

Amended Constitution  
and  
Articles of Incorporation  
of  
St. John's Church  
Located in  
Hassan Valley Township, McLeod County, MN  
Amended as of the 20th Day of November, 2016

ARTICLE I. NAME AND AFFILIATION

1. That our church was formerly organized under the following names: (a) *First Lutheran Church and Society of Glendale*, (b) *St. John's Evangelical and Reformed Church near Biscay*, (c) *St. John's Evangelical and Reformed Church of Hassan Valley Township*; and (d) *St. John's United Church of Christ*. The name of this church is St. John's Church, located in Hassan Valley Township, State of Minnesota, County of McLeod.

2. This congregation shall be a local church of the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference, and accepts for itself the patterns and procedure of the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference, hereinafter called the Conference.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this church shall be to worship God, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to celebrate the Sacraments; to realize Christian fellowship and unity within this church and the Church Universal; to render loving service toward mankind; and to strive for righteousness, justice and peace.

ARTICLE III. POLICY

1. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are recognized as the Word of God and the ultimate rule of Christian faith and practice.

2. The governing authority of this church is held by its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject, however, to the Laws of the State of Minnesota relating to religious corporations.

ARTICLE IV. FAITH AND COVENANT

1. Faith -- This church acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of man. It acknowledges as brothers in Christ all who share in this confession. It looks to the Word of God in the Scriptures, and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic Church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the

Protestant Reformers. In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, it recognizes two Sacraments: Baptism, and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion. This church acknowledges that God has established marriage as a lifelong, exclusive relationship between one man and one woman and that all intimate sexual activity outside the marriage relationship, whether heterosexual, homosexual, or otherwise, is immoral and therefore sin (Gen. 2:24-25; Ex. 20:14, 17, 22:19; Lev. 18:22-23, 20:13, 15-16; Matt. 19:4-6, 9; Rom. 1:18-31; I Cor. 6:9-10, 15-20; I Tim. 1:8-11; Jude 7). It believes that God created the human race male and female and that all conduct with the intent to adopt a gender other than one's birth gender is immoral and therefore sin (Gen. 1:27; Deut. 22:5)."

## 2. Statement of Faith --

- We believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, to be the only inspired, inerrant, infallible authoritative Word of God written.
- We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- We believe in the deity of Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
- We believe that for salvation of lost and sinful man regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
- We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by Whose indwelling power and fullness the Christian is enabled to live a godly life in this present evil world.
- We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
- We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in Christ.

This congregation also accepts reciting other statements of faith, such as the Nicene or Apostolic Creeds, providing they in no way contradict our Statement of Faith and the clear testimony of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

3. Covenant -- We covenant one with another to seek and respond to the Word and the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. We purpose to walk together in the ways of the Lord, made known and to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world, while worshipping God, and striving for truth, justice, and peace. As did our fathers, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming of the kingdom of God, and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

## ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership in this church shall be open to any person who has been baptized, has been confirmed, or has made public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

2. Members shall affirm the Faith and Covenant as described in Article IV.

3. Members shall pledge themselves to attend the regular worship of the church and the celebration of the Lord's Supper; to live the Christian life; to share in the life and work of the



church; to contribute to its support and benevolences; and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and the community.

4. Any member or members may, on their own request, be granted a letter of transfer. If wishing to join a body not in fellowship with this church, they may be dismissed with a certificate of church membership. If, because of change of faith or for other reasons not involving unchristian conduct, members request in writing to be released from their membership obligations, the church shall patiently endeavor to secure their continuance in its fellowship; but failing in such effort, the church may grant the request and terminate their membership. Such a request shall be approved by the Senior Pastor and the Council, and the Secretary and/or Clerk shall issue the appropriate letter of release.

5. If a member or members persistently breach their responsibilities as members of this congregation as outlined in Article V, Sections 2 and 3, the Council shall give due notice to them, offer a hearing before the Council, and make faithful efforts to restore them in accordance with the law of Christ. If the situation remains unchanged, the Council may censure them, or suspend or terminate their membership.

#### ARTICLE VI. GOVERNING BODY

1. The governing body of this church shall be the membership assembled in church meeting. The vote of a majority of active members in good standing present at the meeting shall be the action of the church. A quorum shall consist of twenty percent (20%) of the members.

#### ARTICLE VII. COUNCIL

1. The Council shall be the executive body of this church. It shall be composed of the Pastor and six elected Council members. One half of its members shall constitute a quorum.

2. The Council shall organize itself every year, electing a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer; and shall form such boards or committees as will serve to further the purpose of the church.

3. Six Council members shall be elected by majority vote cast at a church meeting. They shall be elected for two years. In order to provide continuity, not more than three positions should become vacant in any one year. No council member shall be elected for more than two successive two-year terms.

4. Nominations shall be made for the offices by any member of the church. Public notice of such nominations shall be given from the pulpit or by bulletin or letter at least two weeks before the election. Other nominations may be made from the floor at the meeting at which the election is held. Nominees must be present to accept the nomination or have previously given written notice of their willingness to be nominated.

5. When elected, the Council members shall be publicly ordained to or installed in their respective offices.

6. Vacancies on the Council shall be filled by the Council for the unexpired terms.

7. The Council shall be the policy-making body and shall transact the business of the church. It shall make provision for determining and raising the current expense budget, including benevolences and staff salaries. It shall keep a complete and accurate record of its proceedings, be the custodian of all church records, provide annual examination of financial accounts, and report to the church at its regular and special meetings. All acts and deliberations of the Council are subject to the will of and revision by the governing body.

8. The Council shall instruct the proper officers on all fiscal matters, including the payment of bills.

9. The Council may authorize any extraordinary expense if funds are available, as long as it adheres to established written policies referred to in Article VII, Section 12.

10. The Council shall meet as necessary for the transaction of such business as may properly come before it. Special meetings are subject to the President's call.

11. Council members are members of the church elected by the church and ordained to or installed in their office. They shall assist and support the Pastor in the spiritual affairs of the church. They shall have jurisdiction in matters of discipline consistent with this document and church policies. The Council members shall take heed to the high calling of their office, guarding faithfully all the spiritual interests of the church, maintaining order in the house of God, visiting the sick, and ministering to the edification and comfort of all.

12. The Council shall maintain and abide by a set of written policies, and shall include with those policies a set of guidelines as to how the policies will be maintained.

#### ARTICLE VIII. PASTOR

1. It shall be the responsibility of the Council to seek a candidate for a vacancy in the office of Pastor. The Council will seek the help of a search committee for all pastoral vacancies other than supply and interim ministers.

2. As soon as a pastoral vacancy occurs, it shall be reported to the Conference.

3. In filling a vacancy or in securing supply ministers for period of vacancy, the Council may seek the counsel of the Conference.

4. A request may be made to the Conference to secure relevant information about any minister whom it wishes to consider for the vacancy. A criminal and professional background check shall be carried out on any potential candidate.

5. The pastoral candidate shall affirm the Faith and Covenant as described in Article IV.



6. The Council shall present to the church the name of the candidate it recommends to fill the vacancy. A two-thirds majority vote of the governing body as defined in Article VI constitutes a call.

7. In the call, the terms of the relationship shall be stated.

8. When a minister accepts a call to this church, the church and he or she shall join in a service of installation or recognition. The pastor may become a member if he or she wishes. The Council may seek the assistance of the Conference to complete the installation and/or membership process.

9. The pastor may originally be called for a probationary period. After satisfactory completion of that probationary period, the pastor shall be elected for an indefinite period. The pastor and the Council should each be given a copy of the written, signed contract. In order to terminate this relationship, two months' notice shall be given by either party.

10. A periodic review of the pastor's performance shall be conducted.

11. When either party decides to terminate the relationship, the termination shall be initiated by action of the Church Council. The Council has the authority to begin the two months' notice of termination, and further has the authority to immediately relieve the pastor of all pastoral duties. A majority vote of the governing body as defined in Article VI is required to complete a non-voluntary termination. Notice of such termination shall be sent by the President of the Council to the Conference for appropriate action.

12. The church may at its discretion choose an Associate or Assistant Pastor.

#### ARTICLE IX. PROPERTY

1. The church may in its corporate name sue or be sued, acquire by purchase, gift, devise, bequest or otherwise and own, hold, invest, reinvest, or dispose of property both real and personal for such work as the church may undertake and may purchase, own, receive hold, manage, care for and transfer, rent, lease, mortgage or otherwise encumber, sell, assign, transfer and convey such property for the general purposes of the church; it may receive and hold in trust both real and personal property and invest and reinvest the same and make any contracts for promoting the objects and purposes of the church.

2. Upon the dissolution of this church, all of the assets of the corporation shall be distributed to such educational, charitable or religious organizations as shall be determined by the action of the church at the time of such dissolution except as listed below in Article IX, Section 3. The organization or organizations receiving such distributions must be operated exclusively for the purpose of educational, charitable or religious purposes.

3. Upon the dissolution of this church, all benefits, personal property, and real property described hereafter shall be distributed to the St. John's Cemetery Association which has been organized and incorporated to manage the cemetery affiliated with this church. If St. John's

Cemetery Association is not in existence at the time of the dissolution of this church, then these benefits, personal property and real property shall be distributed to the successor to St. John's Cemetery Association. For purposes of this Section, the real property is described as the Northwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter (NW ¼ of SW ¼) of Section Thirty-Five (35), Township 116 North, Range 29 West, McLeod County, Minnesota. This real property consists of the land itself as well as the church, the other buildings belonging to the church, and the church cemetery.

#### ARTICLE X. CHURCH MEETINGS

1. The Annual Meeting of the church shall be held in the month of January. At this meeting, the Council, the officers of the church, the Pastor(s), and all church organizations shall submit their annual reports in writing.

2. Special church meetings may be called by the Council or by a petition to the Council signed by not less than twenty percent of the members. The Council is responsible for scheduling and presiding over the meetings. The Council shall call such meetings within three weeks from receipt of the petition.

#### ARTICLE XI. RULES OF ORDER

1. Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by this Constitution.

#### ARTICLE XII. AMENDMENTS

1. Amendments to this Constitution may be made at a duly called special church meeting or church annual meeting by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present, public announcement of the text of the proposed amendment(s) having been made two weeks prior to the meeting.

2. Previous known versions of this document were adopted on September 14, 1951, January 16, 1972, January 21, 2001, and October 5, 2003.



