

CONSTITUTION

OUR REDEEMER'S LUTHERAN BRETHREN CHURCH

Revised as of February 12, 2020

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this congregation is Our Redeemer's Lutheran Brethren Church of Minot, North Dakota.

ARTICLE II – SYNODICAL AFFILIATION

This Congregation shall be affiliated with the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America and incorporated under the laws of the State of North Dakota.

ARTICLE III – CONFESSION OF FAITH

This congregation subscribes to the Church of the Lutheran Brethren Doctrinal Statement of Faith as follows:

- A. The Bible, including both Old and New Testaments as originally given, is the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God and is free from error in the whole and in the part, and is therefore the final authoritative guide for faith and conduct.
- B. There is one God eternally existent in three distinct persons in one divine essence, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- C. God the Father has revealed Himself as the Creator and preserver of the universe, to whom the entire creation and all creatures are subject.
- D. God created Adam and Eve in His image to live in fellowship with Him. They fell into sin through the temptation of Satan and thereby lost fellowship with God. Through their disobedience the entire human race became totally depraved, that is, self-centered sinners who oppose God, and who by nature are unable to trust, fear or love Him. They are subject to the devil, and are condemned to death under the eternal wrath of God.
- E. Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son, is the image of the invisible God. To accomplish our redemption, He became fully human, being conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus Christ, who is true God and true man, by His perfect obedience and substitutionary death on the cross, has purchased our redemption. He arose from the dead for our justification in the body in which He was crucified. He ascended into heaven, where He is now seated at the right hand of God, the Father, as our interceding High Priest. He will come a second time personally, bodily, and visibly to gather the believers unto Himself and to establish His millennial kingdom. He will judge the living and the dead and make an eternal separation between believers and unbelievers. His kingdom shall have no end.
- F. The Holy Spirit is a divine person eternally one with the Father and with the Son. Through the Word of God He convicts people of sin, persuades them to confess their sinfulness to God and calls them to faith through the Gospel. He regenerates, sanctifies, and preserves

believers in the one true faith. He comforts, guides, equips, directs, and empowers the church to fulfill the great commission.

G. The knowledge and benefit of Christ's redemption from sin are brought to the human race through the Means of Grace, namely the Word and the sacraments.

1. Through the Word of the Law God brings sinners to know their lost condition and to repent. Through the Word of the Gospel He brings sinners to believe in Jesus Christ, to be justified, to enter the process of sanctification, and to have eternal life. This occurs as the Holy Spirit awakens them to see their sin, convicts them of their guilt of sin, and calls them to repent and believe, inviting and enabling them to accept God's grace in Christ. Each one who thus believes is instantly forgiven and credited with Christ's righteousness. The Word then teaches and guides the believer to lead a godly life.
2. In the Sacrament of Baptism, God offers the benefits of Christ's redemption to all people and graciously bestows the washing of regeneration and newness of life to all who believe. God calls the baptized person to live in daily repentance, that is, in sorrow for sin, in turning from sin, and in personal faith in the forgiveness of sin obtained by Christ. By grace we are daily given the power to overcome sinful desires and live a new life in Christ. Those who do not continue to live in God's grace need to be brought again to repentance and faith through the Law and Gospel.

Because the sinfulness of human nature passes on from generation to generation and the promise of God's grace includes little children, we baptize infants, who become members of Christ's believing church through baptism. These children need to come to know that they are sinners with a sinful nature that opposes God. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, they need to confess their sinfulness and yield to God; and possess for themselves forgiveness of their sin through Jesus Christ, as they are led from the faith received in infant baptism into a clear conscious personal faith in Christ as their Lord and Savior and being assured of salvation, rely solely on the finished work of Christ, and the power of the Gospel to live as children of God.

3. In the Sacrament of Holy Communion, Christ gives to the communicants His body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine. He declares the forgiveness of sin to all believers, and strengthens their faith.

H. Eternal salvation is available to every living human being on earth by God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. This salvation consists of an instantaneous aspect and an ongoing, continual aspect.

1. Justification is God's gracious act by which He, for Christ's sake, instantaneously acquits repentant and believing sinners and credits them with Christ's righteousness. At that moment, God gives each one who believes a new and godly nature and the Holy Spirit begins the process of sanctification. There is no place for human effort in justification.

2. Sanctification is God's gracious, continual work of spiritual renewal and growth in the life of every justified person. Through the means of grace, the Holy Spirit works to reproduce the character of Christ within the lives of all believers, instructing and urging them to live out their new nature. The Holy Spirit enables believers more and more to resist the devil, to overcome the world, and to count themselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit produces spiritual fruit in and bestows spiritual gifts upon all believers. He calls, empowers and equips them to serve God in the home, in the community, and as part of the Church Universal. The process of sanctification will be complete only when the believer reaches glory.
- I. The Church Universal consists of all those who truly believe on Jesus Christ as Savior. The local congregation is an assembly of believers in a certain locality among whom the Gospel is purely taught and the sacraments are rightly administered. The confessing membership of the local congregation shall include only those who have been baptized into "the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," confess personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, maintain a good reputation in the community and accept the Constitution of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren. It cannot, however, be avoided that hypocrites might be mixed in the congregation; that is, those whose unbelief is not evident to the congregation.
- J. The Church of the Lutheran Brethren practices the congregational form of church government and the autonomy of the local congregations. The office of pastor and elder is to be filled by men only. The synodical administration has an advisory function as it relates to the congregation and an administrative function as it relates to the cooperative efforts of the congregations.
- K. The Lutheran confessions are a summary of Bible doctrines. We adhere to the following confessional writings: The Apostles' Creed, Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, unaltered Augsburg Confession, and Luther's Small Catechism.

ARTICLE IV – CHURCH MANAGEMENT

- A. Christ is the Head of the Church (Matthew 16:16-19; Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:23; Colossians 1:18). Through the Holy Spirit, Christ guides the Church by the Scriptures, and He bestows upon the Church the gifts of grace for the enablement of His people to fulfill His mission on earth (Romans 12:1-21; I Corinthians 12:1-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; I Timothy 3:1-17; Titus 1:5-9).
- B. Pastor
 1. For the office of pastor, the congregation shall call a man who is a Christian, who accepts the Constitution of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren, conducts himself and his ministry according to the guidelines set forth in the Ministers of the Gospel Handbook, and is listed on the Church of the Lutheran Brethren Clergy Roster or is eligible to be licensed by the Church of the Lutheran Brethren as a pastor.
 2. The pastor's primary calling is to evangelize the lost and to disciple and shepherd the believers. He does this through example, prayer, preaching and

teaching the Word, administering the sacraments, and doing the work of an evangelist.

3. The pastor(s) and other elders shall be the spiritual overseers of the congregation.
4. The pastor(s) and other elders, as the key ministry team, shall direct all ministries in fulfilling the mission statement of the congregation.
5. The pastor(s) shall be accountable to the other members of the Board of Elders and ultimately to the congregation for his/their conduct and actions.
6. The pastor(s) shall be approved by the process described in the Bylaws of this Constitution.

C. Board of Elders

1. The Board of Elders shall be composed of the called pastor(s) of the congregation and elders who have been elected by the congregation. To this board the congregation commits its spiritual direction and well-being.
2. Qualification
 - a. Elders shall be men who are active members of the congregation.
 - b. These men will have the spiritual qualifications and abilities as designated in the Scriptures and are recognized by the congregation as men of faith, integrity, and maturity. 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; and 1 Peter 5:1-3 state the spiritual qualifications of an elder.
3. Function
 - a. The Board of Elders shall function as the key ministry team of the congregation. With the exception of congregational business meetings, all boards and committees of the congregation shall be accountable to the Board of Elders.
 - b. The elders, as members of the congregation's key ministry team, shall assist the pastor(s) in fulfilling the mission statement of the congregation in any and all matters including (but not limited to) preaching, teaching, planning, administering, disciplining, visiting, evangelizing, administering the sacraments, instructing in the catechism, etc.
 - c. In implementing the mission of the congregation, the Board of Elders shall formulate appropriate policies.
 - d. The Board of Elders will have the authority to approve candidates as new active members of the congregation. Once approved, the Board

of Elders must report and introduce the new members to the congregation.

- e. The Board of Elders is responsible for church discipline in accordance with the Word of God (Matthew 18:15-17; I Corinthians 5:1-5; I Timothy 5:20). It has the authority on behalf of the congregation to exclude a member from the Lord's Supper, declare to the congregation a member's loss of privilege to vote in congregational matters, and initiate procedures for reinstatement of those disciplined. It has the responsibility to recommend a member's excommunication by the congregation.
 - f. As the elected representatives of the congregation, the Board of Elders will act for the church in all matters pertaining to the spiritual and temporal affairs of the congregation. They may delegate appropriate business or other functions to the various ministry boards and committees. No organization under the jurisdiction of the congregation shall organize or disband without the approval of the Board of Elders.
 - g. The Board of Elders shall establish the Call Committee.
 - h. The elders shall be mutually accountable to all other members of the Board of Elders (pastor(s) and elders) and ultimately to the congregation for their conduct and actions.
 - i. The Board of Elders is responsible for such other duties and responsibilities as defined in the Bylaws or assigned to them by a majority vote of the congregation at a duly convened business meeting.
- 4. Election - The elders shall be elected and approved by the process described in the Bylaws of this constitution.
 - 5. Term - We recognize that an elder is a gift of grace (spiritual leadership) to the congregation. For that reason elders normally serve for an indefinite period. They may be removed as otherwise provided for in the Bylaws of this Constitution.

D. Chairman

- 1. The Congregation shall elect a chairman of the congregation each year at the annual meeting of the congregation.
- 2. The chairman shall be a member of the Board of Elders.
- 3. He shall, in consultation with the pastor, determine the agenda for congregational meetings and shall lead all business meetings of the congregation.

E. Vice Chairman - The Board of Elders shall elect from its membership a vice chairman for the congregation who, in the absence of the chairman, leads all business meetings.

F. Secretary

1. The congregation shall elect a secretary of the congregation each year at the annual meeting.
2. He/she shall keep accurate minutes of the transactions and decisions made at the business meetings of the congregation, care for its correspondence, and provide and record minutes at each business meeting.

G. Treasurer

1. The trustees shall appoint a treasurer for a two (2) year term. He/she shall be accountable to the Board of Elders. The Business Administrator may be appointed as the treasurer.
2. In general, the treasurer will insure that all financial issues of the church are being appropriately addressed and that all proper accounting practices, financial procedures, and legal requirements are followed.
3. The treasurer shall insure that regular reports are shared with the Board of Trustees, Board of Elders, other ministry boards, and at congregational business meetings.

H. Delegates to the Biennial Synodical Convention - The Board of Elders is authorized to appoint delegates to the Biennial Synodical Convention. The number of delegates is determined by the Constitution of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.

ARTICLE V - MINISTRY BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

Ministry Boards and Standing Committees will provide leadership and guidance for our ministries. Boards and Standing Committees are permanent, and the structure and scope of each board is to be defined by the Constitution and/or Bylaws. Special Committees may be temporary and are to be created and/or dissolved by the Board of Elders.

A. Ministry Boards - The congregation shall provide for the establishment of the Board of Trustees, the Our Redeemer's Christian School Board, and the Nominating Board.

B. Standing Committees – The congregation shall provide for the establishment of the Children's Ministry Standing Committee and the Student Ministry Standing Committee.

C. All boards and committees shall contribute to the harmony and development of the whole congregation.

D. They shall be under the general supervision of the Board of Elders and all boards and committees will submit a written summary of each meeting to the Board of Elders.

E. Each board and standing committee will annually submit an itemized proposed budget of

projected income and anticipated expenditures for the coming year to the Board of Trustees.

- F. The composition of each ministry board and standing committee is defined in the Bylaws.
- G. With the exception of the Christian School board, only active members can be elected to ministry boards. Standing committee members are not required to be active members.
- H. Descriptions of responsibilities of the ministry boards and standing committees are included in the Bylaws of this Constitution.

ARTICLE VI - MEMBERSHIP

Classification of Members – Members of the congregation shall be classified as follows:

A. Active Members

1. Active members shall have been baptized into “the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,” confess Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord, are living in conscious fellowship with Him, maintain a good reputation in the community and accept the constitution of Our Redeemer’s Lutheran Brethren Church.
2. All requests for membership are made to the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders will have the authority to approve candidates as new members. Once approved, the Board of Elders must report and introduce the new members to the congregation.
3. Active members must be of legal voting age.
4. Only active members of the congregation may vote at congregational business meetings.
5. Active members who are still living in the area who have not attended Our Redeemer’s Church for a period of one year shall be removed from membership.

B. Inactive Members

1. Members who have moved out of the area, and/or who for good reason, request to be retained as members, shall be placed on an “Inactive Member” status.
2. This list shall be reviewed periodically by the Elder Board. Inactive members can be reinstated to active status when circumstances so permit.
3. These inactive members should not be included in the number of members used to determine a quorum when conducting congregational business.

C. Regular Attenders

1. The Board of Elders may include as regular attenders those who wish to call this

their congregational home.

2. The Board of Elders may also remove the names of regular attenders when they deem it necessary or advisable.

ARTICLE VII – PROPERTY

- A. All property of the congregation shall be deeded to the congregation itself and held in its corporate name.
- B. No property of the congregation in excess of a value of \$100,000.00 shall be sold, leased, mortgaged, or otherwise disposed of without the same having first been approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the active members in attendance at a duly convened business meeting which has been called for a specific consideration of the proposal. The secretary of the congregation and the chairman of the congregation shall certify in such conveyance, lease, or mortgage, that the same has been duly authorized and approved by the congregation.

ARTICLE VIII – DISSOLUTION

If a division should ever occur in this congregation, which God forbid, the properties and assets of the Church shall belong to that part of the congregation which abides by this Constitution, whether that part may be in the majority or minority. This paragraph is unalterable.

ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS

- A. This constitution may be amended at an annual meeting of the congregation, provided:
 1. The amendment does not conflict with Article III - Confession of Faith or Article VIII – Dissolution.
 2. The amendment is first affirmed by a majority of the Board of Elders. Any active member may propose amendments to the Constitution. They must be submitted in writing to the Board of Elders not less than thirty (30) days prior to a congregational special or annual meeting. If the elders disapprove, a member can still have his/her proposal read before the congregational annual meeting, provided he/she submits a petition signed by no less than ten (10) voting members to the Board of Elders, meeting the time requirements above.
 3. The constitutional amendment has been read at a previous congregational annual meeting before considering it for adoption.
 4. The amendment has been approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the active members in attendance at a duly convened annual business meeting.
- B. The Bylaws of this Constitution may be amended, provided:
 1. The amendment does not conflict with Article III - Confession of Faith or Article VIII – Dissolution.
 2. The amendment is first affirmed by a majority of the Board of Elders. Any active

member may propose amendments to the Bylaws. They must be submitted in writing to the Board of Elders not less than thirty (30) days prior to a congregational special or annual meeting. If the elders disapprove, a member can still have his/her proposal read before the congregational special or annual meeting, provided he/she submits a petition signed by no less than ten (10) voting members to the Board of Elders, meeting the time requirements above.

3. The amendment must be read either at a previous special or annual meeting.
 4. The amendment is approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the active members in attendance at a duly convened special or annual business meeting.
- C. Article VIII of this constitution shall be unalterable.