

All Saints Lutheran Church

Constitution and Bylaws

Table of Contents

PREAMBLE

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I	Name and Incorporation
ARTICLE II	Confessions of Faith
ARTICLE III	Nature and Mission
ARTICLE IV	Membership
ARTICLE V	Authority
ARTICLE VI	Relationship to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
ARTICLE VII	Office of the Ministry
ARTICLE VIII	Congregational Meeting
ARTICLE IX	Congregational Board
ARTICLE X	General Duties of the Congregational Board
ARTICLE XI	Auxiliaries and Organizations
ARTICLE XII	Bylaws and Amendments

BYLAWS

PART I	Communion Participation
II	Membership
III	Congregational Meeting
IV	Annual Reports
V	Duties of the Congregational Board
VI	Non-Board Positions
VII	Nominating Committee
VIII	Auditing Committee
IX	Distribution of Constitution and Bylaws

PREAMBLE

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Recognizing that the Church of Jesus Christ and its unity is found in "the assembly of believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the Holy Sacraments are administered according to the Gospel," and desiring to unite as a congregation in the common confession, defense and proclamation of our faith in Jesus Christ our Saviour, we the members of All Saints Lutheran Church adopt this constitution and pledge ourselves to be governed by its provisions.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

Name and Incorporation

- Section 1.** The name of this congregation shall be **All Saints Lutheran Church.**
- Section 2.** This congregation is incorporated under the laws of the province of Alberta.

ARTICLE II

Confessions of Faith

- Section 1.** This congregation confesses the Triune God--Father, Son and Holy Spirit--as the one true God. It proclaims the Father as Creator and Preserver, His Son Jesus Christ as Redeemer and Lord, and the Holy Spirit as Regenerator and Sanctifier.
- Section 2.** This congregation confesses that the Gospel is the revelation of God's saving will and grace in Jesus Christ, which He imparts through Word and Sacrament. Through these means of grace the Holy Spirit creates believers and unites them with their Lord and with one another in the fellowship of the Holy Christian Church.
- Section 3.** This congregation confesses the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God, through which God still speaks, and as the only source of the Church's doctrine and the authoritative standard for the faith and life of the Church.
- Section 4.** This congregation subscribes the documents of the Book of Concord of 1580 as witnesses to the way in which the Holy Scriptures have been correctly understood and explained and confessed for the sake of the Gospel, namely:
- a.** The Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds as the chief confessions of the Christian faith;
 - b.** The Unaltered Augsburg Confession as its basic formulation of Christian doctrine;
 - c.** Luther's Small Catechism as a clear summary of Christian doctrine;
 - d.** The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Luther's Large Catechism, the Smalcald Articles with the Treatise, and the Formula of Concord as further witnesses to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

ARTICLE III

Nature and Mission

This congregation is a worshipping, learning, witnessing and serving community of baptized persons among whom the Word is proclaimed and the Sacraments are administered according to the Gospel, and whose corporate existence is recognized by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. It shall provide support to enable the fulfilment of the mission and ministry of this church.

- a. Worship.** This congregation, remembering God's mighty acts in the past, celebrating His abiding presence, and moving toward His promised fulfilment, will listen to the Word of God in Scripture and preaching, receive the Sacraments, and respond with confession, prayer, praise, thanksgiving, and with tithes and offerings. In order to assist members to acknowledge God's rule over their lives, their own unity as Christ's body on earth, and to express their relationship with God in public and in private, the congregation shall gather for worship regularly and, in accordance with the theology of the Lutheran Church, recruit, equip and support members for leadership in worship, use appropriate worship materials, and make certain that worship has a place in other functions of the congregation.
- b. Learning.** The congregation shall develop an educational program designed to assist persons to grow in grace and faith and in the knowledge of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions for service and witness in the world. To this end it shall provide learning opportunities with appropriate curriculum, shall recruit, equip, approve and support teachers, and shall ensure that adequate study undergirds all functions of the congregation.
- c. Witnessing.** This congregation, relying on the Holy Spirit, shall proclaim the Gospel by word and deed and thereby invite all people to repent and believe. The congregation shall recruit, motivate, equip and support its members to witness to their faith at every opportunity in daily life so that the Lord is glorified, the fellowship is strengthened, the lapsed are restored and new members are added to the congregation. It shall provide for the communication of the Gospel through fellowship in the wider Christian community. It shall assure that all congregational functions witness to the faith of the church.
- d. Service.** This congregation shall live by faith active in love. It shall motivate, equip and support its members to minister in daily life; to participate as members of a caring community; to serve as Christians in all the institutions and structures of the society of which they are a part; and individually and corporately to promote justice and reconciliation, meet human needs and alleviate suffering. In these efforts the congregation shall co-operate with the synod and the divisions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, other Christian churches and other groups in society. It shall make certain that all its functions strengthen the motivation and ability for service.
- e. Support.** This congregation in faithfulness to God shall provide leadership, organizational structures, facilities and funds to enable fulfilment of its functions. The congregation shall strive to maintain effective stewardship practices, evaluate regularly the total life and ministry of the congregation, and recruit, equip and support members of the congregation to provide for these activities.

ARTICLE IV

Membership

- Section 1.** The membership of this congregation consists of those baptized persons who:
- a.** have been baptized in this congregation, or
 - b.** having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received either by:
 - i.** transfer from another Lutheran congregation;
 - ii.** confirmation, or
 - iii.** affirmation of faith.

Section 2. Members of this congregation may also be classified as confirmed and voting.

- a.** Confirmed members are baptized members who have been:
 - i.** confirmed in this congregation;
 - ii.** received by adult baptism;
 - iii.** received by transfer as confirmed members from another Lutheran congregation;
 - iv.** received by affirmation of faith as baptized adults.
- b.** Voting members are those confirmed who are members in good standing.

Section 3. United in one Lord, one faith and one Baptism, the members of this congregation are to be constant in worship and in the study of the Holy Scriptures, regularly nourishing their life in Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar, presenting their children for Holy Baptism and providing for their Christian instruction.

The members are called by the Spirit to lead godly lives, to promote the unity and welfare of the congregation in the bond of peace, to proclaim the Gospel and to renounce the evil one. The Commitment of each baptized member to this call is to be expressed through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, its synods and this congregation by a life of repentance, faith, prayer and the sharing of resources.

Section 4. Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:

- a. death;
- b. resignation;
- c. transfer or release;
- d. dismissal;
- e. inactivity.

Section 5. A confirmed member who does not, for a period of one year, partake of Holy Communion, support the church with offerings and participate in the life and worship of the congregation shall be visited by the pastor and the congregation's officers and be encouraged by them to active membership. If, during the second year, the confirmed member does not actively participate, the member's name may be removed from the membership roster of the congregation, but it shall be retained on a responsibility list as one who is in special need of the congregation's prayer and concern.

Section 6. A member who advocates doctrines which are contrary to the Holy Scriptures and the Confessions of the Church or who is guilty of conduct that is grossly unbecoming a member of the body of Christ shall be subject to discipline.

Section 7. Discipline in the congregation shall be exercised in accordance with Matthew 18:15-18.

Section 8. Discipline shall be administered by the congregational board. A person who is requested to appear before the congregational board shall be advised in writing no less than ten days prior to the hearing. The written notice shall include the time and place of the hearing and shall specify the exact reason for the hearing. If a person fails to appear at the time and place without valid excuse, the board may proceed with the hearing and may reach its conclusion in the member's absence. Should the person be found guilty by a two-thirds vote of the members of the board, the board shall impose one of the following:

- a. censure before the congregational board or the congregation;
- b. suspension from membership until evidence is given of sufficient repentance and amendment;
- c. exclusion from membership and denial of the Sacraments.

In the event of the imposition of (b) or (c) above, the action of the board shall be in writing.

Section 9. There shall be the right of appeal to the congregation. Right of further appeal from a decision of the congregation shall be as provided in the constitution and bylaws of the synod.

ARTICLE V

Authority

- Section 1.** This congregation shall operate in accordance with its own constitution, owning its own property, making decisions in regard to its programming, calling its pastor(s) after consulting with the bishop, and retaining authority in all other matters that have not been committed to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada or its synods in their constitutions or by subsequent enactment's.
- Section 2.** The authority of the congregation shall be vested in the congregational meeting, called and conducted in the manner provided in this constitution, and in the board and committees of the congregation as provided by this constitution or as assigned by the congregational meeting.
- Section 3.** Real property shall not be purchased, disposed of or encumbered in any manner except by resolution adopted by no less than a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at a legally called meeting of the congregation.
- Section 4.** Should this congregation disband, all property not disposed of, real, personal and mixed shall vest in the synod of which it is a part, its successor or assigns.
- Section 5.** Should this congregation cease to exist or should its membership so diminish in numbers as to render it impossible or impractical for the congregation to function according to its constitution and bylaws, the synod shall after consultation with any remaining members deem the congregation to be defunct. The synod through the Synod Council shall appoint trustees, including where feasible former members of the congregation, who shall take charge and control of the property of said congregation to hold, manage and convey the same on behalf of this synod.
- Section 6.** In case of strife and division in the congregation, the board shall seek the advice of the bishop of the synod.

ARTICLE VI Relationship to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

- Section 1.** This congregation is and shall remain a part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada or its successor and of the synod of the church within whose boundaries it is located or to which it has otherwise been assigned.

- Section 2.** This congregation claims for itself all the rights and privileges and accepts all the duties and obligations connected with being part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. In so doing this congregation recognizes the constitution, bylaws and enactments of the church and of the synod as having governing force in its life.
- Section 3.** This congregation covenants to support faithfully with prayer, personal service and offerings the common work of the church and of the synod for the Kingdom of God.
- Section 4.** This constitution and all amendments thereto, shall be transmitted to the synod for review to ascertain that none of its provisions is in conflict with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada or with the synodical constitution.
- Section 5.** Should the congregation desire to relocate or merge with another congregation, it shall secure the advice of the synod before any commitments to that end are entered into.
- Section 6.** Should the congregation desire to sever its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada this decision shall require a two-thirds majority vote of all voting members present and voting at a legally called and conducted meeting. Such a decision shall not be effective until at least ninety days after the bishop has been notified and until the initial action has been ratified by a two-thirds majority vote at a subsequent legally called and conducted meeting.
- Section 7.** This congregation prohibits any corporate worship with any organization which practices the forms of religion without confessing faith in the Triune God and in Jesus Christ, the eternal and incarnate Son of God, as our only Saviour.

ARTICLE VII

The Office of the Ministry

- Section 1.** A pastor of the congregation shall be a person whose soundness in the faith, aptness to teach and educational qualifications have been examined and approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and who has been properly ordained, who accepts and adheres to the Confession of Faith of this church, and who strives in life and conduct to be above reproach.
- Section 2.** Authority to call a pastor shall rest in the congregation. Such authority to call shall be exercised by not less than a two-thirds majority vote of members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Throughout the call process the congregational board, or a committee authorized by the congregation(s), shall seek the advice and counsel of the bishop of the synod.
- Section 3.** Only an ordained minister on the roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada or one who is recognized for call by a synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada may be called as a pastor of the congregation.
- Section 4.** Every pastor shall:

- a. preach the Word, administer the Sacraments and conduct public worship in harmony with the faith and practices of the church;
- b. baptize, confirm and marry in accordance with the teaching of the church and with the laws of the province or territory, visit the sick and distressed and bury the dead;
- c. inculcate piety in individual and family life and provide pastoral leadership to all schools and auxiliary organizations of the congregation;
- d. install members of the congregational board and, with the board, administer discipline;
- e. seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel and strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, at home and abroad;
- f. encourage the members to be generous in support of the ministry of the congregation, the synod and the church;
- g. ensure that accurate membership records including baptisms, confirmation, marriages, burials and communicants, are maintained and a report of such statistics submitted annually to the secretary of the synod on forms provided by the church. The parish records shall be kept in a separate book which shall remain the property of the congregation;
- h. commend members who move to the pastoral care of the parish in which their new home is located.

Section 5. In order that a pastor of this congregation may be devoted fully to the duties of the office, adequate compensation and premiums under the church's pension plan shall be provided, paid in semi-monthly or monthly instalments. Expenses incident to attendance at conventions of the synod and the church and at meetings otherwise required by the pastor's office shall be reimbursed by the congregation, except where other provisions are made.

Section 6. The regular call of this congregation when accepted by a pastor shall constitute a relationship, which shall be terminated only for the following causes:

- a. the resignation of the pastor;
- b. the attainment by the pastor of the age of sixty-five years, after which time the pastor may be called for renewable two-year terms;
- c. disqualification of the pastor through discipline;
- d. division of a pastoral charge;
- e. the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;

- f. continued neglect of ministry;
- g. inability to conduct the pastoral office satisfactorily in the parish in view of local conditions, without reflection on the moral and spiritual character of the pastor.

In the last three contingencies, the procedures provided for in the constitution of the synod shall be followed.

Section 7. In the event of alleged defection in doctrine or alleged conduct unbecoming a pastor, the matter shall be referred by the congregational board to the bishop for action as provided in the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

Section 8. At a time of pastoral vacancy, the congregational board shall select an interim pastor after consultation with the bishop. The duties of the interim pastor shall be defined by the congregational board. All interim and supply pastors shall refrain from exerting influence in the call process of the congregation.

Section 9. When an additional pastor is called, the privileges and responsibilities of that pastor shall be based upon the description provided in the governance manual and specified in the call drafted in consultation with the incumbent pastor(s), the congregational board and the bishop.

Section 10. Upon receiving a call to another ministry, the pastor shall consult with the bishop and the chairperson of the congregational board before a decision is reached. The pastor shall inform the congregation and the bishop of the decision on the call within thirty days of official notice. When a call has been accepted, the pastor shall normally terminate the ministry within two months.

ARTICLE VIII Congregational Meeting

Section 1. An annual meeting of the congregation shall be held on a date to be stated in the bylaws. Other meetings shall be held as specified in the bylaws.

Section 2. Special congregational meetings may be called by the pastor or the chairperson, or the congregational board, or by the written request of at least ten voting members. The purpose for which such a special meeting is called shall be announced when it is called and no other business shall be conducted.

Section 3. Notice of all congregational meetings shall be given at the services of worship for two preceding Sundays prior to the meeting or by mail to all voting members of the congregation ten days prior to the meeting. Notice of congregational meetings held to dispose, encumber, or otherwise deal with congregational real property shall be given in accordance with applicable provincial legislation. The pastor(s) shall be notified of all regular and special meetings of the congregation.

Section 4. Twenty five (25) voting members of the congregation shall constitute a quorum.

Section 5. Bourinot's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall be the governing parliamentary law of this congregation, except as otherwise provided in the constitution or bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada or in this constitution or its bylaws.

ARTICLE IX Congregational Board

Section 1. At its annual meeting the congregation shall elect a Governing Board of not less than six and not more than twelve members for terms of three years each with approximately one-third of the terms expiring annually. No member of the Governing Board shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms and shall then not be eligible for election to Governing Board for three years. Terms shall begin following the annual meeting.

Section 2. At the first congregational Board meeting following the annual meeting, the congregational board shall elect a chair, vice chair, secretary and treasurer.

Section 3. At the annual meeting the congregation will determine the number of Board positions to be filled for the coming year, with no less than six (6) and no more than twelve (12) members.

Section 4. If a determined amount of vacancies are not filled at the annual meeting, the congregational board shall fill by appointment a board vacancy until the next meeting of the congregation. At such meeting the vacant position shall be filled by nomination and election. Should the expired term be one year or less, this shall not be considered in determining the person's eligibility to serve further terms in that position.

Section 5. The chairperson of the congregational board shall contact a member of the congregational board who is absent from two consecutive regular meetings. The board shall declare the position to be vacant when a board member is absent from three consecutive meetings without acceptable reason.

Section 6. The pastor(s) and administrator shall not be voting member(s) of the congregational board. The pastor(s) and administrator shall be ex officio members of all committees and shall be notified of all regular or special meetings. The pastor(s) shall be notified not less than two days prior to all congregational board and committee meetings.

Section 7. The chairperson, and vice-chairperson as assigned, shall be ex officio members of all congregational board committees.

Section 8. All members of the congregational board shall be installed by the pastor at a worship service as soon as possible following their election.

Section 9. A special Governing Board meeting may be called by the pastor, the chairperson, or any three members of the congregational board. Notice of such meeting shall be given not less than two (2) days prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE X

General Duties of the Congregational Board

Section 1. The congregational board shall:

- a.** have general oversight of the life and activities of the congregation ensuring that everything is done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. The congregational board shall exercise such authority as is delegated to it by this constitution, the bylaws and the resolutions of the congregation;
- b.** lead the congregation in stating its mission, in doing long-range planning, in setting goals and priorities, and in evaluating its activities in the light of its stated mission and goals;
- c.** provide support for the pastor(s) and other staff members serving the congregation. This should include ensuring that the ministry is reviewed and evaluated annually, according to governing policy, and a review of the compensation of the pastor(s) and other staff is conducted annually;
- c.** exemplify for the congregation through their own lifestyles a life that is worthy of the high calling in Christ;
- d.**
- e.** promote congregational unity and good will, fostering better understanding in times of conflict and exercising discipline, if necessary, in accordance with the requirements of this constitution;
- f.** ensure the continuation of pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor(s);
- g.** arrange for the effective administration of all aspects of parish life as defined in governing policy;
- h.** meet a minimum of four times per year;
- i.** review, approve and recommend annually a budget to the meeting of the congregation;
- j.** ensure that the annual budget includes adequate support for the church at large and that regular monthly benevolence monies are forwarded;

- k. emphasize the partnership of the congregation with the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and encourage support for the work of the church at large;
- l. have final authority with respect to all decisions relating to membership in the congregation.

Section 2. Duties of the congregational board officers shall be defined in the governance manual.

ARTICLE XI

Auxiliaries and Organizations

All auxiliaries and organizations within the congregation shall exist to aid it in ministering to its members and to all whom it can reach with the Gospel of Christ. Regular reports concerning the program and work of these organizations and auxiliaries shall be made to the congregational board and congregational meetings. These reports will be aligned with the strategic plan. Reports shall include an annual audited financial statement from those auxiliaries/organizations issuing receipts using the congregation's charitable organization registration number.

ARTICLE XII

Bylaws and Amendments

Section 1. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by the congregational board or at the request of five voting members. Such proposed amendments shall be:

- a. read at two successive public services of the congregation or mailed to the voting members not less than thirty days before the meeting at which it is to be considered;
- b. approved with or without change by a majority vote of those present and voting;
- c. approved without further change at a second congregational meeting to be held no less than thirty days later by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting;
- d. effective upon official notice and approval by the Synod Council.

Section 2. The Confession of Faith as stated in ARTICLE II shall be that of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

Section 3. This congregation may adopt such bylaws, not in conflict with this constitution, as may be necessary. Such bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called and conducted meeting of the congregation by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting.

Section 4. If in the judgment of the Synod Council an amendment to the constitution or bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, to the Approved Constitution for Synods or to the Approved Constitution for Congregations ought to entail related amendments of this constitution, receipt of an official communication to that effect from the secretary of the synod and enclosing a draft of the amendment recommended by the Synod Council shall constitute proper proposal and notice thereof.

Adoption of such an amendment shall then be in order at the next following meeting of the congregation.

BYLAWS

PART 1 Communion Participation

1. Participation in Holy Communion shall be open to all persons baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
2. Regular communing of an infant or young child shall be preceded by consultation between the child, the child's parents, and/or sponsors, and/or a responsible adult, and the pastor.
3. Written and oral announcements shall be made to make prospective participants aware of the above requirements.

PART II Membership

1. Application for membership
 - a. Applicants presenting letters of transfer showing them to be members in good standing in another Lutheran Church shall become members of this congregation upon acceptance by the congregational board.
 - b. Other applicants shall present their applications to the pastor(s), who shall ascertain whether or not the applicants meet the requirements of the constitution. Then the applications shall be submitted to the congregational board for final approval.
2. Discontinuance of membership

Members who move away shall be encouraged to transfer. Any confirmed member in good standing desiring to change their membership to another Lutheran church shall upon request, be entitled to a letter of transfer.
3. Responsibility List
 - a. Members who are inactive for the second year shall have their names retained on a responsibility list (Constitution, Article IV, Section 5).

- b. Unconfirmed children, neither of whose parents or guardians are active members of the congregation, shall be placed on the responsibility list if they fail to participate in the Christian education program of the congregation.

PART III

The Congregational Meeting

1. Normally, the annual meeting of the congregation shall be held on the **fourth** Sunday of the month of September.
2. All congregational meetings shall open with devotion and prayer.
3. In the following cases the vote shall be by ballot:
 - a. to elect members of the congregational Board;
 - b. to adopt or amend the articles of incorporation, constitution, or bylaws of this congregation;
 - c. to call a pastor;
 - d. to suspend or dismiss any officer of the congregation;
 - e. in any other matter upon the request of one voting member.
4. The business to be dealt with at the annual meeting shall consist of at least:
 - a. the minutes of congregational meetings which have not had prior approval;
 - b. the reports of the congregational board officers, pastor(s), administrator;
 - c. report of nominating committee;
 - d. elections of congregational board members;
 - e. presentation and approval of an annual budget for the coming calendar year;
 - f. appointment of auditing committee and nominating committee;
 - g. review of congregational strategic results and goals for the coming year;
 - h. unfinished business;
 - i. new business.
5. The board may call congregational forums from time to time to discuss items of interest to the congregation, including review of mission statement and long range goals.

PART IV

Annual Reports

1. Yearend reports from congregational board and appropriate administrators shall be submitted to the membership at least three weeks prior to the annual meeting.
2. Reports from other committees or ministries may be included in the annual report.

3. All auxiliaries, organizations and committees handling funds within the congregation shall submit year-end financial reports to either the pastor or administrator of the congregation. These reports shall be published in the annual report.
4. The annual report shall include a copy of the minutes of all congregational meetings held in that year.
5. The auditing committee shall submit a written report at the annual meeting.

PART V Duties of the Congregational Board

1. Duties of congregational officers will be defined in the Governance Manual.
2. The congregational board must prepare and present a strategic plan at the annual meeting for approval. The strategic plan must follow the guideline of the Relationship Model.

PART VI Non-Board Positions

Representatives to other ministries supported by the congregation, including delegates to conference, Synod and National conventions may:

- a) be elected by the congregation or appointed by board;
- b) report to board when appropriate;
- c) report to the congregation.

PART VII Nominating Committee

The congregation at its annual meeting shall elect a nominating committee of at least three members to function for the ensuing year. It shall be the duty of this committee to nominate a slate of congregational board members and the other positions required each year at the congregational meeting. This committee may also be requested to submit nominations to board for vacancies that occur.

PART VIII
Auditing Committee

The congregation at its annual meeting shall elect an auditing committee to function for the ensuing year. This committee shall audit all accounts and report to the next annual meeting.

PART IX
Distribution of Constitution and Bylaws

Active and new members of this congregation shall be entitled to receive a copy of the constitution and bylaws and notice of any and all amendments.

