

CONSTITUTION OF GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH OF SOUTH HILLS

418 Maxwell Drive (Whitehall), Pittsburgh, PA 15236

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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 members of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of South Hills, accept and subscribe to the following Constitution and Bylaws 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 Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of South Hills, located in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.

Article II: Purpose

The purpose of this corporate body shall be that of a religious organization; more specifically, that of a Christian Congregation, established and maintained for the express purpose of disseminating the Gospel truth according to the Confessional Standard of the Lutheran Church, the Book of Concord of the year 1580.

Article III: Confessional Standard

This Congregation acknowledges all the canonical books of the Old and New Testament as the revealed Word of God, verbally inspired, and acknowledges and accepts all the symbolical books of the Lutheran Church, contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, to be a true and genuine exposition of the doctrines of the Bible. These symbolical books are: the three Ecumenical Creeds (The Apostolic, the Nicene and the Athanasian), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the same, the Smalcald Articles, Luther's Large and Small Catechisms, and the Formula of Concord.

Article IV: Synodical Membership

This Congregation shall hold membership in the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.

Article V: 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 as conform to this standard shall be used as a basis for instruction.

Article VI: Membership

The membership of this Congregation shall consist of the following:

A. Baptized Membership

Baptized members are all members who have been baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

B. Confirmed Membership

Confirmed members are those

1. who are baptized
2. who declare their adherence to all the canonical books of the Old and New Testament as the only divine rule and standard of faith and life.
3. who are acquainted with and accept Luther's Small Catechism.
4. who lead Christian lives and abstain from manifest works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21).
5. who attend divine services faithfully and partake of the Lord's Supper frequently.
6. who provide for the proper Christian training of their children.
7. who permit themselves to be fraternally admonished and corrected when they have erred or offended.
8. who, if members of any society which embodies oaths or allegiances which conflict with the Word of God, are inactive members of the society and do not accept any teaching of that society which would divide their loyalty to Christ and His Church. (For the purposes of this Article VI, Section B. part 8, "inactive" is interpreted to mean, "does not attend official meetings or participate in promoting the organization except for payment of dues.")
9. who have been received into membership prescribed in the Bylaws.

C. Voting Membership

Voting members are those confirmed members, male and female, who have reached the age of eighteen years, have been accepted as voting members at a Congregational meeting, and have read and signed the Constitution and Bylaws of the Congregation, signing in a book kept by the Secretary for this purpose. Only voting members who have been confirmed members for one year and have reached the age of eighteen shall be eligible to hold elective office in accord with the Bylaws.

Article VII: Excommunication

Any member who conducts himself in an unchristian manner shall be admonished according to Matt. 18:15-20. If he refuses to amend his sinful life after proper admonition, he shall be excommunicated. In the case of members subject to excommunication, or who have refused to submit to church discipline and have thus excluded themselves, or whose lack of interest and participation in worship services or the Sacraments evidences their separation from the Congregation, a unanimous vote of the voting members present and voting shall be required for action. Excommunication terminates membership and forfeits all rights and claims upon the property of the Congregation.

Article VIII: Powers Vested in the Congregation

The Congregation shall have the supreme power in the external and internal administration and management of its own ecclesiastical and congregational affairs including the establishment and conduct of all institutions and societies within the Congregation.

The Congregation may delegate authority to individuals or groups within the Congregation, subject to the restrictions of Article VI, VIII, and X. Actions taken under such delegated authority may be appealed to the Congregation. But not even the Congregation shall be empowered to order, enact, or decide anything contrary to the word of God and Symbols of the Lutheran Church; and any such ordinance, enactment or decision shall be null and void.

Article IX: Pastors and Rostered or Commissioned Workers by the LCMS

Only such ordained pastors and rostered or commissioned workers by the LCMS shall be called by this congregation as are in accord with the confessional Standard of this Congregation, Article III. The right of calling pastors and rostered or commissioned workers by the LCMS shall ever be vested in the Congregation and shall never be delegated to a smaller body or to an individual. For the election of Pastors and rostered or commissioned workers by the LCMS a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting is required by secret ballot. A standing unanimous vote will be requested upon achieving a two-thirds majority.

Article X: Officers

The officers of this Congregation shall be those designated by its Bylaws.

Article XI: Removal from Office

A. Pastors and Rostered or Commissioned Workers by the LCMS

The Pastors and rostered or commissioned workers by the LCMS of the Congregation may, in Christian and lawful order, be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting, for persistent adherence to false teachings, and ungodly life, mental, emotional, or physical inability, or willful neglect of official duties.

B. Officers

The officers of the Congregation may, by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting, be removed from office for willful neglect of official duties, mental, emotional, or physical inability, or leading an ungodly life.

Article XII: In Case of Separation

If at any time a separation should take place in this Congregation on account of doctrine, the property of the Congregation and all the benefits therewith connected shall remain with those members who shall continue to adhere to Article III and VIII of this Constitution.

Article XIII: Bylaws

This Congregation may adopt such Bylaws as the accomplishment of its purpose may demand.

Article XIV: Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution may be adopted, provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing, and two-thirds of the voting members present at a Congregational meeting vote in favor of such amendment.

Article XV: Unalterable Articles

The intent and purpose of Articles III, V, VI-A and B, VII, IX, XI, XII, and XV shall be unalterable and irrevocable.

Revision History

Adopted May 25, 1960

Richard W. Hogan, Secretary

Article VI, Section C

Amended March 10, 1970

William G. Kratz, Jr., Secretary

Article VI, Section B, Part 8

Amended September 8, 1970

William G. Kratz, Jr., Secretary

Article VI, Section B & C

Amended January 11, 1983

Lois J. Toski, Secretary

Article IX and XI

Amended May 23, 2004

Constitution and Bylaws Review Committee

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Proposed by Committee: Ray Betler, Ray Vogel, Sandy Marcovecchio
Article VI, Section C; Article IX; Article XI, Section A, Article XIV