

**The Constitution of  
CHRIST OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**Preamble**

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

It is the will of our Lord Jesus Christ that His Church should bring to the whole world the forgiveness of sins that He earned by His perfect life and atoning death on the cross (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, we, as a Christian congregation, pledge our conformity to God's Word in doctrine and practice (Matthew 28:18-20, 1 Corinthians 1:10, Romans 16:17), and to the fulfillment of His desire that all things "be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40). For this reason, and that Christian love might prevail in all that we do, we, the members of Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church, set forth and by our own signatures accept the following Constitution and Bylaws, in accordance with all spiritual and material affairs of our congregation shall be conducted to God's glory and under His blessing.

**Article 1: Name**

The name of this congregation shall be CHRIST OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH of Elizabeth, Colorado.

**Article 2: Purpose**

The express purpose of this Christian congregation is to disseminate the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to the confessional standards of the Lutheran Church as stated in Article 3.

**Article 3: Confessional Standard**

This congregation accepts without reservation:

- 3.1 All the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God, verbally inspired, inerrant, and infallible in the original writings,, and the only rule and norm of faith and practice;
- 3.2 Also the confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 as true and correct expositions of the doctrines of the Bible. These confessional writings are 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.

**Article 4: Membership**

- 4.1 Baptized members are all who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and are under the spiritual care of the Pastor of this congregation, including children not yet confirmed.
- 4.2 Communicant members are those:

1. Who have a valid Baptism;
  2. Who accept all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the only divine rule and standard of faith and life;
  3. Who are at least instructed in Luther's Small Catechism and declare their acceptance of the confessional standard of this congregation;
  4. Who, being able, faithfully and regularly attend divine services;
  5. Who lead Christian lives not living in manifest sin;
  6. Who partake of the Lord's Supper frequently after their confirmation;
  7. Who contribute regularly and faithfully, as God has prospered them, toward the building of Christ's kingdom in the congregation and throughout the world;
  8. Who devote their time and talents to the extension of the kingdom of God;
  9. Who permit themselves to be fraternally admonished and corrected when they have erred;
  10. And who are not members, affiliates, or supporters of secret societies or other organizations conflicting with the Word of God.
- 4.3 Voting members are those:
1. Male communicant members who have reached the age of 18 years;
  2. Attend a voter's meeting and receive a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws;
  3. Attend the next regularly scheduled voters' meeting, and;
    - A) receives approval of the voters' assembly;
    - B) sings the master copy of the Constitution and Bylaws.
  4. Who have been accepted as a voting member of Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church.

#### **Article 5: Authority in the Congregation**

- 5.1 The Voters' Assembly shall be the governing body of this congregation. The establishment and conduct of all organizations and societies within the congregation or related directly to it shall be subject to the approval and supervision of the Voters' Assembly.
- 5.2 All matters shall be decided by a majority vote of the Voters' Assembly unless otherwise specified by this Constitution or Bylaws, and shall conform to the doctrinal standards of Article 3. Matters of doctrine and conscience shall only be decided on the basis of the Word of God.
- 5.3 The Voters' Assembly shall elect Officers of the Church to manage its affairs. It may establish any other boards deemed necessary to accomplish the affairs of the congregation. All those elected to the Officers shall be voting members, and shall meet any additional qualifications as specified in the Bylaws.
- 5.4 All members present at the validly called meeting shall constitute a quorum.

## **Article 6: Pastors and Teachers**

- 6.1 The pastorate of this congregation shall only be conferred upon a person who has completed his course of study in theology, who has declared his acceptance of and adherence to the confessional standard of Article 3, and is certified for the public ministry by the Lutheran Church. The Pastor (or Pastors) shall automatically be an advisory member of all groups, organizations, committees, and boards within this congregation.
- 6.2 The teacher (or teachers) of Bible classes, Sunday School, and Christian day school shall meet the minimum requirements of this congregation. They shall accept the canonical books of the Bible and the Lutheran confessional writings and shall teach in accordance with them.
- 6.3 Pastors shall be called and Christian day school teachers shall be hired as needed in accordance with Article 3 of our Constitution and according to the procedures in the Bylaws.
- 6.4 Any Pastor, teacher, or officer may be dismissed for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect to perform the duties of the office.

## **Article 7: Doctrinal Literature**

Only such hymns, prayers, and liturgies shall be used in the public services of this congregation and in all ministerial acts as conform to the confessional standard of this congregation. Likewise, in all classes for instruction in Christian doctrine, only such materials shall be used as conform to this standard.

## **Article 8: Schism**

- 8.1 If, at any time, a separation should take place in this congregation, the entire property and all the benefits connected therewith shall remain with those members, whether majority or minority, who continue to adhere strictly to Article 3 of this constitution.
- 8.2 In the event the congregation should dissolve, the property and all rights connected therewith shall, at the final voters meeting in which the decision to dissolve is to be enacted and voted upon, be decided upon by a simple majority vote of the voters present at said meeting.

## **Article 9: Membership in Synod**

This congregation shall be an active member of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod as long as the Synod remains steadfast in the doctrinal basis outlined in Article 3 of this constitution.

## **Article 10: Bylaws and Review**

This congregation may adopt such bylaws as may be required for the accomplishment of its purpose. The operational structure shall regularly be reviewed in order to provide the greatest efficiency for this congregation's activity.

**Article 11: Amendments**

To amend this constitution, a quorum of two-thirds of the voting members must be present, and three-fourths of these voters must vote in favor of the amendment in two consecutive meetings. In this constitution, Articles 2, 3, 7, and 8 are unalterable and irrevocable.

**Bylaws of  
Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church**

**1. Membership**

**1.1 Baptized Members**

- 1.1.1 Reception: Baptized members are received through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, by transfer from another Lutheran Church in accordance to Article 3 of our Constitution, or with the consent of a parent or guardian in the case of children who were baptized in a congregation of another Christian church.
- 1.1.2 Termination: A member in good standing shall, upon request, be transferred by the Pastor to another congregation in fellowship with this congregation. A baptized member who has not become a communicant and has ceased to be under the spiritual care of the Pastor may have his membership suspended by the Pastor as approved by the Elders. If possible, an effort must first be made to bring the member under such spiritual care.
- 1.1.3 Announcement: All changes in membership will be reported by the Pastor to the Officers at their next meeting.

**1.2 Communicant Members**

- 1.2.1 Reception: Communicant members are received through profession of faith and adherence to the doctrinal position of this church after proper instruction in the doctrine and practice of the Lutheran Confessions, the nature of which shall be determined by the Pastor and Elders; or through transfer as a communicant member from another Lutheran church in accordance to Article 3 of our Constitution. If possible, reception shall take place in the presence of the congregation assembled for worship.
- 1.2.2 Termination:
1. Members desiring to join another congregation in fellowship with this congregation shall present a request to the Pastor who will issue a formal letter of transfer.
  2. Members who have joined another congregation outside of the fellowship of this congregation and the Lutheran church in accordance with Article 3 of our Constitution will be considered as having terminated their membership. They shall be removed by the Voters' Assembly following the resolution given by the Elders.
  3. Members who move away and thereby sever their connection with this congregation without obtaining a release, shall, after a period of twelve months, be removed from the list of membership, and, if possible, shall be notified of such action. Exception shall be given to this rule for members such as students and military personnel who by their calling must be absent

- from the congregation for unusual periods of time.
4. Members who fail in regular church and communion attendance and in their support of the congregation for a period of twelve consecutive months, shall be visited by the Pastor or an Elder to determine the reason for their absence and will be encouraged to resume worship and communion attendance. They should be advised that failing to do so will revoke their voting privileges, if applicable. Voting privileges will be denied until regular participation is resumed. After an additional six months of non-participation, a second visit will be made. If no legitimate reason for their absence is offered, the member(s) will be asked to counsel with the Pastor and Elder(s) to bring them back into fellowship. If an additional six months of non-participation occurs and/or they refuse pastoral counsel, the member(s) shall be considered to have removed himself from the communicant membership as determined by the Pastor and Elder(s).
  5. Members who conduct themselves in an unchristian manner are to be admonished according to Scripture (Matthew 18:15-18), and, if they refuse to repent, they shall be excommunicated by the Voters' Assembly following the resolution given by the Elders. They shall be encouraged to attend public worship, and efforts shall be made to bring them to repentance. When they do repent, the excommunication shall be lifted and they shall be reinstated as a communicant member of the congregation.
  6. Members who request to be removed from membership shall be visited, if a visitation is deemed necessary by the Pastor or Elder(s). The Pastor and Elder(s) shall determine if termination is necessary.
  7. Termination of membership releases the individual from all responsibilities to the congregation as determined by the Pastor and Elder(s), such as Christian burial, Holy Communion, transfer to a sister congregation, voting, and of any claim against the properties of the congregation. SUCH A PERSON, HOWEVER, WILL AT ALL TIMES BE CORDIALLY WELCOME TO ATTEND ALL DIVINE SERVICES IN OUR CHURCH!

1.2.3 Announcement: All changes in membership shall be reported by the Pastor to the Officers at their next meeting.

## **2. Congregation Life and Responsibilities**

**2.1** The congregation, through the Voters' Assembly, shall have authority over all its spiritual and temporal affairs in accordance with the Word of God and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church in accordance with Article 3 of our Constitution. Through regular and special meetings of its members, the congregation shall consider its own needs and those of the immediate and greater community; establish general goals and policies; and consider proposals by, and give direction to the Officers.

The Voters' Assembly shall elect the Officers and Elders and shall approve the proposed annual budget. It shall not delegate to any smaller group the right to call a pastor or any called servant; amend the Constitution or Bylaws; purchase, lease, mortgage, rent, or sell real estate; erect a building; or remove a pastor or any called servant or officer from his position. Voting these issues shall be carried by 2/3 majority of those present.

### **2.2 Voting members**

**2.2.1** Reception of voting members: is as stated in Sec. 4.3 of our Constitution

**2.2.2** Privileges and duties:

1. Faithfully attend worship services;
2. Faithfully attend all meetings of the voting membership;
3. Be willing to serve in any office or capacity for which his talents and abilities equip him.

**2.2.3** Suspension of voting privileges: Voting privileges will be temporarily suspended for a given meeting when a voting member has not faithfully attended worship services as determined by the Pastor and Elder(s) and has not attended one of the last three voters' meetings.

### **2.3 Meetings**

**2.3.1** The congregation shall meet quarterly with meetings in January, April, July, and October.

**2.3.2** Special meetings of the congregation may be called by the Pastor, President of the congregation, or the Officers. Notice of the meeting, date, and purpose shall be made in bulletin, or an announcement on the two preceding Sundays after worship. One of the notices may be given in the mail in place of one Sunday notice.

**2.3.3** A quorum shall be those present at a given meeting. Decisions shall be passed by a majority vote of those present except when a larger number is specified in the Constitution or Bylaws.

## **3. The Officers of the Church**

**3.1** The six officers—President, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Property, and Head Elder—shall constitute the Officers of the Church. The Officers shall be male communicant members in accordance with Sec. 4.3 of our Constitution; and have been a faithful member of Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church for no less than one year. The Pastor shall be an ex officio member.

**3.2** The Officers, under authority received from the congregation under these Bylaws and on its behalf, shall administer the affairs of the congregation; review procedures, progress, and problems connected therewith; and give direction to its individual

members and their committees. It shall give counsel and assistance to the Pastor and be concerned with his welfare. It shall serve as the legal trustees of the congregation, supervise all auxiliary organizations within the congregation, and propose and administer the budget. It shall serve as a planning and coordination council for the congregation. It shall adopt such guidelines as will be necessary for the proper conduct of its business and that of its members and committees.

- 3.3 The offices of President, Financial Secretary, Property, and two Elders shall be elected in the odd-numbered calendar years. The Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, and the Head Elder and one other Elder shall be elected in the even-numbered calendar years.
- 3.4 Regular meetings of the Officers shall be held as the Officers determine. Notice of date and time of regular meetings shall be given to the congregation. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor, the President, or by three officers upon written request to the President. Written notices of the date and purpose of the special meeting shall be made to each Officer at least forty-eight hours in advance of the meeting. The quorum for any meeting shall be a majority of the Officers.
- 3.5 Each committee shall meet monthly or as necessary to consider and accomplish its task.

#### **4. Nominations and Elections**

- 4.1 A nominating committee, appointed by the President, approved by the Officers, and headed by the Vice-President shall present a slate of candidates for all elected offices. Additional nominations may be made from the floor except for the Elders. No man shall be nominated without his consent.
- 4.2 All Officers shall be elected by a majority ballot vote and voting shall continue until a clear majority has been established after candidates receiving the lowest number of votes have been eliminated in each succeeding ballot. Elections shall be held at the April congregational meeting.
- 4.3 All Officers and Elders are elected for a term of two years and no man may concurrently hold two positions. No man shall be elected to more than a second consecutive term in any office.
- 4.4 All voting members who meet any other criteria specified in the Bylaws are eligible for office.
- 4.5 Officers shall be inducted into office in a public service of the congregation. They shall begin serving June 1<sup>st</sup>.
- 4.6 In case of a vacancy in an elected office, the Officers shall appoint someone to serve until the next congregational meeting when a successor shall be elected to fill the unexpired term.

#### **5. Duties of Officers and Committees**

- 5.1 **President:** The President shall preside at all meetings of the congregation and the Officers. As executive officer of the congregation, the President shall enforce the Constitution and Bylaws, see that every decision of the congregation is carried out, and that the Officers perform their tasks promptly and efficiently. The President shall appoint necessary committees to meet the needs of the congregation and the ex officio member of all committees; shall execute any documents authorized by the congregation or Officers; and shall be authorized to sign checks for the disbursements of funds in the event of the absence, disability, or death of the



Treasurer. At the meetings of the congregation, the President shall report major actions of the Officers during the previous months.

- 5.2 Vice-President:** The Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President in case of the President's absence, disability, or when requested. The Vice-President shall succeed to the Presidency at the death, resignation, or dismissal of the President for the duration of the unexpired term of the President. He shall be chairman of the nominating committee. The Vice-President shall invite leaders of auxiliary organizations to meet with him at least once a year to plan and coordinate the church program and calendar of activities. He shall also appoint a personnel committee, approved by the Officers, each year by September 1<sup>st</sup>. The Vice-President shall invite leaders of auxiliary organizations to meet with him at least once a year to plan and coordinate the church program and calendar of activities. He shall be responsible for keeping current all insurance policies, tax forms, and legal forms used by the congregation of auxiliary organizations of the church.
- 5.3 Secretary/Treasurer:** The Secretary shall record and keep permanent minutes of the congregation and the Officers during the Voters' Assemblies, and shall conduct correspondence authorized by the congregation and/or the Officers. The Secretary/Treasurer shall also be the custodian of the files. The Secretary/Treasurer shall disburse the funds of the congregation in accordance with the budget and as directed by the Officers. The Secretary/Treasurer shall be responsible for the prompt payment of salaries and bills and for monthly remission of Officers indicating receipts, expenditures, and the condition of the budget; shall make financial reports to the congregation at its meetings; shall submit records for audit in January; and shall be a member of the Finance Committee. The Treasurer shall be responsible for submitting a proposed budget to the Voters' Assembly by the October meeting to be approved at the same meeting.
- 5.4 Financial Secretary:** The Financial Secretary shall record and shall be responsible for depositing all receipts of the congregation. He shall order and provide offering envelopes for communicant members; shall record contributions received through such envelopes and submit quarterly statements to the persons using said envelopes; shall report all receipts to the Secretary/Treasurer each week; and shall submit records for audit in January. He shall count the offerings. In addition, he shall be assisted by at least one other confirmed non-related person 18 years of age or older.
- 5.5 Officer of the Property:** The Officer of Church Property shall see to the maintenance, protection, and improvement of all property of the congregation, shall provide for necessary service to all equipment, and shall enlist and supervise the services of volunteer workers. The Officer shall supervise the use of the congregation's building and equipment and shall regulate the issuance of keys for the same. He shall maintain a running inventory of the equipment owned by the congregation.
- 5.6 The Elders:** The Head Elder and up to three other men serving as Elders shall be examples of Christian conduct and conversation, and shall keep strictly confidential all matters of a private nature which are discussed at their meetings. They shall serve in representing the needs of the Pastor and his family to the congregation. They shall assist the Pastor in all matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the members of the congregation.  
The Elders shall consider complaints and grievances of members of the congregation in accord with Matthew 18:15-20, and shall report to the Voters' Assembly those

grievances which cannot otherwise be adjusted. They shall be responsible for all other church discipline in accord with the following guidelines:

1. Any member who conducts himself in an unchristian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20.
2. If he refuses to amend his sinful life after proper admonition, he shall be excommunicated.
3. If a member refuses to meet to discuss the matter with the Elders or a smaller group delegated with this duty, he thereby shall have excluded himself from the congregation.

The Elders shall be concerned with the congregation members attendance at the public worship of God and use of the Sacraments. They shall establish a personal calling program on those who become lax or delinquent in worship, participation in Holy Communion, or Baptism of children; and evangelically bring strengths, weaknesses, problems, and omissions, as well as constructive suggestions, to the attention of the Pastor. They shall foster support for missions and charities and shall, on the basis of congregational analyses, determine emphases to be made in continuing stewardship education programs. In addition to the Head Elder, there may be up to three other Elders. The Elders may form committees to implement their tasks as necessary. The Head Elder shall be responsible for submitting a proposed budget to the President prior to the October Voters' Assembly.

- 5.7** Officers needing help to perform their duties can request assistance through the Vice President to fill these needs.

## **6. The Pastor**

- 6.1** The office of Pastor, in this congregation, shall be conferred upon such men who are qualified according by the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, who are properly called by the congregation, who are committed to its purpose and theological beliefs, adhere to Article 3 of the Constitution of Christ Our Savior, Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.
- 6.2** **Calls:** When a vacancy occurs, the President of the congregation in conjunction with the Elders may request names of nominees from the District President together with pertinent information concerning each nominee. He shall also request names from members of the congregation and may send such names to the District President for information. A copy of such correspondence may be sent to the Circuit Counselor. A meeting of the Officers shall be held to which the District President and the Circuit Counselor may be invited to the consider information and recommendations supplied by the District. The names of the nominees shall be announced in the congregational bulletin on two consecutive Sundays. Thereafter, at either a regular or a special meeting of the congregation, to which the District President and the Circuit Counselor may be invited, the members shall proceed to call a pastor. The candidate receiving two-thirds of the votes cast shall be the pastor-elect, and the Call shall be extended to him in the name of the congregation by its Officers. If no candidate receives a two-thirds majority of the votes on the first ballot, the one receiving the least number of votes shall be dropped and the congregation shall proceed to ballot on the other candidates. If, after several ballots, one of the remaining two candidates is unable to receive a two-thirds majority, the congregation may, by resolution, request the Officers to submit a new list of candidates. Should the congregation decide to issue a Call to a graduating

candidate, the President may secure appropriate forms from the District President to make such an application according to Synodical procedures.

- 6.3 Mission:** The Pastor is to plan and officiate at worship, proclaim and teach the Word of God, administer the Sacraments, minister to all members of the congregation. The Pastor need not, as a matter of specific requirement, attend all meetings of the congregation, its administrative agencies, or its organizations. The Pastor shall be notified in advance of any such meetings.
- 6.4 Termination:** A pastor may be removed from office by a three-fourths vote of two-thirds of the voting members on two consecutive meetings for one of the following causes: persistent adherence to false doctrines, prolonged incapacity, willful neglect of his official duties, or a scandalous life. A motion to request such a resignation must first be considered by the Officers, who shall ask the Elders to consult with the Pastor. If no satisfactory solution has been achieved, a meeting of the Elders, the Officers, and the District President or his representative may be held, at which all parties shall be heard. Upon recommendation of a two-thirds majority ballot vote of the members of the Officers, the matter shall be presented at a meeting of the congregation at which the District President may again be present. If the Pastor refuses to comply with the congregation's request for his resignation, the Officers shall declare the pastoral office vacant.

## **7. Conflicting Loyalties**

While all people are invited to join in its worship, instruction, and pastoral care, the congregation rejects all fellowship with organizations, secret or open, which practice forms of religion without confessing faith in the Triune God and in Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God, our only Savior from sin. A member of the congregation who joins such an organization shall be instructed by the Pastor as to the contradiction between this membership and his Christian profession and shall be instructed to sever his connection with this organization.

## **8. Committees**

- 8.1 Nominating Committee:** The Vice-President shall be President of this committee. At least six weeks prior to the election, the President of the congregation shall appoint at least two other men to serve on this committee. The committee shall nominate candidates for each office to be filled on the recommendation of the Officers and Elders under the guidance of the Pastor. The list of nominees shall be published in written form at least two Sundays prior to the date of the election.
- 8.2 Audit Committee:** The President of the congregation shall appoint an audit committee of three persons in the month of January. None of the Officers shall serve on this committee. It shall audit all of the congregation's financial records, including the records of the Secretary/Treasurer and Financial Secretary. It shall examine the annual report to substantiate that it coincided with the records of the Secretary/Treasurer and Financial Secretary. This committee shall give a signed written report of their year-end findings to the congregation at its April Voters' Assembly.
- 8.3 Bylaws Committee:** As necessary, the President of the congregation shall appoint two members to consider and present any proposed changes in the Bylaws.
- 8.4 Personnel Committee:** In the event that we establish a church school, the Vice-President and Elders shall oversee and administer job descriptions, salaries, hiring

and dismissal of paid church personnel other than the Pastor.

**9. Amending the Bylaws**

The Bylaws may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the congregation by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present, provided that written notice has been given to the congregation in the congregational bulleting by the Bylaws Committee, stating the proposed change, at least two Sundays preceding the meeting in which the amendment is to be made, and announcement has been made at worship on two consecutive Sundays prior to said meeting date.