

In Jesus' Name

§ 1. Since according to the Word of God (I Cor. 14:40, Col. 2:5) in every Christian congregation everything is to be done decently and in order, we Norwegian Lutherans in this area have decided and agreed on the present congregational constitution, according to which the internal and external affairs of the congregation are to be administered and decided.

§ 2. The name of our congregation shall be Center Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Winnebago County, Iowa.

§ 3. This congregation accepts the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as God's revealed Word and therefore as the only source and rule for faith, doctrine and life.

§ 4. The congregation professes the symbolical books of the Lutheran church, because these give a pure and unadulterated presentation of the doctrine contained in the Word of God. These symbolical books are:

1. The Apostolic Creed.
2. The Nicene Creed.
3. The Athanasian Creed.
4. Luther's Small Catechism.
5. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession or the confession of faith which was delivered to Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Augsburg in the year 1530.
6. The Formula of Concord.



§ 5. No one shall be used as pastor and spiritual guide in the congregation unless he has been properly tested, regularly called and ecclesiastically (in church) ordained to the clerical office and also shares the faith and doctrine of the congregation.

Note: Nevertheless, this does not mean that we would forbid theological students, candidates or others who in the same manner would have to be qualified for it, to preach in the congregation occasionally on behalf of (instead of) the pastor and with his consent.

§ 6. The acts of worship in the congregation shall be carried out in agreement with the Norwegian Church's Ritual of 1685 and Altar Book of 1688, nevertheless, these (should be) thus modified as the congregation on account of the circumstances may find it practical to decide.

§ 7. In order for an adult to be enabled to be received as a member of the congregation, he must

- a) be baptized;
- b) profess the canonical books of the Holy Scriptures as the only divine source, rule and guideline for faith and life;
- c) have at least as much Christian knowledge as is required of a confirmand;
- d) not indulge in manifest works of the flesh (Gal. 5, 19-22), but lead a Christian life;
- e) accept and submit to this congregation's constitution along with those decisions which the congregation in accordance with it must make, provided they do not conflict with God's Word, and allow himself in brotherly love to be admonished when he may have erred;
- f) not be a member of secret societies.

§ 8. Those who desire to be received into the congregation shall announce themselves (their intention) to the pastor of the congregation, who shall investigate whether those concerned satisfy the requirements laid down in the previous paragraph. When this is sufficiently established, the pastor, at the next worship service or congregation meeting, shall announce the

application for admission of those concerned, which then at a later congregation meeting or worship service shall be discussed and decided by the congregation in accordance with § 7.

§ 9. According to the laws of the state and in the manner there prescribed, every year a regular annual meeting shall be held for the election of trustees, who shall manage the congregation's economic affairs, as they are placed on them by the congregation. They therefore have no other authority than that which the congregation delegates to them, and the instructions given them may at any time in a legal congregation meeting be changed or abolished.

§ 10. Besides the aforementioned annual meeting, the congregation can also decide to conduct regular congregation meetings semi-annually or quarterly, or more often, as it finds it useful. Then, the pastor of the congregation may also call a congregation meeting when he finds it useful.

§ 11. The congregation meetings are summoned by the pastor at the previous worship service or congregation meeting or, if that cannot be done, by message or official notice, signed by him, and at the same time the subjects of discussion are to be mentioned. If a majority of the trustees or ten members of the congregation eligible to vote express their desire in writing (petition) to the pastor to have a congregation meeting held on a certain proposed matter, the pastor is obligated to call the meeting. If, then, the pastor neglects or refuses to call the meeting, one of the trustees may call the meeting at such a written request. If in the absence of the pastor a matter which cannot be postponed requires that a congregation meeting be held, it may be called by a majority of the trustees.

§ 12. The congregation meetings as a rule are conducted by the pastor as chairman. In the absence of the pastor, or where special circumstances make it desirable, the congregation may choose another chairman.

§ 13. The congregation as a whole has the highest power in the external and internal administration of all ecclesiastical and congregational affairs; nevertheless the congregation does not have the right to order or desire anything whatsoever against the Word of God and the symbolical books. If it does so, all such regulations and decisions are invalid.

§ 14. The right to speak and vote in congregation meetings belongs only to the male confirmed congregation members who

- a) are 21 years old;
- b) contribute annually to the expenses of the congregation provided that they are not excused (exempt) according to § 21;
- c) are not members of secret societies;
- d) are not under church discipline by the congregation;
- e) are not denied such right for other reasons by a resolution of the congregation.

§ 15. The congregation may for that particular occasion give such people the right to speak in a congregation meeting who either according to the previous paragraph do not have that right or do not belong to the congregation.

§ 16. It is the congregation member's duty to participate in congregational meetings. Those who do not attend cannot exercise their right to vote, but must abide by the decisions of those who attend.*

§ 17. Doctrine and questions of conscience cannot be determined by vote, but only according to God's Word and the symbolical books of our church. Two-thirds voting majority are required:

- a) in choosing a pastor and schoolteacher, after the congregation has first agreed on candidates

for the vote.

b) in denying or granting speaking and voting right to congregation members.

c) in changes or additions to the congregation's order.

In more difficult matters the congregation, before a final decision is made, ought to seek advice with faithful and experienced brethren in the faith. Otherwise other matters may be decided by simple majority vote, and if there is a tie after all including the president have voted, then the president's vote is cast out.

§ 18. The congregation at its annual meeting chooses a secretary, who keeps the minutes at its meetings, as well as a financial secretary and treasurer, who are to direct the congregation's treasury and present an accounting at the annual meeting.

§ 19. For trustees, and other church positions, only voting members should be elected (see § 14), where, besides having the necessary practical skill and Christian knowledge for the office, has a general reputation as men who show zeal and eagerness for God's Word, both by leading a Christian life as well as by diligently hearing the public preaching of the Word and by receiving the Lord's Supper. For this election a majority of the votes taken is required, as long as the congregation in a special case does not decide otherwise.

§ 20. All officers of the congregation can be removed from office or discharged from their office in Christian order. Established reasons for removing a pastor and schoolteacher are stubborn and continued persistence in false doctrine, in spite of being admonished, offensive life or deliberate unfaithfulness in fulfilling the office.

§ 21. It is the duty of every confirmed congregation member according to ability to support the upkeep of the church and school and payment of the congregation's debt. If anyone for a whole year contribute nothing to the congregation's expenses, and are not exempted by the congregation on the basis of poverty, then such a person shall be admonished in a brotherly way.

§ 22. If a congregation member is excluded from the congregation in accordance with God's Word, then such a person has no rights in the congregation and loses all right to the congregation's possessions. And if a congregation member moves away and does not support the congregation's expenses for a whole year such a person thereby ceases to be a member of the congregation.

§ 23. If someone leaves the congregation except in the case of a split in the congregation, then such a person cannot make a demand for what he has contributed into the congregation's possessions.

§ 24. Should a split arise in the congregation (may God in His grace forbid), then all the congregation's various possessions belong to the part which besides being faithful to the order of the congregation holds fast to God's Word and the symbolical books as well as requiring the pastor and schoolteacher to be obligated in this. If both parties make a demand to fulfill these conditions, then the solution takes place in this way, that the outgoing members receive back that which they have contributed to the congregation's possessions. If any of those who have contributed to the congregation's possessions have died, then the heirs of those of the deceased, who are leaving the congregation, can make a demand on that which the named contributors have given.

§ 25. Of these paragraphs the following shall be unchangeable: §§ 3, 4, 5, 13, 20, 22 and 24 along with the present paragraph. The remaining paragraphs can be changed or revised; yet such changes or additions must never go against any of the unchangeable paragraphs and nor may they be removed except at the regular annual meeting, after a proposal concerning this has been

presented in writing and read at a congregational meeting or divine service at least two months beforehand. Voting on this is done in the manner prescribed in paragraph 17.

*(Paragraphs 16-25 translated from Norwegian by Prof. Mark DeGarmeaux, March 2005)

Articles of Incorporation

of the
Center Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran
Congregation in Winnebago
County, Iowa.

We, the undersigned citizens of the state of Iowa, do hereby associate ourselves into a body corporate, as provided by chapter II, title LX, of the laws of the state of Iowa.

ARTICLE I.

The name of this corporation shall be: The Center Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Winnebago County, Iowa.

ARTICLE II.

Members of this corporation are those who according to Article XIV of the constitution of The Center Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran congregation in Winnebago Co., Iowa, are members of the meetings of said congregation.

ARTICLE III.

The objects of this corporation are the providing and taking title to a personage and lot for the use of the pastor of the congregation aforesaid, and such houses for religious worship, schoolhouses, and cemeteries as said congregation may see fit to erect and establish, and such other rights and powers as the laws of Iowa confer upon such corporations.

ARTICLE IV.

This corporation shall have the right to buy and sell real estate and personal property for the purposes above named, and to execute all needful papers thereto, to execute mortgages and all needful papers for the payments of any sums of money agreed to be paid in the furtherance of the objects of this corporation.

ARTICLE V.

The affairs of this corporation shall be managed in accordance with the constitution of said congregation, and also according to such by-laws and resolutions as hereafter from time to time may be adopted at any of its annual or special meetings.

ARTICLE VI.

The pastor of the aforesaid congregation, and successors in office, shall be ex-officio president of this corporation, and of the Board of Trustees, and with the trustees and their successors in office, duly elected by the aforesaid congregation at their annual meetings, shall manage and conduct all economical and pecuniary business of this corporation in such manner and form as prescribed in the preceding Article V. If the pastor is absent, another can be chosen president p. t. The congregation may also appoint committees for certain objects and choose commissioners to assist the pastor in providing for parochial schools.

ARTICLE VII.

This corporation shall commence the 17th day of December, A. D., 1919, and have perpetual succession.

ARTICLE VIII.

The private property of the members of this corporation is exempt from liability for the corporate debts thereof.

ARTICLE IX.

This corporation shall hold its annual meeting on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of December, in each year, beginning with the year 1920, at which meeting it shall elect a secretary, treasurer, and three trustees. Until the annual meeting held on said date in the year 1920, K. N. Nerness shall be secretary, Halvor Fugleberg, treasurer, and K. J. Holstad, Lye Storby and Tom Langfald shall be the trustees.

It shall be the duty of said secretary to keep a full, complete, and impartial record of all the proceedings of the meeting of said congregation, and after the same has been read and approved it shall be signed by the president and countersigned by the secretary.

ARTICLE X.

When the terms of office of trustees, commissioners, etc., aforesaid shall cease, they shall turn over to their successors in office all books, property, and things belonging to said corporation.

ARTICLE XI.

These articles of incorporation may be altered or amended at any annual meeting of the corporation when adopted with a majority of votes, provided such alterations or amendments are not inconsistent with the unchangeable articles in the constitution of the aforesaid congregation.

Witness our hands at Lake Mills, Winnebago County, Iowa, December 17, A. D. 1919.

K. J. HOLSTAD.

LYE STORBY.

TOM LANGFALD.

STATE OF IOWA,

Winnebago County. } ss.

Be it remembered, that on this 17th day of December, A. D., 1919, before me, G. T. Tweed, a notary public within and for said Winnebago County, personally came K. J. Holstad, Lye Storby, and Tom Langfald, to me personally known to be the identical persons whose names are affixed to the above Articles of Incorporation, and severally acknowledged the execution of the same to be their voluntary act and deed for the purpose therein expressed.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto subscribed my name and affixed my official seal, in Winnebago County, Iowa, on the date last above written.

G. T. Tweed,

(Notarial Seal) Notary Public.