

CONSTITUTION

For

Hope Lutheran Church, Virginia Beach, Inc.

PREAMBLE

We the members of Hope Lutheran Church, Virginia Beach, Inc, as a not-for profit, religious congregation, now existing under the Virginia Non-Stock Corporation Act, accept and subscribe to the following Constitution and By-Laws. They will govern the spiritual, material, and mission affairs of the congregation.

ARTICLE I: Name

The name of this congregation is Hope Lutheran Church, Virginia Beach, Inc.

ARTICLE II: Mission

We are dedicated to saving and changing lives by the grace of God in Jesus through biblically sound and culturally relevant evangelism, discipleship, worship, prayer, ministry, and fellowship.

ARTICLE III: Purpose

The purpose of this congregation, in addition to those stated in the Articles of Incorporation, is to give honor and glory to God and to be a blessing to others as God has blessed us. We will be the instruments of God in carrying out Christ's Great Commission. We, therefore, devote ourselves to proclaiming the Word of God; growing in grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ by educating all ages through study and sharing of God's Word and Sacraments; and witnessing to our faith in Jesus Christ to each other, the community in which we live, the nation, and the world. Furthermore, we offer service to others by acts of mercy and concern, practicing stewardship through wise management and use of God's gifts to us, celebrating Christian fellowship with one another so that a spirit of unity and joy exists in the congregation, and giving absolution to the penitent.

ARTICLE IV: Confession of Faith

This congregation holds the Bible (i.e. the books of the Hebrew scriptures known as the Old Testament and the books of the New Testament) to be the Word of God and the sole rule of faith and practice. This congregation accepts all the symbolical books of the Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 as a correct and sound exposition of Christian Doctrine, taken from and in full accord with the Holy Scriptures. These symbolical books are the Ecumenical Creeds (Apostles, Nicene, and Athanasian), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession of 1530, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Catechisms of Martin Luther, the Smalcald Articles, and the Formula of Concord.

ARTICLE V: Synodical Affiliation

This congregation is and will continue to be affiliated with and hold membership in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod unless a two-thirds majority of the Voting Members hold that the confessional standard and practices of the Synod and its members are not in accord with the confessional standards and practices of the congregation as set forth in Article IV of

the Constitution. This congregation will also cooperate and work with the Synod in carrying out our mission and ministry.

ARTICLE VI: Membership

The membership of this congregation includes Baptized Members, Communicant Members, and Voting Members, as defined in the By-Laws.

ARTICLE VII: Organization

A. Voters Assembly.

1. The Voters Assembly is the governing body for Hope Lutheran Church. The Voters' Assembly shall consist of all the Voting Members present at a lawfully assembled regular or special meeting of the congregation, as prescribed in the By-Laws. The congregation, through the Voters' Assembly, shall have final authority in managing all its internal and external affairs. The following are matters for which action may only be initiated or approved by the Voters' Assembly:
 - a. Calling or removing a Called Worker.
 - b. Establishing or eliminating Called Worker positions.
 - c. Establishing or eliminating Paid Staff positions.
 - d. Position changes affecting Paid Staff positions that result in an increase or decrease of more than 20% in the salary of the Paid Staff individual.
 - e. Removal of a council officer.
 - f. Removal of a member for disciplinary reasons (as described in the By-laws).
 - g. Purchasing or selling church property or buildings valued over 10% of the annual operating budget.
 - h. Adopting the Annual Budget.
 - i. Dissolving the congregation.
 - j. Amending the Constitution or By-Laws.
2. Any such matters reserved for Voter' Assembly action (as described in paragraph A.1 of Article VII above) shall be decided by a two-thirds majority of the Voting Members present at a lawfully convened meeting of the Voters' Assembly.

B. The Church Council.

1. The Church Council is responsible to the Voters' Assembly and shall administer all the congregation's affairs, except those actions reserved solely for the Voters' Assembly (as listed in paragraph A.1 of Article VII above).
2. The Church Council is accountable to the Voters' Assembly. Any decision made by the Church Council can be modified or overturned by the Voters' Assembly.
3. The Church Council shall be comprised of such officers as the By-Laws of this Constitution prescribe.

C. Officers. Officers prescribed in the By-Laws shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them in the Constitution or By-Laws. Whatever authority

delegated to them may also be altered or revoked by the Voters' Assembly following the appropriate procedures described herein.

- D. Ministry Teams. Ministry Teams may be appointed by the Church Council to support the mission and purpose of the congregation. These teams will function as prescribed in the By-Laws.
- E. Church Staff. Church staff may consist of Called Workers and/or Paid Staff, as appropriate.
 - 1. Called Workers. Pastors, Associate Pastors, Assistant Pastors, and commissioned Ministers of Religion are considered Called Workers. The Voters' Assembly has the sole authority to determine the appropriate number of, and to authorize calls for, Called Workers.
 - 2. Paid Staff. Paid Staff may consist of full or part-time non-called employees of the church. Paid Staff positions may be established for specific ministerial tasks or needs, as determined by the Voters' Assembly. Paid Staff report to the Called Workers.

ARTICLE VIII: Called Workers

While the congregation is in fellowship with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, the procedures for calling pastors and commissioned ministers of religion will be consistent with those prescribed by the President of the Southeastern District of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod or its successor and those prescribed in the By-Laws. Calls will only be issued to such candidates who are approved by the President of the Southeastern District or its successor.

ARTICLE IX: Property Rights

The congregation may receive, acquire, hold title to, and manage such real estate and other property, as it deems necessary to accomplish its purpose as a congregation. The congregation may sell or otherwise dispose of such real estate and other property or any part of it. The congregation has all the rights and powers granted by laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia to religious organizations. If, at any time, a separations should take place because of doctrine, despite of all efforts to resolve the differences in peace and love, the property of the congregation and all benefits therewith connected shall remain with those who, in the opinion of the Southeastern District of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod or its successor, continue to adhere in confession and practice to Article IV of this Constitution. If the congregation should disband, the property and all rights connected to it will be transferred to the District of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod with which the congregation is affiliated.

ARTICLE X: Quorum for Decisions

All congregation matters voted upon by the Voters' Assembly shall be decided by a simple majority of the Voting Members present at a lawfully convened meeting of the Voters' Assembly, except as otherwise provided in the Constitution and By-Laws.

ARTICLE XI: By-Laws

The Voters' Assembly may adopt such By-Laws as may be necessary to accomplish the congregation's mission and purpose.

ARTICLE XII: Amendments

Notwithstanding the provisions of Article X, this constitution, except for Article IV, may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present at a properly convened meeting of the Voters' Assembly. Article IV may not be amended. At least thirty days prior to the Voters' Assembly at which amendments are considered, the proposed amendment(s) will be mailed to voting members and prominently posted in the church. Each amendment will be voted on separately. Under exceptional circumstances, administrative amendments to the Constitution may be enacted by two-thirds majority vote of the Church Council at a properly called meeting provided there is no change to the policy or intent of the original document.