

CONSTITUTION

BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH EPHRAIM, WISCONSIN

Article I. Name

- 1.01 The name of this congregation is Bethany Lutheran Church.
- 1.02 The congregation is incorporated under the laws of the State of Wisconsin.

Article II. Confession of Faith

- 2.01 This congregation confesses the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- 2.02 This congregation accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm for its proclamation, faith and life.
- 2.03 This congregation affirms the Apostolic, the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds.
- 2.04 This congregation adheres to the unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism.

Article III. Purpose

- 3.01 The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming and sanctifying activity in the world.
- 3.02 This congregation exists to provide worship services in accordance with Lutheran tradition open to all during the extended summer season where the Word of God is proclaimed and the Sacraments are administered.
- 3.03 This congregation exists to express in practical ways God's love to the community and to the world.

Article IV. Affiliation

- 4.01 This congregation shall be an interdependent seasonal ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the East Central Synod of Wisconsin of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

Article V. Property Ownership

- 5.01 The property of Bethany Lutheran Church (the church properties) consists of the church building, the parsonage, and the cemetery.
- 5.02 Title to the church properties will be transferred to the Ephraim Historical Foundation

following mutual agreement on appropriate terms and conditions; however the church properties will be reserved for the use of and remain under the exclusive control of the Bethany Lutheran Church congregation as long as it continues as an active seasonal ministry.

- 5.03 A trust fund designated as the Bethany Heritage Trust will be established in the Ephraim Historical Foundation for the exclusive support of the Bethany Lutheran Church properties.
- 5.04 The Bethany Heritage Trust will be administered by five (5) trustees, three (3) from Bethany Lutheran Church, as long as the congregation is active, and two (2) from the Ephraim Historical Foundation. If the Bethany Lutheran Church congregation is no longer active, all of the trustees will be appointed by the Ephraim Historical Foundation.
- 5.05 No more than five (5) percent (%) of the funds in the Bethany Heritage Trust will be expended in any calendar year for maintenance or improvements to the Bethany properties. However, under extreme circumstances where the viability of the properties is impaired or threatened, the trustees will be authorized to invade the principal in order to employ the funds necessary, in excess of five (5) percent (%), to correct the deficiency.
- 5.06 In the event of the dissolution of Bethany Lutheran Church the properties will be maintained by the Ephraim Historical Foundation through the Bethany Heritage Trust and preserved in perpetuity as historical sites that honor the heritage of Bethany Lutheran Church. The Ephraim Historical Foundation will at no time operate the church as a religious entity.
- 5.07 In the event that the funds in the Bethany Heritage Trust are insufficient, or the Ephraim Historical Foundation is unable or unwilling to properly maintain the properties as historic sites, the properties and all Bethany Heritage Trust funds will be transferred to the East Central Synod of Wisconsin of the ELCA.

Article VI. Membership

- 6.01 Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of this congregation at the time this constitution is adopted and thereafter shall be those baptized persons admitted to membership who have declared and maintained their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution.
- 6.02 All baptized persons who regularly attend worship services and receive communion at Bethany, whether throughout the season or at those times when vacationing in the area, and contribute time, talent and resources to the church are encouraged to become regular or associate members
- 6.03 It is expected that all members will be in essential agreement with the church's confession of faith and its stated purpose.
- 6.04 Persons desiring regular or associate membership shall express their desire to the president of the congregation for approval by the church council. Their membership will begin officially when their names are read at the next regular communion service.
- 6.05 This congregation recognizes the right of members to hold regular membership in another congregation at the same time as they are associate members in our seasonal ministry.
- 6.06 Regular members of other ELCA congregations in Door County, Wisconsin who

contribute their time, talent and resources to the work of this congregation are welcome to become associate members of Bethany Lutheran Church following a season of regular participation in Bethany worship services.

- 6.07 Membership in Bethany Lutheran Church can be accomplished through a Letter of Transfer addressed to the president of the congregation or through an Affirmation of Faith following approval by the church council subject to the conditions of Article VI.
- 6.08 Termination of Regular or Associate Membership shall take place at a person's request, transfer, death or when their active participation in worship, Communion and the work of the church ceases. Persons who are home-bound or unable to attend services on a regular basis due to age or infirmity will not be removed from membership. The membership role shall be reviewed by the officers of the church annually.

Article VII. Bethany Church ... constructed 1882

- 7.01 The Bethany church structure will be maintained by the congregation for as long as the summer ministry is active. In the event the congregation is dissolved the Ephraim Historical Foundation will maintain the church structure in perpetuity as a historical site that honors the heritage of Bethany Lutheran Church with funds from the Bethany Heritage Trust.
- 7.02 Major improvements can be funded from the Bethany Heritage Trust subject to the restrictions on disbursements in 5.03.

Article VIII. Bethany Parsonage ... acquired 1883

- 8.01 The Bethany Parsonage will be maintained by the congregation as long as the summer ministry is active. In the event the congregation is dissolved the Ephraim Historical Foundation will maintain the parsonage in perpetuity as a historical site with funds from the Bethany Heritage Trust.
- 8.02 The parsonage will be maintained and improved in accordance with current safe housing standards and state, county and village regulations while at the same time retaining its historical character.
- 8.03 Major improvements can be funded from the Bethany Heritage Trust subject to the restrictions on disbursements in 5.03.

Article IX. Bethany Cemetery ... established 1889

- 9.01 The Bethany Cemetery will be maintained by the congregation for as long as the seasonal ministry is active. In the event the congregation is dissolved the Ephraim Foundation will maintain the cemetery with funds from the Bethany Heritage Trust.
- 9.02 Applications for gravesites will be reviewed for approval by the church council.
- 9.03 A regular member will be encouraged to contribute \$400 for a gravesite to the Bethany Heritage Trust toward continued cemetery maintenance.
- 9.04 An associate member will be encouraged to contribute \$500 for a gravesite to the Bethany Heritage Trust toward continued cemetery maintenance.

- 9.05 Requests for non-member gravesites will be reviewed for approval by the church council. A contribution of \$800 to the Bethany Heritage Trust will be required for a non-member gravesite toward continued cemetery maintenance.
- 9.06 The church council will review the recommended new gravesite contribution amounts for members and associate members as well as fees for non-members on a periodic basis as a function of inflation and available gravesites.
- 9.07 Major improvements can be funded from the Bethany Heritage Trust subject to the restrictions on disbursements in 5.03.

Article X. Congregational Meetings

- 10.01 The annual congregational meeting will be held during the month of July when most of the membership is available and where essential matters of business will be addressed. Two informal meetings will be held to attend to seasonal opening and closing, one before the beginning and one at the conclusion of the regular season.
- 10.02 All members in good standing, whether regular or associate, are granted the right to vote.

Article XI. Church Officers

- 11.01 The officers of this congregation shall be: president, treasurer, secretary, and two trustees. Together, they constitute the church council.
- 11.02 The officers shall be nominated from the regular membership and elected at the annual congregational meeting.
- 11.03 The officers shall serve for a two year term.
- 11.04 The president shall convene and lead all congregational meetings and be responsible for the orderly conduct of the church's worship and ministry. The president shall see that guest preachers are provided for all the Sundays in the regular season and shall designate a person to provide the order of worship to the printer, arrange for an organist, and for preparation of the weekly bulletin.
- 11.05 The treasurer shall count the offerings and see that they are properly recorded and banked. The treasurer shall disburse the church funds in an appropriate manner and provide financial statements for the congregation at its regular meetings. The treasurer shall provide a record of giving to all regular contributors for income tax purposes, especially those who give more than \$250.00 per year. The treasurer shall arrange to have the financial records audited annually.
- 11.06 The secretary shall take minutes at the congregational meetings. The secretary shall maintain the church records and archives in good order, and shall undertake whatever correspondence is necessary. The secretary shall keep a current record of the active membership of the church.
- 11.07 The trustees shall be authorized to conduct the normal affairs of the congregation and such activities as may be a normal part of a functioning congregation.
- 11.08 The trustees shall represent the church in all legal matters and shall see that all church properties are maintained in good order. They shall see that the church building is in order for worship services each Sunday and whenever a Communion service, Baptism, wedding or other special service is arranged. They shall see that

- the parsonage is properly maintained and prepared for our guest preachers.
- 11.09 A church officer can be removed from his position and the church council by a vote of three of the four remaining members of the church council. Reasons for removal include, but are not limited to, the inability to effectively function as an officer of the church, misappropriation of church funds, fraud and malfeasance or inappropriate behavior that reflects negatively on the congregation.

Article XII. Guest Preachers

- 12.01 Guest preachers shall be arranged under the supervision of the president for all the Sundays when Bethany Lutheran Church is open for worship.
- 12.02 The guest preachers shall normally be persons ordained in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, but not exclusively so. Guest preachers will normally follow an order of worship approved by the ELCA.
- 12.03 The guest preachers shall normally be responsible for the worship service on one or more Sundays as well as Communion, Baptisms and weddings during the period that they occupy the parsonage. They are to be encouraged to visit any home-bound or hospitalized members if possible.
- 12.04 The guest preachers will have use of the parsonage for themselves, their family and friends.
- 12.05 Suggestions for guest preachers will be gladly received by the president of the congregation and are welcomed from regular members, associate members and visitors.

Article XIII. Amendment of this Constitution.

- 13.01 This constitution can be amended by a three fourths (3/4) majority of the regular and associate members present and voting in person or by proxy at the annual congregational meeting or a special congregational meeting called by the church council provided that all regular and associate members have been informed of the proposed amendment(s) at least thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting.