

**CONSTITUTION OF  
GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH  
7675 Maple Hill Road.  
Corcoran, Mn. 55340**

PREAMBLE: Since the Word of God requires, 1 Cor. 14, 40, that in every Christian congregation all things be done decently and in order, therefore we, the undersigned members, accept the following Constitution (together with this its preamble), according to which all matters in and pertaining to this congregation shall be regulated.

ARTICLE 1, Name: The name of this congregation shall be Good Shepherd Lutheran Church .

ARTICLE 2, Confession: (Section 1): This congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testament as the verbally inspired Word of God, and all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 as a true and sound exhibition of Christian doctrine taken from and in full agreement with the Holy Scriptures. This congregation also subscribes to the Brief Statement of 1932 as a correct presentation of the teaching of Holy Writ on all the questions therein discussed. It likewise accepts Part I of the “Confession of Faith Professed and Practiced by All True Lutherans”, not dissenting from Part II of that document. According to this norm of doctrine all teaching in this congregation shall be done and all doctrinal controversies which may arise shall be decided and settled.

(Section 2): For the reasons stated above, this congregation may be affiliated only with an orthodox Lutheran synod or church–body, that is, one which occupies the same confessional standpoint in doctrine and practice with ourselves, and in which only the true doctrine and practice referred to above is permitted to exist, every erroneous teaching and practice being stopped in the manner prescribed by God as soon as it makes its appearance. Such synod or church–body must occupy only an advisory position over against this congregation, not only in theory but also in practice (Matt: 23, 8 & 10; 1Cor. 7, 23; Matt. 18, 15–20; 1 Tim. 5, 20).

ARTICLE 3, Membership: Only such children shall be regarded as members of this congregation as are baptized in agreement with the command of the Lord, and only such adult persons may become and remain communicant members of this congregation or enjoy and exercise the rights and privileges of membership, as (a) are baptized; (b) declare their adherence to the confessional platform of the congregation as set forth in article 2, and, while perhaps deficient in the knowledge of all the Lutheran Confessions, are familiar at least with the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Brief Statement, and the Small Catechism, and declare their adherence thereto; (c) do not live in manifest works of the flesh, but lead Christian lives (Gal. 5, 19–26; Eph. 5, 8–11; etc.); (d) together with the congregation partake of the Lord’s Supper with due frequency (1 Cor. 11, 26) and with proper preparation (1 Cor. 11, 28); (e) permit themselves to be fraternally admonished and corrected when erring in doctrine or life (Matt. 18, 15–18; 1 Tim. 5, 20; Gal. 6, 1; 1 Cor. 5, 5 & 13; 2 Cor. 2, 6–11; James 5, 19 & 20); (f) are not members of any society or fraternal organization, either for adults or youth, which has religious tenets and practices which are at variance with the teachings of Holy Scripture (1 Tim. 5, 22b; Rom. 16, 17; 2 Cor. 6, 14–18); (g) acknowledge it as their Christian duty to share in bearing the financial obligations of the congregation, through regular free–will offerings, everyone according to his ability, according to the principles of the New Testament, no methods in conflict with this, such as various merchandising schemes, being approved for use under the auspices of the congregation (1 Cor. 16, 1 & 2; 2 Cor. 9, 1–8; Gal. 6, 6 & 7; John 2, 16), also no fund–raising by any individual or organiza-

tion outside of this congregation being permitted for any congregational purpose, 2 Cor. 9, 7 & 15; Rom. 16, 17.

ARTICLE 4, Voting Membership: While this congregation fully acknowledges and respects the spiritual rights and privileges bestowed upon all its members by the Lord of the Church (1 Cor. 3, 21b; Gal. 3, 26–28; Col. 3, 11) and expects an intelligent and prayerful interest in the work of the Kingdom also on the part of Christian women (1 Cor. 14, 35a), it observes the Scriptural directions which exclude from such positions in the congregation as usurp authority over men (1 Cor. 14, 34 & 35; 1 Tim. 2, 11–14) the women of the church, and likewise the young men (1 Peter 5, 5). Therefore only such male communicant members of this congregation as have completed their eighteenth year and have signed this constitution shall be entitled to vote, and only such voting members as have completed their twenty–first year and have been voting members of the congregation for one year shall be eligible to an office in the congregation. It shall be the duty of every voting member, if possible, to attend the meetings of the Voters’ Assembly, and by failing to attend a meeting, a member waives his vote at such meeting. If any does not attend a regular meeting within a year’s time, he thereby forfeits his right of voting membership, until by his request and the resolution of the congregation when he is present, he is reinstated. His voting privilege will become effective at the next regular voters’ meeting. Before such action is taken, however, the non–attending member shall have first been visited and the matter discussed with him in a brotherly manner, and such visitation should be carried out before the year has elapsed.

ARTICLE 5, Constitutional Meeting and Validity of Decisions: (Section 1): A meeting of this congregation shall be recognized as being a constitutional meeting able to transact business and pass valid resolutions if said meeting is properly announced beforehand by the pastor or by his consent, and if a quorum is present.

(Section 2): In all matters of doctrine and conscience (such as the final step in church discipline) unanimity is required in all cases where Scripture has clearly spoken. Those stubbornly opposing Scripture shall themselves be placed under church discipline. Any matter of doctrine and practice already decided by a clear Word of God is not open for decision by the congregation; and if any vote should be taken on such a matter it can only have the purpose of expressing the agreement of all the members to submit to Scripture. Any decision contrary to Scripture is of itself null and void. Any protest against such submission is also of itself null and void. In case a person, or persons, protest against the execution of any excommunication which the congregation has found to be Scripturally correct, the protesting person, or persons, must first be dealt with before the disposition of the original case. Either the protesting person, or persons, must see the justice of the resolution and vote in the favor of the excommunication, or the protesting person, or persons, because of a flat refusal to obey the express command of the Lord, must be excommunicated. If, however, the Scriptural basis for excommunication in any particular case is not clear to a sizable part of the congregation, so that an agreement on the matter cannot be reached, the case must be dropped; for the unanimous decision of the congregation is required for excommunication. Other matters shall be disposed of by the majority vote of an acknowledged quorum of the qualified voting members present and properly convened.

ARTICLE 6, The Pastoral Office: The office of pastor can be conferred only upon such a preacher who is in accord with the confessional standard of this congregation (Article 2), and who is sufficiently prepared and qualified for such office (1 Timothy 3, 1–7; Titus 1, 6–9). The right to examine a candidate for office in so far as doctrinal position and qualifications for office are concerned, as well as the responsibility for the ordination and induction shall ever be vested in the congregation. The right of calling pastors shall ever be vested in the congregation as a whole and shall never be delegated to a smaller body or to an individual. Valid reasons for removal from office of the pastor shall be the following: Obstinate adherence to false teaching, ungodly life, or

willful unfaithfulness in the administration of his office. For the calling as well as the release or removal of a pastor, a unanimous vote is required (1 Cor. 1, 10).

The duties of the pastor shall consist of performing those acts usually attendant upon the office as well as serving as the spiritual overseer and leader of the congregation. To this end he shall further be an *ex officio* member of all councils, boards, committees, auxiliary organizations and subsidiary groups existing within the frame-work of the congregation.

Any duly called and installed pastor shall immediately upon his installation be granted voting membership in the congregation and his family shall as individuals be granted communicant membership in the congregation if they qualify.

Such assistant or associate pastor or pastors as the congregation may deem necessary to call, may be called and installed under the same circumstances as those prevailing for the office of pastor. The duties of any assistant pastor or pastors shall be such as may be delegated to the respective office by the congregation and the pastor.

The congregation shall further be authorized to call any qualified person or persons to the office of school teacher under the same procedures as outlined for that of the office of pastor. The duties of such office shall consist of such responsibilities as the congregation in conjunction with the pastor may direct. The removal of a teacher from office may only be carried out on the same basis and according to the same procedure as stated in paragraph 1 of this article with relation to the pastor. Such school teacher or teachers shall be granted communicant membership upon their installation and in the event they otherwise qualify may be granted voting membership.

ARTICLE 7, Auxiliary Offices: (Section 1): The auxiliary offices to the office of Pastor in this congregation (besides the office of school teacher) shall be the following: Elders, trustees, secretary, treasurer, Board of Education, and such other standing committees as the congregation may deem it necessary to elect.

(Section 2): Duties of the respective officers: (a) The Elders shall assist the Pastor in the rule of the congregation in accordance with God's Word, and particularly in the exercise of church discipline. (b) The Trustees shall administer the church property. It shall be entrusted to them in such a way that they administer it in the name of and by authority of the congregation, as common property which they merely hold in trust. (c) The Secretary shall keep the minutes in the congregational meetings and enter them in the minute book. He shall also conduct such correspondence with which he is specifically charged. He shall also issue written notices of meetings when requested to do so. He shall keep accurate attendance record of the voting members. (d) The Treasurer shall receive and disburse all monies of the congregation in accordance with its bylaws and its resolutions. He shall deposit the congregation's money in a bank acceptable to the congregation. He shall also render an account thereof in the regular congregational meetings, and in special meetings when requested to do so. He shall submit his books for audit at the end of the congregation's fiscal year. (e) The Board of Education together with the pastor shall have general supervision over the educational agencies of the congregation. (f) All these officers may be removed from office by the congregation, but only in a thoroughly Christian and orderly manner.

ARTICLE 8, Spiritual Care of Unconfirmed Children: Since the primary duty of rearing children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord is committed to the parents (Eph. 6,4), this duty shall be so enjoined upon parents as to urge them to establish the family altar and to instruct their children thoroughly in the fundamentals of the Christian religion according to the truth contained in the Small Catechism. To this end the congregation shall establish, if possible, an elementary Christian Day School and a Sunday School to supplement the Day School. If a Christian

Day School cannot be established, the congregation shall establish at least a Sunday School, but the latter shall not be regarded as a substitute for the former. These agencies shall be supported by the entire congregation, so that the children in its care may be given adequate training in Christian doctrine and practice.

ARTICLE 9, Books for Worship and Instruction: In the public services of this congregation only hymns with sound Scriptural content, and in all ministerial acts purely Lutheran forms shall be used, and all liturgical forms and acts which would tend to identify the worship of the congregation with sectarian teaching, such as that of the Roman Catholic Church, must be avoided. In the Sunday School and the Christian Day School, as well as similar educational agencies, such books only as are in accordance with the doctrinal stand of the congregation, as set forth in Article 2, shall be introduced and used for instruction, and all other books used in any educational department of the congregation shall be free from everything which is at variance with orthodox Lutheran doctrine and practice, or erroneous teachings which may occur in the books used be adequately corrected by the teachers.

ARTICLE 10, The Sovereign Character of the Congregation: The congregation as a body shall have the supreme power in the external and internal administration and management of its own congregational affairs. No decision, enactment, or performance in behalf of the congregation, or with reference to a member thereof, as such, shall be valid, whether it have proceeded from an individual or from a body within the congregation, unless it shall have been enacted or performed according to a general or special power specifically conferred by the congregation; and whatever may have been ordered or decided by individuals or minor bodies within the congregation under a power conferred by the congregation, shall always be subject to revision and final decision by the congregation. But not even the congregation shall have power to order, enact, or decide anything contrary to the Word of God or contrary to the Confessional platform of the congregation, as set forth in Article 2, and any such ordinance, enactment, or decision shall be null and void. This congregation, having been established according to Scriptural injunction, precept, and example, holds that it is sovereign and autonomous in the conduct of all its affairs, both internal and external. And, while it always stands ready, in agreement with 1 Peter 3, 15, to give an account to any man in matters pertaining to doctrine and practice, it regards all other church-bodies or federations of congregations such as synods and conferences, as service organizations only, the affiliation with which emphasizes the fact of doctrinal fellowship and assists in the cooperative promotion of larger projects. It will never surrender its rights as a congregation to any church organization professing or practicing a synodical government.

ARTICLE 11, Church Discipline: When a member of this congregation, after fruitless application of the procedure prescribed by the Word of God (Matt. 18, 15–20; 1 Tim. 5, 20; Gal. 6, 1), wherever the observance of such procedure has been possible, shall have been expelled from the congregation, such excommunicated person shall then have 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. The same shall also hold good with regard to such members as may have refused to submit to church discipline and thus excommunicated themselves, as also to those who may sever their connection with the congregation, whether by peaceful dismissal or by open withdrawal or removal to another place without notification and without effort to retain spiritual fellowship with the congregation by frequent visits or correspondence. For an excommunication, a unanimous vote is required provided that such member under proposed discipline shall not be entitled to vote on the action pertaining to his case.

ARTICLE 12, Division in the Congregation: If at any time a separation should take place in this congregation, which may God graciously forbid, the property of the congregation and all

the benefits therewith connected shall remain with those members who shall continue to adhere to Article 2 and 3 of this constitution, whether they be in the majority or minority.

ARTICLE 13, Alterations in the Constitution: To alter or repeal any Article of this constitution it shall be requisite that in two consecutive constitutional meetings of the congregation two-thirds of the members present cast their votes in favor of such alteration or repeal. Unalterable are Articles 2 and 3 in their entirety and the doctrinal content of other articles, which must at all times remain in agreement with Holy Scripture.

**BY LAWS**

**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**

Adopted October 28, 1959 —

1. The annual meeting for the election of officers and for giving annual reports shall be held in January.
2. The chairman shall be elected to a one-year term in office. He may not have more than three terms in succession. His duties shall be such as are usually required of a presiding officer.
3. The vice-president's term of office shall be one year. He may have no more than three terms in succession. He shall assist the president as called upon and take his place when the president is absent.
4. The Secretary's term of office shall be one year. He may have no more than three terms in succession.
5. The Treasurer's term of office shall be one year.
6. The Board of Elders shall consist of three members, one to be elected each year. His term of office shall be three years, and he may succeed himself one time. The Elders are to be given instruction in their duties as Elders in accordance with the Constitution.
7. The Board of Trustees shall consist of three members. The Trustee's term of office shall be three years. He may succeed himself one time.
8. The School Board shall consist of three members. The term of office shall be three years. Each member may succeed himself one time.

Adopted January 28, 1960 —

9. Elections shall be held by ballot.

Adopted February 24, 1960 —

10. Quorum for the Voter's meetings shall be set at 50 per cent of the voting membership.

Adopted January 17, 1960 —

11. The office of head usher shall be elective.