

**THE CONSTITUTION OF**  
**OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**CHEYENNE, WYOMING**

**PREAMBLE**

The Word of God requires that a Christian congregation shall conform to the Divine Word in doctrine and practice (Ps. 119:105; Matt. 28:18-20; Gal. 1:5-8; 2 Tim. 4:1-4) and that all things be done decently and in order (I Cor. 14:40). Therefore, we, the members of Our Savior Lutheran Church, accept and subscribe to the following Constitution and By-Laws, in accordance with which all spiritual and material affairs of our congregation shall be governed.

**ARTICLE I, NAME**

The name of this congregation shall be Our Savior Lutheran Church located at Cheyenne, Wyoming.

**ARTICLE II, PURPOSE**

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

**ARTICLE III, CONFSSIONAL STANDARD**

This congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God, verbally inspired, and acknowledges and accepts all the Confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the Book of Concord of the year 1580, to be the true and genuine exposition of the doctrines of the Bible. These Confessional Writings are as follows: the three Ecumenical Creeds (Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian); the Unaltered Augsburg Confession; the Apology of the Augsburg Confession; the Smalcald Articles; Luther's Large Catechism; Luther's Small Catechism; Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, and the Formula of Concord.

**ARTICLE IV, MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of this congregation includes the following:

**A. BAPTIZED MEMBERSHIP**

Baptized members are all persons who have been baptized, including the children of the membership rolls who have not yet confirmed their baptismal vow.

### ***B. COMMUNICANT MEMBERSHIP***

Communicant members are those:

1. Who are baptized in the Name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;
2. Who accept all canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the only divine rule and standard of faith and life;
3. Who are familiar at least with Luther's Small Catechism and declare their acceptance of it;
4. Who attend divine services faithfully;
5. Who lead Christian lives and do not live in manifest works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-20);
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. Who are not members, affiliates, or supporters of secret societies or other organizations conflicting with the Word of God.

### ***C VOTING MEMBERSHIP***

All confirmed members who have reached their 18th year, who have read and understood the Constitution and By-Laws of the congregation and who have agreed to abide by them shall be entitled to vote. Upon reaching their 21st year, they shall be entitled to hold office.

## **ARTICLE V. CALLED WORKERS.**

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

## **ARTICLE VI. POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION.**

### ***A. GENERAL***

The congregation as a body, through the voting members, shall have supreme power to administer and manage all its external and internal affairs. The establishment and conduct of all institutions and societies within the congregation, such as parochial school, Sunday School, youth societies, ladies organizations, men's organizations, choir, etc., shall at all times be subject to the approval and supervision of the congregation. The congregation shall not, however, be empowered to decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church (*Article III*), and any such decision shall be null and void.

### ***B. RIGHT OF CALLING***

The right of calling pastors or auxiliary workers shall be vested in the congregation through the Congregational Assembly and shall never be delegated to a smaller body or to an individual.

***C DECISIONS***

Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided by the Word of God; other matters shall be decided by the Congregational Assembly by a majority vote unless otherwise specified by the Constitution or By-Laws.

***D. POWERS OF OFFICERS***

Congregational officers or committees, whether elected or appointed by the Congregational Assembly shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them, and whatever power may have been delegated to them may at any time be altered or revoked by the Congregational Assembly.

***E. REMOVAL FROM OFFICE***

Any officer, pastor, or called auxiliary worker may be removed from office by the congregation, by ballot, in a Christian and lawful order, for one of the following causes: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, inability to perform his office, duties or willful neglect of them.

**ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS**

The officers of this congregation shall be such officers, boards or committees as the By-Laws of this congregation may prescribe.

**ARTICLE VIII. PROPERTY RIGHTS**

If at any time a separation should take place on account of doctrine, the property of the congregation and all benefit therewith connected shall remain with those voting members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to *Article III* of this Constitution. In the event the congregation should totally disband, the property and all rights connected therewith shall be transferred to the Wyoming District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

**ARTICLE IX, DOCTRINAL LITERATURE**

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

**ARTICLE X, SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP**

- A. This congregation shall hold membership in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. It shall send its pastor and a lay delegate to the District Convention of Synod.
- B. It shall be the duty of the congregation and its individual members to support the work of Synod since they thereby support their own Christ - appointed work.

## **ARTICLE XI, BY-LAWS**

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

## **ARTICLE XII, CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION**

### ***A. UNALTERABLE ARTICLES***

The following articles of this Constitution or sections thereof shall be unalterable and irrevocable; III, V, VII, and IX.

### ***B. AMENDMENTS***

Amendments to this Constitution and the By-Laws may be adopted at a regular Congregational Assembly, provided:

1. That they do not conflict with the provisions laid down in Article III or with any section of any other article that pertains to Scriptural Doctrine and practice; and
2. That the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at a previous Congregational Assembly.

The affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the congregational membership present at the Congregational Assembly shall be required for the adoption of an amendment.

## **BY-LAWS**

## **ARTICLE I MEMBERSHIP**

### **ADMISSION TO MEMBERSHIP**

#### ***A. COMMUNICANT MEMBERSHIP***

##### ***1. By Confirmation***

Confirmation *itself* being a reception into church membership, all who are thus received by this rite become communicant members.

##### ***2. By Transfer***

Persons coming with a communicant letter of transfer from a congregation in church fellowship, provided they conform in all requirements of membership in this congregation, shall be received by the Pastor. This action is to be recorded in a subsequent meeting of the Congregational Assembly.

##### ***3. By Profession Of Faith***

Other persons shall submit their application to the Pastor, and having given satisfactory evidence of qualification for communicant membership to the Pastor and at least one elder, shall be received as members. This action shall be recorded in a subsequent meeting of the Congregational Assembly.

## ***B. VOTING MEMBERSHIP***

- 1. Voting members** are described in Article V, paragraph C of the Constitution.
- 2. Duties:** It shall be the duty of every member to attend the Congregational Assemblies. By failing to attend such meetings, a member waives the right to vote during that meeting. They shall accept nomination for office, committee appointment, etc., if possible, and generally participate in the business activities of the Congregational Assembly.

## **TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

### ***A. TRANSFER TO OTHER CONGREGATIONS:***

Communicant members desiring to join a congregation in church fellowship shall present their request for transfer to the pastor, to whom authorization is granted to issue such transfers. Such transfers of membership shall be ratified by the Congregational Assembly in a subsequent meeting.

### ***B. JOINING OTHER CHURCHES:***

In cases where communicant members have joined other congregations outside our own fellowship, they shall, upon recommendation of the pastor and elders, be considered such as having terminated their membership, and their names shall be removed from the membership list by a resolution of the Congregational Assembly.

### ***C. WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN:***

The names of members whose whereabouts are unknown and cannot be established shall be removed by resolution of the Congregational Assembly, and forthwith such membership is terminated.

### ***D. EXCOMMUNICATION AND SELF-EXCLUSION:***

Any members who conduct themselves in an unchristian manner shall be admonished according to Matt. 18:15-20. If they refuse to amend their sinful life after proper admonition, they shall be excommunicated. If the member refuses to attend the Congregational Assembly to discuss their case, they have thereby excluded themselves. A unanimous vote shall be required for every resolution by the Congregational Assembly for excommunication or self-exclusion. Excommunication or self-exclusion terminates membership.

### ***E. STATUS***

A person whose membership has been terminated has forfeited all rights of a member of this congregation and all claims upon the property of the congregation as such, or upon any part thereof, so long as he or she is not reinstated into membership.

## **ARTICLE II, CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

- A. Regular meetings** of the Congregational Assembly shall be held at least two times a year, such meetings to be held in Spring and Fall.
- B. Special meetings** of the Congregational Assembly may be called at any time by the Pastor or by a majority of the Church Council.
- C. Announcement** of every Congregational Assembly meeting (by word or in the bulletin) shall be no later than at a service prior to it. Whenever a meeting has been thus announced it shall be considered a properly convened and legal meeting, capable of transacting business. However, for amending the Articles of Incorporation, the Constitution, and By-Laws, the erection of buildings, the purchase or sale of property, the removal of a pastor or teacher or some other member from office, a quorum of one-third majority of those present for worship that day shall be required for adoption of a resolution.

## **ARTICLE III. CALLING OF PASTORS AND TEACHERS**

### ***A. NOMINATIONS***

1. When a pastor, teacher or auxiliary worker is to be called, every member of the congregation shall have the privilege of making one or more nominations. The congregation shall also ask the District President for recommendations. In the case of a pastoral call the board of Elders shall serve as the screening committee, and in the case of the calling of a teacher the Board of Parish Education shall perform that function. However, all names shall be submitted to the District President for information and evaluation.
2. At a meeting of the Congregational Assembly properly convened, the list of candidates having been received from the District President and presented for the office of Pastor or Teacher, the appropriate Board may submit preferences, but the Congregational Assembly reserves the right to consider any candidate properly nominated.

### ***B. ELECTIONS***

The slate of candidates shall be chosen by acclamation. The candidates shall then be voted upon by ballot, and the candidate receiving the majority vote shall be considered elected. The vote shall be made unanimous. The call shall be sent to the pastor or teacher elected and shall be signed by the Board of Elders.

#### **ARTICLE IV. ELECTION OF CONGREGATIONAL OFFICERS**

A nominating committee appointed by the congregation, including the Pastor, shall present a slate of candidates at the Spring meeting of the Congregational Assembly. The slate proposed by the nominating committee shall try to provide at least two names for each office. Such candidates shall be notified and their approval to stand for office acquired. Nominations may also be made from the floor by persons present at the meeting with prior consent of those nominated. The annual election shall be by ballot and shall take place at the Spring meeting. The officers-elect shall assume their respective duties at the beginning of the fiscal year. In the event of a vacancy in any office, the Council shall appoint a successor to serve until the next annual election. Officers shall be elected for the terms specified in these By-laws and shall hold office until their successors shall have been elected and qualified.

#### **ARTICLE V, OFFICERS**

The elected officers of this congregation shall be a President, President Elect, the Board of Elders, a Board of Trustees, a Board of Evangelism, a Board of Parish Education, a Board of Assimilation and Fellowship, and a Board of Stewardship. In addition to the elected officers of the congregation a Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and a Financial Secretary shall be appointed by the Church Council.

#### **ARTICLE VI, CHURCH COUNCIL**

##### ***A. MEMBERSHIP***

The Church Council shall consist of three Elders, the chairmen of all boards and the following ex-officio members: the Pastor, the Director of Christian Education, any principal and/ or called teachers if they are members of the Board of Education, the Treasurer, and the Financial Secretary.

##### ***B. DUTIES***

1. It shall be the duty of the Church council to meet four times yearly to consider and discuss all matters pertaining to the general welfare of the congregation as presented by the various boards and to act on matters pertaining to the day-to-day operations of the Congregation.
2. It shall annually review the wages paid to the salaried staff of the congregation. This review includes the adequacy and equity of wages paid to workers, which shall be done prior to the determination of the total financial requirements of the congregation for the ensuing year.

## **ARTICLE VII, TERMS AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

### ***A. GENERAL DUTIES OF BOARDS AND THEIR CHAIRS***

The Chair of each board shall represent that board on the Church Council. Each board shall be responsible for overseeing or performing all of the duties assigned to it. The board is expected to enlist the services of any congregational member to assist with the accomplishment of these duties.

### ***B. PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENT ELECT***

The term of office for President shall be one year as President-Elect and one year as President. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Congregational Assembly and Church Council. In the absence of the President, the President-Elect shall perform the duties of the office. In the event of a vacancy in the office of the President, the President-Elect shall assume the office for the remainder of the term. The President-Elect shall be responsible for the taking of minutes of all meetings.

### ***C. TREASURER***

The term of office for the Treasurer shall be two years alternating with the Financial Secretary. The Treasurer shall administer an accurate recording system for the receipts and disbursements of the congregation. The recording instruments shall be and remain the property of the congregation. These "records" shall be reviewed annually and a report of such review shall be submitted to the congregation. The Treasurer shall submit a report at each Council Meeting and Congregational Assembly. Such reports shall show actual receipts and disbursements compared with budget amounts.

### ***D. FINANCIAL SECRETARY***

The term of office of the Financial Secretary shall be for two years alternating with the term of the Treasurer. It shall be the Financial Secretary's duty to receive and record in appropriate instruments kept for such purpose, and deposit in the congregation's designated depository, all congregational monies, including offerings, contributions, special collections, loans, subsidies, bequests, etc. A report of all receipts shall be submitted to the Treasurer at regular weekly intervals. The Financial Secretary shall prepare a report for each meeting of the Congregational Assembly and Church Council. The Church Council shall ratify the assistants (counters) to the Financial Secretary, who shall constitute the Board of Finance. All offerings shall be counted in the presence of at least two members of this Board.

### ***E. BOARD OF ELDERS***

The Board of Elders shall consist of at least one member for each twenty-five families in the congregation, with the total number of Elders being determined by congregational needs and ministry. Their term shall be two years. One-half of the Elders shall be elected each year.

**They shall:**

1. Assist the Pastor in all matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the congregation.
2. Consider complaints and grievances of members of the congregation if Matthew 18:15-16 has been fully observed, and they shall report to the congregation those which cannot be otherwise adjusted, in accordance with Matthew 18:17-20.
3. Make every effort to induce members who have been negligent in their attendance of services, in the use of the Sacraments, and the financial support of the Church, to mend their sinful ways and fully enjoy the rights and privileges of their membership.
4. See to it that all services are conducted in such a manner as to avoid needless disturbance and to foster an attitude conducive to worship among those in attendance.
5. Assist the Pastor in arranging for pulpit assistance, special services, and guest speakers.
6. Appoint and supervise ushers and head usher.
7. Prepare a list of candidates when the congregation is to call a Pastor or Teacher.
8. Be an example of Christian conduct and life.

**F. BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The Board of Trustees shall consist of two members whose terms of office shall be two years. One Trustee shall be elected each year. The Trustee in the second year of the term shall serve as chair.

It shall be the duty of the trustees to administer all property belonging to the congregation; to make contracts; accept and receive grants and bequests; sign documents; appear in court; in short, to transact all the business of the congregation assigned to them by the Congregational Assembly. They shall manage the property of the congregation as an equitable trust; and shall be responsible for the upkeep, maintenance, and improvement of the property of the congregation.

Inasmuch as the trustees represent the congregation in carrying out its resolutions, the congregation is liable; if, however, they act independently, they are personally liable.

### ***G. BOARD OF EVANGELISM***

The Board of Evangelism shall consist of two members whose terms of office shall be two years. One member shall be elected each year. The member in the second year of the term shall serve as chair.

#### **It shall be the duty of this Board to:**

1. Plan, promote and carry out an evangelism program in the congregation and in the community.
2. Plan and supervise religious surveys of the community.
3. Arrange for the maintenance of record files in order to keep an evangelism program active.
4. Enlist aid in visiting prospective members of the church.
5. Assist the Pastor in training the laity to bring the unchurched to the Pastor's instruction class.
6. In the area of public relations, it shall endeavor to publicize the Gospel and the activities of the congregation by the various avenues available.

### ***H. BOARD FOR PARISH EDUCATION***

The Board of Parish Education shall consist of two members whose terms of office shall be two years. One member shall be elected each year. The member in the second year of the term shall serve as chair. The Pastor, Director of Christian Education, and/or Christian Day School Principal and the superintendent of the Sunday School shall be advisory members of this board.

#### **This Board shall:**

1. Concern itself with all Christian Education in the agencies, organizations, and departments of the congregation. It shall visit all of the educational agencies of the congregation to study all problems related to the successful and advisable conduct of the schools. It shall be understood that the program of the Board shall include all age levels of the congregation.
2. Seek the counsel and guidance of the Pastor, called teachers, and the Board of Elders, in matters affecting the teaching office, in school and Sunday School, and it shall bring all recommendations or requests concerning the physical need of the program to the Church Council.

## ***I. BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP***

The Board of Stewardship shall consist of two members whose terms of office shall be two years. One member shall be elected each year. The member in the second year of the term shall serve as chair. The Financial Secretary and the Treasurer shall be advisory members of this board.

### **It shall be the duty of this Board to:**

1. Discover the talents of the membership and enlist them in the congregational program.
2. Assist in training lay workers.
3. Sponsor stewardship and mission talks, discussion, conference, plays, movies, pageants, etc., in the congregation and its organizations.
4. Work in close cooperation with the Circuit and District Stewardship Committees, and encourage attendance at Circuit meetings.
5. Fully inform the members of their local congregation's program and opportunities to lengthen their outreach into all the world through District and Synod.
6. Give the congregation a clear vision of the need of Christ for all the congregation's mission and ministry.
7. Instruct the people in the grace of proportionate giving to God's work in their own parish and in the world.
8. Prepare the annual proposed Spending Program (budget) for submission to the Spring Congregational Assembly Meeting, and see that an annual Financial Review is done.
9. Supervise the gathering of all gifts and offerings.

## ***J. BOARD OF ASSIMILATION AND FELLOWSHIP***

The Board of Assimilation and Fellowship shall consist of two members whose term of office shall be two years. One member shall be elected each year. The member serving in the second year of the term shall serve as chair.

### **It shall be the duty of this board to:**

1. Sponsor and supervise the assimilation of new members into the life of the congregation and active service to the Lord as a member of the congregation.
2. Sponsor and supervise fellowship activities, events, and such groups within the congregation for the benefit of Christ-centeredness, socializing, and the mutual consolation and conservation of fellow believers.

***K. PLANNING COUNCIL***

The Chairman of all Boards and Committees, the Pastor, the President of the congregation, and chief officers of all auxiliary organizations in the congregation, shall constitute the Planning Council, which shall meet annually at the call of the Pastor to plan the Parish Program for the year, and draw up the Church Calendar. (Ordinarily the Planning Council will meet in early summer and plan the program for the year beginning in September and closing in August).

**ARTICLE VIII, CHANGES IN REGULATIONS**

The congregation shall from time to time adopt, alter, or amend rules and regulations (or directives) for guidance of officers and committees in their work in the manner stated in *Article II* of these By-Laws.

**ARTICLE IX, ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The following shall be the order of business for the regular Congregational Assembly meetings:

1. Devotion and Topic (not to exceed 10 minutes)
2. Reading of minutes
3. State of the Church (Reports)
4. Unfinished Business
5. New Business
6. Adjournment
7. Prayer

In addition to principles laid down in Scripture, the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be followed.