

# **MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH OF DELHI TOWNSHIP**

**Holt, Michigan**

**“SEEK THE LOST; GROW THE FOUND”**

## **THE CONSTITUTION**

### **PREAMBLE**

It is the will of our Lord Jesus Christ that His disciples should preach The Gospel to the whole world (Mark 16:16, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8). That Christ's mission for His Church might be carried out according to His will, He has commanded that:

- A. Christians unite in worship (Hebrews 10:24-25);
- B. Christians practice fellowship with one another (Acts 2:42);
- C. Christians witness to all people (Acts 1:8);
- D. Christians help each other grow in the Word (Ephesians 4:11-14);
- E. Christians serve the needs of all people in Christian love (Ephesians 4:7-6, Mark 10:42-44, John 13:35, Galatians 6:10);
- F. Christians administer the Office of the Keys in His Church (John 20: 21-23; Matthew 18:15-20);
- G. Christians maintain decency and order in His Church (I Corinthians 4:40).

Therefore, we the members of Messiah Lutheran Church of Delhi Township, 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 Messiah Lutheran Church of Delhi Township.

### **ARTICLE II - DOCTRINE**

This congregation accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired and revealed Word of God, and all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the Book Of Concord, the year of 1580, as the correct presentation and true exposition of Christian doctrine drawn from the Holy

Scriptures.

- A. The three Ecumenical (Universal) Creeds:
  - 1. The Apostolic
  - 2. The Nicene
  - 3. The Athanasian
- B. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession
- C. The Apology (Defense) of the Augsburg Confession
- D. The Smalcald Articles
- E. Luther's Large Catechism
- F. Luther's Small Catechism
- G. The Formula of Concord

No doctrine or practice in conflict or inconsistent with the above norms of our faith and life shall be taught or tolerated in this congregation.

### **ARTICLE III - SYNODICAL AFFILIATION**

This congregation shall be affiliated with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as long as the Confessions and constitution of said Synod is in accord with the Confessions and constitution of this congregation as laid down in Article II.

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 of the Kingdom of God.

### **ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Section 1. Baptized Membership**

- A. Baptized membership in this congregation is held by all that are baptized in the name of the Triune God with water, and are under the spiritual care of the congregation.
- B. Baptized persons may participate in Holy Communion when they demonstrate both the desire to participate in Holy Communion and an appropriate understanding of the Sacrament of Holy Communion, as determined by Pastor.

#### **Section 2. Confirmed Membership**

Confirmed membership in this congregation may be held only by those who:

- A. Are baptized in the name of the Triune God;
- B. Have declared their acceptance of the Confessions of this congregation as contained in Article II of this constitution;
- C. Have been accepted into membership in accordance with the bylaws of this congregation and shall remain faithful to the responsibilities of membership as contained in these bylaws;
- D. Do not live in manifest works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21) but lead a Christian life;
- E. Are not members of a secret society or any other organization conflicting with the Word of God and the conduct of a Christian (II Corinthians 6:14-18).

### **Section 3. Duration of Membership**

The membership, and membership privileges, of each confirmed member shall remain in force so long as each member shall maintain his or her eligibility according to the five points in Section 2 of this article and meet the requirements stated in the disciplinary or other provisions of the bylaws. A member who voluntarily severs his or her connection with this congregation, or has been released or transferred, or who has been excommunicated or excludes himself according to the provisions of the bylaws, shall be deemed to have terminated his or her membership in this congregation along with all the rights and privileges of such membership.

## **ARTICLE V - ORGANIZATION**

### **Section 1. Voting Members**

This congregation shall be represented by, and administer all its affairs through its voting membership.

Only confirmed members who have qualified according to the membership provisions of the bylaws shall be received as voting members of this congregation.

### **Section 2. Administrative Boards**

Responsibility and authority for daily administration of congregational affairs shall be delegated to the following boards:

- A. The Board of Elders

- B. The Board of Fellowship
- C. The Board of Christian Education
- D. The Board of Stewardship
- E. The Board of Trustees
- F. The Board of Early Childhood Ministry
- G. The Board of Outreach
- H. Such other boards as may be established, from time to time by the voting membership of the congregation.

One member of each administrative board shall serve as chairman of that board.

### **Section 3. Officers of the Congregation**

The officers of the congregation shall consist of a:

- A. Chairman
- B. Vice-Chairman
- C. Secretary
- D. Financial Secretary
- E. Treasurer

These officers shall be elected from among the voting members in accordance with the bylaws of this congregation.

The chairman of the congregation (or vice-chairman, when acting in the chairman's capacity) shall have a voice on all administrative boards, but his right to vote shall be limited to such boards on which he may hold membership. The called staff of the congregation may, at their discretion be ex-officio members of all boards and their associated committees, and may, at their discretion, attend any or all meetings related to congregational activity of any kind.

### **Section 4. Parish Planning Council**

The Parish Planning Council shall consist of the chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, and treasurer of the congregation, and the chairman of the administrative boards listed in Section 2 of this article. They shall hold a position on the Parish

Planning Council by virtue of their election by the voting members of the congregation so long as their term of office continues. Planning shall be the key function of the Parish Planning Council.

### **Section 5. Rights and Powers**

This congregation, subject to the limiting provisions and regulations of this constitution and its associated bylaws, shall have supreme powers in the administration of its affairs. No duly elected officer of this congregation shall have any power or authority beyond that conferred upon him by the congregation acting through its voting members. Each administrative board, along with the Parish Planning Council, shall be responsible for the performance of such duties as the voting membership may delegate to them by special resolution. Such specially delegated rights and powers, both of officers and administrative boards, shall be subject to review, revision, or complete withdrawal by the voting membership at its discretion.

## **ARTICLE VI - PASTORS**

Only such persons shall be called, ordained, and installed as pastors of this congregation who are qualified by training and education as prescribed standards acceptable to the church body with which this congregation is affiliated.

Any call extended by this congregation shall require the candidate-elect to serve as pastor(s), who shall profess acceptance of, and pledge faithful adherence to, the Confessions of this congregation as set forth in Article II of this constitution.

In the absence of adequate cause for dismissal, as defined in the bylaws of the congregation, the tenure of office of a called or elected pastor shall be the remainder of his active life, or until the Lord calls him into another field of service.

## **ARTICLE VII - SOCIETIES**

Societies may be organized within the congregation only with the expressed approval of the voting membership, and all such societies shall be under the supervision of the Pastor and the appropriate administrative board under whose jurisdiction they function. Only confirmed members of this congregation shall be officers of such societies or groups. Any decisions, enactment, or performance of or by societies or groups shall be invalid if they conflict with this constitution and its associated bylaws. The Pastor, by virtue of his office, shall be the advisor for such societies or groups within the congregation.

## **ARTICLE VIII - CONGREGATIONAL SCHISMS**

If, at any time, a separation should take place within this congregation, the advice of the officers of the District and Synod shall be sought. If, despite all efforts to reconcile differences in peace and love, a division into factions of the congregation shall

occur, the property of the congregation and all benefits therewith connected shall remain with those members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Article II, III, IV, and VI of this constitution.

## **ARTICLE IX - CONGREGATIONAL DECISIONS**

All congregational matters shall be decided by a simple majority vote of voting members present at a properly convened meeting of the Voters' Assembly, except as otherwise provided in this constitution and its associated Bylaws for dealing with certain situations or matters therein specifically mentioned and defined.

## **ARTICLE X - AMENDMENTS**

### **Section 1.**

This constitution may be changed or amended, with the exception of the Articles listed in Section 2 of this Article, by three-fourths (3/4) majority of the votes cast in a regular or special meeting of the voting membership, provided that all proposed changes and amendments be submitted in writing and announced to the congregation assembled for worship on two (2) different Sundays prior to the date upon which the amendment is presented for action. Each proposed change shall be voted on separately.

### **Section 2.**

Articles II, III, IV, VI and VIII are hereby made irrevocable.

(As amended by Messiah Voters' Assembly: December 3, 1995, April 20, 1997, November 23, 1997, November 22, 1998, April 18, 1999, November 21, 1999, November 20, 2000, and April 17, 2005)