

**ROCK OF AGES LUTHERAN CHURCH  
204 W. AIRPORT ROAD  
PAYSON, ARIZONA 85541  
WISCONSIN SYNOD**

# **CONSTITUTION**

## **ARTICLE I NAME**

The name of this congregation shall be Rock of Ages Lutheran Church of Payson, Arizona.

## **ARTICLE II ARTICLES OF FAITH**

### **Section 1.**

This congregation accepts and confesses all the canonical books of the Old and the New Testaments as the verbally inspired Word of God and submits to this Word as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life. (II Timothy 3: 15-17)

### **Section 2.**

This congregation accepts and confesses all the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 as true statements of Scriptural doctrine. They are:

- A. The three Ecumenical Creeds
  - 1) The Apostles'
  - 2) The Nicene
  - 3) The Athanasian
- B. The six Lutheran confessions
  - 1) Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism
  - 2) Dr. Martin Luther's Large Catechism
  - 3) The Unaltered Augsburg Confession
  - 4) Apology of the Augsburg Confession
  - 5) The Smalcald Articles
  - 6) The Formula of Concord

### **Section 3.**

This congregation accepts and confesses these symbolical books without reservation, not insofar as, but because they are the presentation and explanation of the pure doctrine of the Word of God and a summary of the faith held by the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

### **Section 4.**

Hence, no doctrine shall be taught or tolerated in this congregation which is in any way at variance with these symbolical books and the Holy Scriptures.

### **Section 5.**

Likewise, all controversies which may arise in this congregation shall be decided and adjusted according to this norm of doctrine and practice.

# ARTICLE III PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

## Section 1.

The continuing purpose of this congregation as a gathering of Christians, is to serve all people in God's world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of the Holy Scriptures.

## Section 2.

The primary objective of this congregation shall be:

- To proclaim the Law and the Gospel, to lead sinners to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ for life and salvation.
- To strengthen believers in faith and sanctification through the means of grace.
- To equip believers as disciples, stewards, and witnesses for sharing the Gospel of Jesus with our fellowmen.

# ARTICLE IV SYNODICAL AFFILIATION

This congregation shall affiliate itself only with a synod that holds to all the truths of God's Word in doctrine and practice and is bound to the confession of faith as set forth in Article II, it: and as long as, such a synod exists.

# ARTICLE V CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

## Section 1. Classification

- A. Baptized members of the congregation are those who have been baptized into the Christian faith in the name of the Triune God.
- B. Communicant members are those baptized souls who confess the chief parts of Christian doctrine as written in Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism and who have declared their adherence to all the canonical books of the Old and the New Testaments, without qualification, as the only rule and norm of faith and life.
- C. Voting members are those male communicant members (I Corinthians 14:34, I Timothy 2: 12) who have declared their agreement with this Constitution and who have been accepted by the voter's assembly of the congregation.

## Section 2. Privileges and Responsibilities

"God is love" (I John 4:8), and his love ever moves him to bless the members of his Church with innumerable physical and spiritual gifts (I John 4: 19) and to show that love with the works that we do. The giving of such expressions we acknowledge

as both a privilege and a responsibility. Some of the privileges and responsibilities to be noted are the following:

- A. Our God has given us his Word, the one thing needed (Luke 10:42), which alone can save our souls and tell us how to live a God-pleasing life (II Timothy 3:15-17). Consequently, a member of his church will consider it a district privilege and a responsibility to
  - 1) Hear and receive the Word of God diligently;
  - 2) Provide and promote opportunities for Christian education;
  - 3) Bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).
- B. Our God has given us two Sacraments: Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, which are means that our Lord uses to bring his grace to us. Consequently, a member of his church will
  - 1) Have his children baptized early in life, for "Baptism doth also now save us" (I Peter 3:21)
  - 2) Frequently partake of Holy Communion (I Corinthians 11 :23-26), if he is recognized as one who can properly examine himself (I Corinthians 11 :28). Only those in the confessional fellowship of faith are permitted to commune at our altar. (Close Communion - II Corinthians 6:14-15; Romans 16:17).
- C. Our God has given us the privilege of being stewards over a certain portion of his estate and of receiving the steward's

rich reward of grace (Matthew 25: 14-30). Consequently, a member of his Church will

- 1) Continually remember that all his property, time, and talents really belong to God;
  - 2) Conscientiously determine which part of his money, time, and talents shall be devoted to that which the congregation has made its concern, not omitting the work of the Synod (Mark 16:15; I Corinthians 9:14; 16:2; I Peter 4:10);
  - 3) If he is a voting member, regularly attend the voter's meeting and lend the congregation his counsel and aid.
- D. Our God has implanted within us who are Christians the New Man, who desires to live righteously (II Corinthians 5: 17; Ephesians 4:24). Consequently, a member of his Church will:
- 1) Not live in manifest works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21) but lead a Christian life (Galatians 5:22-25);
  - 2) When he has erred, permit himself to be fraternally admonished and corrected in the spirit of Matthew 18:15;
  - 3) Refuse to hold membership in any organization whose teachings and practices conflict with the Word of God (lodges, etc.) (John 5:23; John 8:31-32; II Corinthians 6:14-18).

### **Section 3. Church Discipline and Excommunication**

Christian discipline shall be exercised in this congregation in the spirit of Matthew 18:15-20 toward those who err from the faith or who in other ways have given offense. At all times this shall be done in the spirit of the Gospel, namely, to regain the erring as brethren. Those members who finally must be excommunicated and those who have excluded themselves from the congregation by evading Matthew 18: 15-20 lose all their rights in the congregation and in its property. For excommunication a unanimous vote is required.

### **Section 4. Reinstatement**

When an excommunicated member by the grace of God repents of his sin, he is to be reinstated with all former rights and privileges of this congregation (II Corinthians 2:6-8).

## **ARTICLE VI POWERS AND RIGHTS OF THE CONGREGATION**

### **Section 1.**

In all matters of Christian faith and life, the Word of God is supreme (Psalm 119:105).

### **Section 2.**

In all matters not decided by the Word of God, the congregation alone shall have the right of decision (Romans 12:10; 14:19; Ephesians 5:21).

### **Section 3.**

The church council, any other elected committee or organization within the congregation, and any of its elected or appointed officers shall have no power or authority beyond that conferred upon them by the congregation. However, in rare occasions of emergency, the church council may act in the name and for the welfare of the congregation. Such action must be fully explained at the next voter's meeting and submitted for approval or disapproval.

### **Section 4.**

No group or society may be organized within the congregation without the approval of the congregation. The congregation shall be assured that the aims of such a group are in complete harmony with the congregation's aims before it grants its approval (II Corinthians 6:14-15; Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 1:10; 12:25).

## **ARTICLE VII THE MINISTRY**

### **Section 1.**

The congregation has the exclusive right to call pastors and teachers and to elect other officers.

### **Section 2.**

The pastorate of this congregation shall be conferred only upon such ministers or ministerial candidates as unqualifiedly and publicly profess their acceptance of and adherence to Article II of this Constitution; and such acceptance and adherence shall be required of them in the call or vocation extended by the congregation (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; Colossians 4:5-6).

### **Section 3.**

The teachers called by the congregation shall be such as are in accord with the confessional standard of the congregation (Article II) and are qualified for this field of work (Ephesians 4:11-16; Romans 12:6-8; I Corinthians 14:40).

### **Section 4.**

In case of a vacancy in the position of pastor or teacher, the congregation shall notify the president of the local district of the Synod that he may assist in temporarily filling the vacancy and in giving his good counsel in regard to the calling of a new pastor or teacher.

## **ARTICLE VIII OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

### **Section 1.**

The first New Testament congregation at Jerusalem chose men of "honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom" (Acts 6:1-6) to aid the Apostles in the administration of its temporal affairs. Likewise shall this congregation choose officers and committee members with like qualifications to aid the pastor in administering its affairs (I Timothy 3:8-13).

### **Section 2.**

The listing of the officers and their duties is given in the Bylaws.

### **Section 3.**

These officers shall be given the respect and esteem of the congregation in the performance of their duties and they shall conduct themselves in a manner befitting their responsible office (I Timothy 3:8-13).

## **ARTICLE IX REMOVAL FROM OFFICE**

### **Section 1.**

If anyone who holds an office in the congregation willfully neglects his duty and upon due admonition does not amend, the Congregation has the right and eventually the duty to remove him from office and to elect another in his place. (I Timothy 3:8-13).

### **Section 2.**

Sufficient and urgent causes for removing a pastor or a teacher are persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of duty, or established inability to perform the duties of his office (I Timothy 3: 1-7; Titus 1 :6-9).

## **ARTICLE X MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION**

Meetings of this congregation shall be held at such times and in such a manner as stated in the Bylaws. The meetings shall give the voters of this congregation the opportunity to hear, discuss, and take necessary action in matters pertaining to the welfare of this congregation and of the church at large.

## **ARTICLE XI SEPARATION**

If at any time a separation should occur in this congregation - may God graciously prevent it - the property and all equipment of this congregation shall remain with that portion of the membership which adheres to this Constitution, regardless of number.

## **ARTICLE XII**

# REPEALS AND ALTERATIONS

## **Section 1.**

Articles II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, IX, XI, and XII, Section 1 of this Constitution shall be and remain unalterable and irrepealable, inasmuch as they express clear, Scriptural teachings.

## **Section 2.**

Proposals to alter or repeal any alterable or repealable article of this Constitution, or to add an article, shall be submitted in writing to the church council and shall be publicly announced on two Services immediately preceding the regular business meeting of the congregation, and posted in the church during that period.

## **Section 3.**

Such a proposal shall be discussed in the meeting in which it is presented and voted on in the next regular meeting of the congregation.

## **Section 4.**

A majority vote, consisting of not less than two-thirds of the voting members present at such a constitutional meeting, shall be required to alter or repeal any alterable or repealable article of this Constitution, or to add an article thereto.

# BYLAWS

## BYLAWS ADOPTED APRIL 21, 1996

### ARTICLE I

#### MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION

##### **Section 1.**

At, or shortly following, the beginning of each quarter of the calendar year, a regular meeting of the congregation's voters shall be held.

##### **Section 2.**

The Church Council, together with the Pastor, shall set the exact date, time and place of the meetings, unless otherwise specified by the congregation. Announcement of the meetings shall be given in print and/or orally in the Sunday worship service on at least two successive Sundays prior to the time of the meeting.

##### **Section 3.**

Special meetings of the congregation may be called by the Pastor, President or Church Council. Announcement of the meetings shall be given in print and/or orally in the worship service on at least two successive Sundays prior to the time of the meeting. Only such business as is originally designated as the purpose of the meeting is to be discussed at a special meeting.

##### **Section 4.**

The January meeting shall be designated as the annual voters meeting.

##### **Section 5.**

The order of business for the quarterly voters meetings shall be as follows:

- A. Opening with a devotion or a prayer
- B. Reading and approval of minutes of previous regular and special meetings
- C. Reception of new members, transfer, release or removal from membership
- D. Unfinished business
- E. Report of officers and committees
- F. Recommendations of the Church Council and other new business
- G. Elections if applicable
- H. Adjournment with prayer

##### **Section 6.**

The meetings shall be conducted according to good, Christian order. Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed for parliamentary procedure.

##### **Section 7.**

Only voting members present at the meeting shall have the right to vote.

##### **Section 8.**

Voting membership shall be restricted to male communicant members who have reached the age of 18.

### ARTICLE II

#### QUORUM

The voting members present at a properly announced meeting of the congregation shall constitute a quorum.

# **ARTICLE III**

## **OFFICERS, BOARDS, CHURCH COUNCIL & COMMITTEES**

### **Section 1. Church Council**

In accordance with the laws of the State of Arizona, the voters shall elect by ballot at its annual meeting, specified in the Bylaws, Article I, a Church Council consisting of six or more members. Members of the Church Council are elected for a three year term. The term of 1/3 of the members expires at the end of each year, such expired terms are to be filled by election at the annual voters meeting.

### **Section 2. Officers of the Congregation**

The voters shall elect members at its annual meeting to fill vacancies on the Church Council. The Church Council shall include a President, Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Elder, and Trustee. The Pastor is an ex officio member of the Church Council. The men elected to the Church Council shall meet as soon as is practicable and elect from their midst the men who will serve the various offices.

### **Section 3. Declaration of vacancy**

In the event any elected official, except the President, submits a letter of resignation, the President shall declare the position vacant. In the event any elected officer fails to perform his duties satisfactorily or misses two or more consecutive meetings, unless excused by the council, the President may declare the position vacant.

### **Section 4. Vacancies**

In the event the President has declared a position vacant, he shall appoint a voting member of the congregation to fill that position. Such appointment shall be subject to the ratification of the voters. The length of the appointment shall be until the next annual meeting. In the event the President is not able to perform his duties or complete his term, the Trustee shall assume the duties of President until the next regular meeting of the congregation, at which time the voters shall elect a new Church Council member to fill the unexpired term.

### **Section 5. Committees**

The Church Council shall appoint whatever standing and special committees that it deems appropriate. The President and the Pastor shall be ex officio members of all committees. All committees shall organize with a chairman and a secretary.

### **Section 6. Responsibilities**

The Church Council shall serve as the stated Board of Directors under the charter of incorporation. Officers of the Church Council are expected to exemplify a Christian way of life and be good examples to the congregation (I Timothy 3:8-12). They shall aid the Pastor in the spiritual affairs of the church. They shall be accountable for good order in the services. They shall particularly care in love for the poor, the sick, the widows, and the orphans (Galatians 7:9-10). The members of the Church Council shall consult together concerning the total spiritual and physical well-being of the congregation, giving due attention also to the work of the Lord in the church at large. They shall implement resolutions of the congregation and carry out such assignments as are directed to them by the congregation.

### **Section 7. Installation**

As soon as possible after the election of the Church Council members, they shall be installed into office during a regular worship service and shall be presented to the congregation.

### **Section 8. Dismissal**

If any Church Council member willfully neglects his duty, and upon due admonition does not amend, the voters have the right and the duty to remove him from office and elect another to take his place.

### **Section 9. Meetings**

The Church Council shall meet regularly each month. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor or President. The

Church

Council shall never convene to transact business without the knowledge of the Pastor.

## **Section 10. Resignation**

Any Church Council member who finds that he cannot perform his duties shall ask the President of the congregation to relieve him from office.



# ARTICLE IV

## DUTIES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS

### Section 1. President

The President shall preside as chairman of all business of the congregation and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him. he shall have general supervision of the affairs of the congregation subject to the regulations of the Church Council, sign all deeds, mortgages, notes, leases, and/or all legal documents directed to be executed by the corporation and conduct all its business affairs according to established good order.

### Section 2. Secretary

The Secretary shall record accurately the proceeding of all meetings of the voters and the Church Council. he shall be responsible for the legal records of the congregation. he shall have the authority to countersign all deeds, mortgages, notes, leases, and/or legal documents executed by the corporation and assist in the orderly conduct of its business affairs according to established good order. he shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him by the congregation.

### Section 3. Financial secretary

The Financial Secretary shall receive and deposit all contributions for the congregation. he shall keep accurate records of individual offerings and submit individual reports of such offerings quarterly in a confidential manner.

### Section 4. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall keep an accurate account of all monies received and disbursed. he shall make disbursements according to instructions from the Church Council. he shall make quarterly written reports and also special reports whenever requested by the Church Council. he shall submit his records to the congregation annually for audit, or at any time the congregation so desires. In the absence of the Secretary, he shall have the authority to countersign legal documents. In the event the Treasurer is unable to carry out his duties, the President shall appoint a Church Council member to carry out his obligations.

### Section 5. Trustee

It shall be the duties of the Trustee to see that the buildings and grounds of the congregation are kept in good condition and report to the Church Council monthly any recommendations for repair.

### Section 6. Elder

The Elder shall assist the Pastor in the spiritual work of the congregation including cases of admonition and discipline (Matthew 18:15-16). The Elder shall develop guidelines for ushering under the direction of the Pastor and shall appoint a head usher.

## ARTICLE V

### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

### Section 1.

The Church Council shall present to the October meeting of the voters for ratification a committee of three voting members to serve as a nominating committee.

### Section 2.

The nominating committee shall seek volunteers from the voting membership to form a slate of candidates for each vacancy, and the Church Council shall publish a ballot listing the names two weeks prior to the annual meeting (the committee should have the nominees' consent).

### Section 3.

The voters at their annual meeting shall hear the recommendations of the nominating committee, add to the list, if so desired, and proceed to elect by ballot. A majority of votes cast shall be necessary for election. ....

## ARTICLE VI

### RECEPTION INTO MEMBERSHIP

### Section 1.

Persons who wish to be received into membership in this congregation other than through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, or the Rite of Confirmation, shall bring their request to the attention of the Pastor or the Church Council. The Church Council

shall honor the request when it is accompanied by a letter of transfer or other recommendation from a sister congregation, or when qualifications for membership, as specified in Article V of the Constitution, have been met. Such action of the Church Council shall be ratified by the regular meeting of the voters and notice of such receptions reported to the congregation.

## **Section 2.**

Since reception into membership signifies acceptance of and submission to this Constitution and Bylaws, each family shall be given a copy of the same prior to their reception, so that they may become familiar with its provisions.

# **ARTICLE VII TRANSFER OR RELEASE FROM MEMBERSHIP**

## **Section 1.**

Those desiring a transfer, or release from membership, shall bring their request to the attention of the Pastor or the Church Council for action, to be ratified at the next meeting of the voters.

## **Section 2.**

Transfer of membership shall apply only to those who desire membership in a congregation which is in agreement with this one in doctrine and practice. Release from membership shall apply when affiliation is sought with those denominations not in agreement with our congregation in doctrine and practice.

## **Section 3.**

Members released or transferred relinquish all rights in this congregation.

# **ARTICLE VIII REPEALS AND AMENDMENTS OF THE BYLAWS**

## **Section 1. Repeal and Amendments**

Any and all Bylaws may be repealed or amended by a majority vote of the voting members present at any quarterly meeting, provided that public notice of this proposed action shall have been given the congregation on at least two Sundays prior to the time of the meeting and provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing to the Church Council for its study and recommendation.

## **Section 2. Annual Review**

At the March meeting of the Church Council, the President shall appoint a committee to review the bylaws of the constitution and to recommend modifications if any are needed. The Bylaw Review Committee shall report to the Church Council any modifications of the Bylaws at the Church Council's April meeting.