

Amended Articles of Incorporation

GERMAN EVANGELICAL MARTIN LUTHER CHURCH OF OTTAWA Inc

Definitions:

“Constitution” means the Articles of Incorporation

“Congregation” means to the incorporated company i.e. the German Evangelical Martin Luther Church of Ottawa Inc

“ Council” means to the board of directors of the Congregation

Table of Contents

PREAMBLE

ARTICLE I	Name and Incorporation
ARTICLE II	Confession of Faith
ARTICLE III	Nature and Mission
ARTICLE IV	Authority
ARTICLE V	Relationship to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
ARTICLE VI	The Office of the Ministry
ARTICLE VII	Bylaws and Amendments
ARTICLE VIII	Auxiliaries and Organizations

PREAMBLE

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Recognizing that the Church of Jesus Christ and its unity is found in “the assembly of believers

among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the Holy Sacraments are administered according to the Gospel,” and desiring to unite as a congregation in the common confession, defence and proclamation of our faith in Jesus Christ our Savior, we the members of the Church of Christ adopt this constitution and pledge ourselves to be governed by its provisions.

ARTICLE I

Name and Incorporation

Section 1. The name of this congregation shall be German Evangelical Martin Luther Church of Ottawa.

Section 2. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of Ontario

Section 3. The purpose of this congregation shall be as a religious society in harmony with Article II and Article III of this constitution.

ARTICLE II

Confession of Faith

Section 1. This congregation confesses the Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – as the one true God. It proclaims the Father as Creator and Preserver, His Son Jesus Christ as Redeemer and Lord, and the Holy Spirit as Regenerator and Sanctifier.

Section 2. This congregation confesses that the Gospel is the revelation of God’s saving will and grace in Jesus Christ, which He imparts through Word and Sacrament. Through these means of grace the Holy Spirit creates believers and unites them with their Lord and with one another in the fellowship of the Holy Christian Church.

Section 3. This congregation confesses the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God, through which God still speaks, and as the only source of the Church's doctrine and the authoritative standard for the faith and life of the Church.

Section 4. This congregation subscribes the documents of the Book of Concord of 1580 as witnesses to the way in which the Holy Scriptures have been correctly understood and explained and confessed for the sake of the Gospel, namely:

- a. The Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian creeds as the chief confessions of the Christian faith;
- b. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession as its basic formulation of Christian doctrine;
- c. Luther's Small Catechism as a clear summary of Christian doctrine;
- d. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Luther's Large Catechism, the Smalcald Articles with the Treatise, and the Formula of Concord as further witnesses to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

ARTICLE III

Nature and Mission

This congregation is a worshipping, learning, witnessing and serving community of baptized persons among whom the Word is proclaimed and the Sacraments are administered according to the Gospel, and whose corporate existence is recognized by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. It shall provide support to enable the fulfillment of the mission and ministry of this church.

- a. **Worship.** This congregation, remembering God's mighty acts in the past, celebrating His abiding presence, and moving toward His promised fulfillment, will listen to the Word of God in Scripture and preaching, receive the Sacraments, and respond with confession, prayer, praise, thanksgiving, and with tithes and offerings. In order to assist members to acknowledge God's rule over their lives, their own unity as Christ's body on earth, and to express their relationship with God in public and in private, the congregation shall gather for worship regularly and, in accordance with the traditions of the Lutheran Church, recruit, equip and support members for leadership in worship, use appropriate worship materials, and make certain that worship has a place in other functions of the congregation.

Learning. The congregation shall develop an educational program designed to assist persons to grow in grace and faith and in the knowledge of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions for service and witness in the world. To this end it shall provide learning opportunities with appropriate curriculum, shall recruit, equip, approve and support teachers, and shall ensure that adequate study undergirds all functions of the congregation.

- b. **Witnessing.** This congregation, relying on the Holy Spirit, shall proclaim the Gospel by word and deed and thereby invite all people to repent and believe. The congregation shall recruit, motivate, equip and support its members to witness to their faith at every opportunity in daily life so that the Lord is glorified, the fellowship is strengthened, the lapsed are restored and new members are added to the congregation. It shall provide for the communication of the Gospel through fellowship in the wider Christian community. It shall assure that all congregational functions witness to the faith of the church.
- c. **Service.** This congregation shall live by faith active in love. It shall motivate, equip and support its members to minister in daily life; to participate as members of a caring community; to serve as Christians in all the institutions and structures of the society of which they are a part; and individually and corporately to promote justice and reconciliation, meet human needs and alleviate suffering. In these efforts the congregation shall co-operate with the synod and the divisions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, other Christian churches and other groups in society. It shall make certain that all its functions strengthen the motivation and ability for service.
- d. **Support.** This congregation in faithfulness to God shall provide leadership, organizational structures, facilities and funds to enable fulfillment of its functions. The congregation shall strive to maintain effective stewardship practices, evaluate

regularly the total life and ministry of the congregation, and recruit, equip and support members of the congregation to provide for these activities.

ARTICLE IV

Authority

Section 1. This congregation shall operate in accordance with its own constitution, owning its own property, making decisions in regard to programming, calling its pastor(s) after consulting with the bishop, retaining authority in all other matters that have not been committed to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada or its synods in their constitutions or by subsequent enactments.

Section 2. The authority of the congregation shall be vested in the congregational meeting, called and conducted in the manner provided in this constitution, and in the boards and committees of the congregation as provided by this constitution or as assigned by the congregational meeting.

Section 3. Real property shall not be purchased, disposed of or encumbered in any manner except by resolution adopted by no less than a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at a legally called meeting of the congregation.

Section 4. Should this congregation disband, all property not disposed of, real, personal and mixed, shall vest in the synod of which it is a part, its successor or assigns.

Section 5. Should this congregation cease to exist or should its membership so diminish in numbers as to render it impossible or impractical for the congregation to function according to its constitution and bylaws, the synod shall after consultation with any remaining members deem the congregation to be defunct. The synod through the Synod Council shall appoint trustees, including where feasible former members of the congregation, who shall take charge and control of the property of said congregation to hold, manage and convey the same in behalf of this synod.

Section 6. In case of strife and division in the congregation, the council shall seek the advice of the bishop of the synod.

ARTICLE V

Relationship of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Section 1. This congregation is and shall remain a part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada or its successor and of the synod of the church within whose boundaries it is located or to which it has otherwise been assigned.

It works in close cooperation with the Evangelische Kirche Deutschlands (EKD) The EKD assists in the finding a pastor for the church and looks after the German pension obligations of any German pastor chosen by the congregation.

Section 2. This congregation claims for itself all the rights and privileges and accepts all the duties and obligations connected with being part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. In so doing this congregation recognizes the constitution, bylaws and enactments of the church and of the synod as having governing force in its life.

Section 3. This congregation covenants to support faithfully with prayer, personal service and offerings the common work of the church and of the synod for the Kingdom of God.

Section 4. This constitution, and all amendments thereto, shall be transmitted to the synod for review to ascertain that none of its provisions is in conflict with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada or with the synodical constitution.

Section 5. Should the congregation desire to relocate or merge with another congregation, it shall secure the advice of the synod before any commitments to that end are entered into.

Section 6. Should the congregation desire to sever its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada this decision shall require a two-thirds majority vote of all voting members present and voting at a legally called and conducted meeting. Such a decision shall not be effective until at least ninety days after the bishop has been notified and until the initial action has been ratified by a two-thirds majority vote at a subsequent legally called and conducted meeting.

Section 7. This congregation prohibits any corporate worship with any organization which practices the forms of religion without confessing faith in the Triune God and in Jesus Christ, the eternal and incarnate Son of God, as our only Saviour.

ARTICLE VI

The Office of the Ministry

Section 1. A pastor of the congregation shall be a person whose soundness in the faith, aptness to teach and educational qualifications have been examined and approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and who has been properly ordained, who accepts and adheres to the Confession of Faith of this church, and who strives in life and conduct to be above reproach.

Section 2. Authority to call a pastor shall rest in the congregation. Such authority to call shall be exercised in the first round by not less than a two-thirds majority vote of members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. If no candidate obtains a two third majority in the first round the authority to call may be exercised in the second round by a simple majority of the vote of members present and voting at that meeting. Throughout the call process the Congregational Council, or a committee authorized by the congregation(s), shall seek the advice and counsel of the bishop of the synod.

Section 3. Only an ordained minister on the roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada or one who is recognized for call by a synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada may be called as a pastor of the congregation.

Section 4. Every pastor shall

- a. Preach the Word, administer the Sacraments and conduct public worship in harmony with the faith and practices of the church;
- b. Baptize, confirm and marry in accordance with the teaching of the church and which the laws of the province or territory, visit the sick and distressed and bury the dead;

- c. Incucate piety in individual and family life and provide pastoral leadership to all schools and auxiliary organizations of the congregation;
- d. Install members of the Congregational Council and, with the counsel administer discipline;
- e. Seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel and strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, at home and abroad;
- f. Encourage the members to be generous in support of the ministry of the congregation, the synod and the church;
- g. Keep accurate membership records including baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials and communicants, and submit a report of such statistics annually to the secretary of synod on forms provided by the church. The parish records shall be kept in a separate book which shall remain the property of the congregation;
- h. Commend members who move to the pastoral care of the parish in which their new home is located.

Section 5. In order that a pastor of this congregation may be devoted fully to the duties of the office, adequate compensation and premiums under the church's pension plan shall be provided, paid in semi-monthly or monthly installments. Expenses incident to attendance at conventions of the synod and the church and at meetings otherwise required by the pastor's office shall be defrayed by the congregation, except when other provisions are made.

Section 6. The regular call of this congregation when accepted by a pastor shall constitute a relationship which shall be terminated only for the following causes: 1) the resignation of the pastor; 2) the retirement of the Pastor; 3) disqualification of the pastor through discipline; 4) division of a pastoral charge; 5) the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor; 6) continued neglect of ministry; 7) inability to conduct the pastoral office satisfactorily in the parish in view of local conditions without reflection on the moral and spiritual character of the pastor.

In the last three contingencies, the procedures provided for in the constitution of the synod shall be followed.

Section 7. In the event of alleged defection in doctrine or alleged conduct unbecoming a pastor, the matter shall be referred by the Congregational Council to the bishop for action as provided in the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

Section 8. At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be selected by the Congregational Council after consultation with the bishop. The interim pastor shall have the responsibility of a regularly called pastor. All interim and supply pastors shall refrain from exerting influence in the call process of the congregation.

Section 9. When an additional pastor is called, the privileges and responsibilities of that pastor shall be specified in the call drafted in consultation with the incumbent pastor(s), the Congregational Council and the bishop.

Section 10. Upon receiving a call to another ministry, the pastor shall consult with the bishop and the chairperson of the Congregational Council before a decision is reached. The pastor shall inform the congregation and the bishop of the decision on the call within thirty days of official notice. When a call has been accepted, the pastor shall normally terminate the ministry within two months.

Section 11. This constitution and all amendments thereto, shall be subject to the Agreement between the Evangelisches Kirchenamt der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

ARTICLE VII

Bylaws and Amendments

Section 1. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by the Congregational Council and shall be proposed by the council at the request of five voting members. Such proposed amendments shall be

- a. Read at two successive public services of the congregation or mailed to the voting members not less than thirty days before the meeting at which it is to be considered;

- b. Approved with or without change by a majority vote of those present and voting;
- c. Approved without further change at a second congregational meeting to be held no less than thirty days later by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting;
- d. Become effective upon official notice and approval by the Synod Council.

Section 2. This congregation may adopt such bylaws, not in conflict with this constitution, as may be necessary. Such bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called and conducted meeting of the congregation by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting.

Section 3. The Confession of Faith as stated in ARTICLE II shall be that of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

Section 4. If in the judgment of the Synod Council an amendment to the constitution or bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, to the Approved Constitution for Synods or to the Approved Constitution for Congregations ought to entail related amendments of this constitution, receipt of an official communication to that effect from the secretary of the synod enclosing a draft of the amendment recommended by the Synod Council shall constitute proper proposal and notice thereof. Adoption of such an amendment shall then be in order at the next following meeting of the congregation.

ARTICLE VIII

Auxiliaries and Organizations

All auxiliaries and organizations within the congregation shall exist to aid it in ministering to its members and to all whom it can reach with the Gospel of Christ. Regular reports concerning the program and work of these organizations and auxiliaries shall be made to the Congregational Council and congregational meetings.