

# **Constitution of the German speaking Lutheran Congregation in Newcastle upon Tyne**

## **Article 1 Confession**

1. The proclamation in services and pastoral care within the German speaking Lutheran Congregation Newcastle upon Tyne is according to the gospel of Jesus Christ as laid down in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible and in the documents of the German Reformation, especially the "Confessio Augustana" and Luther's " Kleiner Katechismus " .

Basis of the confirmation classes is Luther's "Kleiner Katechismus". The Minister decides the date of admission to the confirmation.

2. The Church is a member of the Synod of German-Speaking Lutheran, Reformed and United Congregations in Great Britain (hereinafter referred to as Synod) and accepts its rules.
3. The basis of the confession cannot be changed.

## **Article 2 Services**

1. Services shall be held regularly and on as many Sundays and Christian Holidays as possible.
2. Holy Communion shall be celebrated regularly and at least eight times a year.

## **Article 3 Membership**

1. Full members with voting rights of the German speaking Lutheran Congregation Newcastle upon Tyne are Christians who have signed a written declaration of membership.
2. Members have to be baptized or in the case of baptized adults give a written declaration of membership. The Minister can decide about admission after consultation with the church council. Admission of children who are not confirmed is decided by their legal guardian.

3. All members who have completed their eighteenth year have voting rights according to Art. 3, #1 at the Annual General Meetings of the Congregation, the right to elect the Church Council and to stand as candidates for the Church Council and as representatives of the congregation.

Article 4  
Meetings of the Congregation

1. Voting members form the Annual General Meeting.
2. The Annual General Meeting takes place at least once a year; presided over by the Minister or by the Chairperson of the Church council. The Church council or a minimum of 12 voting members may call a meeting. The invitation has to be announced at two successive services and in a circular letter. The items to be discussed have to be itemised in the letter.
3. The Annual General Meeting makes decisions on general matters concerning the congregation and on:
  - a. the election of the Minister;
  - b. the election of the Church Council;
  - c. the election of trustees;
  - d. the nomination of a representative and his/her deputy in the Synod;
  - e. the alteration of the Church Constitution;
  - f. the approval of the budget as presented by the Church Council;
  - g. the acceptance of the financial report as prepared by the treasurer;
  - h. projects costing more than £ 3000.

Every voting member is entitled to see the financial report prepared by the treasurer.

4. The Annual General Meeting can vote if at least 25% of the voting members are present. Normally decisions are taken with a 2/3 majority.

Article 5  
Church Council

1. The Church Council consists of the Minister and at least six, but preferably eight voting members.

2. The members of the Church Council with the exception of the Minister are elected for a period of 4 years. Half of the Church Council members are elected every two years to allow a two year overlap of existing and new members.
3. Based on proposals from the members the Church Council submits a list of candidates for election to the Church Council. The list should preferably contain twice as many names as members to be elected.
4. The Church Council elects in a secret ballot a chairperson and his/her deputy from its members with a simple majority.
5. The Church Council meets at least twice a year. A meeting must be held when at least one third of its members request it.
6. The Church Council can vote when at least two thirds of its members are present. Decisions are made with a simple majority. With an equal number of votes the vote of the chairperson has the casting vote.
7. The Church Council is entitled to hold bank accounts and to invest money. The treasurer looks after the accounts.

Expenditure in excess of £ 3000 requires the approval of the Annual General Meeting.

#### Article 6 Trustees

1. No less than 5 members of the congregation act as Trustees. At least one of them shall be a member of the Church Council.
2. Trustees are nominated by the Church Council and elected by the Annual General Meeting with simple majority.
3. The Trustees act as owners of real estate and buildings. Contracts and documents, which relate to these possessions are signed and executed by the Trustees. They are responsible to the Church Council and the Annual General Meeting.
4. At least once a year a joint meeting of trustees and Church Council is to be held.

#### Article 7 Minister

1. The appointment of a minister shall be carried out according to the procedures laid down by the Synod.
2. After accepting the appointment the minister is obliged to accept these procedures and the confession contained in them.

Article 8  
Discontinuance

1. The Church is to be discontinued if
  - a. the number of voting members has dropped to less than twelve or
  - b. no service has been held for six months or
  - c. at two separate Annual General Meetings discontinuance has been voted on with two-thirds majority of the voting members present
2. In the case of discontinuance the remaining Church Assets comes to the Synod.

Article 9  
Alterations to the constitution

1. This constitution has been accepted on 14.11.1999. It replaces the former Constitution of 9.2.1997. It should be revised every seven years.
2. Alterations to the Constitution are only possible if they have been approved by at least six members of the Church Council and have been endorsed by the Annual General Meeting with a two-thirds majority of those present.