

**THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS  
OF  
TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH  
OREGON CITY, OREGON**

**Revised November 13, 2000**

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**PREAMBLE**

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

**Whereas, we recognize our unity in the confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and desire to express our fellowship in Him, and are mindful of our privileges and duties as members of the Body of Christ as set forth in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12; and**

**Whereas, the Word of God requires that in a Christian congregation all things be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40);**

**Therefore, we Christians who gather in Oregon City, Oregon, are united as a Lutheran congregation; and in addition to the articles under which this church is incorporated, set forth in this present document, the Constitution and Bylaws, by which all of our congregational affairs, spiritual and material, shall be regulated and conducted.**

## ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this congregation shall be TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH of OREGON CITY, CLACKAMAS COUNTY, OREGON.

### Section 1

For the purposes of this constitution and bylaws, the Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church of Oregon City, Oregon, is hereinafter designated as “the congregation.”

### Section 2

The church is incorporated under the laws of the State of Oregon.

## ARTICLE II – MISSION

The congregation exists as a community of baptized Christians. Our mission is to share the love of Jesus with our members, community and world. We will with God’s help:

**Worship** the Triune God in ways that celebrate both our diversity and our common faith.

**Nurture** and encourage one another toward Christian maturity.

Join in **Fellowship** to strengthen the bonds between us.

**Witness** the saving love of Christ.

**Serve** God and humankind through caring ministries and stewardship of our resources.

## ARTICLE III – CONFESSIONAL STANDARD

The congregation confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe. To that end:

1. The congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God, verbally inspired.
2. The congregation 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:
  - a. the three Ecumenical Creeds, viz: the Apostle’s, the Nicene, and the Athanasian
  - b. the Unaltered Augsburg Confession
  - c. the Apology of the Augsburg Confession
  - d. the Smalcald Articles
  - e. Luther’s Large Catechism
  - f. Luther’s Small Catechism
  - g. the Formula of Concord

#### ARTICLE IV – SYNODICAL AFFILIATION

This congregation shall be affiliated with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (hereinafter referred to as LCMS), as long as the confessions and constitution of said Synod are in accord with the confessions and constitution of this congregation as laid down in Article III.

This congregation shall to the best of its ability collaborate with said Synod and assist it in effecting all sound measures intended for the building up of the Kingdom of God.

#### ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP

##### Section 1

- a. **Baptized members** are all members who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and who are under the spiritual care of the pastor(s) of the congregation.
- b. Baptized members are received through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, through transfer, or, in the case of children who have been baptized in another Christian congregation, at the request of parents or guardians.
- c. The Pastor or the Board of Elders shall promptly notify the congregational membership of all new members.
- d. Baptized members shall conform their lives to their baptismal vows.

##### Section 2

- a. **Communicant members** are those baptized members who have been confirmed in the Lutheran Church, accept the Scriptures as the God-given source of doctrine and guide for life, and are familiar with at least the summary of doctrine contained in Luther's Small Catechism.
- b. Communicant members are received through the rite of confirmation, by transfer from a sister congregation, upon profession of faith, or by reaffirmation of faith, provided they conform to the requirements of membership in this congregation.
- c. The names of new members shall be presented by the Pastor(s) and the Board of Elders to the church council and to the congregation.
- d. Using God's power all communicant members shall strive to conform their entire lives to the rule of God's Word and to that end make diligent use of the means of grace, exercise faithful stewardship of God's gifts, and impart and accept fraternal admonition as the need for such admonition becomes apparent.

### Section 3

Communicant membership may be changed in one of the following ways:

- a. Members in good standing may be transferred immediately upon their request by the pastor to a sister congregation or to a Lutheran congregation with whom we are in fellowship. Such transfer(s) shall be reported promptly to the church council and the congregation.
- b. Members who move out of the community and thereby become inactive shall be encouraged to transfer their membership to the sister congregation nearest to them.
- c. Members who join other congregations thereby terminate their membership. Their names shall be removed from the membership list by the Board of Elders and the action reported to the church council and the congregational assembly.
- d. Members whose whereabouts are unknown or whose addresses cannot be established shall be removed from the membership list by the Board of Elders and the action reported to the church council and the congregational assembly.
- e. Members who conduct themselves in an unchristian manner (this includes membership in organizations whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God) shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20. If they remain impenitent after proper admonition, they shall be excommunicated in the following manner:
  1. Each case shall be presented individually to the congregational assembly by the Pastor and the Board of Elders for action.
  2. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote by the voters present, excluding the vote of the member under discipline, shall be required for excommunication.
  3. If such member deliberately absents himself from the meetings at which his case is to be discussed, or in some other manner makes it impossible to deal with him, he thereby excludes himself.

### Section 4

- a. **Voting members** of the congregation shall be male and female communicants who have reached sixteen (16) years of age. These voting members shall constitute the congregational assembly.
- b. It shall be the duty and privilege of each voting member to attend the meetings of the congregational assembly, participate in the ministry of the congregation and willingly accept responsibilities of ministry according to the abilities which God has given them.
- c. The right to vote in any congregational meeting will terminate when membership in the congregation is terminated.

## **ARTICLE VI – OFFICE OF PASTOR AND CALLED WORKERS**

### **Section 1**

This congregation shall establish the pastoral office, which shall be conferred only on such a pastor or candidate who professes and adheres to the confessional standard set forth in Article III of this constitution, who is qualified for his work, who has been endorsed by the Synod, and who is a member of the Synod. The same shall apply to called teachers in the parochial school and to other called workers.

### **Section 2**

The congregation may request the resignation of any pastor or other called worker from his position in the congregation in the case of prolonged incapacity or general incompetence.

### **Section 3**

Any pastor or called worker may be removed from office by the congregational assembly by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote in Christian and lawful order for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, inability to perform official duties or willful neglect of them. The congregation may seek the counsel and advice of the President of the Northwest District, LCMS, or his designee, in these matters.

## **ARTICLE VII – POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

### **Section 1**

The affairs of the congregation shall be administered and managed through the congregational assembly, which body may delegate some of the responsibility insofar as there is no conflict with the constitution or its bylaws.

### **Section 2**

The establishment and conduct of all institutions and organizations within the congregation shall at all times be subject to the approval and supervision of the congregation or the church council.

### **Section 3**

Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided by the Word of God and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church (see Article III). Other matters shall be decided by the congregational assembly or the church council by a majority vote, unless otherwise specified in the constitution or bylaws.

### **Section 4**

The right of calling pastors or other called workers shall be vested in the congregation through the congregational assembly and shall never be delegated to a smaller body or individual.

Section 5

The church council under direction of the congregational assembly shall be responsible for the employment, supervision and removal of all non-called employees of the congregation.

**ARTICLE VIII – OFFICERS AND BOARDS**

Section 1

This congregation shall have the following elected officers and boards in addition to any that the congregation shall authorize from time to time: President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Board of Elders, and the Board of Property Management.

Section 2

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

Section 3

The officers of the congregation who are empowered to sign legal documents and to serve as the elected officers of the corporation are the President, the Vice President and the Recording Secretary. The President, the Treasurer, and the Business Manager shall be authorized to sign checks.

Section 4

Women may not serve on the Board of Elders.

Section 5

Duties of officers, boards, and committees shall be given in the bylaws.

**ARTICLE IX – PROPERTY RIGHTS**

Section 1

At no time shall any of the net earnings of the congregation inure to the benefit of any member, officer, or other individual.

Section 2

If at any time a division should take place on account of doctrine, the property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those communicant members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Article III of this constitution, as determined by the adjudication procedure of the Synod.

Section 3

If division takes place for any other reason, the property shall remain with the majority of the communicant members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Article III of this constitution, as determined by the adjudication procedure of the Synod.

Section 4

In the event the congregation should dissolve, the property and all rights connected therewith shall be transferred to the Northwest District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

**ARTICLE X – DOCTRINAL LITERATURE**

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

**ARTICLE XI – BYLAWS**

The congregation may adopt such bylaws as may be required for the accomplishment of its purposes as long as such bylaws are not in conflict with the constitution.

**ARTICLE XII - AMENDMENTS**

Section 1

The following Articles of this constitution, or sections thereof, shall be irrevocable and shall not be altered so as to change the original and intended meaning: Articles III, VI, IX, X, and XII (Section 1 only).

Section 2

Amendments to this constitution shall be adopted at a properly convened meeting of the congregational assembly provided that:

- a. they do not conflict with the provisions laid down in Article III or with any other section that pertains to a Scriptural doctrine and practice;
- b. they have been reviewed by the Northwest District Constitution and Bylaws Committee to ascertain that all of its provisions are in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the LCMS;
- c. they have been submitted in writing at a previous meeting of the congregational assembly and published prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be acted on;
- d. they receive an affirmative vote of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voters present in a properly convened meeting.



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Adopted November 13, 2000**

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## ARTICLE I – CONGREGATIONAL ASSEMBLY

### Section 1

The congregational assembly shall hold regular semi-annual meetings in May and November.

### Section 2

- a. The dates of the regular meetings shall be published in the monthly newsletters preceding the meeting and in the Sunday bulletins each of the two (2) Sundays prior to the meeting date.
- b. A list of candidates and proposed operating budgets shall be published and made available for three (3) weeks prior to the meeting dates.

### Section 3

Special meetings of the congregational assembly may be called by the church council or by a written petition of at least twenty-five (25) members presented to the president.

### Section 4

A quorum shall consist of those voting members present.

### Section 5

The presiding officer shall announce those eligible to vote and a written attendance record shall be kept by the Recording Secretary.

## ARTICLE II – CHURCH COUNCIL

### Section 1

The voting members of the church council shall be composed of the following elected officers:

President	Financial Secretary
Vice President	Dean of Elders
Recording Secretary	Chair of Board of Property Management
Treasurer	

Chairs of other council approved boards and committees or their designees are voting members of the council.

### Section 2

The Pastor(s), Director of Christian Education or Youth Director and the Business Manager shall serve as advisory members of the council. The Sr. Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees.

### Section 3

The church council shall:

- a. meet monthly or at the call of the Pastor(s) or President;
- b. coordinate the programs and activities of the various departments of the congregation, and present recommendations to the congregation;

- c. have the power to act on behalf of the congregation between meetings of the congregational assembly;
- d. see that all contracts and documents are negotiated and approved on behalf of the congregation;
- e. serve as a forum for planning the congregation's future ministry;
- f. be responsible for annual Performance Reviews of contract employees and called workers and submit written reviews for the council's permanent records and for the individual's file;
- g. direct and approve the compilation of Operating Procedures for appointed boards and committees to be kept on file with the council recording secretary and in Trinity's office files.

**Section 4**

A majority of the council voting members present shall constitute a quorum.

**ARTICLE III - NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

In January the president shall appoint a nominating committee consisting of three (3) or more members.

**Section 1**

The nominating committee shall:

- a. assemble itself, choose a chairman, and begin the task of preparing a slate of candidates for the May congregational election;
- b. encourage nominations from the members of the congregation and may make printed nomination forms available;
- c. seek at least one (1) nominee for each office;
- d. report the final list of nominees to the March council meeting;
- e. prepare ballots.

**Section 2**

Additional nominations may be made from the floor provided consent of the nominee has been obtained.

**Section 3**

- a. A majority vote shall elect.
- b. There shall be no absentee ballots.
- c. Elected officers, elders and property managers shall assume their duties on July 1 of the year in which they are elected.

**Section 4**

- a. In the event of a vacancy in any elective office, except that of president, the church council shall appoint a successor to serve the remainder of the term, subject to the approval of the congregational assembly at its next regular meeting.
- b. In the event of a vacancy in the office of president, a special meeting shall be called as specified in Bylaws Article I, Section 3 for the purpose of electing a replacement.

### **Section 5**

No member shall hold more than one elective office at a time, and no member shall be eligible to serve more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office.

### **Section 6**

Elections shall be as follows:

- a. The president, the recording secretary and the financial secretary shall be elected in even-numbered years for a term of two (2) years each, with eligibility for one (1) reelection;
- b. The vice president and the treasurer shall be elected in odd-numbered years for a term of two (2) years each, with eligibility for one reelection;
- c. One-third (1/3) of the elders and one-third (1/3) of the property managers shall be elected each year for a term of three (3) years each, with eligibility for one (1) reelection.

## **ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS**

### **Section 1**

The **President** shall:

- a. preside at all congregational meetings;
- b. see that all resolutions duly adopted are carried out;
- c. be privileged to cast the deciding vote in any matter except the election of officers;
- d. supervise the functioning of all committees;
- e. appoint a nominating committee each January;
- f. be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees, except the Nominating Committee;
- g. be bonded and authorized to sign checks in case of an emergency;
- h. be available, with an Elder, to counsel an elected person who may be failing to discharge his/her duties as prescribed in these bylaws, and if needed shall recommend resignation;
- i. conduct annual Performance Reviews of contract employees as directed by the church council and submit a written report to the Recording Secretary and to the individual.

### **Section 2**

The **Vice President** shall:

- a. preside at all meetings of the church council;
- b. perform the duties of the office of the president in the absence or at the request of the president;
- c. conduct annual Performance Reviews of contract employees as directed by the church council and submit a written report to the Recording Secretary and to the individual.

### **Section 3**

The **Recording Secretary** shall:

- a. keep a permanent record of all proceedings and transactions of the church council and of the congregational meetings;
- b. submit to the church newsletter a summary of every meeting of the church council and a summary of every congregational meeting;

- c. be responsible for all correspondence of the church council;
- d. be responsible for notification of all members concerned for the meetings of the church council and of the congregation.

#### **Section 4**

The **Treasurer** shall:

- a. be bonded and authorized to sign checks;
- b. be the custodian of all funds of the congregation;
- c. see that all expenditures are paid as authorized by the church council or the congregation;
- d. see that accurate records of all financial transactions are kept and maintained as property of the congregation under the control of the church council;
- e. provide regular monthly reports to the church council and semi-annual reports to the congregation;
- f. assist the church council in all matters pertaining to church finances;
- g. receive gifts and bequests on behalf of the congregation;
- h. submit records for financial review at the close of each fiscal year.

#### **Section 5**

The **Financial Secretary** shall:

- a. keep individual accurate records of contributions of members;
- b. render a semi-annual report to each contributor of his/her contributions to the congregation with the December report covering the current calendar year;
- c. order and distribute the necessary offering envelopes as designated by the council;
- d. see that a Head Counter is recruited, bonded and trained to perform the following duties:
  - 1. recruit and train helpers as needed;
  - 2. make an accurate weekly count of all offerings received, and deposit such funds promptly;
  - 3. give copies of deposit slips and breakdown of offerings to the treasurer, business manager, pastor and church secretary;
  - 4. give detailed tabulations of the offering envelopes to the financial secretary.
- e. submit records for financial review at the close of each fiscal year without revealing the names of individual contributors.

#### **Section 6**

The **Dean of Elders** shall:

- a. be elected for a term of one (1) year by the Board of Elders at its first meeting in July;
- b. work closely with the senior pastor in determining the spiritual needs of the congregation and the conduct of the worship services;
- c. set the agenda for the board's regular monthly meetings;
- d. see that a monthly written report from the Elders is prepared for the church council;
- e. appoint his designee to attend regular church council meetings if he will be unavailable to attend;
- f. conduct, with the assistance of another Elder, the annual Performance Reviews of pastor(s) and other called workers as directed by the church council and submit a written report to the Recording Secretary and to the individual.

### **Section 7**

The **Chair of the Board of Property Management** shall:

- a. be elected for a term of one (1) year by the Board of Property Management at its first meeting in July;
- b. set the agenda for the board's regular monthly meetings;
- c. supervise the board in the care of the physical properties of the congregation;
- d. see that a monthly written report from the Board of Property Management is prepared for the church council;
- e. appoint a designee to attend regular church council meetings if he/she will be unavailable to attend.

## **ARTICLE V – ELECTED BOARDS**

### **Section 1**

The **Board of Elders** shall:

- a. serve as pastoral assistants in worship services, ministry to members and visiting the sick and shut-ins;
- b. see that all worship services are conducted in a proper and orderly manner, that appropriate music is provided for worship, that the pulpit is filled, and Holy Communion is celebrated on a regular schedule;
- c. encourage all members in regular attendance and frequent partaking of the Lord's Supper;
- d. maintain Christian discipline in harmony and love according to the principles of Matthew 18:15-18;
- e. consist of one Elder per approximately twenty-five (25) families in the congregation;
- f. hold regular monthly meetings;
- g. elect a dean and a scribe at its first meeting in July;
- h. appoint the Head Usher who shall recruit and train ushers to serve;
- i. serve in an advisory capacity to the Altar Guild;
- j. direct the training of acolytes;
- k. serve as the Call Committee as outlined in Bylaws Article VII, Section 1;
- l. assist the Dean of Elders in conducting annual Performance Reviews of pastors and other called workers.

### **Section 2**

The **Board of Property Management** shall:

- a. consist of three (3) or more members whose term of office shall be three (3) years;
- b. hold regular monthly meetings;
- c. elect a chair at its first meeting in July;
- d. administer all physical properties of the congregation, keeping them in good condition and safeguarding them against loss or damage;
- e. see that all repairs or improvements are effected promptly;
- f. engage custodial services subject to the approval of the church council, specifying the duties and supervising the work;
- g. see that the congregation, its members, friends, and properties are adequately protected from loss and liability by adequate insurance coverage.

## ARTICLE VI – APPOINTED BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

### Section 1

The church council may from time to time appoint boards and committees as deemed necessary for the implementation of various aspects of the ministry of the congregation.

### Section 2

The name, number of members and specified duties of any appointed board or committee shall be described in a document entitled “**Appointed Boards and Committees: Operating Procedures.**” These guidelines shall be written by each board or committee and approved by the church council and may be amended as needed.

### Section 3

The **Board of Christian Education** shall see that Biblical studies are offered to the congregation through Bible classes on Sundays and at various times throughout the week, to the children in Sunday School and in Home Bible Fellowship groups under the direction of the pastors, Director of Youth and Education, and other Trinity members; shall administer VBS; and shall direct the awarding of scholarships to applicants entering professional church work.

### Section 4

The **Preschool Advisory Board** shall oversee the administration of Trinity's Preschool, its finances, and the publicity for recruiting students each new school term. The board and the Business Manager shall develop the preschool budget for annual congregational approval.

### Section 5

The **Youth Board** shall consist of the Youth Director and other congregational members to provide good direction for the youth at Trinity.

### Section 6

Other boards and committees such as Outreach, Mission, Public Relations, Social Ministries and Stewardship may be formed as the need arises and meets with the approval of the church council.

## ARTICLE VII – CALLING OF PASTORS OR OTHER CALLED WORKERS

### Section 1

To fill a vacancy in the office of pastor or of another called worker, the Board of Elders shall:

- a. conduct the requisite self-study prior to calling;
- b. develop a description of the position to be filled;
- c. provide nomination forms to communicant members to be completed and returned to the Elders;
- d. submit the nominations to the Northwest District President for review and comment;
- e. request a list of eligible candidates from the Northwest District President;
- f. conduct telephone interviews of potential candidates;

- g. publish the complete list of candidates by letter and in the church bulletin at least two (2) weeks prior to the election;

#### **Section 2**

The election of a pastor or other called worker from the eligible candidates list shall be:

- a. by ballot at a duly called congregational assembly;
- b. by the following voting procedure:
  - 1. In the event that there are three (3) or more candidates and a majority vote has not been reached after two (2) ballots have been cast, the candidate with the lowest number of votes shall be removed from each successive ballot.
  - 2. A majority vote shall elect.
  - 3. If possible, a unanimous affirmation shall be given by a rising vote.
  - 4. The Dean of Elders and the congregational President shall send a joint call to the pastor-elect or called worker-elect. An invitation may be extended to the selected candidate for a site visit.

### **ARTICLE VIII – CONVENTIONS AND REPRESENTATION**

#### **Section 1**

Trinity congregation is to be represented at three (3) conventions on a rotating three (3) year cycle: 1) All Workers' Conference for Directors of Christian Education, Teachers, and Youth Workers; 2) Northwest District Convention; and 3) The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Convention.

- a. The All Workers Conference will be attended by Trinity's appropriate staff member if possible.
- b. A delegate and an alternate from the congregation shall be appointed by the president, with approval of the church council, to attend the Northwest District Convention with the Senior Pastor or his pastoral representative. Circuit caucuses at the convention will determine who will represent the individual circuits at The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod convention.

### **ARTICLE IX – FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year of Trinity congregation shall be from January 1 to December 31 inclusive. The congregational treasurer shall adhere to these dates in closing the books.

### **ARTICLE X – PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the proceedings of the church council and congregational meetings in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are consistent with the Constitution, Bylaws, Standing Rules or Christian principles.



## **ARTICLE XI – AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to these bylaws shall be adopted at a properly convened congregational assembly provided that notice has been given at a previous meeting and that the proposed amendment(s) has been published and made available to all congregational voting members at least twenty-one (21) days prior to the date of the announced meeting of the congregation. An affirmative vote of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voters present shall be required for adoption.

## STANDING RULES

Standing rules are adopted by a majority vote at any regular business meeting. They are amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote without previous notice or by a majority vote with such a notice. They can be suspended for the duration of any session (but not for longer) by a majority vote. Standing rules cannot conflict with bylaws. The adoption date should be indicated on each rule.

### 1. Meeting Agenda:

- a. Devotions
- b. Introductions
- c. Reading of the Minutes
- d. Treasurer's report
- e. Reports of officers, boards, and committees
- f. Pastors reports
- g. Unfinished business
- h. New business
- i. Adjournment