

# CONSTITUTION and BY-LAWS

of

H O P E  
Lutheran | Brethren  
C h u r c h

Constitution Adopted February 16, 2019  
By-Laws Adopted February 12, 2022

# CONSTITUTION

## ARTICLE I NAME

The name of this congregation shall be  
Hope Lutheran Brethren Church,  
of Barnesville, Minnesota –  
hereafter referred to as “the church.”

## ARTICLE II STATEMENT OF FAITH

### **1. The Bible**

The Bible, including both Old and New Testaments as originally given, is the verbally and plenary<sup>1</sup> inspired Word of God and is free from error in the whole and in the part, and is therefore the final authoritative guide for faith and conduct. (2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Romans 16:25-27)

### **2. The Trinity**

There is one God eternally existent in three distinct persons in one divine essence, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:21-22; 1 John 5:7-8)

### **3. God the Father**

God the Father has revealed Himself as the Creator and preserver of the universe, to Whom the entire creation and all creatures are subject. (Genesis 1; Matthew 6:9; Ephesians 4:6)

### **4. The Human Race**

God created Adam and Eve in His image to live in fellowship with Him. They fell into sin through the temptation of Satan and thereby lost fellowship with God. Through their disobedience the entire human race became totally depraved, that is, self-centered sinners who oppose God, and who by nature are unable to trust, fear or love Him. They are subject to the devil and are condemned to death under the eternal wrath of God. (Genesis 1:26-3:7; Psalm 51; Romans 3:9-23, 5:12)

### **5. God the Son**

Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son, is the image of the invisible God. To accomplish our redemption, He became fully human, being conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus Christ, who is true God and true man, by His perfect obedience and substitutionary death on the cross, has purchased our redemption. He arose from the dead for our justification in the body in which He was crucified. He ascended into heaven, where He is now seated at the right hand of God, the Father, as our interceding High Priest. He will come a second time personally, bodily, and visibly to gather the believers unto Himself and to establish His millennial kingdom. He will judge the living and the dead and make an eternal separation between believers and unbelievers. His kingdom shall have no end. (Luke 1:34-35; John 1-18; Colossians 1:15-20)

### **6. God the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is a divine person eternally one with the Father and with the Son. Through the Word of God, He convicts people of sin, persuades them to confess their sinfulness to God and calls them to faith through the Gospel. He

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<sup>1</sup> Plenary – “full; complete; entire; absolute; unqualified” (dictionary.com)

regenerates, sanctifies, and preserves believers in the one true faith. He comforts, guides, equips, directs, and empowers the church to fulfill the great commission. (John 14:16-18; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 12:7-13)

## **7. Means of Grace**

The knowledge and benefit of Christ's redemption from sin is brought to the human race through the means of grace, namely the Word and the sacraments. (Mark 14:22-25; Romans 10:17; Ephesians 4:4-6)

### **a. Law and Gospel**

Through the Word of the Law God brings sinners to know their lost condition and to repent. Through the Word of the Gospel He brings sinners to believe in Jesus Christ, to be justified, to enter the process of sanctification, and to have eternal life. This occurs as the Holy Spirit awakens them to see their sin, convicts them of their guilt of sin, and calls them to repent and believe, inviting and enabling them to accept God's grace in Christ. Each one who thus believes is instantly forgiven and credited with Christ's righteousness. The Word then teaches and guides the believer to lead a godly life. (Exodus 20:1-21; Galatians 2:11-21; 1 Timothy 1:8-11)

### **b. Baptism**

In the Sacrament of Baptism, God offers the benefits of Christ's redemption to all people and graciously bestows the washing of regeneration and newness of life to all who believe. God calls the baptized person to live in daily repentance, that is, in sorrow for sin, in turning from sin, and in personal faith in the forgiveness of sin obtained by Christ. By grace we are daily given the power to overcome sinful desires and live a new life in Christ. Those who do not continue to live in God's grace need to be brought again to repentance and faith through the Law and Gospel. (2 Corinthians 13:5; Colossians 2:11-12; 1 Peter 3:20-22)

Because the sinfulness of human nature passes on from generation to generation and the promise of God's grace includes little children, we baptize infants, who become members of Christ's believing church through baptism. These children need to come to know that they are sinners with a sinful nature that opposes God. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, they need to confess their sinfulness and yield to God; and possess for themselves forgiveness of their sin through Jesus Christ, as they are led from the faith received in infant baptism into a clear conscious personal faith in Christ as their Lord and Savior and being assured of salvation, rely solely on the finished work of Christ, and the power of the Gospel to live as children of God. (Psalm 14:2-3; Matthew 19:14; Acts 16:33)

### **c. Communion**

In the Sacrament of Holy Communion, Christ gives to the communicants His body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine. He declares the forgiveness of sin to all believers and strengthens their faith. (Matthew 26:26-29; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34)

## **8. Salvation**

Eternal salvation is available to every living human being on earth by God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. This salvation consists of an instantaneous aspect and an ongoing, continual aspect. (Acts 16:30-33; Romans 10:9-17; Ephesians 2:8-9)

### **a. Justification**

Justification is God's gracious act by which He, for Christ's sake, instantaneously acquits repentant and believing sinners and credits them with Christ's righteousness. At that moment, God gives each one who believes a new and godly nature and the Holy Spirit begins the process of sanctification. There is no place for human effort in justification. (John 5:24; Romans 3:23-28; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Galatians 2:15-16)

### **b. Sanctification**

Sanctification is God’s gracious, continual work of spiritual renewal and growth in the life of every justified person. Through the means of grace, the Holy Spirit works to reproduce the character of Christ within the lives of all believers, instructing and urging them to live out their new nature. The Holy Spirit enables believers more and more to resist the devil, to overcome the world, and to count themselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit produces spiritual fruit in and bestows spiritual gifts upon all believers. He calls, empowers and equips them to serve God in the home, in the community, and as part of the Church Universal. The process of sanctification will be complete only when the believer reaches glory. (Colossians 3:15-17; Galatians 5:13-26; James 1:25)

## **9. The Church**

The Church Universal consists of all those who truly believe on Jesus Christ as Savior. The local congregation is an assembly of believers in a certain locality among whom the Gospel is purely taught and the sacraments are rightly administered. The confessing membership of the local congregation shall include only those who have been baptized into “the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” confess personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, maintain a good reputation in the community and accept the constitution of Hope Lutheran Brethren Church. It cannot, however, be avoided that hypocrites might be mixed in the congregation; that is, those whose unbelief is not evident to the congregation. (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:42-47; 20:17-30; Hebrews 10:23-25)

## **10. Church Governance**

The Church of the Lutheran Brethren practices the congregational form of church government and the autonomy of the local congregations. The office of pastor and elder is to be filled by men only. The synodical administration has an advisory function as it relates to the congregation, and an administrative function as it relates to the cooperative efforts of the congregations. (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-16; Hebrews 13:17-19; 1 Peter 5:1-11)

## **11. Lutheran Confessions**

The Lutheran confessions are a summary of Bible doctrines. We adhere to the following confessional writings: The Apostles’ Creed, Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, unaltered Augsburg Confession, and Luther’s Small Catechism. (Copies of these specific documents can be made available upon request to the church office.)

### **ARTICLE III PURPOSE**

The purpose of this congregation shall be to win souls for Christ and to strengthen believers by the preaching of the Word, the administration of the Sacraments, and the exercise of spiritual gifts through God’s grace. It is also our purpose to cooperate with other congregations of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren in the ventures of faith that God gives us in Home and World Missions, in Christian education, and in publications and charities. We also support other worthy endeavors, which are in harmony with our principles and practices.

### **ARTICLE IV CHURCH MANAGEMENT**

1. **CHRIST:** The Head of the Church  
Matthew 16:16-19, Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:23, Colossians 1:18. Through the Holy Spirit Christ guides the Church by the Scriptures, and He bestows upon the Church the gifts of grace for the enablement of His people to fulfill His mission on earth. (Romans 12:1-21, I Corinthians 12:1-31, Ephesians 4:11-16, I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9).
2. **PASTOR**  
For the office of Pastor, the congregation shall call a man who is recognized as a true Christian, who accepts this constitution and who otherwise has the necessary qualifications. The Pastor shall particularly attend to preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. He shall also perform such other services within the church as are required of him by the Word of God. His call, as well as his resignation or dismissal, shall take place at a

lawful meeting of the congregation by secret ballot and shall require a two-thirds majority for passage. The Pastor remains in office as long as both find it desirable. His resignation becomes effective after a three months' notice. The three months' notice may be waived by mutual agreement.

### 3. ELDERS

The congregation shall confirm as many elders as it shall find qualified and advisable. The duties of the elders are to assist the pastor, to watch over the spiritual condition of the congregation, and to exercise such supervision that all aspects of the church program shall be of a functional nature and in accordance with the Word of God and ARTICLE II of this constitution. The Elder Board has final authority for interpretation of Scripture.

- A. The Elders shall be confirmed for a term of three years and may serve consecutive terms.
- B. The Pastor(s) and the elders together constitute the Elder Board.
- C. Nominations for Elder shall come from the Elder Board. Possible candidates may be brought to the elder board by any member of the congregation.
- D. New candidates for office of Elder shall be confirmed for a one-year term. During this intern year, he shall receive instruction and training in the office of Elder. After completion of this intern year, the candidate shall have the opportunity to withdraw. Should he decide to continue, and the existing board concurs, his name will be placed on the ballot for a full three (3) year term. Upon confirmation to office, ordination will be arranged as soon as practical.
- E. All candidates for the office of Elder shall be considered on an individual basis. In order to be confirmed, the candidate must receive, by secret ballot, two-thirds affirmative vote of those present at the Annual Meeting.
- F. The congregation shall be notified at an Annual Meeting when a new three-year term begins for any of the Elders.
- G. In absence of the Pastor, one of the Elders shall lead the devotional meeting, or arrange for their leadership.
- H. As God prospers, there may be more men qualified to be an elder than can serve on the board at one time. Therefore, when need, a rotation system may be instituted to enable the use of these men in this office.
- I. If, and when practical, after having served at least two consecutive three-year terms, an Elder may request a sabbatical of up to one year. The sabbatical would be a part of, and occur during, a three-year term.
- J. The Elders and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees shall constitute a Call Committee when seeking a new Pastor. The Elder Board may appoint additional committee members from the voting membership of the congregation to assist in this task if deemed necessary or advisable.

### 4. BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The congregation shall elect at least three (3) members (or the minimum number as required by State law) to serve as Trustees. Their duties are to care for all financial matters pertaining to the congregation and to supervise all property belonging to the congregation and to submit a report of the same at the Annual Meeting. The Treasurer of the Congregation becomes a member of the Board of Trustees upon election at the annual meeting.

### 5. JOINT BOARD

The Elder Board, Board of Trustees, and the Secretary of the Congregation constitute the Joint Board. The Chairman of the Congregation shall serve as Chairman of the Joint Board. Meetings of the Joint Board shall be called by the Chairman and shall be held as required. The Joint Board shall elect a Vice-Chairman from its membership to serve in the absence of the Chairman.

### 6. OTHER OFFICERS

- A. Chairman: The Congregation shall, at each annual meeting of the church, elect a Chairman who shall lead all congregational business meetings.
- B. Secretary of the Congregation: A Secretary shall be elected at each annual meeting of the church.
- C. Treasurer: The Treasurer shall be elected at each annual meeting of the church. Upon election, the Treasurer becomes a member of the Board of Trustees.

### 7. COMMITTEES

- A. Auditing Committee: Two auditors shall comprise this committee. Each Auditor shall be elected at an Annual Meeting of the church to serve a two-year term. These terms shall be staggered.
- B. Nominating Committee: A nominating committee of three members shall be elected at each Annual Meeting of the church. One of the three shall be an Elder. They shall submit nominations for all offices except for the

office of Elder, and in the event of a change of the Pastor, the Pastor. All nominations for the office of Elder must be made by the Elder Board. Suggestions for Pastor shall be brought to the Congregation by the call committee. Additional nominations for Elder may be brought to the Elder Board by any member of the congregation.

- C. Other Committees: Other committees may be appointed by the Joint Board of the Congregation for specific ministries as need may arise.
8. All Officers and Board Members provided for in this constitution must be confessing members of this congregation.

## ARTICLE V CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

1. Confessing Members: Confessing members shall have been baptized "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," confess personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, maintain a good reputation in the community and accept this Constitution. All requests for confessing membership are made to the Board of Elders, which recommends candidates to the Congregation. A majority vote at any business meeting of the Congregation is required for candidates to become members of the Congregation.
  - A. Baptized children of the Congregation who have become confessing Christians may request Confessing Membership upon completion of Confirmation. Only Confessing Members of the Congregation who have reached the voting age determined by the local congregation may vote at business meetings.
  - B. Confessing Members shall not belong to any secret society or organizations which in its official statements or rites assert that individuals are reconciled to God outside of Jesus Christ and His atonement.
  - C. All those considering confessing membership are required to participate in the Discovery Class conducted by the Elder Board prior to making membership application.
  - D. A Confessing Member may be removed upon recommendation by the Elder Board to the Congregation. Such action shall require a majority vote at any business meeting of the Congregation.
2. Baptized children of the congregation: Children baptized in the congregation and all baptized children of confessing members shall be designated baptized children of the congregation. Upon completion of Confirmation, the baptized children may apply for transfer to confessing status if they profess and evidence a living relationship with Jesus Christ. Those not requesting confessing membership shall become parishioners and they shall continue to remain on the church record as parishioners of the congregation until they request to have their names removed or until the Board of Elders deems it necessary to remove them. They shall have the privilege of being served by the Pastor for weddings, baptisms, Christian instruction and funerals. They shall be the object of the prayer interest and evangelistic concern of the church. The congregation shall diligently guide these children and youth by teaching the Word of God and modeling Christian attitudes and behavior. The Congregation shall arrange for Sunday School, Youth Ministries, Pastoral Instruction, Confirmation, and other Christian Training Programs. These young people shall be made objects of prayer as the Congregation seeks to guide them to conscious faith, spiritual growth and confessing membership in the church.
3. Parishioners: Baptized children of the Congregation become Parishioners upon reaching voting age if they have not been received as Confessing Members. The Board of Elders may include as Parishioners those who wish to call this their church home. The Board of Elders may also remove the names of Parishioners when they deem necessary or advisable. Parishioners shall have the same privilege of being served by the Pastor for weddings, baptisms, Christian instruction and funerals. They shall be the object of the prayer interest and evangelistic concern of the church.

## ARTICLE VI CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

Only those organizations that have first been approved by the Elder Board and accepted by the congregation shall function within the church. The Presidents and Vice Presidents of auxiliary organizations shall be professing Christians and shall adhere to this constitution.

ARTICLE VII

**CHURCH PROPERTY**

If a division should ever occur in this Congregation, which God forbid, the properties and assets of the church shall belong to that part of the Congregation which abides by this Constitution, whether that part be in majority or minority. In the event that this Congregation is dissolved, the property shall be deeded to the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America, provided it is in existence.

**THIS PARAGRAPH IS UNALTERABLE.**

ARTICLE VIII

**AMENDMENTS TO THIS CONSTITUTION**

This constitution may be amended by a 2/3 majority vote of the members present at an Annual Meeting of the Congregation, provided that a motion for amendment shall have been presented in written form and read at the previous Annual Meeting. Amendments to the Constitution shall not conflict with or change Article II – STATEMENT OF FAITH, ARTICLE III – PURPOSE, or ARTICLE VII – CHURCH PROPERTY.

*The constitution printed above was adopted as the official constitution of Hope LBC at the February 16, 2019 annual meeting.*

# BY-LAWS

## ARTICLE I

### **BY-LAWS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

1. Business meetings are held as often as required by the congregation or as deemed necessary by the Joint Board.
  - a. The business session must be conducted in a brotherly spirit. At a general business session, no one shall bring forth another's mistakes or shortcomings or anything of a personal nature that would disrupt the spirit of brotherliness.
  - b. All confessing members who have attained legal voting age are eligible to vote.
  - c. A quorum of 30% of the resident confessing members is required at every business meeting of the Church to transact any legal business.
  - d. Business meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.
  - e. The annual meeting of the church shall be held by the end of February.
  - f. Election of Officers shall take place at the annual meeting.
2. Baptism and the Lord's Supper shall be administered according to the ritual of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America. The same shall be true of all ministerial functions such as confirmation, weddings and funerals.
3. Confessing membership shall be conferred in the following manner: the candidate for membership shall be examined by the Elder Board regarding Christian testimony and doctrine. They must be recommended for membership at a congregational business meeting. If they are accepted for membership, they shall be publicly welcomed into the membership at a later public worship service.
4. In the event of a letter of transfer, the following procedures shall be observed. The Elder board may grant a letter of transfer to another congregation to any member in good standing requesting it, and the member shall be removed from membership. A letter of transfer from another Lutheran Brethren Congregation shall be accepted and the person(s) transferring shall be welcomed into the congregation in the same manner as new members. Transfers from other churches shall be considered by the Elder Board and acted upon by the congregation in the same fashion as confessing membership.
5. Because confessing membership implies a living faith expressed within the community of believers and accountable to a local church body (Romans 12:4-5, Galatians 6:1-5, Hebrews 10:23-25, James 5:16), it is expected that confessing members will remain active in the life of the church. A membership policy document will be maintained by the Elder Board that covers active and inactive membership, church discipline, and the process by which a confessing member may be recommended for removal by the congregation in accordance with the constitution.
6. The Pastor and his family are automatically to be considered members of the church upon his installation. His resignation as Pastor shall be considered to be a resignation of the Pastor and his family from church membership, unless specifically requested otherwise.
7. This congregation shall not allow or sanction any service, function, celebration, or other activity to take place on the property owned or under the control of the congregation which conflicts with or is expressly contrary to the CLB Statement of Faith, position papers, Ministerial Acts, or the CLB view of and exegesis of Scripture, which in the view of the congregation would bring disrepute to the name of Christ.

## ARTICLE II

### **TERM OF OFFICE FOR ELECTED OFFICERS**

1. Elders are confirmed for a term of three years.  
The terms shall be staggered.
2. Trustees are elected for a term of three years.  
The terms shall be staggered.
3. Auditors are elected for a term of two years.  
The terms shall be staggered



**ARTICLE III  
DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND BOARDS**

**1. ELDERS**

- a. The Elders are the spiritual overseers of the congregation. They shall, together with the Pastor, constitute the Elder Board and have all the privileges and responsibilities already delineated in this constitution. They shall care for the spiritual welfare of the church and initiate disciplinary action when church discipline becomes necessary. They shall assist the Pastor in communion services and oversee the pastoral functions in the absence of the Pastor.
- b. An Elder who violates the responsibility of his office may be removed from office by applying the following procedure: Two or more members of the congregation must bring the charge before the entire Elder Board, which will carefully review its validity. The Elder in question must be allowed to answer the charge in person before the board, but will leave the room for the discussion and final vote. If by a majority vote, the board concurs with the charge, the Elder shall forfeit his position and duties, or at his discretion be allowed to gracefully resign. If the Elder feels he has been unfairly treated, he may request that the matter be referred to a Congregational meeting for a vote. The Congregation may remove the elder from office when two-thirds of the voting membership present at the meeting approve his removal.

**2. CHAIRMAN OF THE CONGREGATION**

The Chairman shall preside over the congregational business meeting and the meetings of the Joint Board. He shall be authorized to call special business meetings of the congregation or the Joint Board. If 20% of the members of the congregation present a request to the Chairman for a meeting of the Joint Board or congregation, such a meeting shall be held.

**3. TRUSTEES**

The trustees shall care for financial matters and maintain all property belonging to the church. They shall recommend salary changes or payments to the congregation. They are authorized to make expenditures up to \$2500.00 without direct congregational authorization.

**4. SECRETARY OF THE CONGREGATION**

The Secretary shall keep accurate minutes of the congregational business meetings and the joint board meetings care for correspondence, and report at each business meeting.

**5. TREASURER OF THE CONGREGATION**

The Treasurer shall make payments authorized by the Trustee Board within the bounds of this constitution or as authorized by the congregation. The Treasurer shall keep accurate accounts of income and expenditures and report to each business meeting of the church.

**6. AUDITORS**

The Auditors shall examine the financial records of the church and report to the annual meeting of the congregation.

**7. CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

The Christian Education Committee shall be comprised of an elder board representative, a trustee board representative, a congregational representative, and the main ministry leaders (directors) from each of the children's and youth programs of this congregation. They shall work to advise and support the discipleship and educational ministry to the children and youth to whom Hope ministers. This will include setting educational objectives, reviewing curriculum, and resourcing ministry leaders. This committee will meet as often as is deemed necessary.

8. All positions provided for under Article III of the By-Laws of this Constitution shall be confessing members of this congregation.

**ARTICLE IV  
SPECIFIC MINISTRY LEADERSHIP ROLES**

**1. MINISTRY DIRECTORS**

The main leader for specific ministries, whether called director, coordinator, etc., shall be appointed by the elder board as needed to fulfill ministry needs and supervision of ministry teams at Hope. Individuals in these positions shall report to and receive direction from the elder board and are expected to work within Hope's Constitution and

By-Laws and to uphold Hope's mission, vision, and ministry plan. (*Examples could include Sunday School, youth ministry, nursery, small groups, etc.*)

2. **MINISTRY TEAMS**

Directors for specific ministry areas may recruit ministry team members to exercise the duties and activities of the ministry initiatives and programs. These teams will operate within the mission, vision, and ministry plan of Hope and the team members will report to and receive direction from their respective ministry director, as defined above.

3. **COLLABORATIVE PLANNING AND TRAINING**

The main leader for specific ministries, whether called director, coordinator, etc., shall meet together with the lead pastor, at least once per year but as often as is needed, to collaborate on ministry budget and calendar planning, spiritual emphasis within the church, and organizational communication.

**ARTICLE V  
AMENDMENTS TO THE BY-LAWS**

By-Laws may be amended when a motion is made at a congregational business meeting. Adoption requires a two-thirds majority vote of those at the annual meeting.

*The by-laws to the constitution printed above was adopted as the official by-laws of Hope LBC at the February 12, 2022 annual meeting.*