their direct involvement in the specific functions of the pastoral office.

## **C. Removal from Office**

Any called worker or member of the Board of Directors or Board of Elders may be removed from office for one of the following causes: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, or inability to perform their official duties or willful neglect of them. Only those cases that have received due process and come on the recommendation of the Board of Directors, Board of Elders, or a petition from the majority of the congregation will be considered.

## **Article VI: Property Rights**

If at any time a division should take place on account of doctrine, the property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith will remain with those members of the Congregational Assembly who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Article II of this Constitution. If a division takes place for any other reason, the property will remain with the majority of the members of the Congregational Assembly. In the event the congregation shall totally disband, the property and all rights connected therewith will be turned over to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod through its representative district or any such other organization(s) that adheres to the Confessions in Article II of this Constitution and are created and operated for not-for-profit purposes similar to the church as the Congregational Assembly may determine provided that such organization(s) qualify at that time as an exempt organization(s) under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (or the corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue law).

## **Article VII: Changing the Constitution**

Amendments to this Constitution may be adopted by the Congregational Assembly provided that proposed amendments are presented in writing at two consecutive properly called meetings at least one month apart. Adoption shall require the affirmative vote by two-thirds of the Congregational Assembly members present at each meeting and the approval of the Northwest District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod or its successor. The Confessional Article (Article II) and the Article on the Office of Pastors and Teachers (Article IV) may not be changed so far as their intent is concerned.

## **Article VIII: By-Laws**

The congregation may adopt such By-Laws as may be required for the accomplishment of its purpose.

## **Article IX: Approval**

A revised Constitution was adopted by a two-thirds majority vote at consecutive constitutional meetings held on January 28, 1954, and March 11, 1954, and approved by the Northwest District of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, on June 15, 1954.

This revised Constitution was adopted by a two-thirds majority vote at consecutive Constitutional meetings held on May 7, 1970, and July 9, 1970, and approved by the Northwest District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Article IV, Section C revised to delete the phrases "Board of Parish Education and School Board" by a two-thirds majority vote at consecutive congregational meetings held on May 20, 1984, and July 22, 1984, and approved by the Northwest District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.

**Revisions:**

3/30/2003 Constitution and By-laws approved with the following revisions:  
3/30/2003 Communicant Members changed to Confirmed members throughout the entire document.

## **BY-LAWS OF HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

### **BY-LAW 1: CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

#### **SECTION 1: MEMBERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Congregational Assembly is a body consisting of all confirmed members 18 years and older as defined in Article III of the Constitution. The Congregational Assembly shall meet once a year for the purpose of electing the members of the Board of Directors and Board of Elders and approving the budget for the following year. It shall be the responsibility of every member to attend meetings of the Congregational Assembly, if possible, and by failing to attend a meeting, a member waives the right of casting a vote at such meeting. Special meetings of the Congregational Assembly can be called by the Board of Directors or a petition of Congregational Assembly members equal to or greater than 25% of the average Saturday and Sunday worship attendance of the previous 12 months. Two weeks advance notice must be given before calling a Congregational Assembly meeting.

#### **SECTION 2: QUORUM**

Ordinarily the Congregational Assembly members present at a properly called meeting shall constitute a quorum to do business. However, for amending the Constitution or for the calling or removal of the Senior Pastor, a quorum shall consist of 25% of the average Saturday and Sunday worship attendance for the previous 12 months. In the absence of a quorum, those present may fix the date for an adjourned meeting for which at least 14 days notice shall be given. The members who are present at such an adjourned meeting shall constitute a quorum.

#### **SECTION 3: PROCEDURE**

Questions of parliamentary procedure not governed by the latest edition of this Constitution or By-Laws shall be decided by the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*.

### **BY-LAW 2: CONGREGATIONAL ADMINISTRATION**

#### **SECTION 1: BY-LAWS**

These By-Laws shall govern the administration and management of all congregational affairs. These By-Laws may be amended, revised or repealed by a simple majority of the Congregational Assembly members present at any business meeting properly called for that purpose, provided that written notice of the proposed action and a written copy of the proposed change has been made available to all Congregational Assembly members at least two weeks prior to the meeting. These By-Laws may be temporarily suspended to handle specific individual situations that may arise by a unanimous vote of all Congregational Assembly members present at any business meeting properly called for that purpose.

### **BY-LAW 3: CONGREGATIONAL FUNDS**

#### **SECTION 1: FINANCIAL PLAN**

The Board of Directors shall recommend a budget for the coming year and present it to the Congregational Assembly for action at the annual meeting.

## SECTION 2: FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year is July 1 through June 30.

## **BY-LAW 4: ADMISSION TO MEMBERSHIP**

### SECTION 1: BAPTIZED MEMBERSHIP

Baptized members are all persons within the congregation who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God, whether children or adults, and who come under the pastoral care of this congregation.

### SECTION 2: CONFIRMED MEMBERSHIP

Confirmed members are all baptized persons within the congregation who have completed a course of instruction in Christian doctrine that meets with the approval of the Senior Pastor and Board of Elders and have made a public declaration of their faith as explained in Article II of the Constitution.

### SECTION 3: CONGREGATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERSHIP

Congregational Assembly members are all Confirmed Members who have reached 18 years of age.

### SECTION 4: TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

#### A. Transfers

A member desiring transfer to another congregation shall make that fact known to the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor shall cause the creating and mailing of a letter of transfer to the receiving congregation.

#### B. Whereabouts unknown or moved

The names of people whose whereabouts are unknown or who have moved from the area after a period of one year shall be removed from membership.

#### C. Discipline

All discipline in this Congregation shall be administered in accordance with Matthew 18: 15-20. The purpose of any disciplinary action is to renew a member's relationship with the Lord and with the church. A member shall be considered self-excluded when unresponsive to the witness and ministry of the church.



## **BY-LAW 5: MINISTRY STAFF**

### **SECTION 1: MEMBERS OF THE STAFF**

The ministry staff shall be composed of:

1. A Senior Pastor called by the Congregational Assembly as stated in Article V of the Constitution.
2. Other pastors, LCMS called staff, and contracted staff.

The duties of the ordained pastors shall include, but not be limited to, preaching and teaching the Word of God, performing marriages and funerals and administering the sacraments. The duties of all other ministry staff shall be in accord with their job descriptions.

### **SECTION 2: OFFICE OF THE KEYS**

While the Office of the Keys and the public ministry are given to the local congregation by Christ and His Holy Word, the spiritual leadership, ministry planning and operating philosophies are delegated to the Senior Pastor under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

The ministry staff is accountable to the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor is accountable to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is accountable to the members of the Congregational Assembly. All of the above are accountable to Jesus Christ.

### **SECTION 3: GENERAL DUTIES**

Each member of the staff shall remain fully informed of their role and responsibilities, consistent with their job description. Members of the staff should refer to their Staff Handbook for details of their employment and benefits.

## **BY-LAW 6: CALLING CALLED WORKERS**

### **SECTION 1: CALLING PROCESS**

- A. When preparing to call a rostered worker, the Board of Directors shall create and appoint a Call Team.
- B. The Call Team shall consult with those in the affected ministry area and with LCMS District Representatives as part of their efforts to secure the names of candidates. Information regarding final candidates will be provided to the congregation for comments to the Call Team, prior to a final recommendation.
- C. The Call Team will present a final recommendation of a candidate to the Board of Directors for issuance of the Call and communication of said Call to the congregation. As

articulated in Article V of the Constitution, the Senior Pastor will be called by the Congregational Assembly.

## SECTION 2: REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

Any called worker of the congregation except the Senior Pastor may be removed from office by the Board of Directors for one of the following causes: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, or inability to perform their official duties or willful neglect of them. The Board of Directors will consider only those cases that have received due process and come on the recommendation of the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor may be removed from office by a 2/3 majority vote of the Congregational Assembly at a meeting properly called for that purpose for one of the following causes: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, or inability to perform their official duties or willful neglect of them. The Congregational Assembly will consider such action upon the completion of due process, a recommendation of a majority of both the Board of Directors and the Board of Elders, and after consultation with a Northwest District appointed mediator.

## SECTION 3: INTERIM PASTOR

Should a vacancy occur in the senior pastorate of this congregation, the Assistant Pastor shall become the Interim Pastor. If there is no Assistant Pastor, the Congregational Assembly shall elect an Interim Pastor in consultation with the Northwest District President.

## **BY-LAW 7: BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### SECTION 1: MEMBERSHIP

The Board of Directors shall consist of 7 or 9 members of the Congregational Assembly. Any worker under paid employment by the congregation and members of their household are not eligible to serve on the Board of Directors. The Senior Pastor shall serve as an ex officio non-voting member. Other ministry staff may be requested to attend certain meetings by the Board or the Senior Pastor.

### SECTION 2: NOMINATION AND ELECTION

In an effort to secure candidates who are highly qualified and understand and are willing to undertake these various responsibilities, the nominations process for selecting candidates for the Board of Directors shall be as follows:

- A. A Nominations Team consisting of two members of the Board of Directors, two members of the Board of Elders, and two members at large will facilitate the nominations process.
- B. A letter will be sent to all members of the congregation to briefly explain the responsibilities of the Board of Directors and the Board of Elders and the Biblical characteristics of church leaders, along with an invitation to nominate candidates from members of the Congregational Assembly.

- C. Any member of the Congregational Assembly can nominate themselves or any other member of the Congregational Assembly in writing in accordance with the process detailed by the Nominations Team.
- D. The Nominations Team will then invite nominees to attend an informational meeting to learn more about their responsibilities if elected.
- E. Nominees will be asked to return a form stating their intent to accept or decline nomination.
- F. The nominations team will interview nominees who accept nomination.
- G. The nominations team will prepare a slate of the necessary number of candidates for presentation to the Congregational Assembly at its' annual meeting, at which the Congregational Assembly will vote on the slate of candidates.

The term of office shall be for three years. No person shall be elected to more than two consecutive three year terms. Approximately one third of the Board of Directors shall be elected each year by the Congregational Assembly. The term of office commences with the first day of the following fiscal year.

### SECTION 3: VACANCIES

In the event of a vacancy, the chairperson shall create a list of candidates from which the Board of Directors will elect an individual to serve and fill the vacancy until the next Congregational Assembly election. If at that time the individual is elected to complete the term of office, the individual shall not be prohibited from being elected to two consecutive three year terms.

### SECTION 4: MEETINGS

The Board of Directors shall meet at least every other month and may be called more frequently at the request of the Chairperson, any three Board of Director members, or the Senior Pastor. The meetings are open to members of the congregation unless the Board is meeting in an Executive Session. Minutes shall fully disclose all actions taken and be signed by the secretary. Minutes shall be available to the congregation upon request.

### SECTION 5: REMOVAL FROM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Any Board of Directors member may be removed by a majority vote of the Congregational Assembly at a properly called meeting for any one of the following causes: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, or inability to perform their official duties or willful neglect of them. Such action shall be initiated by the Board of Directors.

### SECTION 6: POWERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors shall have the power to develop policies as required to execute the mission articulated in the preamble. A written policy manual shall be available upon request. The Board of Directors shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them by the Constitution, its By-Laws, or the Congregational Assembly.

## **BY-LAW 8: DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Board of Directors as the chief governing Board of the Congregation shall act in all matters pertaining to the legal and general welfare of the congregation except those reserved for the Congregational Assembly.

The Board of Directors shall see to it that all activities of the congregation reflect the purpose and faith of the congregation.

The Board of Directors shall establish policies in accordance with the purpose, mission, and budget adopted by the Congregational Assembly. In order to accomplish the congregation's purpose and mission, the Board of Directors will ensure strategic planning and implementation occurs.

### **SECTION 1: OFFICERS**

The executive officers of the Board of Directors shall consist of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer elected from within the Board of Directors annually.

### **SECTION 2: DUTIES**

#### **Chairperson**

The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors and Congregational Assembly and shall be responsible to see that all resolutions are carried out.

#### **Vice-Chairperson**

The Vice-Chairperson shall assume the duties of the Chairperson whenever the Chairperson is unable to perform them.

#### **Secretary**

The Secretary shall keep a permanent record of all transactions of the Congregational Assembly and the Board of Directors; all records shall be and remain the property of the congregation. The Secretary shall submit to the church office the minutes of all such meetings within one week from the date of the meeting. The Secretary shall publish a list of all members elected or appointed to office within one week from the date of such action. He/she shall keep an up-to-date copy of the Constitution and By-Laws of the congregation on file in the church office. In the absence of the Secretary, the Chairperson shall appoint a temporary Secretary.

#### **Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall oversee the financial affairs of the organization and ensure they are legal and constitutional. The Treasurer will work with the staff person responsible for financial management of the organization to ensure proper records are kept and that effective financial procedures are in place and to monitor and report on the financial health of the organization, including the production of financial reports and audits, as deemed necessary by the Board of Directors.

## **BY-LAW 9: BOARD OF ELDERS**

### **SECTION 1: MEMBERSHIP**

The Board of Elders shall consist of 9 members. The term of office shall be three years. One-third of the Board shall be elected each year. The Pastor(s) shall be ex-officio member(s) of the Board.

### **SECTION 2: NOMINATION AND ELECTION**

The members of the Board of Elders shall be nominated by the Nominations Team and nominations process articulated in By-law 7 Section 2.

### **SECTION 3: DUTIES**

The Board of Elders shall assist the Pastor in assuring the general spiritual welfare of the congregation and shall encourage and assist the Pastor in meeting the challenges and responsibilities of the ministry and see to it that congregational discipline is carried out according to the dictates of Scripture. They shall assist the Pastor in cultivating a constant spirit of harmony among the members. They shall ensure that all members are called upon, especially the less active, endeavoring to strengthen them in the Christian faith and life. The Board shall be responsible to see that the services of worship and related gatherings and activities are conducted in accordance with Biblical teaching, Lutheran theology and practice.

### **SECTION 4: REMOVAL FROM BOARD OF ELDERS**

Any Board of Elders member may be removed by a majority vote of the Congregational Assembly at a properly called meeting for any one of the following causes: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, or inability to perform their official duties or willful neglect of them. Such action shall be initiated by the Board of Elders.

## **BY-LAW 10: MINISTRY ACTION TEAMS**

Ministry Action Teams (MATs) are groups of Hope Lutheran Church and School volunteers created either by the Board of Directors, Board of Elders, or ministry staff to help fulfill some aspect of the strategic plan then in place. Any person connected with Hope Lutheran Church and School can serve on a MAT. A regular attender or school parent who is not a Hope Lutheran Church member may serve, so long as in doing so they agree to serve according to the beliefs and stated mission of the church as articulated in the preamble and Article II of the Constitution. Any member of the Congregational Assembly can lead a MAT. In the area of school ministry, the principal is empowered to designate school parents who are not members of Hope Lutheran Church to lead MATs so long as in doing so they agree to serve according to the beliefs and stated mission of the church as articulated in the preamble and Article II of the Constitution. All MATs will be responsible to the ministry staff person or Board which created it for direction, encouragement, training, and accountability.

## **BY-LAW 11: AMENDMENTS**

SECTION 1: These By-laws may be amended in a properly called meeting of the Congregational Assembly by a majority of all Congregational Assembly members present provided a written copy of the proposed change has been made available to all Congregational Assembly members at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

SECTION 2: The date of adoption shall be included in the amendment and shall not be implemented until approved by the Board of Directors of the Northwest District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

**Revisions:** *(Note: A complete revision history is available in the church office.)*

Dates:

3/30/2003

1/5/2005

6/28/2008

5/20/2013 Pastor will summarize the current changes in detail.

*Section 2: DECISIONS was removed because it is addressed in Constitution Article V*

*Old Section 1 The Offices of Pastor and Teacher is covered in Article IV*

*By-law 3 Section 2 deleted because vouchers will be in policy and role of treasurer will cover this.*