

# THE CONSTITUTION

## 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 Resurrection 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 Resurrection Lutheran Church of Lethbridge, Alberta.

## ARTICLE II            MISSION

The purpose of this congregation shall be to serve its members and to spread the kingdom of God by the preaching of the Word of God, by the administration of the Sacraments, and by the religious instruction of youth and adults, according to the confessional standard of the Lutheran Church (Article III) and to foster Christian fellowship and charity.

## ARTICLE III            CONFESSIONAL STANDARD

Resurrection Lutheran Church and every member thereof, accepts without reservation:

- A. the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice;
- B. all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, to wit: the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord.

## ARTICLE IV            MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the congregation consists of three categories.

- A. *Baptized* members are all who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and who submit or are submitted to the spiritual care of the pastor, including the children who have not yet confirmed their baptismal vows;
- B. *Communicant* members are baptized members who have been confirmed in the Lutheran faith, commune regularly, are familiar with the contents of *Luther's Small Catechism*, accept the Confessional Standard of this constitution, and are not members of organizations whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God, e.g. the Lodge;

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- C. *Voting* members are communicant members who have reached the age of 18 years, have been received by the Voter's Assembly, and have signed the Constitution of the congregation, the totality of which shall constitute the Voters' Assembly.

ARTICLE V                  CALLED CHURCH WORKERS

The congregation, so long as it remains a member of Synod, calls only pastors and deacons who are members of the Synod.

ARTICLE VI                  AUTHORITY OF THE CONGREGATION

A. General

The congregation, as a body, through congregational meetings, shall have supreme power to administer and manage all its external and internal affairs. All officers, boards and committees are to be accountable to the voters' assembly and not to any individual or small group within the congregation. The establishment and conduct of all institutions and societies within the congregation are 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 decision shall be null and void.

B. Right of Calling

The right of calling pastors and church workers 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 alone; other matters shall be decided by the congregation in legal assembly by a majority vote unless otherwise specified by the Constitution or By-laws.

D. Authority of Officers

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

E. Removal from Office

Any officer, pastor, or church worker 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 their duties, or willful neglect of them.

ARTICLE VII                  OFFICERS

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

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ARTICLE VIII            DIVISION

When conflict in the congregation cannot be resolved through reconciliation, and the result is a parting of the ways as the congregation divides, then the property of the congregation and all benefits shall remain with those voting members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Article III of the constitution. In the event the congregation should disband, the property and all rights shall be transferred to the district in which the congregation held membership at the time of dissolution.

ARTICLE IX            DOCTRINAL LITERATURE

Only such hymns, prayers, and liturgies shall be used in the public service of the congregation and in all ministerial acts, as conform to the confessional standard of Article III. Likewise, in all classes for instruction in Christian doctrine along with all publically posted advertisements, only such books or materials shall be used as conform to this standard.

ARTICLE X            SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

This congregation shall hold membership with Lutheran Church-Canada as long as the confessions and constitution of the Synod are in agreement with Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions and this Constitution as described in Article III. A change in Synodical affiliation shall require a three-quarters majority ballot vote at a properly called voters' meeting, and take place only after a thorough consultation with the district.

ARTICLE XI            BY-LAWS

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

ARTICLE XII            CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION

A. Unalterable Articles

The following articles of this Constitution or sections thereof shall be unalterable and irrevocable: III and XI

B. Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution may be adopted at a regular Congregational meeting, 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 amendments be submitted in writing, and be read after three church services.

The affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the voting members present at the congregational meeting shall be required for the adoption of an amendment.

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ARTICLE XIII      NON-PROFIT

The Organization shall be carried on without purpose of gain for its members, and any profits or other gains to the organization shall be used in promoting its objective.

**BY-LAWS**

ARTICLE I      ADMISSION INTO MEMBERSHIP

A. Communicant Membership

1. By Confirmation

Confirmation itself being a reception into church membership, all who are received thereby become communicant members.

2. 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 in this congregation, shall be received by the pastor and elders, whose action is to be approved in a subsequent meeting of the congregation or the Church council.

3. 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 and at least one elder, they shall be received as communicant members, their reception to be approved in a subsequent meeting of the Congregation or the Church council.

B. Voting Membership

1. Admission to voting membership is determined by Article IV, Section C of the Constitution.

2. It shall be the duty of every voting member to attend the congregational meetings. By failing to attend such meetings a member waives the right to cast a vote during that meeting. He or she shall accept nomination for such offices, as he or she may be qualified for, for committee appointments, if possible, and shall generally participate in the business activities of the congregation.

Termination of Membership

A. Communicant Membership

1. Transfer to other congregations

Communicant members desiring to join a congregation in church fellowship with us shall present their request for transfer to the pastor and elders to whom authorization is granted to issue transfers. Such transfers of membership shall be approved by the Congregation or Council at a subsequent meeting.

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### 2. Joining Other Churches

In cases where communicant members have joined another congregation outside our fellowship, they shall, upon recommendation of the pastor and elders be considered such as have terminated their membership, and their names shall be removed from the membership roster by resolution of the congregation of church council. They shall receive a letter notifying them of their termination due to having joined a heterodox fellowship.

### 3. Whereabouts unknown

The names of members whose whereabouts are unknown and cannot be established within a reasonable length of time shall be removed by the congregation or church council in a regularly constituted meeting, and forthwith such persons' membership are terminated.

### 4. Excommunication and Self-Exclusion

Any member who is accused of conducting himself in an unchristian manner shall be admonished according to Matt 18:15-30, and the Pastor may ban him from Holy Communion until he repents. If he disputes the accusation of wrongdoing, he has the right to appeal to the congregation for a trial conducted in Christian and Lawful Order. If he acknowledges the wrongdoing but refuses to amend his sinful life after proper admonition, he shall be excommunicated. If the member refuses to attend the congregational meeting to discuss the member's case, this shall constitute self-exclusion. A unanimous vote shall be required for every resolution by the congregation for excommunication or self-exclusion. Excommunication or self-exclusion terminates membership in the congregation.

### 5. Forfeiture of Rights

A person whose communicant membership has been terminated has forfeited all rights of a member of this congregation and all claims upon the property of the congregation as such, or any part thereof, so long as he or she is not reinstated into membership.

## ARTICLE II            MEETINGS

- A. One regular meeting of the congregation shall be held in the Fall. It shall be the Annual Meeting at which the budget for that year shall be accepted, and at which all foreseeable policy-making decisions shall be taken.
- B. Special meetings of the Congregation may be called by the pastor or the chairman. Notification of such meetings shall be given at a previous Sunday service.
- C. Every congregational meeting shall be announced in writing. Whenever a meeting has been thus announced, and at least 10 voting members or else a majority, whichever is less, are in attendance, it shall be considered a properly convened and legal meeting capable of transacting business. For amendment of the Articles of Incorporation, the

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Constitution and By-laws, the decision to erect buildings, to sell or purchase property, the removal of a pastor or deacon or some other member from office, a two-thirds majority of the voting members present shall be required shall be required for the adoption of the resolution, unless otherwise provided by Provincial Law. All voting members shall be notified in writing whenever any of the foregoing actions are contemplated.

- D. When a request for a special meeting, stating the reason for such meeting, and signed by a quorum of voting members is received by the chairman in the case of a vacancy, he shall be obligated to call and hold such a meeting within thirty days of the request.

ARTICLE III                    CALLING OF PASTORS AND CHURCH WORKERS

Nominations:

At a meeting of the congregation, properly convened, the list of candidates having been received from the District President and presented, candidates for the office of Pastor or Church Worker shall be submitted by a nominating committee previously appointed by the Chairman. Any voting member shall be entitled to make additional nominations from the floor.

Elections:

The election of a Pastor or Church Worker 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. The call shall be sent to the Pastor- or Church Worker- elect.

ARTICLE IV                    ELECTION OF CONGREGATION OFFICERS

A nominating committee appointed by the congregation shall present a slate of candidates at the Annual meeting of the congregation. Such slate shall consist of at least one name for each office, and the proposed candidates shall have given their consent to stand for office. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. Election shall be by ballot. The officers-elect shall assume their office and be installed on the Sunday following the annual meeting. In the event of a vacancy in any office, the council shall appoint a successor to fill the unexpired term. Officers shall be elected for the terms specified in these By-laws, and shall remain in office until their successors have been installed.

ARTICLE V                    OFFICERS AND BOARDS

The elected officers of this congregation shall be: a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Board of Elders and Board of Trustees.

In the event that there are not enough willing, qualified, and congregationally approved candidates to fill every officer's position, the voter's assembly may decide to lessen the number of officers for a time, so long as their duties are delegated to and carried out by the existing officers.

Other boards and committees may be appointed as necessary.

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ARTICLE VI            CHURCH COUNCIL

The church council shall consist of the Chairman of the congregation, the Vice-Chairman, the Board of Elders, and Board of Trustees, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Financial Secretary of the congregation.

It shall be the duty of the Church Council to act as the executive of the congregation between congregational meetings, to consider and make decisions on all matters pertaining to the general welfare of the congregation. These decisions shall be in keeping with the planning and general policies accepted at the Annual Meeting. The council shall give an account of the past year's executive action to the subsequent Annual Meeting, and shall annually appoint an auditing committee.

ARTICLE VII            QUALIFICATIONS, TERMS, AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS

General

All voting members shall be eligible to serve on boards and committees, and upon reaching the full age of twenty-one years, shall be eligible to hold office on the Church Council, with the exception that the offices of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Elders shall be open to male members only as they are intended to be positions of authority within the church (1 Timothy 2:12).

Chairman and Vice-Chairman

The term of office of the Chairman and of the Vice-Chairman shall be one-year. The Chairman shall preside at all meetings of the congregation and the council. In his absence, the Vice-Chairman shall perform the duties of the office. In the event of a vacancy in the office of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman shall succeed to the office of the Chairman for the remainder of the term. Should there be a vacancy in both the office of Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the called pastor shall serve as the ad hoc Chairman until one of the vacancies is filled.

Secretary

The term of office of the Secretary shall be one year. The secretary shall keep accurate minutes of the meetings of the congregation and the council for the permanent records of the congregation and shall perform other duties in keeping with his or her office.

Treasurer

The term of office of the Treasurer shall be one year. The Treasurer shall pay all bills authorized by the congregation or council, and shall keep accurate records of the receipts and disbursements of the congregation in books, which shall be and remain the property of the congregation. All of these books shall be audited annually, and a report of such audit be submitted to the congregation. The treasurer shall submit a report at each council and congregational meeting.

Financial Secretary

The term of office of the Financial Secretary shall be one year. It shall be the duty of the financial secretary to receive, record in books kept for such purpose, and deposit in the congregation's designated depository, all congregational moneys, including offerings,

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contributions, special collections, loans, subsidies, bequests, etc. A report for all receipts shall be submitted to the Treasurer at regular weekly intervals. It shall also be the duty of the financial secretary to issue appropriate receipts for donations. The congregation may appoint assistants to the Financial Secretary as necessary. The books and records of the financial secretary may also be audited.

Board of Elders

The Board of Elders shall consist of three or more members. Their terms of office shall be three years. They shall be elected on a rotating basis. They shall:

1. Assist the pastor in all matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the congregation.
2. Consider complaints and grievances of members of the congregation and of the Pastor ensuring Matt. 18:15-16 has been fully observed and documented, and they shall report to the congregation those which cannot be otherwise adjusted, in accordance with Matt. 18:17-18.
3. Make every effort to induce members who have been negligent in their attendance at services, in the use of the sacraments, and the financial support of the church, to mend their sinful ways and fully enjoy the rights and privileges of their membership.
4. See to it that all services are conducted in such a manner as to avoid needless disturbance and to foster an attitude conducive to worship among those in attendance.
5. Assist the pastor in arranging for pulpit assistance, special services and guest speakers.
6. Prepare a list of candidates when the congregation is to call a pastor or church worker.
7. Be an example of Christian conduct and conversation.

Board of Trustees

This board shall consist of two or more members whose term of office shall be two years. They shall be elected on a rotating basis. It shall be the duty of the trustees to administer all property belonging to the congregation, to make contract, to accept and receive grants and bequests, to sign documents, appear in court, and in short, to transact all business assigned to them by the congregation.

ARTICLE VIII            CHANGES IN REGULATIONS

The congregation shall from time to time adopt, alter or amend rules and regulations (or directives) for the guidance of officers and committees in their work.

This Constitution and By-laws signed on behalf of Resurrection Lutheran Church of Lethbridge, Alberta by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Vice-Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



