

CHARTER

ARTICLES OF AMMENDMENT

CONSTITUTION

Holy Nativity Lutheran Church
1200 Linden Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21227

Rev. 7/79

As Secretary of the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, I hereby attest that I was present at the meeting of the Church when this Amendment change was acted upon, and that it was accepted by a majority of the members present, which was sufficient to approve the said Amendment, and that the matters and facts as set forth herein are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

William C. Phillips
Secretary

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

Since in every Christian congregation according to the injunction of Holy Writ - I Corinthians 14:40, Colossians 2:5 - all things should be done "decently and in order" - therefore, we the undersigned, have drafted this Constitution and By-Laws according to which the affairs of this body are to be ruled and governed.

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this congregation shall be "Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Baltimore County, Maryland".

ARTICLE 2 - PURPOSE

The purpose of our congregation shall be:

1. To preach and teach the Word of God for the salvation of souls through faith in Jesus Christ.
2. To strengthen the faith of our members by religious instruction and the administration of the Sacraments.
3. To develop and marshal the talents of individual Christians for the benefit of God's Kingdom.
4. To foster Christian fellowship and works of charity.
5. To remain keenly aware of our responsibility to the many individuals under our influence who have not affiliated with the congregation.

ARTICLE 3 - CONFSSIONAL STANDARD

This congregation accepts and acknowledges all the canonical books of the Old and the New Testaments as the inspired Word of God, and all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the Book of Concord, as true and genuine expositions of the doctrines of the Bible. In this congregation no doctrine shall be taught or tolerated which is at variance with these symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, viz.; (1) the three Ecumenical Creeds; the Apostles, the Nicene, and the Athanasian; (2) the Unaltered Augsburg Confession; (3) the Apology of the Augsburg Confession; (4) the Smalcald Articles; (5) the Formula of Concord; (6) the Small and Large Catechism of Martin Luther.

According to this norm of doctrine, all doctrinal controversies which may arise in this congregation shall be decided and adjudicated.

ARTICLE 4 - MEMBERSHIP

No one shall be denied membership or any right of membership because of race. Membership of this congregation shall consist of:

- A. Baptized Members - All members who have been baptized, including children who have not yet confirmed their baptismal vows. Baptized members are expected to:
1. Attend Sunday School and divine services regularly.
 2. Receive instruction to prepare for communicant membership.
- B. Communicant Members - Communicant members are those who have been instructed in the Christian faith, have become acquainted with the Lutheran Confessions, especially Luther's Small Catechism, and confessed adherence to this faith in the Rite of Confirmation. Communicant members are expected to:
1. Attend divine services regularly. (John 8:47; Hebrews 10:25)
 2. Lead Christian lives and not live in manifest works of the flesh. (Galatians 5:19-21)
 3. Partake of the Lord's Supper frequently. (I Corinthians 11:23-29)
 4. Contribute regularly and faithfully as God has prospered them, for the building of Christ's Kingdom in this congregation and throughout the world. (I Corinthians 16:2; Matthew 28:19-20)
 5. Devote their time and talents to the extension of our Savior's Kingdom. (I Corinthians 12)
 6. Accept fraternal admonition when they have erred. (Matthew 18)
 7. Refrain from membership or affiliation with organizations conflicting with the Word of God. (II Corinthians 6:14-18)
- C. Voting Members are all communicant members who have reached their twenty-first birthday and have read and signed the Constitution. Every voter shall:
1. Attend meetings regularly. (I Corinthians 4:2) By failing to attend a meeting, a member waives the right of casting his vote during such meeting. It shall, however, be the privilege of absent members to send their ballots in writing whenever an officer of the congregation is to be elected, or whenever a Pastor is called.
 2. Willingly assume responsibilities assigned to him. (Luke 19:11 ff)

ARTICLE 5 - VOTERS' ASSEMBLY

The Voters' Assembly shall consist of the voting members of the congregation and shall have supreme power in the administration and management of the congregation. The establishment and conduct of all institutions and societies within the congregation shall be subject to the approval and supervision of the Voters' Assembly.

Regular Voters' meetings, as specified in the By-Laws, and special Voters' meetings which have been announced in all Church services at Holy Nativity on the previous Sunday, shall be capable of transacting business and passing valid resolutions if at least ten of the voting members are in attendance.

The Voters' Assembly shall elect a President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer at the December meeting. These four officers shall be the Trustees of the body corporate.

The duties and authority of the officers, boards, and committees shall be as specified in the By-Laws. Whatever power these officers, boards and committees may have at any time delegated to them shall at all times be subject to change or rescission by the Voters' Assembly.

In matters of doctrine and conscience, all final decisions by the Voters' Assembly must be unanimous.

The Voters' Assembly, however, shall not be empowered to decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the Confessional Standard of this Constitution.

ARTICLE 6 - PASTORAL OFFICE

The pastoral office in this congregation shall be conferred only upon such ministers of ministerial candidates as profess their acceptance of and adherence to the doctrinal standards of this congregation as set forth in Article 3 and have been pledged to faithful adherence to the Word of God and Symbols of the Lutheran Church by the call extended to and accepted by them.

The right of calling ministers shall ever be vested in the Voters' Assembly and shall never be delegated to an individual or to a minor body or circle within the congregation.

ARTICLE 7 - DISMISSAL FROM OFFICE

The Pastor may be dismissed or Congregational Officers may be removed from office by the Voters' Assembly in Christian and lawful order. Sufficient and urgent causes are: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, and neglect of or inability to perform official duties.

ARTICLE 8 - PROPERTY RIGHTS

The Voters' Assembly shall have authority to exclude any communicant member according to Matthew 18:15-18. The person so excluded (excommunicated) shall forfeit all rights of a member and all claims upon the property of the congregation as such, or upon any part thereof. This same forfeiture applies to such members who refuse to submit to Church discipline and thus excommunicate themselves, and to those who may sever their connection with the congregation in any manner.

ARTICLE 9 - AFFILIATION

This congregation shall be affiliated with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, as long as the Confessions and Constitution of this Synod are in accord with the Confessional Standards of this congregation as outlined in Article 3. This congregation shall, to the best of its ability, cooperate with District and Synod, and assist such with pastoral and lay delegate representation along with financial support to effect all sound measures intended for the up-building of the Kingdom of God.

ARTICLE 10 - SEPARATION

If at any time a separation should take place in this congregation on account of doctrine, the property of the congregation and all the benefits therewith connected shall remain with those members who shall continue to adhere to Article 3 of this Constitution.

ARTICLE 11 - ALTER OR REPEAL

To alter or repeal any article of this Constitution, with the exception of Articles 3, 9, and 10, which cannot be changed, it shall be requisite that in two consecutive constitutional meetings of the congregation two-thirds of those present cast their votes in favor of such alteration or repeal.