

**THE CONSTITUTION OF  
SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS LUTHERAN CHURCH  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

**PREAMBLE**

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the last chapter of Matthew, commanded His disciples, saying, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

2. For almost 2000 years God's faithful people have obeyed Christ's command and have shared the good news of God's saving love both with those near and dear to them and with strangers close to home and far away. By the grace of God at work in their efforts we, too, have come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

3. Now we have the call to go and make disciples. To us God is now saying, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (I Peter 2:9) God has made us His people, to advance the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Church. By His grace, we confess one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all who is above all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:5-6)

4. We gather as a congregation within the Body of Christ for the purpose of making disciples, as our Lord commanded. Disciples, as the Scriptures define them, are learners and followers. That we might follow our Lord and learn from Him, we:

a. Worship our God, for it is our duty to thank, praise, serve and obey Him: (Hebrews 10:24-25)

b. Fellowship with one another, for in the communion of saints we are mutually encouraged in the faith: (Acts 2:42; I Thessalonians 5:11)

c. Witness to our faith, so that all may come to know the good news of salvation in Christ Jesus: (Romans 10:17)

d. Teach and learn the faith that we might grow in the knowledge and in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: (Ephesians 4:11-16)

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e. Serve the needs of all people in Christian love: (Galatians 6:10 and James 2:14-17);

f. Administer the Scriptural Office of the Keys as Christ has given it to His Church. (John 20:21-23 and Matthew 18:15-20)

5. It is God's will that within the Church all things be done decently and in order. (I Corinthians 14:40) Therefore, as members of this congregation, we accept and subscribe to the following Constitution and By Laws, in accordance with which all spiritual and material affairs of our congregation shall be governed.

## ARTICLE 1: NAME

The name of this congregation shall be Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, San Antonio, Texas.

## ARTICLE 2: MISSION

1. Our Congregational Mission Statement is "A place of refuge in a stormy world; Called, gathered, enlightened, and empowered by God to multiply places of refuge throughout our world".

2. Our Congregational Vision Statement is "God has made us a place of refuge in a stormy world so that every gift God gives might be used to equip all people to grow up in every way into Christ".

3. Our Congregational Motto is "Celebrating God's Transcendent Majesty".

4. Our Congregational Values are:

a. I believe that God expects me to and it is my privilege to attend church every week.

b. I believe that in everything we do as the people of God we should seek and comply with the Holy Spirit's guidance.

c. I believe that God wants me to keep on growing in my faith and in my walk with Him through personal and group study of His Word all my life.

d. I believe that nothing should ever get in the way of telling people about Jesus, because it is my life's purpose to bring people to Jesus.

e. I believe in welcoming and caring for people, because God welcomes and cares for me.

f. I believe that everything I am and have is God's gift to me, and that giving back to Him my very best is the best use of His gifts.

g. I believe in always doing my best, because my goal is to do all things to the glory of God.

## ARTICLE 3: CONFESSIONAL STANDARD

1. This congregation accepts and affirms all the books of the Old and New Testaments in the cannon of the Reformation and translated from the original languages as the inspired and revealed Word of God. We confess the three ecumenical creeds: the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian. And we look to the Book of Concord of 1580 and the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church including the Augusburg Confession of 1530, the Apology of the Augusburg Confession of 1531, the Smalcald Articles of 1537, the Treatise on the Power of Primacy of the Pope of 1537, the Small Catechism of 1529, the Large Catechism of 1529 and the Formula of Concord of 1577 for the correct presentation and true exposition of Christian doctrine drawn from the Holy Scripture.

2. No doctrine or practice in conflict, or inconsistent, with the above norms of our faith and life shall be taught or tolerated in this congregation.

## ARTICLE 4: MEMBERSHIP

1. Baptized membership in this congregation is held by all those who are baptized in the Name of the Triune God with water and are under our pastoral care.

2. Communicant membership in this congregation may be held only by those who:

a. Are baptized in the Name of the Triune God;

b. Have declared their acceptance of the confessions of this congregation as contained in Article 3 of this Constitution;

c. Have been accepted into communicant membership in accordance with the By Laws of this congregation and shall remain faithful to the responsibilities of membership as contained in these By Laws;

d. Lead a Christian life by avoiding the manifest works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21);

e. Are not members of a secret society or of any other organization conflicting with the Word of God and the conduct of a Christian (II Corinthians 6:14-18)

f. Worship and commune faithfully and regularly.

3. Voting members are all communicant members, regardless of gender, who have reached the age of 18.

4. The membership and membership privileges of each communicant member shall remain in force so long as each member shall maintain eligibility according to the provisions in paragraph 2 of this Article and shall meet the requirements stated or implied in the disciplinary, or other, provisions of the By Laws.

5. Membership in this congregation along with all rights and privileges of such membership shall be deemed to have terminated when one of the following has occurred.

a. A member has been transferred or released to another congregation;

b. A member has shown by absence from attendance at worship and Holy Communion that membership is no longer a priority in his or her life. Absence from worship and the distribution of the Lord's Supper must be the exception in a Christian's life and not the norm. When members commune less than four times a year and worship less than once a month, in Christian love, they will be confronted and encouraged to improve their efforts;

c. A member has moved away leaving no forwarding address or any other means of contact by the congregation;

d. A member has been excommunicated in accordance with the Word of God and provisions of these By Laws;

e. A member dies.

## ARTICLE 5: PASTORS AND STAFF

1. Both Called and contracted workers serve the church. Only candidates who profess acceptance of and pledge faithful adherence to the confessions of this congregation as set forth in Article 3 of this Constitution and are members in good standing and on the roster of workers of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod shall be eligible for a divine call.
2. In the absence of adequate cause of dismissal, as defined in the By Laws of the congregation, the tenure of office of a Called worker shall be the remainder of his or her active life or until the Lord calls him or her into another field of service.
3. The right and responsibility of issuing a divine Call shall be vested in the congregation, which may, at its discretion, delegate that right and responsibility as necessary. Called workers who are directly responsible to the Congregation at large, ie, Pastors, Directors of Christian Education, Principals, Music Directors, etc., shall be called by the entire congregation. Those called workers who are responsible to a board, as for example teachers, may be called by that specific Board.
4. Called workers are expected to submit written reports of their activities to the Board of Directors on a monthly basis.
5. Contracted workers in the church shall be employed by the Director of Operations acting under the supervision of the Board of Directors.

## ARTICLE 6: AUTHORITY OF THE CONGREGATION

1. This congregation, subject to the limiting provisions and regulations of this Constitution and its associated By Laws, shall have supreme power in the administration of its affairs. No duly elected officers, Board or Ministry Team members shall have any power or authority beyond that conferred upon them by the congregation acting through its voting membership. Such delegated rights and powers, of officers, Board or Ministry Team members, shall be subject to revision and complete withdrawal by the voting membership at its discretion.

2. All church and school groups, organizations and societies will willingly submit to the authority of the congregation and comply with this Constitution and its associated By Laws in all their decisions and actions.

## ARTICLE 7: OFFICERS AND BOARDS

### A. Officers of the Congregation

1. The Officers of the Congregation shall consist of a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary and a Financial Secretary, elected from among the voting membership in accordance with the By Laws of the congregation. The above listed officers shall constitute the legal representatives of the congregation.

2. The President of the Congregation the Vice-President when acting in the President's capacity shall have a voice on all Boards and Ministry Teams, but his right to vote shall be limited to such Boards or Ministry Teams on which he may hold membership.

3. The Pastor of the congregation shall be, ex-officio (voting member), an officer and member of all Boards and Ministry Teams, and may at his discretion, attend any or all meetings related to congregational activities of any kind.

### B. Boards of the Congregation

Responsibility and authority for the daily administration of congregational affairs shall be delegated by the Board of Directors to individuals and boards that will see to the needs of the congregation in the areas of worship, teaching and learning, witness, service, fellowship, church properties, and finance.

### C. Board of Directors (Church Council)

1. The Board of Directors shall consist of the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary, the Financial Secretary of the Congregation and up to five (5) At Large Representatives. The Representatives at Large must be members of the Congregation, at least 18 years old, and must not be members of any other Board. Positions on the Board of Directors shall be held by virtue of election by the voting members of the Congregation so long as their term of office continues.

#### **D. Board of Elders and Deaconesses**

In compliance with the numerous directives in Scripture to provide spiritual oversight in the church, for the encouragement, admonition and nurture of the body of Christ, there will always be a Board of Elders comprised of communicant members elected by the voting members at a Congregational Meeting. Female Communicant members shall likewise be elected Deaconesses by the voting members at a congregational meeting and will act in an advisory role on the Board of Elders.

#### **E. Board of Education**

The Board of Education, under the leadership of the Principal, shall be responsible for all school/child care staffing actions.

#### **F. Ministry Teams**

Because the needs of the church regularly change, Ministry Teams shall be established or disbanded by the Board of Directors as specific functions or tasks become necessary or cease to be so. The number of Ministry teams and the tasks assigned to each shall be determined by the current needs and resources of the congregation.

### **ARTICLE 8: SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP**

- 1. This congregation shall be affiliated with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as long as the confessions and constitution of said Synod are in accord with the confessions and constitution of this Congregation as defined in Article 3.**
- 2. This congregation shall, to the best of its ability, collaborate with said Synod and assist it in effecting all sound measures intended for building up the Kingdom of God.**

## ARTICLE 9: DIVISION

If, at any time, a separation should take place within this congregation, the advice of the officers of District and Synod shall be sought. If, despite all efforts to resolve these differences in peace and love, a division into factions of the congregation shall occur, the property of the congregation and all benefits therewith connected shall remain with those members who continue to adhere to the confessions and practices contained in Articles 3, 4, 5 and 8 of this Constitution. In the event the congregation should dissolve, the property and all rights connected therewith shall be disposed for the furtherance of the work of God's Kingdom at the discretion of the remaining members. If the congregation dissolves completely, the property and all rights connected therewith shall transfer to the Texas District of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

## ARTICLE 10: MEETINGS

Congregational Meetings shall be held as determined in the By Laws.

## ARTICLE 11: AMENDMENTS

1. This Constitution may be changed or amended, with the exception of Articles listed in paragraph 2 of this Article, by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in any regularly scheduled Congregational Meeting, provided that the intention to amend the Constitution and the wording of the proposed amendments shall be published and distributed to the congregation on two different weekends prior to the date upon which the amendment is presented for action.

2. Changes or amendments to Articles 3, 4, 5, 8 and 9 require a three-fourths majority of the votes cast in any regularly scheduled Congregational Meeting, provided that the intention to amend the Constitution and the wording of the proposed amendments shall be published and distributed to the congregation on two different weekends prior to the date upon which the amendment is presented for action.