

**CONSTITUTION OF  
TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, INC**

**SAVANNAH, GEORGIA**

**MAY 2008**

**THE CONSTITUTION OF**

# **TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH OF SAVANNAH, INC.**

**(Revised May 2008)**

## **PREAMBLE**

Inasmuch as 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 4:105) and that all things be done decently and in order (1 Cor 14:40), we, the members of Trinity Lutheran Church, Savannah, Georgia, Chatham County subscribe to the following Constitution and Bylaws in accordance with which all spiritual and material affairs of the congregation and its members shall be governed.

## **ARTICLE I**

### **NAME**

The name of this congregation shall be TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, SAVANNAH, INC., CHATHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this congregation shall be to give honor and glory to the Triune God, to carry out His will, to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world, to manifest the unity of our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior, to spread the kingdom of God, and to foster Christian fellowship and love, by the preaching of the word of God, by the administration of the Sacraments, and by the religious instruction of all its members, according to the confessional standard of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Article III).

## **ARTICLE III**

### **DOCTRINAL STANDARD**

This congregation and its members acknowledge and accept all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed 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**

Any requirement of condition of membership as stated in the By-Laws shall not be contrary to the doctrinal standard of Article III of this Constitution. The membership of this congregation includes the following:

**A Baptized Membership**

**1 Definition**

- a Baptized members shall be those who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God, and who are under the spiritual care of the pastor of this congregation, including the children on the membership rolls who have not yet confirmed their baptismal vows.

**B Communicant Membership**

**1 Definition**

- a Communicant members are those baptized members who have been confirmed or received adult instruction in the Lutheran faith, accept the doctrinal standards of Article III of this Constitution, are familiar at least with the chief doctrines as set forth in Luther's Small Catechism, and who are not members of any anti-Christian organizations whose principals, rituals, and conduct conflict with the Word of God.

**2 Duties**

- a Communicant members shall conform their entire lives in the rule of God's Word and to that end attend divine services faithfully, make diligent use of the Means of Grace, exercise faithful stewardship of God's gifts, and impart and accept fraternal admonition as the need for such admonition becomes apparent.

**C Voting Membership**

**1 Definition**

- a All who met the requirements of communicant membership and have reached their eighteenth year and have read and agreed to abide by the Constitution and By-Laws of this congregation.

**2 Duties**

- a Voting members shall attend the meetings of the Voter's Assembly regularly, vote, and participate in the work of the congregation and willingly accept responsibility according to ability.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **THE OFFICES OF CALLED CHURCH WORKERS**

The pastoral office of this congregation and its members, as well as that of a called ordained or commissioned minister as defined by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, hereinafter referred to as *called church workers*, shall be conferred upon those ministers, called church workers, and candidates who profess and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in Article III of this Constitution and are well qualified for their work. Pastors and called church workers shall, in the call extended to and accepted by them, be pledged to this confessional standard.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **AUTHORITY OF THE CONGREGATION**

#### **A General**

- 1 The congregation, 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 parochial school, Sunday School, youth societies, ladies 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.
- 2 The congregation shall not conduct or carry on any activities not permitted to be conducted or carried on by an organization exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States and the regulations promulgated there under as said Section and regulations now exist, or as they may hereafter be amended, or by an organization contributions to which are deductible under Section 180(c)(2) of such Code and regulations promulgated there under as said section and regulations now exist or as they may hereafter be amended.

#### **B Right of Calling**

- 1 The right of calling pastors or other church workers shall be vested in the voting members of the congregation and shall never be delegated to a smaller body or to an individual.

#### **C Decisions**

- 1 Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided by the Word of God; other matters shall be decided by the Voter's Assembly by a majority vote unless otherwise specified by the Constitution or By-Laws.

#### D Powers of Officers

- 1 Corporate officers or committees, whether elected or appointed by the voters, 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.

#### E Removal from Office

- 1 Any officer, pastor, or called church worker may be removed from office by the members, 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 official duties or willful neglect of them.
- 2 The congregation may request, by two-thirds majority vote of the Voter's Assembly, the resignation of any pastor, called church worker, or officer from the position in the congregation in the case of prolonged incapacity or general incompetence.

#### F Miscellaneous

- 1 Any part of the property or earnings of the congregation shall not inure to the benefit of any member, contributor, trustee, or officer of the congregation or any other private individual.
- 2 The corporation shall not issue capital stock.

### **ARTICLE VII**

#### **MANAGEMENT**

The congregation shall be managed by the Church Council, members of which shall be selected in the manner and at the time set forth in the By-Laws of the congregation. The Church Council shall at no time consist of less than three (3) members, the exact number of which shall be fixed by the By-Laws. The congregation empowers the Church Council to conduct business of Trinity Lutheran Church in accordance with this Constitution and other regulations adopted from time to time.

### **ARTICLE VIII**

## **OFFICERS, BOARDS, AND COMMITTEES**

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

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **PROPERTY RIGHTS**

If at any time a division should take place on account of doctrine, or for any other reason, the property of the congregation and all benefits therewith connected shall remain with the communicant members who continue to adhere in doctrinal standard and practice to Article III of this Constitution, as determined by the adjudication procedure of the Synod. In the event the membership should totally disband, or upon the dissolution of the congregation, the property and all rights connected therewith shall be distributed exclusively to the Florida-Georgia District 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. Likewise, in all classes for instruction in Christian doctrine only such books shall be used as conform to this standard.

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP**

This congregation shall hold membership in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod as long as this Synod remains true to the Word of God, the Lutheran Confessions, and Article III of this Constitution. It shall send its pastor and a lay delegate to the District Convention of the Synod. It shall be the duty of the congregation and its individual members to support the work of the Synod, since they thereby support their own Christ-appointed work.

## **ARTICLE XII**

## **CHANGING THE ARTICLES AND CONSTITUTION**

### **A Unalterable Articles**

- 1 Articles II, III, XII.A, and XII.B.3 of this Constitution shall not be subject to change or repeal.

### **B Amendments**

- 1 Amendments to these Articles and Constitution may be adopted at a regular Voter's Assembly, provided:
  - a 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.
  - b Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed in writing in any Voter's Assembly meeting by any voting member. If the majority of the voting members present vote in favor of the proposal, then a copy of such proposed amendment shall be communicated by written notice to all voting members at least two (2) weeks preceding the next Voter's Assembly meeting. The final vote on the proposed amendment shall be taken in that meeting or at a duly publicized continuation of that meeting.
  - c The affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting membership present at the Voter's Assembly shall be required for the adoption of an amendment.
  - d Upon adoption, any such amendments shall be submitted to the district Committee on Constitutions for approval in accordance with the Synod's By-Laws.

## **ARTICLE XIII**

### **BY-LAWS**

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