

**CONSTITUTION**

**AND**

**BY-LAWS**

**SHERMAN OAKS LUTHERAN CHURCH  
AND CHILDREN'S CENTER**

**14847 Dickens Street  
Sherman Oaks, California 91403**

**CERTIFIED TO BE TRUE AND COMPLETE**

**February 24, 2015**

**DATE**

**Connie Runck**

**SECRETARY**

## **PREAMBLE**

It is the will of our Lord Jesus Christ that His disciples should preach the Gospel to the whole world (Mark 16:15; 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 Christians unite in worship (Hebrews 10:24-25), practice fellowship with one another (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28-18-20), and serve the needs of all men in Christian love (Ephesians 4:7-16; Mark 10:42-44; John 13:35; Galatians 6:10). Since Christians are also to administer the Office of the Keys as His Church (John 20-21-23; Matthew 18:15-20), and to maintain decency and order (1 Corinthians 14:40) in the Church. Therefore we, Sherman Oaks Lutheran Congregation at Sherman Oaks, California, a member of the English District of the Missouri Synod, accept and subscribe to the following Constitution and By-Laws, in accordance with which all spiritual and material affairs of our congregation shall be governed.

## **ARTICLE I**

We acknowledge and accept all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed and inspired Word of God, and acknowledge and accept all the Confessional Writing of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the Book of Concord of the year 1580, to be the true 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 Catechism, and the Formula of Concord.

## **ARTICLE II**

The purpose of our Congregation is:

- To serve its members and the community by preaching and teaching the Word of God as revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures;
- To administer the blessed Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, according to their institution by our Lord Jesus Christ;
- To provide for the religious instruction of youth and adults, according to the confessional standard of the Lutheran Church (ARTICLE I);
- To foster Christian fellowship and charity and to promote the practice of Christian Stewardship for the advancement of the Savior's Kingdom at home and abroad.

## **ARTICLE III**

Membership in Sherman Oaks Lutheran Church consists of the following:

Baptized Membership: All who have been received into the Kingdom of Christ by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

Communicant Membership:

- All who have renewed their Baptismal vow by Affirmation of Faith, following instruction in the chief teachings of the Holy Scriptures as the divine Standard of faith and life;
- Who faithfully receive God's appointed Means of Grace (Gospel and Sacraments) for the forgiveness of sin and strengthened faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord;
- Who by the power of the Holy Spirit strive to lead Christ-centered lives, and determine to support the building of the Kingdom of God in the congregation and throughout the world by their personal witness to the Savior's love, and their loving gifts of stewardship of time, talents, and earthly treasures.

#### **ARTICLE IV**

To be a voting member is to accept the belief in Articles I and III and be 18 years of age or older.

#### **ARTICLE V**

All who teach the Word of God in our Church and Sunday School accept the beliefs of Article I, and preach and teach diligently to all who attend their classes.

#### **ARTICLE VI**

Our congregation, united under the guidance of the Holy Scriptures, shall administer all visible and spiritual affairs.

Matters of doctrine shall be decided by the Word of God.

Matters of the Visible church shall be decided by the majority vote of the assembled members.

#### **ARTICLE VII**

By virtue of the sovereignty vested in this congregation, we choose to be affiliated with and support the English District of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, as the confessions of faith of that body are in harmony with the confessions of faith of this congregation.

As a member of the English District of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, we are to be represented at the District convention by the Pastor and a chosen lay delegate.

If at any time a separation should take place due to doctrinal difference, the property of the congregation and all benefits therewith remain with those voting members who continue to adhere to the confessed benefits of ARTICLE 1.

In the event the congregation should totally disband, the property and all rights connected therewith will be transferred to the English District of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

### **ARTICLE VIII**

Regular meetings of the voter's assembly shall be held on a Sunday in October and April, *or as soon thereafter as practicable*. Special meetings of the voter's assembly may be called by the church council. All voters meetings are to be announced in the Sunday bulletins *for two* (2) Sundays prior to the meeting.

A quorum shall consist of twelve (12) voting members.

A nominating committee, consisting of five (5) voting members appointed by the Council, together with the Pastor shall prepare a slate of candidates to be announced in the Sunday bulletin two (2) Sundays prior to the April voters meeting. The proposed slate shall, if possible, consist of at least two candidates for each office who have expressed willingness to serve, and are 18 years of age or older.

The election of officers shall be by ballot during the April voters meeting. The elected officers and board members shall assume their duties on June 1 following their election.

### **ARTICLE IX**

The elected officers and board members of the congregation shall be: President, Secretary, Treasurer, Sunday School Superintendent, Board of Elders, Board of Trustees, and Board of Stewardship. If needed and approved by the church council additional officers shall be: Vice President, Financial Secretary, Board of Education, Board of Missions. Each board shall consist of at least three members and shall determine its own chairman. The term of office shall be one year. In the event of a vacancy in any office, the council shall appoint a successor to serve until such time as an election can be held.

**A quorum shall consist of at least 5 council members.**

### **ARTICLE X**

The church council shall consist of the President; Vice President; Secretary; Financial Secretary; Treasurer; Sunday School Superintendent; The Chairman of the Board of Elders, Trustees, Christian Education; Stewardship, Missions, Evangelism; and the President of the Mary & Martha Guild, Men's Group; and Chair of the SOLC Children's Center.

Members of the Finance Committee are the Vice President, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, and the Board of Stewardship.

## **ARTICLE XI**

The Pastor is the spiritual advisor in all areas of Kingdom work.

The voters' assembly establishes policy, elects the congregational officers and board members, and makes major decisions.

The council is responsible for the execution and implementation of policies and decisions of the voters' assembly, and coordinates the total church program through the following officers and committees:

### **PRESIDENT**

The President is the executive director of the congregation's total program:

- Responsible for the carrying out of the respective responsibilities of all elected and appointed officers, boards, and committees;
- Prepares agenda for church council meetings and voters meetings;
- Ex-officio member of all committees and attends or designates the Vice President to attend meetings as necessary;
- Encourages officers and committee chairmen to make concise written reports and recommendations;
- Responsible for the council's preparations of the church program (calendar) for the church year June 1 to May 31;
- Responsible for the council annually to select an auditing committee.

### **VICE PRESIDENT**

The Vice President assumes the responsibilities of the President in his absence, and:

- Fulfills the responsibilities delegated to him by the President;
- Is chairman of the finance committee, which is to assist in the performance of the responsibilities assigned to the financial secretary and to prepare the annual budget and present it to the April voter's assembly;
- Serves on the Sherman Oaks Lutheran Children's Center Board.

### **SECRETARY**

The Secretary records the permanent minutes of the council and voters' assembly meetings; responsible for the safekeeping *on the church property* of all permanent minutes, past and present; responsible for notifying members of date, time and place of regular and special voters' meetings (reference ARTICLE VIII).

## **TREASURER**

The Treasurer:

- Maintains a permanent record of congregational receipts and disbursements according to proper accounting procedures;
- As authorized by the council, is responsible for monthly remission of offerings for missions and church agencies, and prompt payment of bills and salaries;
- Is to submit a written financial report at council and voters' meetings;
- Is to submit permanent records for an annual audit (*fiscal year July 1 to June 30*);
- In the absence of a Financial Secretary, the Treasurer will assume the duties of the Financial Secretary.

## **FINANCIAL SECRETARY**

The Financial Secretary (if any), together with the Board of Finance, is responsible for:

- The safe deposit of all church funds;
- Keeping accurate records of contributions and issue quarterly statements to members of their gifts;
- Ordering and distributing offering envelopes, as authorized by the council.

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT**

Sunday School Superintendent is to carry out the specific spiritual education program for the Sunday School as approved by the Board of Christian Education and is responsible for:

- Accurate recording of receipts and disbursements of the Sunday School and is to present a written financial report at council meetings;
- Ordering and care of Sunday School supplies as authorized by the Board of Christian Education;
- Scheduling regular teacher guidance meetings to be conducted by the Pastor.

## **ELDERS**

The Elders have as their special concern the spiritual welfare of the congregation.

- They are responsible, with the Pastor, for arranging pulpit and altar assistance, guest speakers, and special services;
- Are responsible for all services to be conducted in a manner conducive to meditation and worship among those in attendance;
- Together with the Pastor and Mission Board be concerned for a visitation program to the aged, sick and shut-in members and those who are negligent in attending the worship services;

- Analyze at least once each year the time, number and meaningfulness of our regular and special worship services, the condition of hymnals, pews, lights, ventilation, heat, etc. and recommend improvements to the council;
- Maintain with the Pastor permanent church records (Baptism, Marriages, etc.)
- Arrange for pastoral services when a vacancy occurs and exercise leadership in properly calling another Pastor;
- Appoint, train, and supervise ushers.

## **TRUSTEES**

The Trustees are to exercise good stewardship of the congregational property.

- They are to conduct frequent inspections for fire hazards, state of repair, proper care of facilities and equipment and recommend needed repair or improvements to the council;
- Carry out resolutions of the council on purchases, repairs, replacements, etc., of church property and equipment;
- Sign official documents and contracts reviewed by the council;
- Determine and engage with council approval adequate custodial help, and meet periodically with custodians to discuss care of buildings, needs and problems in custodial services;
- Enlist work crews for special repairs, improvements, cleaning, painting, decorating, gardening, etc.;
- Maintain a current inventory list of church equipment, documents in safe keeping *at the Church*, etc., and furnish the information for the council minutes;
- The Trustees are authorized to transact business to one thousand dollars (\$1,000);
- Additional expenditures may not be made until the first expenditure has been approved by the council and made a matter of record.

## **STEWARDSHIP**

The Stewardship Committee is to:

- Maintain a program to discover and enlist for Kingdom services the talents God has given members, old and new, youth and adults;
- Conduct an intensive program annually to contact every member with basic Biblical stewardship principles;
- In accordance with the financial secretary, be responsible for regular issuance of statements to each member showing his contributions to date.

## **MISSION/EVANGELISM**

The Board of Missions together with the Pastor and Elders is to be:

- Concerned for a visitation program to the aged, sick, and shut-in members and to those who are negligent in attending the worship services;
- Concerned for the reception and orientation of new members;
- Utilizing newcomer series, Synod referral services, etc. for knowledge of those moving into the community and for both members and prospects moving into other areas;
- Informed of mission programs in the community and those of Synod and District;
- Lead, encourage and guide our members in the privilege of Christian mission service.

## **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

The Board of Christian Education is generally to be concerned with the Christian nurture of children, youth, and adults in the congregation.

- *Under the guidance of the Pastor shall develop general objectives for the total education program and specific objectives for each education agency in the congregation – Sunday School, Confirmation classes, Bible classes, Vacation Bible School, etc.;*
- Enlist, train, and place lay teachers;
- Encourage increasing participation of every congregational member in Bible study, privately and in formal and informal groups;
- Annually examine educational facilities and equipment and make recommendations as to upkeep, repairs and replacements;
- Be good stewards of educational resources of the congregation.

## **OTHER COMMITTEES**

ALTAR GUILD is responsible for provisions, care and cleaning of the altar, altar paraments, chancel furnishings, communion vessels, etc. and flower arrangements.

AUDITING COMMITTEE is to audit at least annually all financial records of the congregation and make a written report to the voter's assembly.

FINANCE COMMITTEE is to assist in performance of responsibility assigned to financial secretary; prepare annual budget and present to April voter's assembly.

Review salaries to maintain a realistic salary schedule, based on the English District Salary Guidelines.



## **SHERMAN OAKS LUTHERAN CHILDREN'S CENTER**

The Sherman Oaks Lutheran Children's Center is owned and operated by Sherman Oaks Lutheran Church for the following purposes:

1. To develop and conduct a quality program in early childhood education as a service to the community.
2. To promote and nurture Lutheran Christian ideals among staff, children and families of the Children's Center.

### **A. TREASURER**

- The Treasurer maintains a permanent record of the Children's Center receipts and disbursements according to proper accounting procedures;
- Is to submit a written financial report to the Children's Center Board;
- Is to submit the financial report to the Church Treasurer who will submit to the council and voter's assembly in October;
- To purchase of a single item in excess of \$1,500 requires approval by the school board and church council;
- A fiscal year (July to June) budget shall also be prepared by the Treasurer/Board and presented in combination with the Church Treasurer for approval at the April congregational voter's meeting.

### **B. SCHOOL BOARD**

- The Children's Center shall be operated by a five (5) member board which shall consist of the Vice President of the congregation, the Children's Center Treasurer and three (3) members of the congregation elected for a term of two (2) years.
- A quorum shall consist of three (3) voting members.
- The election of the three shall be staggered.
- The Board shall elect its own chairman from among the three elected members and the Children's Center Treasurer. The chairman shall represent the Children's Center on the church council.
- A parent of the Children's Center may act as an ex-officio member.
- The Board shall have the authority to make any and all decisions as they relate to the operation and educational program as shown above, subject to the approval of the church council and the congregation.
- No paid employee of the Children's Center shall be a voting member of the Board.
- The Children's Center Board shall meet every month prior to the SOLC council meeting.

#### C. CHAPEL

Chapel will be held twice a week under the supervision of the Pastor and in coordination with age appropriate Synodically approved curriculum.

#### D. DIRECTOR(S)/TEACHER(S)

- It is a mission of SOLC that the preschool program be administered by a staff of teachers and directors who are members of a Missouri Synod Congregation.
- The position of Director (s) and teacher(s) at Sherman Oaks Lutheran Church and Children's Center shall be filled by a person(s) who agree to be subject to Article I of the constitution to which he/she is to bind himself/herself in accepting a teaching position at SOLCC; and
- Therefore, shall receive the religious training provided by the Pastor of SOLC, necessary for employment.
- Supply teachers (i.e. substitutes or contracted individuals hired on a temporary or part-time basis) shall confirm their Christian beliefs to the preschool director/Pastor.
- Their position shall be filled as soon as practical by teachers who conform to the paragraphs above.

#### E. CURRICULUM

All Lutheran Christian teaching curriculum must be Synodically approved.

### **RULES OF ORDER**

In addition to principles laid down in Scripture, the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed.