



Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church  
of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, Chico, California

## **Constitution & Bylaws**

Amended: January 8, 2023



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# CONSTITUTION

## PREAMBLE

**WHEREAS** the Word of God commands that Christians unite in worship (Hebrews 10:24-25), practice fellowship with one another (Acts 2:42-47), preach the Gospel to the whole world (Mark 16:16, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8), and serve the needs of all men in Christian love (Ephesians 4:7-16, Mark 10:42-44, John 13:35, Galatians 6:10); and

**WHEREAS** our Lord and Savior commands not only that a Christian Congregation conform to the Word of God in doctrine and practice (Psalm 119:105, Galatians 1:6-8, Matthew 28:19-20, 2 Timothy 4:1-5) but also that all things be done decently and in good order (1 Corinthians 14:40);

**NOW THEREFORE**, in order that we may publicly worship the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that the Word of God may be preached among us in its purity and truth and His sacraments administered according to their instructions by our Lord Jesus Christ; and that we may fulfill our Lord's commands, we, the members of Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church, Chico, California, having duly and regularly incorporated under California law hereby subscribe to the following Constitution and Bylaws, in accordance with which, all spiritual and material affairs of our congregation shall be conducted.

## ARTICLE I – NAME & AFFILIATION

This congregation shall be named Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, Chico, California, and shall be a member of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, as long as the Synod conforms to the congregation's confessional standards as set forth in this constitution.

## ARTICLE II – PURPOSE & MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of this congregation shall be that of a Christian congregation established and maintained for the express purpose of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and disseminating the Holy Scriptures in all their truth and purity.

Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church is a community of believers saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. As a people enabled by the Spirit, we are committed to regular worship and the use of the sacraments, studying and teaching the Bible, praying, using our gifts and talents in God's service, caring and nurturing of others, and sharing the message of God's salvation so that God is glorified and all people may know Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

## ARTICLE III – DOCTRINAL STANDARD

This congregation as a body and all of its members as individuals accept without reservation:

1. The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as the true and inerrant written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice;
2. All ten of the Symbolic Books contained in the Book of Concord (1580) as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God.

The congregation insists that all doctrine preached, taught, or practiced in its midst must be in accord with this doctrinal standard. All doctrinal disputes which may arise shall be judged and decided according to this Article.

## ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this congregation includes the following:

1. **Baptized members** are all persons within the congregation, whether children or adults, who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and who come under the pastoral care of this congregation.
2. **Communicant members** are those baptized persons of the congregation who have been instructed as outlined in Section 1.04 in the Bylaws and confirmed into the Lutheran faith, confessing their personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; who accept the provisions of this Constitution and the doctrinal standard of this congregation; and who are not members of any church other than this congregation and who are not members or supporters of any group or organization whose teachings and/or practices conflict with the Word of God.
3. **Voting members** are those communicant members of the congregation who are of legal age of the State .

The above provisions for baptized, communicant, and voting membership in this congregation shall be applied equally to all persons regardless of race, color, or national origin.

## ARTICLE V – DUTIES & PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERS

### 1. Baptized Members

- a. The duties and privileges of baptized members are the same as those of communicant members insofar as they apply.
- b. Baptized members may in due time take a course of instruction in preparation for communicant membership in the congregation.

### 2. Communicant Members

In addition to the qualifications for communicant membership set forth in Article IV of this Constitution and Bylaws, it shall be the duty and privilege of all communicant members:

- a. To conform their entire lives to the rule of God's Word and in all things to glorify the Triune God;
- b. To attend worship services faithfully, when physically able, and to make diligent use of the means of grace (God's Word and the Sacraments) in order to grow spiritually.
- c. To exercise faithful stewardship of God's gifts of time, talents, and treasures, supporting the work of God's Kingdom at home and abroad;

- d. To bring their children for baptism at an early age and to provide proper Christian training for them both at home and through the educational agencies of this congregation (Sunday School, Confirmation Classes, Vacation Bible School, etc.)
- e. To witness by word and deed to show God's love to others and to build up their fellow members in the Christian faith;
- f. To accept brotherly admonition when they have erred or given offense;
- g. To submit willingly to all regulations properly adopted by this congregation, providing such regulations do not conflict with the Word of God;
- h. To become a voting member when reaching the age set for voting membership .

3. **Voting members** are expected to:

- a. Attend meetings of the voters assembly faithfully. By being absent, a voting member forfeits the right to vote at that meeting.
- b. Serve faithfully, according to their God-given talents, in any capacity in which they may be called upon to serve.
- c. Read and sign the Constitution and Bylaws, signifying their willingness to abide by the provisions therein.

## ARTICLE VI – AUTHORITY OF THE VOTERS ASEMBLY

- 1. **General.** The voters' assembly shall be the governing body of this congregation and shall be empowered to administer and to manage all of its affairs. The establishment and conduct of all organizations and societies within the congregation shall be subject to the approval and supervision of the voters assembly.
- 2. **Bylaws.** The voters assembly shall have the authority to adopt and to amend this Constitution .
- 3. **Right of Calling.** The right of calling ordained and commissioned church workers for this congregation shall be vested in the voters assembly and shall never be delegated to a smaller group or to an individual other than Synod's Board of Assignment.
- 4. **Decisions.** The decisions of the voters assembly shall be final and binding. Any member may appeal to the voters assembly in regard to any matter relating to the government and affairs of the congregation. Doctrinal matters shall be decided only by the Word of God. All other matters may be decided by a majority vote of the voters assembly unless otherwise specified by this Constitution and Bylaws or the rules of parliamentary procedure.
- 5. **Excommunication.** The voters assembly shall have the authority to exercise Christian discipline according to Matthew 18:15-18. The goal is to win the person back, but if necessary, he or she shall be excluded from membership in the congregation.

6. **Officers.** The voters assembly shall elect officers for the congregation as specified in the Bylaws. When necessary, other officers and committees may be established and their duties defined by the voters assembly. Congregational officers, boards, and committees, whether elected or appointed, shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them, and whatever power may have been delegated to them at any time may be altered or revoked by the voters assembly.
7. **Removal.** Any officer may be removed from office by a two-thirds majority vote by secret ballot vote of the voters assembly for persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, inability to discharge his or her duties, or willful neglect of them.

## ARTICLE VII – THE OFFICES OF PASTOR, VICAR, & TEACHER

1. The **offices** of Pastor, Vicar, and Teacher shall be conferred only upon such pastors, vicars or teachers, who:
  - a. Are theologically trained, certified by The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, and are qualified for their work;
  - b. Unreservedly pledge their acceptance of and adherence to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions which are the doctrinal standard of this congregation;
  - c. Have been properly called by the congregation, and have been publicly installed in their office. Only male candidates shall be considered for the office of Pastor or Vicar.
  - d. The office of Teacher for a Christian Pre-school, Day Care Center, Kindergarten, and/or Parochial School System can be either male or female provided they are properly trained, meet the Christian scholastic requirements of this congregation, and adhere to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions which are the doctrinal standard of this congregation.
2. **Duties.** The rights and duties of a pastor are to act as the chief enabling minister and spiritual leader of the congregation and its component and auxiliary groups, equipping the leaders and members to carry out the stated purpose of this congregation (Article II of this Constitution); order and officiate at the worship services of the congregation; proclaim and teach the Word of God; administer the Sacraments; minister to the entire congregation and to individuals; keep a church record of all official acts, which record is to be and remain the property of the congregation; and discharge all other duties which the Holy Scripture lays upon the office of the ministry.
3. **Removal.** The voters assembly shall have the right to remove from office by a two-thirds majority vote by ballot, in Christian and lawful order, any pastor, vicar, or teacher of the congregation for any of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, inability to discharge his or her duties, or willful neglect of them.

## ARTICLE VIII – SCHOOLS

This congregation has the privilege and right to operate a Christian Day Care Center, Pre-school, Kindergarten, and/or a Parochial School System.

## **ARTICLE IX – PROPERTY RIGHTS**

1. This congregation may receive, acquire, hold title to, and manage such real estate and other property as it may need to accomplish its stated purpose and may, by decision of the voters assembly, sell or dispose of all such real estate and other property or any part thereof.
2. If at any time a division should take place in this congregation on account of doctrine, the property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those communicant members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Article III of this Constitution. If a division takes place for any other reason, the property shall remain with the majority of the communicant members.
3. In the event the congregation should disband, after due settlement of just claims, all remaining funds shall be conveyed to a congregation/ministry that upholds the confessional standard as shown in Article III, as determined by the voters assembly.

## **ARTICLE X – CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION**

1. The members of this congregation shall not change the doctrinal standard upon which the congregation is based (Article III of this Constitution). All other portions of this Constitution may be changed, provided such revision is not contrary to the Word of God.
2. This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of those present at each of two consecutive regular meetings of the voters assembly, provided the proposed change(s) has been announced and published at least two weeks by mail before the first meeting.



# BYLAWS

## SECTION I – MEMBERSHIP

### A. Admission into Membership

- 1.01 Baptism. All persons baptized under the authority of this congregation become baptized members. Children already baptized in a Christian congregation may be received as baptized members with the consent of their parents or guardians.
- 1.02 Confirmation. After instruction (see 1.04 below) in the Word of God, all children and adults who are confirmed in this congregation become communicant members .
- 1.03 Adult Baptism. When adults not previously baptized are instructed in the Word of God and are baptized in this congregation, they become communicant members.
- 1.04 Instruction. Instruction shall consist of a minimum of ten hours of study of the pertinent doctrines as outlined in the Luther's Small Catechism for adults and two years of Confirmation instruction in the Catechism for children. Confirmation class may begin at age 11.
- 1.05 Profession of Faith/Transfer. Applicants for communicant membership who have been instructed and confirmed in the Lutheran Church and provide evidence of such instruction and confirmation may be received provided they are qualified in all respects for membership in this congregation (see Article IV of the Constitution). All persons who have been instructed and confirmed in the Lutheran faith may be received as communicant members.
- 1.06 Procedure for Acceptance into Membership. After having given satisfactory evidence to the Pastor and/or to the Deacons that they understand and are in full accord with the doctrine and practice of this congregation and are qualified for membership (see Article IV of the Constitution), the names of those who have been instructed (1.04) or confirmed (1.02) or who wish to join by profession of faith (1.05) shall be presented to the Deacons by the Pastor. The Deacons shall present the names of those who have been accepted for membership through instruction, confirmation, or profession of faith to the congregation. These shall be formally accepted in the next public worship service.
- 1.07 Reinstatement. Any member whose membership has been terminated by excommunication or self-exclusion may be reinstated to communicant membership by profession of repentance or profession of faith in a regular worship service .
- 1.08 Responsibilities. All persons desiring to become communicant members should first establish regular attendance at worship services, if at all possible, and be willing to abide with the other responsibilities of membership stated in Article V of the Constitution.
- 1.09 Voting Members. When a communicant member of this congregation reaches legal age, he or she shall be entitled to vote on all matters before the congregation. Each prospective voting member shall be given a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws of the congregation.



## **B. Termination of Membership**

- 1.12 Release. Those wishing to transfer their membership to another The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod congregation shall be given a letter of transfer. Those wishing to join a congregation of a denomination not in fellowship with The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod may be granted a release by the Board of Deacons.
- 1.13 Whereabouts Unknown. The names of members whose whereabouts are unknown and who cannot be contacted may be removed from the membership list by a resolution of the voters assembly.
- 1.14 Delinquent Members. Upon the recommendation of the Deacons, providing the persons have been admonished in Christian love according to the Word of God, the voters assembly may at any regular meeting by a two-thirds majority vote remove from the membership roll such members who have severed their connection with this congregation by neglecting the duties of membership set forth in Article V of the Constitution.
- 1.15 Status of Membership. All those whose membership has been terminated forfeit all rights as members of this congregation.
- 1.16 Soul Accounting. All names added to or removed from the membership in this congregation shall be entered into the minutes of the voters assembly. Insofar as possible, all names removed from the membership list of this congregation shall be placed on a soul responsibility list (list of mission prospects) of this or of a sister congregation.

## **SECTION II – MEETINGS**

- 2.01 Regular Meetings. A regular meeting of the Voters Assembly shall be held annually to adopt a budget and to elect officers. Additional meetings may be held at the discretion of the Church Council.
- 2.02 Special meetings. Special meetings of the voters assembly may be called by the Pastor or the President of the congregation with approval of one Deacon and advance notification given as in 2.03 below. Business at special meetings shall be limited to the announced purpose.
- 2.03 Announcements. Every legal meeting of the voters assembly shall be announced orally or by being published including (but not limited to) any of the following: verbal announcement at a service, bulletin announcement, newsletter announcement, phone tree, or electronic (such as Flocknote, email, Webpage, etc.) Regular and special meetings shall be announced on the Sunday prior to the meeting.
- 2.04 Quorum. When a meeting has been properly announced, fifteen members of the voting membership, two of whom must be legal officers, must be present to constitute a quorum.
- 2.05 Parliamentary Authority. In all questions not covered by the Constitution and Bylaws of this congregation, the rules contained in the current edition of “Roberts Rules of Order” shall be applied in Christian love.

## **SECTION III – CALLING A PASTOR, A TEACHER, AND OTHER WORKERS**

- 3.01 Vacancy Pastor. In the event of a pastoral vacancy, the Deacons shall immediately arrange for a meeting of the voters assembly to select a vacancy pastor .
- 3.02 Candidate Nomination. A six-member Call Committee consisting of three Deacons, three members of the congregation at large and a pastoral advisor shall be elected by the voters assembly. They shall contact all members of the congregation by letter and by announcement in two consecutive Sunday worship services, requesting their nominations of candidates they may wish to include in the call list. This list shall be forwarded to the District President along with a request for him to add any name he deems appropriate for this congregation. The congregation shall receive from the District President a completed list along with biographical information on each candidate .
- 3.03 Candidate Evaluations . The Call Committee shall review, evaluate, and screen the candidates for compatibility with the mission and needs of the congregation. Methods to this end may include study of the biographical sketches, telephone interviews with the candidate, discussions with the Circuit Visitor and District President, and written correspondence. The Call Committee shall have the authority to delete or retain names presented for a specific cause, but not to add names unless by repeat of the process. The list accepted by the Call Committee shall be made known to the entire congregation by letter and at one Sunday worship service.
- 3.04 Election. The Call Committee shall present the accepted list to the voters assembly for approval. The voters assembly may delete names by majority vote, but may not add new names. One candidate shall be elected by a two-thirds majority vote from the approved list. The election shall, if possible, be made unanimous by a rising vote to indicate solidarity, and the call sent to the elected candidate.
- 3.05 Additional Calls. In the event the elected candidate returns the call unfulfilled, the entire call process shall be repeated.
- 3.06 Call Through the Board of Assignments. In lieu of the above procedure, the voters assembly may by majority vote, call a pastor or teacher through the Board of Assignment of Synod.

## **SECTION IV – OFFICERS, BOARDS, AND COMMITTEES**

- 4.01 Legal Officers. The congregation shall elect the following officers from its active voting membership: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Financial Manager.
- 4.02 Boards. The congregation shall elect the following boards from its active voting membership: Board of Deacons, Board of Evangelism, Board of Trustees, Board of Fellowship, and Board of Youth Activities. Each board will in turn elect its own chairperson and report the name of the chairperson to the President.
- 4.03 Terms of Office. The terms for officers and board members shall be one year from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, for the calendar year they are voted in.

- 4.04 Limitation. The offices of President, Vice-President, and Deacons shall be filled by male members of the congregation who are at least twenty-one (21) years of age.
- 4.05 Committees. As it deems necessary, the Voters Assembly may appoint officers and/or committees not listed in the Bylaws by passing a resolution. The President may also appoint congregational members to fill vacant positions and establish committees not listed in the Bylaws with approval from the Church Council.
- 4.06 Church Council. The Church Council consists of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Financial Manager, and the chairperson of each individual board. (The chairperson may designate a fellow board member to represent their board at a Church Council meeting if they are going to be absent.) The Church Council shall be the primary administrative board responsible for taking resolutions to the Voters Assembly and in administering the business of the congregation. The Church Council shall meet at the discretion of the president, in consultation with the council.

The Church Council shall review all resolutions (which are proposed by boards, council members and voters to be brought before the Voters Assembly). Those resolutions, which are approved by the Church Council, shall be brought before the Voters Assembly at their next meeting.

Decisions of the Church Council are made official through a majority vote of all Church Council members (omitting any vacancies). Electronic voting (text, email, etc.) is authorized when needed at the discretion of the President. Church Council meetings may be held face to face or by video / audio conference (or any combination thereof), provided that all council members have access to attend the meetings.

## **SECTION V – ELECTION OF OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS**

- 5.01 Nominating Committee. The congregational President, the Pastor, and the Church Council shall select a Nominating Committee prior to the November voters meeting. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of two members from the boards and two members from the congregation-at-large for a total of four members and the Pastor. The Nominating Committee shall propose a slate of names for each office. Additional nominations may be made from the floor by any voting member; however, the nominee must give prior consent to the nomination.
- 5.02 Election. The election of officers and board members shall be by ballot and shall take place in the November meeting of the voters assembly. The newly elected officers shall assume their respective duties January 1 and be installed in a public worship service of the congregation in the month of January. In the event of a vacancy in any office, the president shall appoint a replacement to serve the unexpired term.
- 5.03 Term of Office. Officers shall be permitted to hold the same office for as many terms as the congregation elects them. Officers shall hold office until their successors shall have been elected and qualified.

## **SECTION VI – DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

- 6.01 Duties of officers and boards of the congregation shall be those outlined in the Job Guidelines manual and as approved by the congregation at one voters assembly .
- 6.03 The Vice-President assumes the presidency upon a vacancy of the presidency or in the absence of the President.
- 6.04 The President shall appoint a committee to review the church's financial records annually and a report of said review shall be presented at the next voters assembly.

## **SECTION VII – ADMINISTRATION OF CHURCH FUNDS**

(other than the annual budget)

- 7.01 Directed Memorial Fund. The purpose of this fund is to receive gifts and bequests and to use them for the mission and ministry at Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Church Council has the authority to disburse these funds without further approval of the voters assembly. This fund shall continue to exist as long as the congregation does. If Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church ceases to exist the fund will be terminated in accordance with Article IX of the Constitution.
- 7.02 School Reserve Fund. The purpose of this fund is to receive a portion of the monies from the rental or lease of the school facilities and to provide funds for the repair and maintenance of those facilities. The Board of Trustees makes recommendations to the Church Council for needed expenditures exceeding \$1,000. If approved by the Council, the President shall present the need to the voters assembly along with supporting facts for its approval before the funds are used. Funds spent less than \$1,000 shall be reported by the Board of Trustees at the next Church Council meeting. This fund shall continue to exist as long as the congregation does. If Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church ceases to exist the fund will be terminated in accordance with Article IX of the Constitution.
- 7.03 Church Facilities Reserve Fund. The purpose of this fund is to receive a portion of the monies from the rental or lease of the school facilities and to provide funds for the repair and maintenance of the church facilities (as separate from the school facilities) The Board of Trustees makes recommendation to the Church Council for needed expenditures between \$5,000 - \$10,000. Expenses exceeding \$10,000 shall be presented by the President to the voters assembly along with supporting facts for their consideration. Funds spent less than \$5,000 shall be reported by the Board of Trustees at the next Church Council meeting. This fund shall continue to exist as long as the congregation does. If Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church ceases to exist the fund will be terminated in accordance with Article IX of the Constitution

7.04 Mission Endowment Trust Fund: The purpose of this fund is to receive gifts and bequests and to use the interest earned from them for the mission and ministry of Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church and The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, its districts, seminaries, colleges, institutions or agencies. At least annually the Church Council shall make the grants. (The principal shall always remain intact.) The fund shall be invested in accordance with Section 7.06 of these Bylaws. This fund shall continue to exist as long as the congregation does. If Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church ceases to exist the fund will be terminated in accordance with Article IX of the Constitution.

7.05 Scholarship Endowment Trust Fund. This fund was established in 1991/1992 by Herman Biederstadt. The fund is intended to support a needy student or students pursuing studies in a Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod university or seminary. The Board of Deacons will be responsible for administration and disbursement of the fund and will maintain a written policy regarding such. The Scholarship Fund shall be invested in accordance with Section 7.06 of these Bylaws and shall continue to exist for as long as the congregation exists. If Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church ceases to exist the fund will be terminated in accordance with Article IX of the Constitution.

7.06 Financial investment of the Mission Endowment Trust Fund and the Scholarship Endowment Trust Fund are to be invested by a committee of the following: President and the Financial Manager. Investments shall be approved by the church council before being completed.

## **SECTION VIII – ORDER OF BUSINESS**

8.01 The order of business for regular meetings shall be:

- Prayer.
- Roll call.
- Reading and approval of minutes.
- Pastor's report
- Report of officers, boards, and committees.
- Unfinished business.
- New business.
- Adjournment with prayer.

## **SECTION IX – AMENDMENTS**

9.01 These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of those present at a regular or special voters assembly, provided the proposed change(s) has been announced orally and published at least two weeks before the meeting in the bulletin, in a newsletter announcement, or in electronic format (such as Flocknote, email, Webpage, etc.)

# CERTIFICATION OF THE CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

This document represents a true copy of the Constitution & Bylaws as amended at a Voters Assembly held on January 8, 2023.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Frederick W. Sherman III". The signature is stylized with a large 'F' and a small 'III' at the end.

Frederick W. Sherman III  
President of the Congregation

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Jerry Brandt". The signature is stylized with a large 'J' and a long horizontal stroke.

Jerry Brandt  
Vice President of the Congregation