

Constitution of the N.N. Congregation, Arcadia

(Draft version)

Adopted by the Congregational Meeting
on the *date*

General Resolutions

1. Name of the Congregation

The name of the congregation shall be N.N. Congregation.

2. Axiom, Mission, Statement of Faith

2.1 The N.N. Congregation (hereafter referred to as “the Congregation”) stands in its place as a church of Jesus Christ in the unity of the one holy Christian and Apostolic church, which is present everywhere where the genuine word of God is preached in its purity and the sacraments are administered as established in Christ. It bears witness to Jesus Christ being the sole Lord of the Church and proclaims Him Saviour of the World.

2.2 The Congregation is committed to the Holy Scripture of the Old and the New Testament as the infallible Word of God in accordance with which all the teaching and teachers of the Church shall be judged. It is therefore bound to the articles of faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, because these testify to the scriptural doctrines, viz. the three Ecumenical Symbols (the Apostolic, the Nicene and the Athanasian Creed); to the unaltered Augsburg Confession and its Apology; the Smalcald Articles; the Small and Large Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther and the Formula of Concord.

3. Affiliation of the Congregation with N.N. (Church-body)

3.1 The N.N. Congregation is an independent member congregation of the N.N. and acknowledges and subordinates itself to its ecclesiastical doctrines and regulations.

4. Legal Status of the Congregation

4.1 The Congregation shall be entitled to acquire and dispose of movable and immovable property; to take up bonds; to open bank accounts and in other ways to dispose of its property as the Congregational Meeting may resolve.

4.2 The Congregation shall be legally represented by the Church Council.

4.3 The Congregation manages its own affairs within the framework of the applicable statutes (Par 2) and the resolutions of the Synodical Meetings.

The Congregation

5. Membership within the Congregation

- 5.1 A member of the Congregation shall be anyone who :
- (a) received the Holy Sacrament of Baptism in the Congregation; or
 - (b) is transferred from another congregation belonging to the N.N. Church –body or a congregation in church fellowship with N.N: church body; or
 - (c) is admitted to the congregation.
- 5.2 The membership of the Congregation shall be terminated by:
- (a) the transfer to another congregation belonging to N.N. or to a congregation in church fellowship with N.N.; or
 - (b) voluntary resignation from the Congregation; or
 - (c) exclusion in accordance with the church disciplinary statutes.

6. Rights and Duties in the Congregation

- 6.1 Members of the Congregation may, as of right, expect the Pastor to preach the Word of God in accordance with the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church; to administer the Sacraments as established in Christ; to instruct them in accordance with the Word of God and the Evangelical-Lutheran Confessions; to serve them in a pastoral manner and to provide them with the services of the church in accordance with the laws of the church.
- 6.2 The members of the Congregation shall take on duties and assist in the church in accordance with their talents and capabilities. Within the framework of these duties and other church laws, they take part in making appointments to church offices and in the formation of church organisations.
- 6.3 In accordance with the Word of God it is the duty of members of the Congregation to contribute voluntarily and equitably to the discharge of the duties of the church and Congregation by means of contributions, donations and collections.

7. The Congregational Meeting

- 7.1 The Congregational Meeting shall be convened by the Pastor according to the resolution of the church council, stating the place, time and agenda by announcement within a public service or by written notice. Two week's notice shall be required for the convening of the Congregational Meeting. A

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Congregational Meeting should be convened at least once a year as the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Further meetings may be called according to need. A Congregational Meeting must be convened if a written motion in this regard is submitted by at least ten percent of members with voting rights.

- 7.2 The Congregational meeting consists of the Pastor and the members of the Congregation entitled to vote. Entitled to vote at all Congregational meetings are all members, who have turned 22 years of age and have been admitted to the Holy sacrament of the Altar. Members from age 18 to 21 years have voting rights except in matters concerning the assets, both movable and immovable, of the Congregation.
- 7.3 The pastor is the chairman of the Congregational Meeting. In the event of an unavoidable absence or if so proposed by the Pastor the Congregational Meeting may authorise a member of the Congregation to take the chair.
- 7.4 Responsibilities of the Congregational Meeting shall be to:
- (a) receive the Pastor's report and of those in charge of the various church organisations;
 - (b) receive the financial report;
 - (c) approve the budget;
 - (d) elect the Church Council and other office bearers in the Congregation as well as the congregational delegate and his deputy [for two synodical periods (four years). Re-election is possible. The congregational delegate represents the congregation at the Synodical Convention].
 - (e) approve any amendments in the Constitution of the congregation
 - (f) debate and adopt resolutions in all matters relating to the congregation.
- 7.5. Every properly convened Congregational Meeting is empowered to adopt resolutions if there is a quorum of at least ten members of the Congregation who are entitled to vote. If a Congregational Meeting has to be convened a second time, the following properly convened Congregational Meeting can adopt resolutions in any case.
- 7.6 The resolutions of the Congregational Meeting are adopted by simple majority of those present and who are entitled to vote, unless the Congregational Regulations state otherwise. Unanimity is desirable.
- 7.7 Minutes shall be kept of the debates and resolutions. They are to be signed by the chairman of the Meeting and by the secretary. The Congregation is to be notified of the resolutions.

- 7.8 If the Congregational Meeting doesn't take place following a Service, it is opened with God's Word and prayer and also closed with prayer.

Composition of the pastoral care

8. The Pastor

- 8.1 The Ministry of the Word and the Sacraments originated in Christ in the Service of his church.
- 8.2 The Pastor, as the appointed shepherd of the Congregation, is charged with publicly preaching the Word of God and to administer the Sacraments. He shall conduct the Services of the Congregation, carry out official ministries, instruct in the Christian faith and take pastoral care of the members of the Congregation.
- 8.3 Apart from that the calling and appointment as well as all other regulations of his pastoral service are affected in accordance with rules applicable to appointments in the Church and Synodical Constitution of N.N.
- 8.4 In the performance of this duty he relies on the intercession, the protection and the care of the Congregation and has to rely on its cooperation.

9. The Church Council

- 9.1 The Church Council consists of the pastor and the Church Councillors elected by the Congregational Meeting.
- 9.2 The Church Council holds its own meetings, as a rule once a month, for the purpose of carrying out these duties. They are convened and chaired by the Pastor or, if he should be prevented from doing so, by a Church Councillor appointed by the Pastor.
- 9.3 The quorum for a Church Council Meeting shall be three members. Resolutions are adopted by simple majority. Unanimity is desirable. Who is personally concerned from a subject of matter is not allowed to vote.
- 9.4 The Church Council shall be responsible for the execution of the following duties:
- (a) preparation of the Congregational Meetings and to carry out its resolutions;
 - (b) administration of property belonging to the Congregation;
 - (c) preparation of the annual balance sheets and accounts and submit a budget for the ensuing year for adoption;
 - (d) encouraging volunteers for congregational duties;

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- (e) assisting in the admission or exclusion of members of the Congregation;
- (f) to act as the trustees of the congregation.

- 9.5 Minutes of the Church Council meetings shall be recorded. These shall be accepted as a true record of the proceedings of the meeting and shall be signed by the Chairman and the Secretary.
- 9.6 Other members of the Congregation, the treasurer, choir conductor's and work groups may be invited to meetings of the Church Council in a consultative capacity.
- 9.7 Secrecy is to be observed in respect of all matters concerning pastoral care, confidential matters or confidential resolutions.

10. The Church Councillors

- 10.1 The office of a Church Councillor is honorary.
- 10.2 The election of Church Councillors takes place during the Annual General Meeting.
- 10.3 The election is by secret ballot. It is conducted in two sessions. The first ballot serves to propose nominees for the council. During this session written nominations, which have been submitted before the elections, are permitted.

The (???) nominees receiving the highest number of votes are eligible for the second ballot. The (???) persons receiving the highest number of votes in this second ballot are elected as councillors.
- 10.4 The term of office for a councillor shall a period of four consecutive years. Councillors whose term has expired are eligible for re-election
- 10.5 Eligible as Church Councillors are confirmed members of the Congregation who are over 21 years old and, as a rule, have belonged to the Congregation for at least a year and who assiduously take part in the congregation life.
- 10.6 Spouses, brothers and sisters as well as parents and their children should, as a rule, not be members of the Church Council at the same time.
- 10.7 The Church Councillors are, in particular, responsible for the spiritual life in the Congregation and for the discharge of congregational duties. They assist the Pastor in his service.
- 10.8 Councillors are invested in their office during a church service.
- 10.9 The term of office of a Church Councillor ends with the installation of his successor. Church Councillors may resign from office at any time for sufficient reasons; they may be called upon to resign from office or can be removed from office, should circumstances so require.

11. Additional Assistants and Work Groups

- 11.1 Members of the Congregation may be appointed as lecturers, as Sunday School Teachers, organists, conductors of the choirs as well as other helpers.
- 11.2 The assistants are appointed by the Church Council which defines their duties. They may be introduced in a church service.
- 11.3 The conductors of the brass band and choir, youth leaders as well as the leadership of the women's guild are elected by the work teams in accordance with the applicable regulations. The elected persons are presented to the Church Council and the Congregation.

Budget and the Property of the Congregation

12. The Budget of the Congregation

- 12.1 The Congregation shall establish annual budgets. The Mission and as far as possible the work of charity shall be given consideration therein.
- 12.2 The budget of the Congregation is met by voluntary contributions, collections, donations and other income.

13. The Property of the Congregation

- 13.1 The finances of the Congregation are to be administered by the treasurer appointed by the Congregational Meeting, who shall bear in mind the approved budget, as regards income and expenditure and in such a manner that the financial position may be clearly accounted for at any time.
- 13.2 In order to meet the Congregational budget members of the Congregation are expected to assess themselves and undertake at the beginning of the financial year to pay this amount.
- 13.3 All income must be used solely for the purposes of the church and the Congregation.
- 13.4 The financial year runs from 1st January to 31st December.
- 13.5 The auditor appointed by the Church Council examines the books of accounts of the Congregation on the termination of each financial year and certifies that they have been properly kept.
- 13.6 In the case that the Congregation should be dissolved, its property shall go to N.N. No claims exist by individual members of the Congregation to any portion of the property of the Congregation.

Concluding provisions

14. Amendments to the Constitution of the Congregation

- 14.1 Every amendment to this Constitution must be circularised in a notice of motion inviting members to an Ordinary Congregational Meeting. It requires a two-thirds majority of the quorum of the Congregational Meeting.

This Constitution was adopted by the Congregational Meeting held on the *Date of the Constitutional Meeting*.