



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

# Constitution & Bylaws

Amended: Draft 2024-02



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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);

**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 of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, Chico, California, 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*, hereafter referred to as *Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church, Chico*, in this document, having and shall be a member of the LCMS (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, Chico* 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 – CONFESSIONAL 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 the Symbolical Books of the LCMS as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, to wit: The Three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, Luther's Large Catechism, Luther's Small Catechism, and the Formula of Concord.

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

This congregation distinguishes between three types of membership:

1. **Baptized members**—includes all 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 children who have not yet been confirmed into communicant membership;
2. **Communicant members**—includes those baptized members who have been instructed in and are familiar with the contents of Luther's Small Catechism, have been confirmed in the Lutheran faith, have accepted the confessional standard of Article 3 of this constitution and who are not members or supporters of any group or organization whose teachings and/or practices conflict with the Word of God; and
3. **Voting members**—includes communicant members who are of the legal age in California.

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

- 1. General.** The Voters Assembly shall administer and manage all substantive powers in this congregation as set forth in the constitution and bylaws. 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 a properly constituted quorum of the Voters Assembly unless otherwise specified by this constitution and these 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. 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, willful neglect of them or being domineering.

## ARTICLE VII – THE OFFICE OF PASTOR

1. The **office** of pastor shall be conferred only upon such pastors, who meet the following requirements:
  - a. The pastoral office shall be conferred only upon male pastors or candidates who profess and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in this constitution, who are qualified for the work of the ministry, and who have been endorsed by and are members of the LCMS.
  - b. Only those commissioned ministers shall receive a call who adhere to the confessional standard set forth in this constitution, who are qualified for the work of the ministry to which they are called, and who have been endorsed by and are members of the LCMS.
  - c. The pastor or other ordained or commissioned ministers may be removed from office in Christian and lawful order by a two-thirds majority ballot vote of the Voters Assembly for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of the duties of office, the inability to perform those duties, or being domineering in office.
  - d. When a vacancy occurs in an office of the pastor or commissioned minister, the Church Council shall notify the president of the CNH District (California-Nevada-Hawaii) to receive assistance in temporarily filling the vacancy and to receive his counsel in calling a new pastor.
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 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 IIX – PROPERTY RIGHTS

1. This congregation may receive, acquire, hold title to, and manage real and personal property, and may erect structure(s) thereon, mortgage, sell, or convey such real or personal property or any part thereof. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the voters present at a regular or specially called Voters Assembly shall be required for adoption for the purchase or sale of real property or erection of buildings.
2. All property of this congregation shall be held in the corporate name as stated in Article I.
3. 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.
4. 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 IX – AMENDMENTS

1. Proposed Amendments to the provisions of this constitution shall be submitted in writing at a duly called Voters Assembly and announced to the congregation by public posting and/or mail to all communicant members 60 days before the assembly at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the voters present shall be required for adoption. Amendments to this constitution shall not destroy the constitution's essential meaning. The date of approval shall be referenced in any adopted amendment.
2. The revised constitution shall, as a condition of continued membership in the LCMS, be submitted to the president of the district for review by the District Committee on Constitutional Matters (DCCM) and approved by the CNH District's Board of Directors before being implemented by the congregation.
3. After approval by the CNH District's Board of Directors, the document shall be signed by the president, secretary, and pastor.



# BYLAWS

## SECTION I – MEMBERSHIP

### 1. Admission into Membership

- a. **Baptism.** All persons baptized in the name of the Triune God, 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.
- b. **Confirmation for Children.** Instruction shall consist of two years of confirmation instruction in the catechism for children. Confirmation class may begin at a reasonable age, at the discretion of the pastor. After instruction in the Word of God, all children who are confirmed in this congregation become communicant members.
- c. **Confirmation for Adults.** Instruction shall consist of a minimum of ten hours of study of the pertinent doctrines as outlined in the Luther's Small Catechism. After instruction in the Word of God, all adults who are confirmed in this congregation become communicant members.
- d. **Profession of Faith/Transfer.** Applicants for communicant membership who have been instructed and confirmed in the LCMS 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.
- e. **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.
- f. **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.

- g. 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.

## 2. Termination of Membership

- a. Release. Those wishing to transfer their membership to another LCMS congregation shall be given a letter of transfer. Those wishing to join a congregation of a denomination not in fellowship with the LCMS may be granted a release by the Board of Deacons.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. Status of Membership. All those whose membership has been terminated forfeit all rights as members of this congregation.
- e. 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 .
- f. Death. Members who have died shall be removed from the membership list.
- g. 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

1. Regular Meetings. A regular meeting of the Voters Assembly shall be held annually to adopt a budget and to elect officers in November, unless otherwise scheduled in a different month. Additional meetings may be held at the discretion of the Church Council.
2. 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.
3. 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 push protocols, email, Webpage, etc.) Regular and special meetings shall be announced on the Sunday prior to the meeting.
4. 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.
5. Parliamentary Authority. In all questions not covered by the constitution and bylaws of this congregation, the rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be applied in Christian love.

## SECTION III – CALLING ORDAINED OR COMMISSIONED CHURCH WORKERS

When this congregation calls a pastor, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The call committee shall consist of two members of the Church Council and no fewer than two members at large from the congregation. At its first meeting the committee shall:
  - a. Elect a chairperson;
  - b. Establish a set of criteria for the position;
  - c. Seek assistance and a list of proposed eligible candidates from the district president's office;
  - d. Call for nominations from the congregation for at least 30 days (members must submit nominations in writing);
  - e. Establish an interview and evaluation process;
  - f. Present a summary of its work and recommendations to the Church Council for its affirmation before a Voters Assembly vote to call.
2. The call committee shall present its recommendation(s) to the Voters Assembly in an appropriate format at least one week before a vote to extend a call.
3. Voting shall be done by secret ballot at a duly called Voters Assembly designated for calling a new pastor. Ballots shall be counted by the secretary and confirmed by an attending member chosen at the time.

4. A candidate must receive a majority of the votes cast to be elected. If no one receives a majority, the candidate(s) with the fewest votes is removed, and the process repeated until one candidate receives a majority. A motion should then be made to make the election unanimous.

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

1. Legal Officers. The congregation shall elect the following officers from its active voting membership: president, secretary, and financial manager (treasurer).
2. In addition to the legal officers mentioned in the above paragraph, the congregation shall elect a vice president to also serve as an officer of the congregation.
3. 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. 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.
5. Limitation. The offices of president, vice-president, and deacons shall be filled by male members who are voting members of the congregation and are at least twenty-one (21) years of age.
6. Committees. As it deems necessary, voters at any legally called Voters Assembly may appoint officers and/or committees not listed in these bylaws by passing a resolution at a regular meeting. The president may also appoint members of the congregation to fill vacant positions and establish committees not listed in the bylaws with approval from the Church Council.
7. Church Council. The Church Council consists of the president, vice-president, secretary, financial manager (treasurer), 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 where such resolutions are discussed and voted on for approval. The Church Council shall meet a minimum of once per year to create a list nominations for next years officers and to develop a proposed budget for next year to be presented at the next Voters Assembly. Additional issues of importance to the congregation may also be addressed. Other meetings during the year may be held at the discretion of the president or council members, as needs exist.
8. The Church Council shall review all resolutions (which are proposed by boards, council members and / or voters). Those resolutions, which are approved by the Church Council, shall be brought before the Voters Assembly at their next meeting for approval by a majority of the members.

9. Decisions of the Church Council are made official through a majority vote of the Church Council members (omitting any vacancies). Voting electronically is authorized if the following conditions are met:
  - a. The ballots sent through email or other electronic means or delivered in paper form must contain the following or similar phrase:

*By submitting this ballot, I authorize the council to deliver ballots through electronic message exchange. (Note, all council members must submit ballots, electronically or through paper, on any given vote to signify that they agree to the use of electronic voting or the vote will not be authorized.)*
  - b. After the vote, all responses shall be printed out and filed with the minutes of the council.
  - c. A follow up electronic message (or paper correspondence as needed) shall be delivered to each council member to inform them of the outcome.
10. 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**

1. Nominating Committee. The president, the pastor, and the Church Council shall select members for 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 qualified names (refer to Section IV) for each office. Additional nominations of qualified members may be made from the floor by any voting member; however, the nominee must give prior consent to the nomination.
2. 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 qualified replacement to serve the unexpired term.
3. Term of Office. Officers shall be permitted to hold the same office for successive terms for as many terms as the congregation elects them according to the rules specified in Sections IV and V. Officers shall hold office until their successors shall have been elected.

## SECTION VI – DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. 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 a Voters Assembly. Church Council members may bring suggestions for changes to the Job Guidelines manual to the Church Council for discussion. The Church Council shall submit any changes to the Voters Assembly as resolutions, where such resolutions are discussed and voted on for approval.
2. The vice-president assumes the presidency upon a vacancy of the presidency or in the absence of the president.
3. 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

Policies for the administration of church funds (other than the annual budget) may be found in the *Administration of Church Funds* manual. This document is prepared and maintained by the Church Council.

## SECTION VIII – ORDER OF BUSINESS

The order of business for regular meetings of the Voters Assembly and Church Council shall be:

1. Prayer.
2. Roll call.
3. Approval of minutes.
4. Pastor's report
5. Report of officers, boards, and committees.
6. Unfinished business.
7. New business.
8. Adjournment with prayer.

## SECTION IX – AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended in a duly called Voters Assembly in this manner:

1. Amendments to the provisions of these bylaws shall be submitted in writing at a duly called Voters Assembly and announced to the congregation by public posting and/or mailed to all communicant members 30 days before the assembly at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon. A majority vote of the voters present shall be required for adoption.
2. The revised bylaws shall, as a condition of continued membership in LCMS, be submitted to the president of the CNH District (California-Nevada-Hawaii) for review by the district's constitution committee and favorable action by the district's board of directors before being implemented by the congregation.

# CERTIFICATION OF THE CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

This document represents a true copy of the constitution & bylaws as amended at a Voters Assembly held on XXX.

XXX

Frederick W Sherman III  
President

XXX

Aaron Ashworth  
Secretary

XXX

Brennan DeForest  
Pastor