

CONSTITUTION OF SKUDESNES NORWEGIAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CONGREGATION.

ARTICLE I - Name of the Congregation.

1. The name of this congregation shall be Skudesnes Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation.

ARTICLE II - Confession

1. This congregation believes and confesses that the Holy Scriptures, the canonical books of the Old and the New Testaments, are truly the Word of God, revealed for the salvation of man, and therefore, in union with Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the only source and rule of faith, doctrine and life in the Congregation.
2. This Congregation accepts and adheres to the Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, with Luther's Small Catechism, understood in accordance with that explanation and progress revealed in other of the Lutheran Church's symbolic writings as revealed in the Book of Concord.
3. This Congregation is affiliated with the ~~Lutheran~~ Free Church of America.

ARTICLE III - Membership and Voting

1. Members of this Congregation are all those who legally have been received into the Congregation and who since have not resigned, nor been expelled.
2. All children of parents belonging to the Congregation become members of same through Baptism.
3. Adults who are to be received into the Congregation must:
  - a) Be baptized with Christian Baptism.
  - b) Be confirmed or have knowledge of Christian doctrine equivalent to that required for confirmation.
  - c) By confession and life show that they seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.
  - d) Subscribe to this constitution and partake according to ability
4. The right to vote in this Congregation have all confirmed members, 18 years and over who are not under church discipline and who according to ability take part in the financial expenditures of the Congregation.

ARTICLE IV - Meetings of the Congregation.

1. The power and authority of this Congregation regarding its own affairs are exercised at the Congregational meetings consisting of voting members whose decisions are valid when the meeting has been called in a legal manner.
2. The right of the Congregational meeting is:
  - a) To elect all officers.
  - b) To adopt such rules and make such decisions which are considered to be of benefit and edification and which do not conflict with this Constitution.
  - c) To decide regarding books of instruction.
  - d) To determine the budget of the Congregation and decide how it shall be raised.
  - e) To act on the admission of members to the Congregation.
3. The annual meeting of this Congregation shall be held in the month of November each year.
4. The Congregational meeting is legally called when it has been announced at a public service at least ten (10) days previous to being held, though in case of matters that cannot be postponed, shorter notice is permitted, meeting to be announced by the Pastor, or in case of pastoral vacancy, by the chairman of the church Council.
5. The chairman of the meeting shall be the Pastor or whomsoever the meeting shall elect.
6. Congregational meetings shall be held when called by the Pastor, or in case of pastoral vacancy by the elected chairman of the church council, or by five (5) voting members of the Congregation.

ARTICLE V - Officers of the Congregation.

1. Legal officers of this Congregation are:
  - a) Pastor.
  - b) Secretary.
  - c) Treasurer.
  - d) Three, six, or nine Deacons.
  - e) Three, six or nine Trustees.
2. The Pastor is the shepherd of the congregation. His election as well as discharge takes place at a legal Congregational meeting with a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) majority vote. When the Pastor wishes to resign his pastorate he shall give the Congregation three (3) months notice. Likewise is a three (3) months notice required when the Congregation wishes to discharge its Pastor.
3. The Secretary shall record all minutes of Congregational meetings and preserve the archives of the Congregation. He is elected at the annual meeting to a term of one (1) year.

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3. The Secretary shall record all minutes of Congregational meetings and preserve the archives of the Congregation. He is elected at the annual meeting to a term of one (1) year.

4. The Treasurer shall keep all financial accounts of the Congregation, receive all contributions for current expenses and disburse the same as the Congregation decides. He is elected at the annual meeting to a term of one year.
5. The Deacons shall assist the Pastor in the Spiritual care of the Congregation and constitute with him, ~~the Trustees, Secretary and Treasurer~~ the Church Council. In case of pastoral vacancy the Church shall consist of the Deacons Trustees, Secretary and Treasurer. The Duty of the Deacons shall be to watch over the Congregation's spiritual well-being, to be mindful of the Congregation's poor and needy as well as to determine whether or not they who desire church membership have the necessary qualifications. They are elected at the annual meeting, one, two or three, each serving in office for a period of three (3) years.
6. The Trustees shall have charge of the temporal affairs of the Congregation. They are elected in the same manner as the Deacons.
7. All the officers of the Congregation are accountable to the Congregation ~~for their official acts.~~

#### ARTICLE VI - Property of the Congregation.

1. The legal property of this congregation cannot be disposed of except it be so decided at a Congregational meeting with a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote. In case of a division within the Congregation, the property shall belong to that part remaining faithful to this Constitution and who hold fast the Congregation's unity, be they a majority or a minority.

#### ARTICLE VII - ALTERING of this Constitution.

1. Paragraph 1 of Article I, paragraph 1, 2, and 3 of Article II as well as Article VI and VII cannot be altered.
2. A motion causing change in or addition to this Constitution must be brought up at the Annual Meeting and cannot be enacted until the next Annual Meeting and requires then a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote.

#### BY-LAWS TO THE CONSTITUTION OF SKUDESNES LUTHERAN CONGREGATION.

##### Chapter 1 to Article III of the Constitution.

##### A. Duties of the Members:

1. The Congregation desires that all its members should work according to his measure of faith and the grace given him toward his own salvation and the edification of the brethren; and earnestly support the Congregation in its struggle against the world as well as in its efforts to spread and establish the Kingdom of God among us.
2. All members shall according to their ability, and the extent of the need contribute to the current expenses of the Congregation, including Pastor's salary, as well as other needful expenses of God's Church.
3. It is the duty of every voting member to attend all legally called business meetings of the Congregation unless a good and valid reason make it impossible.
4. All members of the Congregation, and especially parents, should exercise due concern for the Christian rearing of the young as well as for their instruction in the Christian faith.

##### B. The Exercise of the Right to Vote.

1. An alphabetically arranged list of the voting members of the Congregation shall always be available for the chairman at every meeting of the Congregation, and shall be read upon demand by the Congregation.
2. The Congregation may, when it finds it advisable, suspend the right to vote for each one who does not particularly fulfill his duties in participating in the Congregation's expenses. Such suspension shall not be made where poverty is the hindering cause in not participating in the expenses and shall only be in effect until all the demands of the Congregation are satisfied.
3. Members who are under church discipline cannot exercise their right to vote from the time their case is laid before the Congregational meeting by the Council until they at a Congregational meeting are again received into full fellowship by the Congregation.
4. Voting for officers within the Congregation can be done as the meeting may deem advisable with the exception of the election of Pastor which must be done by secret ballot.

##### C. Church Discipline.

1. The Congregation zealously watches over the purity of doctrine and life of its members, when anyone is overtaken in any sin, then help restore such a one in a spirit of meekness.
2. With this purpose in mind, it is forbidden anyone to accuse a brother before the Congregation without first having sought privately to admonish him in love

3. If such admonition fails, the case may be brought before the Council of the Congregation which thereupon, after careful consideration, shall seek through admonition and conviction by the Word of God to bring the erring one to confession and repentance.
4. If a member by his manner of life shall cause offense within the Congregation the Council shall, without delay, in Christian sincerity and love, strive to help right such a one according to God's Word unto conversion and restoration by the admonition of God's Word and brotherly intercessory prayer.
5. If these methods fail, the Council shall submit the matter to the Congregation, together with its recommendation as to the proper course to be pursued.
6. The means that possibly may be used are:
  - a) Exclusion from participating in the Lord's Supper;
  - b) Expulsion from the Congregation according to I Cor. 5:4-5.
7. The Pastor shall have the right to temporarily refuse the Lord's Supper to such persons that lead ungodly lives. Such refusal shall be laid before the Congregation at its first following meeting.

#### D. Regarding Moving Away.

1. Members of the Congregation who move away may retain their membership by taking part in the finances of the church. If after twelve months they have made no contribution to the finances of the church, they are considered non-members.

### Chapter 2 to Article IV of the Constitution:

#### A. The Annual Meeting:

1. All meetings of the Congregation shall open with hymn singing, Scripture reading and prayer and shall close with prayer and song.
2. The order of business of the Annual Meeting is:
  - a) Report by the Pastor in conjunction with the Deacons concerning the spiritual condition of the Congregation.
  - b) The report of the Board of Trustees;
  - c) The Treasurer's report;
  - d) The report of the Congregation's School teachers;
  - e) Election of Auditing Committee;
  - f) Election of officers.
3. Officers are elected as follows:
  - a) One Secretary for one year;
  - b) One Treasurer for one year;
  - c) One Deacon for three years;
  - d) One Trustee for three years;
  - e) One Sexton for one year;
  - f) One janitor for one year.

#### B. Other Congregational Meetings:

1. Besides the Annual meeting held in November every year, the Council may call a Congregational meeting whenever it is deemed necessary, or if requested to do so by the board of trustees, or by at least five (5) voting members.
2. Decisions in money matters require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of members present.
3. When announcing Congregational Meetings, the matter to be considered shall also as far as possible be made known.

#### C. Admission of New Members.

1. When a person is admitted as member of the Congregation, such admission shall be made known to the Congregation at the first following Worship Service, by the Pastor or one of the Deacons, where the newly admitted as well as the Congregation, are reminded of the meaning of this union, through admonition well-wishes, or by intercessory prayer, in such a way that it may be unto edification for both Congregation and the newly admitted.
2. Unbaptized adults are admitted by Baptism after first having been duly examined whether they have the necessary Christian knowledge and Christ-like mind.

### Chapter 3 To Article V of the Constitution.

#### A. Election of Pastor and the Pastor's Duties;

1. When a Pastor is to be elected, the Congregational meeting must, in order to consummate said election, be announced beforehand and also indicate the subject of discussion in accordance with the Constitution Article IV, paragraph 4.
2. The election of Pastor shall be by secret ballot and to be legal requires a two thirds (2/3) majority vote.
3. The deacons of the Congregation shall then proceed with the Letter of Call to the elected and shall do so according to the form as prescribed and accepted by the church and all there-in mentioned duties shall be binding

for both Pastor and Congregation. This prescribed form is as follows:

"In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
According to the decision made by the Skudesnes Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation is a legally called Congregational meeting on \_\_\_\_\_, we, the undersigned, in behalf of said Congregation, hereby call you as its Pastor and Spiritual Leader.  
As such we demand of you:

- 1) That you publicly and privately teach the Word of God purely and unadulterated, from Holy Scripture and in accordance with the symbols of our Lutheran Church.
- 2) That you publicly and privately lead such a life as is worthy of your sacred office and servant of the Word of God.
- 3) That you conscientiously visit the sick, poor and needy as well as care for the instruction of the young in the Christian religion.
- 4) That you always keep loyal to the Constitution of this Congregation as it legally has been adopted.

In behalf of the Congregation we pledge ourselves to:

- 1) That we, as a Christian Congregation, will respect you as the possessor of the office of public teaching in the Congregation and as such be obedient and loyal to you according to the Word of God and the Congregation's Constitution, rules and regulations.
- 2) That we as well as the chosen elders of the Congregation, and all its members, as ability and opportunity permits, will stand by you with advice and deeds to the execution of your office and useful discipline within the Congregation.
- 3) That we, as it becomes a Christian Congregation, will share all good things with those who teach us and pledge ourselves to pay you a stated salary of\*\* \_\_\_\_\_ per year.

All this we promise in behalf of Skudesnes Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation and pray that the Supreme Shepherd and Bishop of the Church will lead you and us with His Holy Spirit to the upbuilding of the Congregation on the eternal foundation in Zion, who is Jesus Christ. "

4. If the Pastor accepts the Call, he shall be installed in the Congregation at a public worship service, where, after the sermon, the church Council through its chairman, receives his promise to abide by the terms set forth in the Letter of Call after which he be declared legally the pastor of the Congregation.

5. No person can thus be installed except he has been duly examined and ordained for the office of pastor.

#### B. Election of Officers:

1. Election of Secretary, Deacons and Trustees is done by ballot.

#### C. Duties of the Treasurer.

1. The Treasurer shall keep all financial accounts of the Congregation, receive and receipt all contributions for current expenses or benevolences and disburse the same according to the decision of the Congregation and the Board of Trustees.
2. The Treasurer shall under no circumstances pay out money except by order of the board of Trustees.
3. The Treasurer shall report to the Annual Meeting of the Congregation the status of the treasury, and all his accounts shall be turned over to an auditing committee after which the Congregation will act on his report.

#### D. Duties of the Deacons.

1. If any of the deacons die or for any other reason leave his office prior to the expiration of his term, his position shall be filled by the election of another at the next Congregational meeting to serve the unexpired term/.
2. The Deacons must be patterns for the flock, setting a good example in thier manner of life, visit the sick and poor and bring help and comfort to the extent that the grace of God endows them.
3. In the absence of the Pastor, or during a vacancy, they shall, either personally, or through some qualified person, lead the Congregation in divine worship.
4. The Deacons, Trustees, Secretary and Treasurer together with the Pastor, or in case of vacancy, without the pastor, shall constitute the church Council, electing from their midst a secretary to carefully record all decisions.
5. The Council shall meet at least twice every year. All their meetings open and close with prayer.
6. At each meeting the Council shall consider the spiritual state of the Congregation as well as what may be done to promote the Congregation's spiritual and temporal and spiritual well-being.
7. The Council shall supervise the parochial school, its teachers and pupils and also remind the parents of their duties toward their children

in case neglect takes place.

8. The Council shall dismiss all complaints against members of the congregation that are not in accordance with Chapter 1, paragraph C of these By-Laws.

E. Duties of the Trustees.

1. The Trustees shall keep the Congregation's property in a legal status for the use and comfort of the Congregation and preserve all deeds and valuable documents.
2. The Trustees shall not be permitted to buy, sell, lease or mortgage the property of the Congregation, or any part thereof, without the decision of the Congregation.
3. Under no circumstances shall the trustees have any right to prevent the pastor or the Congregation from using the church according to what the Congregation has decided.
4. The Trustees shall keep the property of the Congregation in good shape for the use of the Congregation, with heat and light when needed, provided that the Congregation allows the necessary funds for it.
5. The Trustees shall look after the property and suggest the necessary reparations and improvements in order to keep the property from being damaged.
6. The Trustees shall elect one of their number to act as chairman whose duty it is to lead their deliberations as well as call a meeting when necessary.
7. The Trustees shall together gather and subscribe contributions for defraying all expenditures of the Congregation in accordance with the contributions received and as the funds come in, turn them as well as the names of the donors over to the Treasurer and from him receive receipt.
8. The Trustees shall have the right to demand a conference with the Treasurer of the Congregation when deemed necessary.

Chapter V. Change in the By-Laws:

Motion to alter or to add to these by-laws shall be made in writing at one congregational meeting and cannot be decided until the following Congregational meeting.

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~~Decisions made at a Congregational meeting held March 5th, 1908 at the Andrew Deamert home.~~

Divine Worship and Ministerial Acts.

1. The Altar Book of the Norwegian Church be used with the following changes:
  - a) Opening Prayer or free prayer by the song leader (klokker) or by some one from the congregation.
  - b) The General Church Prayer or prayer in one's own words.
  - c) Closing prayer or prayer in one's own words.
2. Ministerial acts:
  - a) At Infant baptism:  
The question-form of the Renunciation and Confession of Faith be omitted and replaced by Confessing of same.
  - b) In the Admonition to the sponsors, the words, "Dear Christians," be replaced with, "You who have been sponsors, "
  - c) The General Confession is dropped in connection with the Lord's Supper.
  - d) The churching of mothers be omitted.

Addition to the By-Laws adopted at the Annual Meeting, Nov. 20th, 1911.  
Skudesnes Congregation is affiliated with Zion Congregation, east from Elbow in the Sand Hills, Bethel Congregation, Elbow and Bethlehem Congregation, Hawarden and with these constitute a Call (Pastorate).