

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
OF
OUR SAVIOR DEAF LUTHERAN CHURCH
Madison, Wisconsin
(revised February 21, 2021).

PREAMBLE

Whereas, in accordance with the Word of God (1 Corinthians 14:40) all things should be done in a proper and orderly way in a Christian Congregation; therefore, we, a number of Lutheran Deaf, and others, residing in the city of Madison, Wisconsin and the vicinity, have united to form a congregation and do herewith ordain and establish this constitution according to which the affairs of this congregation shall be administered.

ARTICLE 1. NAME AND ADDRESS

The name of this congregation shall be: Our Savior Deaf Lutheran Church. The physical address shall be: 3110 Dairy Drive, Madison, Wisconsin 53718.

ARTICLE 2. INCORPORATION

Our Savior Deaf Lutheran Church shall be incorporated according to the laws of the state of Wisconsin.

ARTICLE 3. PURPOSE

OUR SAVIOR DEAF LUTHERAN CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

WHEREAS: The purpose of this congregation shall be to serve its members and to spread the Kingdom of God among all people, but especially among deaf people.

Therefore: This shall be done by the preaching of the Word of God, by giving the Sacraments (Holy Baptism, Holy Communion, and Holy Absolution), and by instructing youth and adults according to the doctrinal basis and the confessional standard of the Lutheran Church (see ARTICLE 4). We also wish to encourage Christian fellowship and acts of Christian love to help all people.

ARTICLE 4. CONFESSION OF FAITH

This congregation accepts:

- A. All the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired, inerrant Word of God and the only rule of faith and life.
- B. All the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 as true and correct Christian doctrine in full agreement with the Bible.

THESE SYMBOLICAL BOOKS ARE:

- (1) The Three Ecumenical Creeds
 - a. the Apostolic
 - b. the Nicene, and
 - c. the Athanasian
- (2) The Unaltered Augsburg Confession
- (3) The Apology of the same
- (4) The Smalcald Articles
- (5) Luther's Large and Small Catechisms, and
- (6) The Formula of Concord

No doctrine shall be taught or permitted in this congregation which is contrary to the Word of God or these above-named confessions.

ARTICLE 5. SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

- A. This congregation will hold membership in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and in The South Wisconsin District of the same. It shall send its pastor and a lay delegate to the Biennial District Convention.
- B. The congregation and its individual members by this membership accept the responsibility to support the work of Synod through The South Wisconsin District, since they support their own Christ-appointed work in that way.

ARTICLE 6. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Persons desiring membership in this congregation must:

- a) Be baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- b) Accept the Old and New Testaments as God's inspired word and as the only rule of faith and life.

- c) Know Luther's Small Catechism and accept its teaching as correct explanation of God's Word.
- d) Lead Christian lives and not live in visible and habitual sins.
- e) Attend church services regularly.
- f) Receive of the Lord's Supper frequently.
- g) Support the work of God's church with time, finances, and with their skills.
- h) Permit themselves to be corrected / warned in brotherly love according to the Word of God (Matthew 18: 15-20).
- i) Not be a member of any organization having teachings or principles conflicting with the Word of God.

Section 2. Excommunication and Reinstatement

- a) Church discipline shall be exercised in this congregation upon those members who live in manifest sin, in the manner and according to the rules prescribed in Matthew 18:15-20.
- b) A member forfeits all rights and privileges of membership in this congregation and all claims upon the property or any part thereof by:
 1. Expulsion (excommunication) according to Matthew 18:15-20;
 2. Release to another congregation
 3. Refusal to submit to church discipline (self-exclusion).
 4. Removal to another place of residence resulting in loss of contact.

ARTICLE 7. POWER OF CONGREGATION

- A. The congregation as a whole (body, group) shall have supreme power in the management of all its affairs. However, the congregation shall have no power to decide or order anything against the Word of God or against Article 2 of this constitution. The right to elect and call ministers and elect officers of this congregation shall never be given to any one person or small group in the congregation. The calling of a minister shall be done in cooperation with the South Wisconsin District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.

ARTICLE 8. RIGHT TO VOTE

Section 1: Voting members must be at least 18 years of age and must have READ AND ACCEPTED THIS CONSTITUTION, AND SIGNED MEMBERSHIP LIST.

- a) Pastor and President of the congregation have the right to vote.
- b) If a person wants to stay a Voting Member, that person must attend at least fifty (50) percent of worship services and continue to fulfill the responsibilities of membership under Article 5.

ARTICLE 9. CALLING OF PASTORS

Section 1. The calling of a pastor shall happen in the manner prescribed by the Department of Missions of the South Wisconsin District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Also, the selection of a vacancy pastor shall be done in the manner prescribed by the district Department of Missions.

Section 2. The Circuit Counselor (if possible) or the administrative assistant in the area of Missions of the District shall be called in to advise the congregation as to the proper procedures.

Note: The pastor the Circuit Counselor, and the administrative assistant in the area of Missions of the District will be given copies of the Synodical Board for Missions' "Handbook and Policies" for the operation of the Mission to the Deaf. They also will be given copies of the Mission Department policies of the South Wisconsin District relative to Deaf Ministry.

ARTICLE 10. OFFICERS

Section 1. The congregational officers shall consist of the following, President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Board of Elders, Board of Trustees, Board of Stewardship and Offices of Evangelism and Christian Education.

Section 2. Term of office:

- a) elected and appointed officers shall serve a term of two year, and are subject to renewal by election or appointment, with the exception of those boards outlined in (b) and (c) of this section;
- b) the congregation shall have three Elders, electing one Elder in each succeeding year for the term of three years, with the Elder in his third year serving as Head Elder;
- c) the congregation shall have three Trustees, electing one Trustee in each succeeding year for the term of three years, with the Trustee in the third year serving as the Head Trustee.

ARTICLE 11. CHURCH COUNCIL OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers shall be elected annually for a term of two years except that the Elders and the Trustees shall hold office for three years.

Section 2. Officers must be 18 years of age or older and must have been members of this congregation for one year.

Section 3. The Elder and Trustee serving the longest in their current term shall be Head Elder and Head Trustee, respectively.

Section 4. The Elders are to meet with the Pastor on every first and third Tuesday after the Bible Study Class.

C. Officers shall be:

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|------------------------|--|
| 1. President | 6. 3 or more Elders (Three will be chosen to represent the Church Council) |
| 2. Vice-President | |
| 3. Secretary | |
| 4. Treasurer | 7. 3 Trustees- |
| 5. Financial Secretary | |

ARTICLE 12. AMENDMENTS TO THIS CONSTITUTION

This constitution may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the voters' assembly in the following manner.

Section 1. Ordinarily, amendments to the provisions of this constitution shall be submitted in writing for public posting two weeks prior to the two consecutive meetings at which the proposed amendments will be discussed. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the voters present shall be required to continue to amendment process.

Section 2. Amendments to Articles 3 and 4 shall not alter their essential meaning. Notice of discussion of these amendments shall be given to all members prior to the two voters assemblies when the proposed action will be discussed. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the voters present at these meetings shall be required on both occasions to continue the amendment process.

Section 3. All revisions shall be submitted to the president of the district for review by the district's constitution committee and favorable action by the district's board of directors prior to final adoption by the congregation by a two-thirds affirmative vote.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE 1. CHURCH COUNCIL NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Section 1: Nomination

- a) Persons to be nominated must be eligible voters at the meeting when they would be elected.
- b) Person to be nominated must be present at the meeting to accept the nomination.
- c) Only one member of a household may be an officer at any time.

Section 2: Election of Officers

- a) The election shall take place at the October meeting.
- b) Election shall be by ballot.
- c) One trustee shall be elected each year.
- d) The newly elected officers shall take office on January 1st after their election. Outgoing officers shall use the time from the October meeting to January 1st to train incoming officers.

ARTICLE 2. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

A. PRESIDENT:

Section 1: To serve the Lord Jesus Christ faithfully and honestly by setting an example to the Lord's people.

Section 2: To assist the Pastor in helping Our Savior Deaf Lutheran Church (hereinafter OSDLC) members grow in the Lord Jesus Christ; especially, making sure that God's Word (Bible), and the Sacraments (Lord's Supper / Baptism / Absolution) are faithfully administered to God's people.

Section 3: To conduct OSDLC Council Meetings by Robert's Rules of Order according to the constitution and by-laws of the congregation.

Section 4: To make sure the members of OSDLC are well informed about the ministry in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

Section 5: To make sure the members of OSDLC are well informed about our spiritual, financial, and physical (building) wellbeing.

Section 6: The President shall be an "ex-officio" member of all boards and committees, and ensure that the Church Constitution is properly followed with the resolutions of the Voters' Assembly being carried out.

Section 7: The President shall have the authority to call special meetings with at least two Sundays prior notice given to the congregation.

Section 8: The President shall also appoint persons to complete the term of any elected officer, who cannot continue his / her duties, with the consent of the Church Council.

B. VICE PRESIDENT:

Section 1: To serve the Lord Jesus Christ faithfully and honestly by setting an example to the Lord's people.

Section 2: To assist the Pastor and President of Our Savior Deaf Lutheran in helping our members grow in the Lord Jesus Christ,

Section 3: To assist the President in carrying out the duties of the presidential office.

Section 4: To take over and conduct OSDLC Council and Voters' Meetings whenever the President is unable to do so or whenever requested by the President.

Section 5: To guide the members of OSDLC to grow in their understanding of the stewardship of God's gifts. To guide the congregation in stewardship programs developed by the District and Synod, as appropriate.

C. SECRETARY:

Section 1: To serve the Lord Jesus Christ faithfully and honestly by setting an example to the Lord's people.

Section 2: To write all the minutes from all Church Council and Voters' Meetings of the congregation and, after approval of the minutes by the congregation, will record minutes in both print and digital form.

Section 3: To post minutes of Council and Voters' Meeting on the church bulletin board within two weeks after a meeting.

Section 4: To read "minutes" upon request at OSDLC Council and Voters' Meetings.

Section 5: To write letters of correspondence for OSDLC Council and Voters' Meetings.

Section 6: Written records will be kept on church premises for passing on to succeeding Secretaries.

Section 7: To write and send "Thank You" letters for all non-cash gifts.

D. TREASURER:

Section 1: To serve the Lord Jesus Christ faithfully and honestly by setting an example to the Lord's people.

Section 2: To know, keep, and maintain all church financial records in proper order by using the accounting principles recorded in THE CONGREGATION TREASURER'S MANUAL FROM THE LUTHERAN CHURCH MISSOURI SYNOD.

Section 3: To prepare an annual budget to be approved at the October Voter's Meeting. The treasurer will ask Pastor, President, Trustees, and Financial Secretary to assist in preparing the budget.

Section 4: To know the approximate "net worth" of the congregation's asset at all times and be able to show on paper an accounting, if it is needed.

Section 5: To know and be able to show on paper the balance of the church's Checking and Savings accounts upon request.

Section 6: To make appropriate payment of OSDLC's bills.

- a) To debit these expenditures from OSDLC's check book at the time the check is written.
- b) If the treasurer has any doubts about a bill, he will consult the Church Council before paying it.

Section 7: To write out a quarterly "Treasurer's Report" to the South Wisconsin District. And make necessary copies of that report for the Pastor, President, and Financial Secretary.

- a) To give this "Treasurer's Report" during the appropriate Church Council Meetings.
- b) To confer with the Financial Secretary and make sure ALL financial reports are in agreement.
- c) To also report these findings during regular Voters' Meetings and give a "year-end" report.

Section 8: To write out and send in "year-end" financial reports to the South Wisconsin District, and also has an annual professional audit of OSDLC financial book. To also send a "cover" letter along with the "year-end" report stating that OSDLC books have undergone an annual audit and are in proper order. This cover letter is to be accompanied with the signatures of those who completed the annual audit.

Section 9: To make the Pastor, President, and Church Council of OSDLC aware of any "emergency" financial problems facing the congregation in a timely manner.

E. FINANCIAL SECRETARY:

Section 1: To serve the Lord Jesus Christ faithfully and honestly by setting an example to the Lord's people.

Section 2: To receive and keep a record of all money received by the congregation.

Section 3: To keep a record of the offerings of the members and give quarterly statements to each member.

Section 4: To write and send a "Thank You" card or letter to those who makes the cash donation.

Section 5: To help the treasurer write out a quarterly "Financial Report" to the South Wisconsin District. And make necessary copies of that report for the Pastor, Treasurer, and President.

- a) To assist the treasurer to give this "Financial Report" during the appropriate Church Council Meetings.
- b) To confer (talk) with the Treasurer and make sure ALL financial reports agree.
- c) To assist the treasurer also report these findings during biannual Voters' Meetings and give a "year-end" report.

Section 6: To help the Treasurer write out and send in "year-end" reports to the South Wisconsin District, and have an annual audit of OSDLC's financial books.

- a) To also send a "cover" letter along with the "year-end" report stating that OSDLC'S books have undergone an annual audit and are in proper order. This "cover" letter is to be accompanied with the signature of those who completed the annual audit.

Section 7: To make the Pastor, President, and Council of OSDLC aware of any "emergency" financial problems facing the congregation.

Section 8: The Financial Secretary shall assist the congregation in carrying out their responsibilities of proper stewardship with the blessings God has bestowed. The Financial Secretary shall:

- a) assist the Pastor in leading the congregation in good stewardship practices;
- b) shall oversee and prepare any congregational method of pledging.
- c) shall oversee and establish any special funds carried out by the congregation.

F. ELDERS:

Section 1: To serve the Lord Jesus Christ faithfully and honestly by setting an example to the Lord's people.

Section 2: To assist the Pastor in helping OSDLC's members grow in the Lord Jesus Christ; especially, making sure that God's Word (Bible), and the sacraments (Lord's Supper/Baptism/Absolution) are faithfully administered to God's people.

Section 3: To assist the Pastor and the President of OSLDC in administering Church discipline if the situation should require it.

Section 4: To develop ways to help the people in need, both physically and spiritually.

Section 5: To choose assistants for each service and make sure that the services are conducted in an orderly manner.

Section 6: To report to the Pastor and President any potential problems within the congregation, or any potential new ideas that would improve the congregation's SPIRITUAL and physical wellbeing.

Section 7: To work with the Pastor to develop a ministry team when necessary to help guide the congregation in Spiritual Growth (see H for description).

Section 8: To serve as the congregation's Stewardship Committee with the Pastor.

Section 9: Elders will be chosen by the Pastor, and then confirmed by the Voters.

G. BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Section 1: To serve the Lord Jesus Christ faithfully and honestly by setting an example to the Lord's people.

Section 2: Maintenance.

- a) To properly manage and maintain the property of the congregation. They are responsible for the entire plant and property.
- b) All work is to be done according to the Partnership Agreement and the Lease with SWD, and according to council decisions.

Section 3: In addition to these duties of all trustees shall be:

- a) To meet regularly to plan work projects.
- b) To help the Financial Secretary count and record Sunday offerings on appropriate forms.
- c) To help set up any items necessary for worship or other church meetings.
Example: tables and chairs.
- d) To supervise the work of the janitor and see that janitorial supplies are well stocked.
- e) To be responsible for supervision of church work projects.

- f) To buy necessary equipment for efficient maintenance.
- g) To make suggestions for improvements and needed maintenance, and work with the church council and SWD board to carry out them as approved.

Section 4: The Head Trustee will give a written report to the Church Council on any items he / she feels should be brought to the Councils attention.

H. MINISTRY TEAM:

Section 1: The Ministry Team shall include at least three people to help guide the outreach and ministry of the congregation. At least one person should be from or sent to the Council, the Elders, and other groups to help coordinate and support the work of the ministry. team. The Ministry Team shall be chosen by the Pastor with the agreement of the Council and Elders.

Section 2: The Ministry Team shall meet at least monthly to plan and coordinate the care and outreach of the congregation. The Ministry Team shall coordinate with other groups within the congregation to assist in follow-up and care for members and reaching out to non-members.

I. OFFICE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:

Section 1: The Board of Christian Education will become active or inactive depending on the presence / absence of an active Sunday School Program.

Section 2: The President of the congregation shall appoint an individual(s) to serve in the capacity of Chairperson of Christian Education. The Person selected must be with the consent of the Pastor. The Office of Christian Education will work with the Pastor to ensure that proper and adequate Christian Education is available to all the members. The Office of Christian Education shall ensure:

- a) that needed teachers and assistants are available to meet the needs of the program;
- b) that training periods are conducted for all teachers.
- c) that all congregational children are encouraged to attend programs of Christian Education;
- d) that the Sunday School Program is operated properly;
- e) that provisions are made for the offering of a Vacation Bible School;
- f) that opportunities are made available for all members of all ages for continued Christian Education for Spiritual Growth.

J. Representatives:

Section 1: The congregation shall select a representative for each:

- a CR-ILDA / ILDA
- b) SWD District Convention and others as needed.

ARTICLE 3. MEETINGS

Section 1: The congregation shall conduct Voters' meetings during Spring and Fall. Special meetings may be held as the wellbeing of the congregation demands. Extra meetings may be called by the pastor or by the president. All voting members shall be notified in advance of any meeting to be held, by announcement in the previous church service or by email two weeks before.

Section 2: In order to transact business and pass valid resolutions at least one-third of the number of voting members must be present. The wish of the majority shall prevail at such a meeting, the president and the Pastor voting only in case of a tie. No proxy authorization will be accepted.

Section 3: All matters passed in a valid meeting and not contrary to God's Word shall receive the full support of the whole congregation.

Section 4: The Church Council shall meet monthly and as many other times, as necessary. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president. All council members shall be notified in advance of any special meeting to be held. Council members are required to attend all council meetings unless excused by the President.

Section 5: The Church Council members shall include the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Head Elder, Head Trustee, and the Pastor. Non-council members may address the council only by invitation or by permission.

Section 6: Regular Voters' meetings shall be limited to two (2) hours in length. An extension of 30 minutes may be authorized by a 2/3 vote. Only two extension shall be permitted, for a maximum meeting time of three hours.

ARTICLE 4. REPRESENTATIVES

Section 1: When necessary OSDLC Council shall choose the legal representatives for the congregation and custodians of all its property, including all valuable papers such as deeds, documents, insurance policies, certificates of incorporation. They shall make loans for the congregation and sign all legal papers WHEN the congregation authorizes them to do so. The congregation is responsible for whatever the appointed

representatives do in agreement with the congregation's resolutions and instructions. The congregation shall not permit the appointed representatives to suffer any personal loss.

ARTICLE 5. ORDER OF BUSINESS (Voters' Meeting)

1. Prayer
2. Call to Order
 - a) Roll Call
3. Reception of New Voting Members {upon their signing of this Constitution)
4. Review of the Agenda
5. Minutes of the Last Meeting
6. Officers' Reports
 - President
 - Vice President
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Financial Secretary
 - Head Elder
 - Head Trustee
7. Pastor's Report
8. Report of Representative
9. Committee Reports
10. Unfinished Business
11. New Business
 - a) Election and Installation of New Officers (Fall)
12. Adjourn with Prayer
13. Date of Next Meeting
14. Announcements

ORDER OF BUSINESS (Church Council)

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| 1. Call to Order - Roll Call | 5. Pastor's Report |
| 2. Opening Devotion/Prayer - Pastor | 6. Deaconess Report |
| 3. Minutes of the Last Meeting | 7. Committee Reports |
| 4. Officers' Reports <ol style="list-style-type: none">President/Vice PresidentSecretaryTreasurer /Financial SecretaryHead EldersHead Trustees | 8. Unfinished Business |
| | 9. New Business |
| | 10. Adjournment / Prayer
(President) |
| | 11. Date of Next Meeting |
| | 12. Announcements |

ARTICLE 6. CHURCH SERVICES

Section 1. Only purely Lutheran books forms, and supplies shall be used in the public services of this congregation as well as in ministerial acts. If Lutheran items are not available, then the purchase of such needed items from non-Lutheran sources is permissible; however, Lutheran sources are to be used whenever possible.

Section 2. No person shall be allowed to preach in this congregation who has not the proper call or is not a member of our synod or church bodies with whom we are in declared synodical fellowship.

Section 3. Any speaker wishing to address this congregation on any matter must have the approval of the Pastor and the Church Council.

ARTICLE 7. ORGANIZATION WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

Section 1: Any member wishing to form an organization or club within the congregation must first receive permission from the Council and / or congregation to organize. Such organizations shall always be subject to the congregation and this Constitution.

ARTICLE 8. BUILDING USE POLICY

Section 1: Our Savior Deaf Lutheran Church is a congregation of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS). We bind ourselves to the Christian faith as expressed in the Book of Concord and as shared by the congregations and ministries of the LCMS. Therefore, the property of OSDLC is to be used only for purposes that further the mission and ministry of this congregation. The property of OSDLC is dedicated to the glory of God, and is not to be treated as a rental hall or personal workshop. Events and organizations may be permitted to use church property only if the following conditions are met:

- a) For the benefit of the congregation and her ministry
- b) Consistent with the beliefs and teachings of this congregation and the LCMS
- c) Approved in advance by the pastor and the President of the Church Council

Section 2: A detailed request must be submitted in writing to the Pastor and the President at least two (2) weeks in advance of the event. (please see attached Building Use Policy)

ARTICLE 9. PROPERTY RIGHTS

Section 1. In case of a separation occurring in the congregation the property of the congregation and all rights connected therewith shall remain with and belong to those members who shall remain true in faith and doctrine as laid down in Article 3 and Article 4 of the Constitution.

Section 2. Should the congregation be disbanded, the property and all rights thereto shall become the express property of the South Wisconsin District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod or its successor.

ARTICLE 10. EFFECT OF THIS CONSTITUTION

This Constitution and By-Laws shall be in effect upon their adoption by the congregation and shall supersede and rescind all previous by-laws, constitutions, and amendments thereto.

This Constitution and By-Laws will be distributed to the Congregation of Our Savior Deaf Lutheran Church on April 18, 2021 for the Spring Voter's Meeting.