

RESURRECTION LUTHERAN CHURCH

765 J. Clyde Morris Boulevard, Newport News, VA 23601-1513

CONSTITUTION

05May24

PREAMBLE

It is the will of our Lord Jesus Christ that His disciples should live and share the Gospel message to the whole world (Jn. 15:1-16; Lk. 24:44-53), conforming their lives and congregations to the Word of God in doctrine and practice (Gal. 1:6-8; 5:16-26; 2 Tim. 4:1-5), and doing all things decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40) that the mission of the Church may be accomplished.

Therefore, we, the members of this congregation, accept and subscribe to the following Constitution, 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 Resurrection Lutheran Church, located in Newport News, Virginia.

ARTICLE II – SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

This congregation shall hold membership in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod as long as the synod conforms to the congregation's confessional standards as set forth in this Constitution.

ARTICLE III – PURPOSE

The purpose of this congregation shall be:

- A. To preach, teach, share and study the Word of God and administer the Sacraments according to the confessional standard in Article IV.
- B. To establish and foster Christian fellowship and love with all Christians.
- C. To be in Christ's mission by reaching out to all of the world with forgiveness, understanding, encouragement, and love.

ARTICLE IV – CONFESSIONS

The congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God, verbally inspired, and without error in the original manuscripts. The Bible is the only source of special revelation for the church. The congregation also 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 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. All doctrine, teachings and practices of this congregation shall conform to, and be consistent with, this doctrinal standard which include the specific Doctrinal Distinctives noted below.

A. Doctrinal Distinctives

a. Christian Behavior:

- i. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Resurrection Lutheran Church.
- ii. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-20).

b. Marriage:

- i.** We believe the term “marriage” has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25). We believe that marriage between one man and one woman, for life, uniquely reflects Christ’s relationship with His Church (Eph. 5:21-33).
- ii.** We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We see in our creation as sexual beings an intimation of our creation for fellowship and give thanks for the healing which God offers in marriage;
- iii.** The official position of The Lutheran Church— Missouri Synod is that homosexual unions come under categorical prohibition in the Old and New Testaments (Lev. 18:22, 24; 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:9-10) as contrary to the Creator’s design (Rom. 1:26-27). These positions and beliefs can be found on the LCMS website, along with other statements, papers and reports on the subject of homosexuality and same-sex civil unions and “marriage.”
- iv.** The marriage policy of Resurrection Lutheran Church, a member congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, is and always has been consistent with the Synod’s beliefs on marriage and the doctrinal statements above. Our pastors will not officiate over any marriages inconsistent with these beliefs, and our church property may not be used for any marriage ceremony, reception or other activity that would be inconsistent with our beliefs and this policy.

c. Sanctity of Life:

- i.** We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Ps. 139.)

d. Biological Sex:

- i.** We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary sexes together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

e. Human Sexuality:

- i.** We honor God and our neighbor rightly when we delight in our creation as male and female and affirm our identity as male or female. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, cohabitation, homosexual behavior, rejection of one's biological sex or use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).

B. These statements of doctrine and confession of faith do not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Resurrection Lutheran Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our called and ordained Pastor is the church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's application.

ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the congregation includes the following:

A. Baptized Membership

- 1. Baptized members are all members who have been baptized in the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

B. Communicant Membership

- 1. **Qualifications.** Communicant members are those who fulfill all of the following:
 - a. Baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
 - b. Accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, and witness to the same in word and life.
 - c. Who, under the Lordship of Christ, constantly avoids associations which deny this Lordship.
 - d. Subscribe and confess to Article IV of this Constitution.
 - e. Permit themselves to be fraternally admonished and corrected when they have erred.

2. Responsibilities:

- a. Attend divine services faithfully.
- b. Partake of the Lord's Supper frequently.
- c. Contribute monetarily and in service both regularly and faithfully.
- d. Engage in fellowship with one another.
- e. Live consistent with the confessions and Doctrinal Distinctives noted in Article IV.

C. Voting Membership

1. **Qualifications.** Voting members are entitled to vote after fulfilling all of the following:
 - a. Communicant Membership.
 - b. 18 years or older.
 - c. Sign the Constitution and Bylaws of this congregation.
 - d. Are accepted by the Voters Assembly of the congregation.

ARTICLE VI – CONGREGATIONAL POSITIONS

A. The Office of the Pastor

The pastoral office of this congregation, headed by the Senior Pastor and including any called associate or assistant pastor, youth pastor, vicar, or other called commissioned officer, shall be conferred upon such candidates only as profess, affirm, and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in Article IV of this Constitution and are well qualified for their work. Pastors shall, in the call extended to and accepted by them, be pledged to this confessional standard.

B. Congregational Elected Positions and Ministry Teams

The elected positions of this congregation shall be such positions and ministry teams as the Bylaws of this congregation shall prescribe. Position holders shall profess, affirm, and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in Article IV of this Constitution and be well qualified for their work.

ARTICLE VII – 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 organizations within the congregation shall at all times be subject to the approval and supervision of the congregation. The congregation, however, shall not be empowered to decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church (Article IV).

B. Right of Calling

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

C. Right to Elect Officials

The right to elect Officials of the congregation shall be vested in the Voters Assembly and shall never be delegated to a smaller body or to an individual.

D. Powers of Elected or Appointed Officials or Committees

Congregational Officials or Committees, whether elected or appointed by the voters, shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them, and whatever power may have been delegated to them may be altered by the voters.

E. Discipline / Removal of a Pastor or Called Staff from Office

1. Note: Members may be disciplined or removed from office through following the Bylaws as they relate to membership and discipline.
2. Any pastor or called staff may be removed from office by the congregation for one of the following causes:
 - a. persistent adherence to false doctrine.
 - b. do not live consistent with the confessions and Doctrinal Distinctives noted in Article IV.
 - c. immoral or illegal behavior
 - d. inability to perform his/their official duties for an extended period of time.
 - e. willful neglect of his/their official duties.

3. Removal action can be taken after all the following is complete:
 - a. The Elders and the Board of Directors (BOD) initiate removal action.
 - b. The BOD oversees the detailed process as outlined in the Bylaws for Member Removal for Misconduct.
 - c. The pastor or called staff shall be
 - i. pre-advised of the charges preferred against him/them in writing from the Head Elder and Congregational President.
 - ii. given opportunity to answer such charges.
 - d. The Circuit Visitor and District President shall be advised of and consulted about the removal procedure against the pastor. No action to remove shall be taken until the congregation has received counsel from both.
 - e. A duly called Voters Assembly is convened.
 - i. a quorum for this removal action shall be considered at least two-thirds (66%) of the total current voting membership.
 - f. The affirmative vote of a three-fourths majority of those present is received.

F. Rights and Powers

Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided on the basis of the confessional standard (Article IV) under the direction of the Pastor(s) and the Elders Team. All other matters shall be decided by the voting membership present at a properly convened meeting of the Voters Assembly, by a simple majority unless otherwise specified by this Constitution and Bylaws.

ARTICLE VIII – CHURCH PROPERTY RIGHTS

1. Resurrection Lutheran Church (RLC) is a corporate entity under the provisions of the incorporation laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.
 - a. The Resurrection Lutheran School (RLS) is a separate corporate entity under the provisions of the incorporation laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.
2. This congregation may
 - a. acquire, hold title to, and manage real estate and other property as it may deem necessary to accomplish its purposes as a congregation,
 - b. may sell or dispose of such real estate and other property or any part thereof.
3. This congregation shall have all the rights and powers that are granted by the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia to religious organizations.

4. If at any time a separation should take place on account of doctrine, the property of the congregation and all benefits therewith connected shall remain with the voting members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Article IV of this Constitution.
 - a. If arbitration is necessary to decide which members are in agreement with Article IV, the President of the Southeastern District shall be asked to appoint an arbitration board.
5. In the event the congregation should totally disband, the property and all the rights connected therewith shall be transferred to the Southeastern District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

ARTICLE IX – DOCTRINAL LITERATURE

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

ARTICLE X – BYLAWS

This congregation may adopt such Bylaws as may be required for the accomplishment of its purpose.

ARTICLE XI – AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

A. General

1. Amendments to this Constitution and Bylaws may be adopted provided they do not alter or conflict with the provisions laid down in Article IV.

B. Adoption Requirements

1. Adoption of an amendment to the Constitution requires:
 - a. submission of the proposed amendment in writing.
 - b. distribution of said amendment with a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the Voters Assembly, to
 - i. the Resurrection Lutheran Church Board of Directors
 - ii. the congregation.
 - c. a duly called Voters Assembly.
 - d. a quorum of at least one-third (33%) of the total current voting membership.
 - e. the affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of those present.

2. Adoption of an amendment to the Bylaws requires:
 - a. submission of the proposed amendment in writing.
 - b. distribution of said amendment with a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the Voters Assembly, to
 - i. the Resurrection Lutheran Church Board of Directors and
 - ii. the congregation.
 - c. a duly called Voters Assembly.
 - d. a quorum of at least 20% of the total current voting members.
 - e. the affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of those present

ARTICLE XII – RELATIONSHIP TO RESURRECTION LUTHERAN SCHOOL & CHILD CARE

A. Relationship

Resurrection Lutheran Church is the sponsoring body of Resurrection Lutheran School & Childcare (RLS) and hosts its activities, which are carried out by the School Director and the School Board. RLS is a single member non-profit LLC of Resurrection Lutheran Church.

B. Obligations

1. The Church provides the use of its physical facilities to the School.
2. The School is financially self-supporting. However, as its sponsor and host, the church may provide the school supplementary financial support.