

**CONSTITUTION**  
**GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**1436 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue North**  
**Fort Dodge Iowa**

**CONSTITUTION**

**Mission Statement**

"We proclaim Jesus, a caring and sharing Savior." This motto has been part of Good Shepherd for many years. It indicates that Jesus truly cares about each of us and wants to share the blessings of heaven with us. We too want to care and share by caring about each other and sharing his message with all who will hear. In order to do this, we have the following vision.

- We will see a deeper commitment in our members to be in the Word. More people will be involved in Bible study, applying God's Word to their daily life, and experiencing God's commitment to our spiritual growth. We will use these Bible study events as opportunities for people to join the faith. We will use these Bible study events as opportunities to care for each other.
- We will beautify and enhance our worship with audio and visual technology that supports effective reception of God's Word and His sacraments. Our worship will touch the hearts and lives of people with God's eternal Word. The music of our worship will glorify God in response to His love and grace.
- We will care for our members through a Family Life Ministry that will intentionally reach out to people of all ages and stages in life. Specific goals will include:
  - deliberate older adult ministry to our congregation and community;
  - an expanded children's ministry through music, midweek education opportunities, an intensified Jr. High youth ministry; we will use these "doors" to encourage our children, other children, and their families to become part of the family of God that worships at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church;
  - a greater sense of connection among our members in a warm family atmosphere that reflects God's love at work among us.

- Through outreach to our community, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church will
  - become more visible in our community as we publicize special events, family events, and other opportunities for people to participate;
  - be seen as open to involvement with the people of our community;
  - grow larger as souls are added to the Body of Christ;
  - grow large enough to create the need to add on space, services, and fellowship areas to enhance our caring relationships.
- We will evaluate and match our church staff to serve the ministry needs in our congregation and community.

### **PREAMBLE**

The word of God requires that a Christian congregation shall conform to this Divine Word in doctrine and practice (Ps. 119:105; Matt. 28:18-20, Gal. 1:6-8; 2 Tim. 4:1-5) and that all things be done decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40). Therefore, we, the members of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 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 - Name**

The name of this congregation shall be Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Fort Dodge, Iowa, located at 1436 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue North, Fort Dodge, Iowa.

#### **Article II - Purpose**

The purpose of this congregation shall be to build and enlarge the kingdom of God by proclamation of the Word of God, by the administration of the sacraments, by the Christian instruction of children, youth, and adults, according to the Confessional standard of the Lutheran Church (Article III) and to provide opportunities for growth in Christian living, fellowship and charity.

### **Article III - Confessions**

This congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed and inerrant Word of God, verbally inspired and 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.

### **ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of this congregation includes the following:

#### **A. Baptized Membership.**

Baptized members are all members who have received Christian Baptism including the children on the membership rolls who have not yet confirmed their baptismal vows.

#### **B. Communicant Membership.**

Communicant members are those:

1. Who are baptized in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost;
2. Who accept the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the only divine rule & standard of faith & life;
3. Who are familiar at least with Luther's Small Catechism and declare their acceptance of it;
4. Who study the Word of God diligently;
5. Who worship the Triune God faithfully and regularly;
6. Who lead Christian lives and do not live in manifest works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21);
7. Who partake of the Lord's Supper frequently after their confirmation;
8. Who contribute regularly and faithfully, as God has prospered them toward the building of Christ's Kingdom in the congregation and throughout the world;

9. Who devote their time and talents to the extension of the Kingdom of God;
10. Who, for the sake of love and peace, submit to the decisions of the majority in the congregation;
11. Who permit themselves to be fraternally admonished and corrected (Matthew 18) when they have erred;
12. Who are not members, affiliates, or supporters of any organization whose purposes, principles, or practices conflict with the Word of God.

**C. Voting Membership.**

All confirmed members of the Church (male and female) who have reached the legal public voting age, shall be entitled to vote and hold office.

**ARTICLE V - OFFICE OF PASTOR**

The Pastoral office of this congregation shall be conferred upon such ministers as profess and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in Article III 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. This minister shall also have been examined by an orthodox Lutheran Synod as to knowledge, ability, and attitude, and have been found to possess the necessary qualifications.

In the administration of his office the pastor shall be held:

1. To teach the Word of God in truth and purity in accordance with the confessional principles enumerated in Article III of this Constitution,
2. To administer the Sacraments and the Office of the Keys according to Christ's instruction along the line of guidance laid down in an orthodox Liturgy and Agenda,
3. To advise, admonish, and encourage individual members, whenever necessary, on the basis of God's Word,
4. To instruct the catechumens on the basis of Luther's Small and Large Catechisms,
5. To be a good example to the congregation. 4

**ARTICLE VI - COMMISSIONED MINISTERS AND CERTIFIED CHURCH WORKERS, LAY**

**Certified Teachers/DCEs/DCOs/ Deaconesses/Parish Assistants/ Certified Lay Ministers/Certified Directors of Parish Music/and [Director of Family Life Education]**

All certified teachers, Directors of Christian Education, Directors of Christian Outreach, Certified Lay Ministers, deaconesses, parish assistants, Certified Directors of Parish Music and [Director of Family Life Education] who are listed on Synod's roster (*"Lutheran Annual," under Minister of Religion—Commissioned*) as graduates or colloquied from one of Synod's educational institutions and are in the exercise of the ministry also are "ministers of the Gospel" because of specific rulings issued by the IRS. (*See 1.905, 1.910 and 1.920. Ref. PLR 92-21025.*)

***This is from Synod Congregational Treasurer's Manual 1.110.***

**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 institutions and societies within the congregation such as the Sunday School, youth societies, men's or women's organizations, choir, etc., 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 III), and any such decisions shall be null and void.
- 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. **Decisions.**  
Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided by the Word of God; other matters shall be decided by the Voters' Assembly by a majority vote unless otherwise specified by

the Constitution or By-Laws: Any decisions contrary to the Word of God and the Confessional Standard of Article III of the Constitution shall be null and void.

**D. Powers of Officers.**

Congregational officers or committees, whether elected or appointed by the Voters' Assembly, shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them and whatever power may have been delegated to them, may at any time be altered or revoked by the Voters' Assembly.

**E. Removal from Office.**

Any officer or pastor may be removed from office by the congregation, by ballot, in Christian and lawful order for one of the following causes: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, and inability to perform his official duties or willful neglect of them.

**ARTICLE VIII - OFFICERS**

The officers of this congregation shall be such officers, boards or committees as the By-Laws of this congregation may prescribe.

**ARTICLE IX - PROPERTY RIGHTS**

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 those voting members who continue to adhere to confession and practice of Article III of this Constitution. In the event the congregation should totally disband, the property and all rights connected therewith shall be transferred to the Iowa District West of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

**ARTICLE X - DOCTRINAL LITERATURE**

Only such hymns, prayers, and liturgies shall be used in the public services of the congregation and in all ministerial acts as conform to the confessional standard of Article III. Like wise, in all classes for instruction in Christian doctrine only such books shall be used as conform to this standard.

**ARTICLE XI - SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP**

- A. This congregation shall hold membership in The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synods. It shall send its pastor and lay delegate to the District Convention of Synod.
- B. It shall be the duty of the congregation and its individual members to support the work of synod, since they thereby support their own Christ-appointed work.

**ARTICLE XII - BY -LAWS**

This congregation may adopt such By-Laws as may be required for the accomplishment of its purpose.

**ARTICLE XIII - CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION**

**A. Unaltered Articles.**

The following Articles of this Constitution or sections thereof shall be unalterable and irrevocable: III, V, X, XIII-A.

**B. Amendments.**

Amendments to this Constitution, the By-Laws, or Articles of Incorporation may be adopted at a regular Voters' Assembly provided:

1. That they do not conflict with the provisions laid down in Article III or with any section of any other Article that pertains to Scriptural doctrine and practice; and
2. That the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at a previous Voters' Assembly.

The affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the voting membership present (By-Laws, Article II, D) at the Voters' Assembly shall be required for the adoption of an amendment at two consecutive Voters' Assembly meetings.

**BY-LAWS**

**ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP**

**A. Admission into membership.**

**1. Baptized membership.**

- a. By valid Baptism.

All those baptized in this congregation shall be considered baptized members of this congregation.

- b. By Presentation of Evidence of Valid Baptism. Persons coming with evidence of valid Baptism shall be received into baptized membership by the pastor and elders whose action is to be approved by the Voters' Assembly in a subsequent meeting.

## 2. **Communicant Membership.**

- a. Confirmation **by** itself is a reception into church membership

- b. By Transfer.

Persons coming with a communicant letter of transfer from a congregation in church fellowship, provided they conform in all respects to the requirements of membership of this congregation, shall be received by the pastor and elders whose action is to be approved by the Voters' Assembly in a subsequent meeting.

- c. By Profession of Faith.

Other persons shall submit their application to the pastor or an elder and, having given satisfactory evidence of qualifications for communicant membership to the pastor, they shall be received as communicant members, to be approved in a subsequent meeting of the Board of Elders.

## 3. **Voting Membership.**

- a. **Reception.** All communicant members of the congregation who have reached the legal public voting age are considered member of the Voters' Assembly.

**b. Duties.** It shall be the duty of every voting member to attend the Voters' Assemblies. By failing to attend such a meeting a member waives the right to cast his or her vote during that meeting with the exception of absentee balloting which shall be determined by 2/3 vote of the Church Council for special circumstances. He or she shall accept nomination to office, committee appointment, etc., if possible, as governed under Article

V of the By-Laws of the Constitution, and generally participate in the business of the Voters' Assembly.

## B. **Termination of Membership**

### 1. Communicant Membership.

- a. Transfer to another Congregation.

Communicant members desiring to join a congregation in church fellowship shall present their request for transfer to the pastor and elders to who authorization is granted to issue such transfers. Such transfers of membership shall be approved by the Voters' Meeting in a subsequent meeting.

- b. Joining other Churches.

In cases where communicant members have joined another congregation outside their own fellowship, they shall, upon the recommendation of the pastor and elders, be considered to have terminated their membership and their names shall be removed from the list by a resolution of the Voters' Assembly.

- c. Whereabouts Unknown.

The names of members whose whereabouts are unknown and cannot be established shall be removed by the Voters' Assembly and forthwith such membership is terminated.

- d. Excommunication and Self-Exclusion.

Any member who persists in false doctrine or conducts himself in an unchristian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20. If he refuses to amend his sinful life after proper admonition, he shall be excommunicated. If the member refuses to attend the Elder' Meeting to discuss his case, he has thereby excluded himself. A unanimous vote shall be required for every resolution by the Voters' Assembly for excommunication or self-exclusion. Excommunication or self-exclusion terminates membership.

- e. A person whose communicant membership has been terminated has forfeited all rights of a member of this congregation as such, or upon any part thereof, so long as he is not reinstated.

## **ARTICLE II - MEETINGS**

- A. Regular meetings of the Voters' Assembly shall be held quarterly.
- B. The annual meeting of the Voters' Assembly shall be held in January.
- C. Special meetings of the Voters' Assembly may be called by pastor, the president, or a majority of the church council.
- D. Every regular voters' meeting shall be announced at a church service at least a week prior to it. Special meetings shall be announced as early in advance as possible. All voters' meetings shall be announced at a church service and/or by mail to the voting membership. Whenever a meeting has been announced, those present shall constitute a quorum and business may be transacted.
- E. The affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the voting membership present shall be required for approval of real estate transactions and/or borrowing money for a period exceeding one year."

## **ARTICLE III - CALLING OF PASTORS**

### **A. Nominations.**

At a properly convened meeting of the Voters' Assembly, the list of candidates having been received from the District President and presented, candidates for the office of pastor shall be submitted by the nominating committee through Circuit Counselor or Calling Pastor.

Any voter is entitled to make additional nominations which are to be reviewed by the District President so that he can ascertain the availability and eligibility of the proposed candidates and provide pertinent information at the call meeting.

### **B. Elections.**

The Election of a pastor from the list of candidates chosen by the congregation shall be by ballot. The candidate receiving the majority of all votes cast shall be considered elected. 10

A call for a candidate from one of our seminaries shall be extended through the District President to the appropriate Board of Synod in the manner specified by the regulations of Synod.

Note: For guidance in the matter of calling, it is suggested that congregations consult the "Calling Procedures Guidelines" which are available from the District Office.

The Pastor's Call is not for a specified time only, but for as long a time as he preaches and teaches the Word of God in its truth and purity, is faithful in performances of his duties, and leads a Christian life, or until the Lord calls him to another field of service.

## **ARTICLE IV - CALLING OF COMMISSIONED MINISTERS & CERTIFIED CHURCH WORKERS, LAY**

When a vacancy occurs in the office of a commissioned minister or certified church worker, lay, or when the congregation resolves to engage the services of such a minister or worker, a list of candidates for the office to be filled shall be requested from the District President or the District Executive charged with such responsibility. Individual members shall also have the right to propose candidates, but shall do so by a specified deadline. Such names as have been proposed shall be forwarded to the District President or District Executive so that they can ascertain the availability and eligibility of the proposed candidates and so that pertinent information may be available at the meeting at which the call or appointment is to be extended.

The election of the person to be called or appointed shall be by ballot. The person receiving the majority of the votes cast shall be considered elected, where upon the call or appointment shall be extended to the person called or appointed.

A call or appointment to a person graduating from a terminal school of Synod shall be extended through the District President to the appropriate Board of Synod in the manner specified by the regulations of Synod. Such as have received a regular call shall continue in their office for as long a time as they continue to

perform the duties of their ministry, adhere to the Confessional Standard of this congregation, and lead a Christian life, or until the Lord calls them to another field of service.

Such as have received an appointment or contract shall continue in their office as long as they perform the duties of their ministry, adhere to the Confessional Standard of this congregation, and lead a Christian life or until their appointment or contract expires or is terminated in accordance with the provisions of their appointment or contract.

#### **ARTICLE V - ELECTION OF CONGREGATIONAL OFFICERS**

A nominating committee appointed by the Church President (Elders and Trustees whose term is not expired) shall present a slate of candidates at the annual meeting of the Voters' Assembly. The slate proposed by the nominating committee shall consist of at least two names for each office (if possible). Additional nominations may be made from the floor, assuming the person nominated has consented. The annual election shall be by ballot and shall take place at the annual meeting. The officers-elect shall assume their respective duties on July 1 of the following year. In the event of a vacancy in an office, the president, with the approval of the Church Council shall appoint a successor to serve until the next annual election. Ordinarily, officers shall be permitted to hold the same office for two consecutive terms. Certain circumstances may dictate extension of terms. Officers shall be elected for the terms specified in these By-laws and shall hold office until their successors shall have been elected and qualified.

#### **ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS**

The elected officers of this congregation shall be: a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, Elders, Trustees, a Sunday School Superintendent, Usher Chairmen, Chairman of Christian Management Committee, Board of Christian Education and a Chairman of Christian Outreach committee. President, Vice President and Elders must be male members of the congregation. All other officers may be male or female.

**ARTICLE VII – Non-elected Members of the Board of Christian Education, of Christian Outreach, and of Christian Management shall be selected and enlisted on the basis of talents and interest of individual communicant members by the chairman of each board in consultation with the pastor and president of the congregation. Names of the board members shall be submitted to Church Council for approval and official appointment. All appointments or reappointments shall be made for a term of one year. All boards of the congregation shall meet regularly in accordance with their responsibilities.**

#### **ARTICLE VIII - CHURCH COUNCIL**

The Church Council shall be composed of the President of the congregation, the Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Elders, Trustees, Usher Chairmen, Sunday School Superintendent and members of all Boards duly elected.

It shall be the duty of the Church Council to meet once a month to consider and discuss all matters pertaining to the general welfare of the congregation. It shall

1. Hear and receive reports on progress of each area of the Kingdom Work from each Board Chairman;
2. Receive and act upon for recommendation to the Voters' Assembly suggestions and recommendations from the Chairman of each area of Kingdom work; and
3. Plan and coordinate action in improving and extending the building of the Kingdom of God.

#### **ARTICLE IX - TERMS AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

##### **A. President and Vice President.**

The term of office of the President & Vice President shall be one year. The President, with the Vice President, shall be responsible for administrative direction of the congregation's program as outlined in the "Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Fort Dodge Congregational Job Descriptions."

##### **B. Secretary.**

The term of office for the Secretary shall be one year. The Secretary shall carry out the general duties of a recording and corresponding Secretary in accordance with specific duties outlined in the “Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Fort Dodge Congregational Job Descriptions.

**C. Treasurer.**

The term of office of the Treasurer shall be one year. The Treasurer shall carry out their duties in line with specific duties outlined in the “Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Fort Dodge Congregational Job Descriptions. The books of the Treasurer shall be audited annually.

**E. Elders.**

The term of office for Elders shall be two years. The Chairman of the Board of Elders shall be elected for one-year term. The Chairman of the Board of Elders shall assume and carry out, with his board members, the specific duties as outlined in the “Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Fort Dodge Congregational Job Descriptions.” The membership of the Board of Elders shall be determined by the number of Communicant members in the congregation.

**F. Usher Chairmen.**

The term of office of the Usher Chairman shall be one year. The Usher Chairmen shall 1. prepare the Church in a setting appropriate for worship; 2. maintain good order and decency for worship; 3. act as a host for God; 4. make friendly Christian contact with people, as an evangelist; and 5. further good public relations.

**G. Trustees.**

The term of office for Trustees shall be for two years. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees shall be elected for a term of one year. It shall be the duty of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees

to carry out, together with his board members, the specific duties of the Board of Trustees as outline in the “Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Fort Dodge Congregational Job Descriptions.”

**H. Board of Christian Education**

The Board of Christian Education shall include three elected members, with two members elected each year, one for a term of one year and one for a term of two years. The Chairman of the Board of Education shall be an elected member of the Board of Education after serving the previous year on the Board. Non-elected members of the Board of Education shall be chosen as provided in Article VII. The DCE shall be an ex officio non-voting member of the Board. The Board of Education shall be responsible for all areas of Christian education ministry within the congregation including Confirmation, Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Cross-town, Pre-School, Youth and Adult Bible Classes and assume and carry out the specific duties of the Board of Christian Education as outlined in the “Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Fort Dodge Congregational Job Descriptions”. In addition, the Board of Education shall recommend to the congregation compensation for the paid education ministry staff (excluding the Pastor)\*. “

**I. Chairman of the Board of Christian Management.**

The Chairman of the Board of Christian Management shall be elected for a term of one year. The Chairman of the Board of Christian Management shall, together with the members of his board, assume and carry out the specific duties of the Board of Christian Management as outlined in the “Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Fort Dodge Congregational Job Descriptions.”

**J. Chairman of the Board of Christian Outreach.**

The Chairman of the Board of Christian Outreach shall be elected for a term of one year. The Chairman of the Board of Christian Outreach, together with the members of his

Board, shall assume and carry out the specific duties of the Board of Christian Outreach as outlined in the “Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Fort Dodge Congregational Job Descriptions.”

**K. The Superintendent of the Sunday School.**

The term of office for the Sunday School Superintendent shall be for two years. The Sunday School Superintendent shall 1. supervise the Sunday School, with respect to the rules and regulations set down by the Education Committee, and 2. evaluate, periodically, together with the Education Committee, the progress and problems of the Sunday School.

**ARTICLE X - ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The following shall be the Order of Business of regular Voters’ Assemblies.

1. Devotion.
2. Reading of Minutes.
3. Report of offices and Boards (Including admission of New Members).
4. Report of Programs.
5. Unfinished Business.
6. New Business.
7. Adjournment.
8. Prayer.

Parliamentary Authority shall be Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly revised.

