CONSTITUTION

Article I - Name
The name of this congregation shall be Redeemer Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Article II - Purpose
The purpose of this congregation shall be to serve and glorify God; to spread His kingdom by the preaching of His Word and administration of the Sacraments; by the building up of one another in faith and love; and by the religious instruction of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Article III - Confession
This congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God; and acknowledges and accepts all Confessional Writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as contained in the Book of Concord, 1580, to be the true and genuine exposition of the Word of God. These Confessional Writings are the three Ecumenical Creeds [Apostles, Nicene, and Athanasian], the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcauld Articles, the Treatise, Luther’s Large and Small Catechisms, and the Formula of Concord. To this Word of God, as correctly confessed in the Book of Concord, all doctrine and practice shall conform and according to it all religious disputes shall be decided.

Only such hymns, prayers, and liturgies shall be used in public services and in all ministerial acts as do conform to the Confessional standard set forth above. Likewise, in all classes for instruction in Christian doctrine, only such books shall be used as do conform to this standard.

Article IV - Synodical Membership
This congregation shall hold membership in the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod in the English District, subject to the confessional standard set forth in Article III of the constitution.

Article V - Membership
This congregation recognizes the following levels of membership.

A. Baptized Membership
Baptized members are all those who have been baptized with water in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

B. Communicant Membership
Communicant members are those who have been baptized and, upon proper instruction and examination, have been admitted to the Lord’s Supper.

C. Voting Membership
Voting members are all communicant members who have been admitted into voting membership according to the provisions set forth in the By-laws of the congregation.

It shall be the responsibility of all members to attend the Divine Service faithfully; to partake of the Lord’s Supper frequently after having been admitted thereto; to present children for baptism and instruction in the faith; to contribute regularly and faithfully, as God has prospered them, and to devote their time and talents to the building of Christ’s Kingdom in the congregation and throughout the world; to lead Christian lives, and not live in manifest works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21); and to permit themselves to be admonished and corrected when they have erred.
Membership in, or affiliation with, an anti-Christian organization is incompatible with membership in the Christian Church and this congregation.

**Article VI - Office of Pastor and Teacher**

Pastoral and teaching offices in this congregation shall be conferred only upon such ministers, teachers, or candidates as profess and adhere to the confessional standards set forth in Article III, and who are well qualified for this work. Pastors and teachers shall, in the call extended to and accepted by them, be pledged to this confessional standard.

**Article VII - Congregational Authority**

The congregation as a body, through the Voters’ Assembly, shall have supreme power and authority, subject to the Word of God and the Confessions, to administer and manage all external affairs and internal affairs.

No individual, group, or society shall bind the congregation to any course of action without the express consent of the Voters’ Assembly.

For purposes of the Articles of Incorporation, the twelve members of the Council shall be the Board of Directors of the congregation.

**Article VIII - Societies**

The establishment and conduct of all institutions and societies within the congregation shall, at all times, be subject to the approval of the Voters’ Assembly.

**Article IX - Right of Calling**

The right of calling Pastors and teachers shall be vested in the Voters’ Assembly alone, and shall not be delegated to a smaller body or to an individual.

**Article X - Power of Officers and Boards**

Congregational officers, boards, and committees, whether elected or appointed by the Voters’ Assembly, shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them; and whatever powers as may have been delegated to them may, at any time, be altered or revoked by the Voters’ Assembly.

**Article XI - Removal from Office**

An officer, teacher, or Pastor may be removed from office by the affirmative vote of at least three-fourths (3/4) of the voting members present at the Voters’ Assembly called for this purpose, by ballot, in a Christian and lawful order, for one of the following causes: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, inability to perform official duties, or willful neglect of duties.

**Article XII - Officers**

The officers of this congregation shall be such officers, boards, and committees as the Articles of Incorporation and the By-laws may require or prescribe.

**Article XIII - Property Rights**

If at any time a division or separation should take place for doctrinal reasons, all rights and titles to the property and all other assets of the congregation shall remain with those members who remain faithful to the confessional standard set forth in Article III above.

All disputes arising out of such division or separation shall be resolved in church courts. In the event that the congregation be dissolved, all property and all other assets shall revert to the use of the Church at large, and not to the personal gain of individual members.
Article XIV - By-laws

The Voters’ Assembly shall adopt such by-laws as may be required for the accomplishment of the purposes of the congregation.

Article XV - Fixed Articles

Article II, Article III, Article V, Article VI, Article IX, Article XI, Article XIII, and Article XV of this Constitution, and any section of any other article that pertains to doctrine and practice, shall be unalterable and irreparable.

Article XVI - Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution and By-laws may be adopted at a regular or special meeting of the Voters’ Assembly, provided that:

1) such changes do not conflict with the provisions of Article III, or with any other Article pertaining to doctrine and practice; and

2) that the proposed amendment has been submitted, in writing, at a previous meeting of the Voters’ Assembly, and has been approved by at least one-third (1/3) of the voters present for consideration at the next Voters’ Assembly; and

3) that within fourteen (14) days following such submission, the proposed amendment has been made available to all communicant members, in written form, by publication in the bulletin or newsletter, or by other means which will bring it to the attention of all communicant members; and

4) that the proposed amendment has been adopted by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the voters present at the Voters’ Assembly considering the amendment.

There shall be an interval of time not less than fourteen (14) days and not greater than two hundred (200) days between the Voters’ Assembly at which the amendment was first proposed and the Voters’ Assembly that adopts such an amendment.

BY-LAWS

Chapter One - Membership

A. Baptized Membership

Baptized membership is granted to all who have been baptized into this congregation.

Baptized membership is granted to those who have been baptized outside of this congregation and have placed themselves under the care and jurisdiction of this congregation.

B. Communicant Membership

Communicant membership is granted to those who, after proper instruction and examination, have been confirmed in this congregation.

Communicant membership may be transferred to this congregation from another recognized orthodox Lutheran congregation.

Communicant membership may, in the case of those who have been baptized and/or confirmed outside of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, be granted upon a profession of faith following a period of instruction suitable to the Pastor.
C. Voting Membership
Voting membership is granted to those communicant members who have reached the age of eighteen (18) years, and who have presented themselves before the Voters’ Assembly and requested to be admitted into the voting membership. Application for voting membership must be approved by a resolution passed by three-quarters (3/4) of the voters present at the Voters’ Assembly, and the new voters will be required to sign the Constitution of the congregation and the Register of voters.

Chapter Two - Termination of Membership

A. Baptized/Communicant Membership
Baptized and communicant membership in this congregation may be terminated by transfer or by self-exclusion.

Termination by transfer is effected by making application to the Pastor for a Letter of Transfer to another orthodox Lutheran Congregation.

Self-exclusion is the willful, expressed separation from the Word and Sacraments, and from participation in the life of this congregation, thus depriving the congregation of the opportunity to apply the healing process which our Lord has outlined for us in St. Matthew 18:15-17.

B. Voting Membership
Voting membership is terminated whenever a voting member shall have been absent from four (4) consecutive semi-annual meetings of the Voters’ Assembly.

Voting membership may be restored by making application before the Voters’ Assembly in accord with the procedure set forth in Chapter One above.

Chapter Three - Church Discipline
The Office of the Keys is rightly used so that we may gain a brother or sister, not lose one. Therefore, a manifest and impenitent sinner shall be admonished in accordance with the steps prescribed in St. Matthew 18:15-17, whenever this is possible. Fruitless admonition shall result in excommunication and the loss of all rights and privileges of membership. A member refusing to submit to Church discipline shall be adjudged as having deliberately severed all connections with this congregation.

After sincere repentance, an excommunicated person shall be eligible for reinstatement into membership.

Chapter Four - Calling of Pastors and Teachers
The right of calling pastors and teachers is reserved to the Voters’ Assembly by Article IX of the Constitution. The Voters’ Assembly may appoint a call committee to advise the congregation regarding the issuing of a call. A list of candidates shall be solicited from the competent authority in the applicable district of the Church. The members of the congregation may also nominate candidates not included on this list. The candidate who receives two-thirds (2/3) of all the votes cast shall be elected and a call shall be sent to the pastor-or teacher-elect.

Chapter Five - Officers and Boards
The elected officers of this congregation shall be a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Financial Secretary.

The Boards of this congregation shall be a Board of Elders, a Board of Finance, a Board of Education, a Board of Missions, and a Board of Congregational Services.

The Voters’ Assembly shall elect, in accordance with the provisions of these by-
laws, three Elders and the chairmen of these Boards who, together with the five (5) elected officers, shall comprise the Council.

The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary shall, together, function as a Board of Trustees.

The elected Board chairmen shall be empowered to assemble their own working committees in consultation with the Pastor and the Chairman of the congregation, subject to the approval of the Council.

Chapter Six - The Council

The officers of the congregation, the elders, and the elected board chairmen, shall constitute the Council. The Pastor shall be an ex officio member of the Council and the Boards.

The Council shall meet monthly, on an agreeable day and at a reasonable hour, and shall be empowered by the Voters’ Assembly to act upon all matters pertaining to the general welfare of the congregation at those times when the Voters’ Assembly does not meet. The Council shall give advice and consent to matters presented by officers and boards: and may make recommendations to the same officers and boards, or to the Voters’ Assembly.

The Council shall have no authority to act in matters that are specifically reserved to the Voters’ Assembly by Article VIII of the Constitution.

Chapter Seven - Terms and Duties of Officers

The Chairman of the congregation shall be elected for a term of three (3) years, and shall be the President of the Voters’ Assembly and Chairman of the Council. Subject to the control of the Voters’ Assembly, the Chairman shall exercise general control and supervision of the business of the congregation.

The Vice-Chairman shall be elected for a term of three (3) years, and shall be the Vice-president of the Voters’ Assembly.

In the case of the absence or disability of the Chairman, the Vice-chairman shall exercise the office and duties of the Chairman. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Chairman, the Vice-chairman shall succeed to that office for the remainder of the current term.

The Secretary of the congregation shall be elected for a term of three (3) years, and shall be the Secretary of the Voters’ Assembly and the Council. The Secretary shall sign and cause the seal of the congregation to be affixed to all deeds, conveyances, mortgages, leases, obligations, bonds, promissory notes, certificates, papers, and instruments as the Voters’ Assembly shall direct or require. The Secretary shall also keep accurate Minutes of the Voters’ Assembly and Council for the permanent record of the congregation, and shall maintain a current register of all voting members.

The Treasurer shall be elected for a term of three (3) years, and shall be a member of the Board of Finance. The Treasurer shall safely keep and deposit all such funds as the Financial Secretary shall deliver, and shall provide receipts for all monies received. The Treasurer shall pay all bills, and make complete and accurate records in accord with accepted accounting practice.

The Financial Secretary shall be elected for a term of three (3) years, and shall be a member of the Board of Finance. The Financial Secretary shall receive, record, and deliver to the Treasurer, all monies received by the congregation. These monies shall include, but are not limited to, all offerings, contributions, special collections, loans, subsidies, rents, bequests, and gifts. The Financial Secretary shall keep complete and accurate records in accordance with accepted
accounting practice.

All officers are required to give full and complete accounts of their office at all meetings of the Voters’ Assembly and the Council. Failure to do so shall be considered willful neglect of duty and may be dealt with in accord with the provisions set forth in Article VII of the Constitution.

Chapter Eight - Vacancies in Office

In the event that any elected office other than that of Chairman of the congregation becomes vacant for any reason, a special meeting of the Voters’ Assembly shall be called to elect a successor to serve for the remainder of the current term.

If the office becomes vacant with six (6) months or less remaining in the current term that office shall remain vacant until it is filled in due form at a regular election during the October annual meeting. If necessary, the Chairman of the congregation may appoint someone to perform the duties of the vacant office during this interim period.

Chapter Nine - Board of Elders

The Elders shall be three (3) men of good standing in the congregation, and they shall be elected for terms of three (3) years.

The Elders shall counsel and assist the Pastor in the spiritual care of the congregation. They shall correct the erring, and admonish the careless and indifferent. In the case of contention and strife within the congregation, they shall endeavor to reconcile the disagreeing parties.

The Elders shall supervise the work of a competent organist and choirmaster; they shall supervise the acolytes; and they shall assist the Pastor in arranging pulpit and altar assistance, and special services.

In consultation with the Pastor, they shall make provision for the giving of alms and assistance to members who may be in physical or economic need.

Chapter Ten - Board of Finance

The board chairman shall be elected for a term of three (3) years.

The Board of Finance shall consist of the elected Finance chairman, the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, and such other persons as may be required to conduct the business of the board.

It shall be the responsibility of the Board of Finance, subject to the supervision of the Voters’ Assembly, to establish and administer the fiscal programs of the congregation. These programs include, but are not limited to, the preparation of an annual budget, solicitation and collection of funds, authorization for payment of all budgeted debts and obligations, and the payment of other funds as authorized by the Voters’ Assembly.

The Board of Finance shall keep such records and make such reports as are in keeping with accepted accounting procedures.

Chapter Eleven - Board of Education

The board chairman shall be elected for a term of three (3) years.

Except for such educational functions as the Pastor may designate, and except for the preparation of catechumens, the Board of Education shall supervise, promote, and expand all education programs of the congregation. The Board shall recommend policies, procedures, and practices with regard to education; and shall offer guidance to both leaders and participants in these programs.

Chapter Twelve - Board of Missions

The board chairman shall be elected for a term of three (3) years.

The Board of Missions shall plan and promote programs to make the congregation aware of mission projects of the Church at
large, as well as of local projects, and needs; and coordinate our cooperation with these programs. The Board shall conduct a visitation program to call upon prospective members and to invite them to participate in the life of the congregation. The Board shall make the provision for the giving of alms and assistance to those outside the congregation who may be in physical or economic need.

Chapter Thirteen - Board of Congregational Services

The board chairman shall be elected for a term of three (3) years.

The Board of Congregational Services shall be a liaison between all societies of the congregation, and shall represent these societies to the council. The Board shall assist the congregation in promoting the work of these societies and all parish wide activities.

This board shall take special care to see that ushers and greeters are scheduled to serve at all public services.

Chapter Fourteen - Meetings

Regular meetings of the Voters’ Assembly shall be held semi-annually, in April and October. The October meeting of the Voters’ Assembly shall be the annual meeting.

Special meetings of the Voters’ Assembly may be called by the Pastor, the Chairman of the congregation, or at the request of five (5) voting members. The reason and purpose of special meetings must be specified when they are announced. The agenda of special meetings is fixed, and such meetings may only address the specific matter for which they have been convened.

All meetings of the Voters’ Assembly, whether regular or special, must be scheduled on an agreeable day and at a reasonable hour.

Meetings of the Voters’ Assembly shall be announced at least fourteen (14) days prior to the scheduled date. Announcements shall be made in the bulletin, newsletter, calendar, or by other means which will bring such announcement to the attention of all communicant members.

A quorum for any meeting shall be as many voting members as are present when the meeting is called to order.

A quorum equal to one-third (1/3) of all voting members is required for meetings that are called to amend the Articles of Incorporation, the Constitution, or the By-laws; to consider resolutions regarding the erection of buildings, or to purchase or sell real property or other assets; or to remove a Pastor, teacher, or elected officer or Board chairman from office.

All meetings shall be conducted according to standard parliamentary procedure.

Chapter Fifteen - Election of Officers and Board Chairmen

A nominating committee shall be appointed by the Chairman of the congregation at the April semi-annual meeting to present a slate of candidates at the annual meeting of the Voters’ Assembly. Candidates shall be nominated for each position to be elected. Additional candidates may be nominated from the floor during the October annual meeting.

Nominees must be communicant members in good standing, and at least eighteen (18) years of age. Nominees should also be voting members.

Election shall be by ballot. A majority of votes cast is required for election.

Newly elected officers and Board chairmen shall be installed on the First Sunday of Advent, and all terms expire on the Saturday before Advent I three (3) years after election.
Chapter Sixteen - Board of Trustees

The Chairman, Vice-chairman, and Secretary of the congregation shall function as a Board of Trustees. The Vice-chairman shall represent this Board on the Council.

The Board shall have charge of all real and personal property of the congregation, and shall manage such property in agreement with instructions given by the Voters' Assembly, and in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation. It shall provide for the proper protection of the congregation through insurance policies, and for the safe-keeping of all items of value.

This Board shall employ such office and maintenance personnel as may be required, and shall employ other personnel as directed by the Voters' Assembly.

Chapter Seventeen - General Regulations for Boards

All Boards shall meet monthly, at a time and place agreeable to their members, and the chairmen shall report on the activities of their boards to the Council and to the Voters' Assembly.