

**HOSANNA LUTHERAN CHURCH  
TO GOD BE THE GLORY**

**Preamble**

In His great mercy, God has called us, who were no people, to be His people. As His people we desire to work together as a congregation to God's glory and for our neighbor's welfare. Therefore, we accept and subscribe to the following constitution and bylaws in accordance with which all affairs of our congregation shall be done decently and in good order (*1 Corinthians 14:40*).

**THE CONSTITUTION**

Article I

**Name**

The corporate name of this congregation shall be Hosanna Evangelical Lutheran Church – hereafter in this document referred to as the “Congregation” – located at 105 Hosanna Avenue, Mankato, Minnesota.

Article II

**Purpose**

The purpose of this Congregation shall be that of the Body of Christ seeking the honor and glory of God; namely,

- 1) To spread the Good News of Jesus' victory over death to all through Word and Sacrament (*Matthew 28:19–20*);
- 2) To equip those who believe the Good News to do the work of serving and building up the Body of Christ so that all may achieve, by the insight of the Holy Spirit, unity of faith and knowledge that the Son of God possesses (*Ephesians 4:12-16*);
- 3) To bear each other's burdens and to foster Christian fellowship and love (*Galatians 6:2*); and
- 4) To sing the praise of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (*Ephesians 5:19-20; 1 Peter 2:9*).

The purpose shall be carried out by the preaching of the Word of God, by the administration of the Sacraments, and by the religious instruction of all the congregation's disciples, according to the confession of faith as set forth in Article III of this constitution.

To this end the Congregation will furnish a place of worship for its disciples.

Article III

**Confession of Faith**

This Congregation confesses one God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; and believes that the divinely inspired Old and New Testaments of the Holy Scriptures are the only normative authority for instructing it for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. The Congregation further acknowledges the confessional writings (The Apostolic, Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Apology, the Smalcald Articles, Luther's Large and Small Catechisms, and the Formula of Concord) which are contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, as a true exposition of the Word of God.

Hymns, songs of praise, liturgies, ministerial acts, and educational materials shall be used to proclaim the confession of faith set forth above.

#### Article IV

##### **Discipleship (Membership)**

The discipleship of this Congregation is open to all persons who believe they are justified by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. Discipleship shall be placed under the following spiritual care:

- 1) Baptized disciples: Baptized disciples are those who have been baptized in the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are encouraged to live in their baptismal covenant.
- 2) Communicant Disciples: Communicant disciples are those
  - a) Who are baptized in the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;
  - b) Who accept the confession of faith as set forth in Article III;
  - c) Who attend worship and partake of the Lord's Supper frequently;
  - d) Who use their time, treasures, and talents for building Christ's kingdom in the Congregation and the world;
  - e) Who, when they have erred, permit themselves to be fraternally admonished and corrected according to Matthew 18:15-20; and
- 3) Voting Disciples: Voting disciples are those communicant disciples who have been confirmed. They shall have the right to vote at Congregational meetings on any matters, except legal matters, for which they must have reached the age of eighteen. The disciples shall share in the Christian responsibility to minister to other disciples, be acquainted with and understand the Constitution, and help facilitate the governing of the Congregation.

#### Article V

##### **Reception, Release, Removal, and Transfer of Disciples**

Individuals desiring to become disciples of the Congregation shall follow the following procedures: In the case of a non-communicant, the request for discipleship may be made by the individual, a parent, or guardian. Communicant disciples from sister congregations may present a letter of transfer and will be received into discipleship by the Pastor and/or the Governance Board. Others will give evidence of their willingness of and qualifications for discipleship to the pastor, who shall announce their request to the Governance Board.

Persons requesting a letter of transfer or a release to another church may be granted such a request by the pastor and/or the Governance Board.

The Governance Board shall determine whether a person shall be removed from Hosanna's ministry for reasons other than a transfer, release or excommunication. A disciple so excluded shall forfeit all rights of a disciple and the name of that person shall be placed under the Congregation's pastoral care.

## Article VI

### **Pastors and Other Called Staff**

The Congregation has the exclusive right to call pastors and other called staff.

The called positions in this Congregation shall be conferred upon such individuals who

- 1) Accept and adhere to the confession of faith set forth in article III; and
- 2) Have been called by 3/4 of the voting discipleship present of the Congregation and who have accepted the Congregation's call.

They shall have been trained and educated for such office and shall be well qualified for their ministry to the Congregation. The called staff shall consider themselves as servants of the Congregation and be assisted in every way to maintain that position.

In case of any vacancy, the Congregation through the Governance Board will notify the President of the Minnesota South District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod and the counselor for the Circuit to which Hosanna Lutheran Church belongs to ask for assistance in filling of the vacancy.

Following the procedures of Matthew 18:15-20, the Congregation may remove any called staff from office by  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the voting disciples present at a properly called Congregational meeting for one of the following reasons:

- 1) Persistent adherence to false doctrine;
- 2) Scandalous life;
- 3) Willful neglect of duties; or
- 4) Protracted inability to perform his/her official duties.

The considered causes for removal shall be investigated by the Governance Board and the Minnesota South District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod before a final vote by the Congregation is taken.

## Article VII

### **Synodical Membership**

The Congregation shall be a member of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, as long as this synod continues to adhere to the confession of faith as set forth in Article III. The Congregation shall send representatives to all official conventions on all levels of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The Congregation shall support the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in its efforts to carry out the work of Christ.

## Article VIII

### **Property Rights**

The property rights of this Congregation shall be held in the corporate name.

If, at any time, a division on account of doctrine shall occur, the adjudication procedure of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod shall be used to determine which communicant disciples continue to adhere to the confession of faith set forth in Article III of this constitution as determined by the adjudication procedure of the Synod.

In the event the Congregation should dissolve, the property and all rights connected therewith shall be transferred to that District of the Synod in which the Congregation holds membership at the time of dissolution.

## Article IX

**The Governing of the Congregation (Voters' Assembly, Officers, Boards)**

1. The Voters' Assembly shall be the governing body of the congregation and shall be empowered to administer and manage all its affairs.

## Meetings:

- a) The Voters' Assembly shall meet annually to elect officers & Directors, adopt an operating budget, and hear reports and visions by the Pastor, Staff, Chair of the Governance Board, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Task Forces and Ministry Action Teams (MAT).
- b) A special meeting of the Voters' Assembly may be called at any time by the Pastor, the Governance Board, or a signed petition by 10% of the discipleship of the Voters' Assembly. The date, time, place, and purpose shall be publicly announced two Sundays prior to the meeting.
- c) The quorum for any meeting of the Voters' Assembly shall be those disciples present. Robert's Rules of Order shall decide questions of parliamentary procedure not governed by the Constitution. Every decision by a majority of those present and voting shall be valid as an act of the Voters' Assembly. Ballots by proxy or mail shall not be recognized unless received prior to the vote.

## Decisions:

- a) Only the Word of God shall decide all matters of doctrine and of conscience.
  - b) All other matters shall be decided by a majority vote of the Voters' Assembly unless otherwise specified by this Constitution or Bylaws.
2. The Governance Board
    - a) The Directors of the Governance Board shall be elected by the Voters' Assembly to aid in the governing of the ministry of the Congregation. The elected officers shall be Chair, Vice-Chair, Past Chair, and Treasurer.
    - b) The Governance Board shall consist of 11 elected Directors – Chair, Vice Chair, Past Chair, Treasurer, Financial Secretary and Recording Secretary and Five At-Large Board Members. The Governance Board may establish Task Forces as deemed necessary.
    - c) Any voting disciple may hold any of the elective or appointive offices in the congregation.
  3. Officers
    - a) The Voters' Assembly in a regularly called meeting elects all officers.
    - b) Governance Board shall consummate the removal of any officer, board member, or MAT member by a  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote for the willful neglect of duties.
    - c) Congregational Officers or Directors, whether elected or appointed, shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them by the Voters' Assembly, and whatever authority may have been delegated to them may at any time be altered or revoked by the Voters' Assembly.

## Article X

**Organizations**

Organizations within the congregation, whether receiving financial support from the Congregation or not, shall exist with the consent of and be under the supervision of the Governance Board. The Governance Board may require written reports.

## Article XI

**Bylaws**

The Congregation shall adopt such Bylaws as may be required for the accomplishment of its purpose.

## Article XII

**Amendments**

1. Unalterable Articles: Articles II, III, VI and VIII of this Constitution shall not be subject to change or repeal.
2. Amendments: Amendments to this Constitution may be adopted at a Voters' Assembly provided:
  - a) That they do not conflict with the provisions laid down in Article III, or with any other Article that pertains to a scriptural doctrine ;
  - b) That the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at a previous meeting of the Voters' Assembly and published at least two weeks prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon. These two meetings shall be at least two weeks apart; and
  - c) That an affirmative vote of  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority of the voters present is secured.

Approved by the Voters \_\_\_\_\_

# HOSANNA LUTHERAN CHURCH BY-LAWS

## A. DISCIPLESHIP

1. Confirmed Communicant Discipleship
  - a. Catechumens upon their affirmation of their Baptism shall be received into communicant discipleship.
  - b. Any person bearing a letter of transfer as a communicant disciple from a congregation recognized as such and in fellowship with this congregation, shall be accepted as a communicant by the Pastor whose action shall be ratified by the Governance Board at its earliest opportunity.
  - c. Persons of the Christian faith of other denominations who apply for discipleship must give satisfactory evidence of their qualifications for communicant discipleship in accord with the Constitution of this congregation based on Holy Scripture and shall be accepted by the Pastor as communicants. The Governance Board at its earliest opportunity shall ratify such action and those communicants shall be accepted by profession of faith.
2. Communion may be offered to a baptized child or adult who has received sufficient instruction, are able to examine themselves and recognize the real presence of the Lord's body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine.  
*[1 Corinthians 11:28, 29].*
3. Sending out of Communicant Disciples
  - a. Communicant disciples desiring to join other congregations shall request a letter of transfer from the Pastor to whom authorization is given to issue such transfer. The Governance Board in the earliest subsequent meeting shall ratify such action of the Pastor.
  - b. All disciples of Hosanna shall be assured of the concern we are to have for one another as expressed by Jesus in Matthew 18:15-19. If, in love, we are brought to express our concern by the removal of a disciple from Hosanna's ministry, it will be done by the unanimous vote of the disciples present at a congregation meeting. If such action is necessary, the person will be removed from discipleship but will continue to receive, if they are willing, Christian ministry, compassion, and prayer.

## B. OFFICERS

- |                                            |         |
|--------------------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Elected Officers: (Executive Committee) | Term    |
| Governance Chair                           | 1 year  |
| Vice Chair                                 | 1 year  |
| Past Chair                                 | 1 year  |
| Treasurer                                  | 3 years |
| 2. Governance Board (11 voting)            | Term    |
| Executive Committee                        | 3 years |
| Financial Secretary                        | 3 years |
| Recording Secretary                        | 3 years |
| Five "At – Large" Directors                | 3 years |

3. Terms of Office. All Officers and Board disciples shall be elected to three-year terms, and consecutive terms shall be limited to two, for a maximum of six years. In the event that no successor has been elected or has qualified when the respective term expires, such officer shall continue until a successor is elected and qualified. Concerning the offices of Governance Chair, Vice Chair and Past Chair will be a rotating structure. Individuals will spend one year in each position starting with the Vice Chair – Chair – Past Chair. Directors are limited to one rotation on the Executive Committee. A Disciple will be limited to one term on the Executive committee in any office including the Treasurer position.
4. The Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall meet a minimum of one time per month with meetings conducted by the Governance Chairperson. The Governance Board meeting will satisfy the monthly requirement. The Executive Committee will be responsible for signing all legal and financial documents for Hosanna Church where a minimum of two Executive Committee members' signatures are required.
5. Any individual, qualified for discipleship in Hosanna Lutheran Church and of voting age, is eligible to serve as a Director on the Board of Governance.
6. Any individual, qualified for discipleship in Hosanna Lutheran Church and of legal voting age, is eligible to serve as an officer.

Ministry Action Team (MAT) members are selected and appointed by Hosanna Staff and the Senior Pastor or the acting interim lead Pastor.

7. An Auditing Task Force consisting of a minimum of three members appointed by the Chair of the Governance Board, shall make an annual audit of the books and records of the bookkeeper, the Treasurer, and the Financial Secretary, none of who will be a part of the Task Force. Other funds within the church may be audited as directed by the Governance Board or by a majority ballot vote at a Hosanna Congregational meeting by the Hosanna Disciples. It shall make its report to the Governance Board at the earliest possible date after the audit has been completed. The Governance Board will submit the findings to Hosanna Disciples in a reasonable time frame thereafter.
8. Additional Task Forces shall be formed and disciples appointed as needed by action of the Executive Committee and/or Governance Board.

### **C. PROCEDURE FOR NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The Nominating Task Force will consist of a minimum of 6 disciples of legal voting age, in good standing and will be chosen by the Governance Board. They shall meet in March/ April to select a slate of candidates to be presented at the May/June Voters' meeting. The proposed slate shall consist of at least one person for each office to be elected. Floor nominations will not be allowed at the Hosanna Congregational meeting. The task force will announce to the Hosanna Disciples that the nomination process is open a minimum of 30 days prior to the meeting. Nominations by Hosanna Disciples may be submitted to the nominating task force for consideration by a qualified Hosanna disciple 10 days prior to the meeting.

At the May/June Voters' meeting, all officers shall be elected by a majority ballot vote. The officers elected shall assume their respective duties immediately following their commissioning. In case of a vacancy in an elective office, the Governance Board shall approve a successor to fill the remainder of the term, and the officer approved shall assume office immediately.

## **D. DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND BOARDS**

### **1. The Chair of Governance Board**

- a. Shall be the "Executive Director" of the congregation. As such, he is responsible that all elected or appointed officers, boards and Task Forces of the congregation are functioning and carrying out their individual responsibilities.
- b. Shall preside at meetings of the Governance Board and voters' assembly.
- c. Shall prepare an agenda for each Board meeting and after consideration of items by Governance Board prepare the agenda for Voters' meetings.
- d. Shall be an ex officio member of all standing Task Forces and shall attend personally or designate the Vice Chair of the congregation to attend meetings of Task Forces whenever necessary, or advisable.
- e. The Executive Committee shall meet at least once each month with the Pastor to analyze past progress and plan future efforts and emphases needed in the total church program.
- f. Shall encourage officers and chairpersons of Task Forces to adopt a principle of making concise written reports and well-worded recommendations to the Voters' Assembly in the interest of stewardship of time.
- g. Shall seek every opportunity to commend "leadership shown" and "job well done" by disciples of the congregation.
- h. Shall conduct meetings in accordance with good "rules of order" and give attention to avoiding long meetings.

### **2. The Vice Chair of Governance Board**

- a. Shall preside at meetings of Voters or Board of Governance in absence of the Chair or when asked to do so by the Chair.
- b. Shall acquaint himself with his responsibilities as they are outlined in "Chair of Governance Board Duties".
- c. Shall encourage Stewardship efforts in the church and report the status to the Governance Board. The Vice Chair will also be responsible for presenting the proposed working budget and final budget.

### **3. Past Chair**

- a. The Past Chair will be a part of the Executive Committee. Serving in this role is the last year of the three year leadership rotation of Vice Chair – Chair – Past Chair. The Past Chair is to mentor the Chair and Vice Chair as well as provide leadership to the Governance Board.

### **4. The Recording Secretary**

- a. Shall be responsible for the safekeeping of all permanent minutes, past and present, of the congregation.
- b. Shall faithfully record in permanent records all minutes of the Voters' and Governance Board meetings.

- c. Shall conduct all official correspondence of the Voters or the Board of Governance.
  - d. Shall stand ready to supply the Executive Committee with information as recorded in church minutes when so requested.
5. The Treasurer
- a. Shall supervise the bookkeeper's accurate records of the receipts and disbursements of the congregation.
  - b. Shall give attention that good systems and methods are used in the accounting of funds and suggest new and better methods or systems to the congregation for keeping financial records.
  - c. Shall present a written duplicated financial report at all regular Voters' meetings and at all Governance Board meetings.
  - d. Shall be responsible for expediting the safe deposit and keeping of all funds.
  - e. Shall maintain a set of permanent records and be responsible to train his successor in the details and function of the job of Treasurer.
  - f. Shall supervise prompt payment of salaries, the remitting of monthly mission offerings and the payment of authorized bills.
  - g. Shall have the financial books and records audited annually by the Auditing Task Force.
6. The Financial Secretary
- a. Shall supervise the keeping of a week-by-week record of the offerings of giving units.
  - b. Shall prepare individual BI-annual statements for each giving unit.
  - c. Shall be responsible for preparation of reports and exhibits that will be helpful to Stewardship in analyzing the giving performance of disciples.
7. Directors (5 - At Large)
- a. These individuals need to be of legal voting age and of good standing in the community and church body. The nominating Task Force should seek candidates that represent an accurate cross section of the disciples of Hosanna Church.

## **E. GOVERNANCE BOARD**

1. Governance Board Members:
  - Senior Pastor (non-voting)
  - Governance Board Chair
  - Governance Board Vice Chair
  - Governance Board Past Chair
  - Treasurer
  - Recording Secretary
  - Financial Secretary
  - Five At-Large Directors
2. The Directors of the Governance Board shall meet a minimum of once every quarter on a date selected by the Board. The Chairperson of the Board or the Pastor may call special meetings. Formal order of business need not be followed.

The Board shall vote on all releases and transfers of disciples, acceptance of new disciples, vote on expenditures not part of normal monthly expenses and authorized limits of spending for the staff, but not to exceed the limitations in the approved budget.

They shall carefully study all business of the congregation and make recommendations to the congregation.

3. Order of Business

- a. Opening devotion
- b. Reading of minutes
- c. Reception of new disciples and releases
- d. Reports of staff, officers, boards and Task Forces
- e. Old business
- f. New business
- g. Adjourn

**F. AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the Voters' Assembly by a majority of all voting disciples present, provided the proposed change has been announced at least one week prior to the meeting in which the amendment is voted upon.