

Constitution
German-Speaking Lutheran Church in East Anglia
(formerly known as “Hamburg Lutheran Church” and “German Lutheran Church in
Cambridge and East Anglia”)
Reg. Charity No. 1135273

1. Name and Objectives

The name of the Church is *German-Speaking Lutheran Church in East Anglia*.

The objective for which this charity has been established is the advancement of the Christian religion. This is achieved primarily by providing services and pastoral care for German-speaking Protestant Christians.

2. Beliefs

The fundamental purpose of the *German-Speaking Lutheran Church in East Anglia* is the preaching and administration of the sacraments, pastoral care and teaching. All these are grounded in the prophetic and apostolic witness of the Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, and in the confessional documents of the Reformation, in particular the Augsburg Confession, Martin Luther’s Catechism, and the Theological Declaration of the Confessing Synod of the German Evangelical Church of Barmen (1934).

3. Historical background and legal basis

The official date of the foundation of the church known as the *German Lutheran Church in Cambridge and East Anglia* is 2 December 1956.

The pastoral office was established on 1st May 1959.

The chapel at the Lutheran Church House, 4 Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, is a recognised 'Place of public worship', entitled by right to perform church weddings (Certificate Reg. No. 34314, deposited with the Superintendent Registrar in Cambridge).

The former *Hamburg Lutheran Church* was founded in 1669 and confirmed by the Charter issued by King Charles II on 13 September 1673. On 31 May 2013 the *Hamburg Lutheran Church* merged with the *German Lutheran Church in Cambridge and East Anglia*, leading to the formation of the new *German-Speaking Lutheran Church in East Anglia*.

4. Services and religious instruction

Church services and ceremonies are generally held in the German language. They take place regularly at appropriate locations in East Anglia.

The order of worship, times and locations for all church services are arranged by the Church Council.

Communion, baptisms and confirmations are celebrated within the congregational services.

5. Affiliation to the Synod

The *German-Speaking Lutheran Church in East Anglia* is a member of the *Synod of German-speaking Lutheran, Reformed and United Congregations in Great Britain (Evangelische Synode Deutscher Sprache in Großbritannien)*.

6. Membership

- 6.1. Members of the *German-Speaking Lutheran Church in East Anglia* are baptised Christians, who accept the constitution of this Church. Membership is possible from 14 years of age (age of religious maturity).
- 6.2. Admission into membership takes place by baptism, confirmation, transfer from another parish, or by application to the Pastor or the Church Council. A formal written membership declaration is required to be completed when joining the Church.
- 6.3. Members of the Church are entitled to vote at General Church Meetings, however only members who have reached the age of 18 are entitled to stand as candidates for the Church Council.
- 6.4. Members of the Church commit themselves to making a financial contribution to cover the costs of parish work. The amount of the contribution is at the members' discretion. In certain cases, an exemption from such contributions may be arranged.

7. General Church Meetings

- 7.1. The General Church Meeting consists of Church members to whom paragraphs 6.1 and 6.2 apply.
- 7.2. General Church Meetings take place usually once a year and are convened and chaired by the Chair of the Church Council. Minutes are taken by the secretary of Church Council as a rule.
- 7.3. The General Church Meeting is to be convened in writing at least 28 days prior to the date of the meeting.
- 7.4. The General Church Meeting takes decisions by simple majority in the presence of at least 10% of members of the Church who are entitled to vote.
- 7.5. Only the General Church Meeting is allowed to make changes to the Church Constitution. A two-thirds majority is required to make changes to the Church Constitution, with at least 10% of members of the Church being present who are entitled to vote.

No change can be made that would result in the Church losing its Registered Charity status.
The Church Council's Secretary must send the details of the constitution changes to the Charity Commission within twenty-one days of them being passed.
- 7.6. An additional General Church Meeting must be convened if and when this is demanded by either the Church Council or by at least ten members of the congregation.
- 7.7. The General Church Meeting deals with important questions relevant to the life of the congregation and to the whole Church.

- 7.8 The General Church Meeting elects the Church Council and the Independent Examiner.
- 7.9 The General Church Meeting receives the annual progress report by the Pastor.
- 7.10 The General Church Meeting receives the annual Trustee Report by the Church Council (KV) and the annual accounts and report prepared by the Treasurer and grants approval to the Church Council and the Treasurer according to the recommendations of the Independent Examiner.
- 7.11 The Constitution of *the German-Speaking Lutheran Church in East Anglia* must be available in both German and English.
- 7.12 If so agreed by the Church Council, Annual and Extraordinary General Church Meetings may take place digitally, by means of telephone/video conference facilities. Members' presence, either visual or by sound only, must be duly listed and recorded.

8. The Church Council

The *German-Speaking Lutheran Church in East Anglia* is a charity registered with the *Charity Commission for England and Wales* (Registered Charity Number 1135273). It is therefore bound by the legislation and rules of the *UK Charity Act 2011*. The legal responsibility for the governance and leadership of a registered charity rests with the Charity's Trustees. In the *German-Speaking Lutheran Church in East Anglia* the role of the Charity Trustees is fulfilled by the Church Council Members.

8.1 Membership

- 8.1.1 The Church Council consists of a minimum of 10 and maximum of 12 Church members, as well as the Pastor who is a member of the Church Council by virtue of their position. Members of the Church Council are elected by the General Church Meeting. Each location where services are held should be represented by at least one member of the Church Council.
- 8.1.2 Members of the Church Council must have been members of the Church for at least six months.
- 8.1.3 All members of the Church may propose candidates for the Church Council. These proposals must be submitted in writing to the Pastor or the Chair of the Church Council at least one week prior to the date of the election.
- 8.1.4 The vote is secret. Those candidates who receive the most votes are elected.
- 8.1.5 The period of office for those elected is three years. Re-election is permissible.
- 8.1.6 Membership of the Church Council can be ended:
 - 8.1.6.1 by a letter of resignation,
 - 8.1.6.2 if it is not possible for the member to continue to fulfil the duties taken on with membership of the Church Council,
 - 8.1.6.3 in the case of a gross breach of duties related to membership of the Church Council. This is to be decided upon by the remaining Council members and must be reported at the next meeting of the Church Council.
- 8.1.7 When a place on the Church Council is vacant, the Church Council may vote to fill the vacancy with an appropriate replacement. The term of office for such an appointee will end at the next election.

8.2 Responsibilities

- 8.2.1 The Church Council is responsible for all matters concerning the Church, and will take all essential decisions that are necessary for the good work and appropriate management of the congregation
- 8.2.2 The Church Council elects 3 Synod delegates for the Synod Assembly.

8.3 Governance

- 8.3.1 The members of the Church Council (Kirchenvorstand) are the Trustees of the Registered Charity. They elect from its ranks, by a simple majority, the Chair and Deputy Chair (of the Charity) for one year.

The chairing of the Church Council meetings can be rotated amongst the Trustees.

If no-one volunteers to chair the Church Council meetings, then, by default, the incumbent Pastor takes on this role.

The Church Council appoints a secretary and a treasurer

- 8.3.2 The Church Council meets at least four times a year. It has a quorum when the majority of members are present.
- 8.3.3. Although it is the aim of the Church Council to arrive at decisions by consent, a resolution may be passed by a simple majority. Decisions are to be made with the support of all.
- 8.3.4 Minutes of resolutions are taken at the meetings. Proceedings are public in principle.
- 8.3.5 The Chair sends out invitations, including details of the agenda, at least one week prior to the meeting.
- 8.3.6 Extraordinary General Church Council Meetings must be convened if requested by a minimum of four members of the Church Council.

8.4 Ownership of the Church House

- 8.4.1 The ownership of the property known as *Church House*, 4 Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8BW, lies with the Official Custodian for Charities in Great Britain, on behalf of the Trustees of the *German-Speaking Lutheran Church in East Anglia*.
- 8.4.2 The rights and duties concerning the administration and ownership of the grounds and property remain with the Trustees of the *German-Speaking Lutheran Church in East Anglia*, who are the members of the Church Council.

8.5 Holding a Church Council meeting

If so agreed by the Church Council, its meetings may take place digitally, by means of telephone/video conference facilities. Members' presence, either visual or by sound only, must be duly listed and recorded.

9. Finances

- 9.1 The money and assets of the above-named church must only be used for this charity's aims and purposes.
- 9.2 The Church Council must keep accounts of the Church's finances.
- 9.3 The Treasurer is responsible for the administration and overview of the Church's finances and is bound by the decisions of the Church Council. She/he shall produce a report to the Church Council on request.
- 9.4 The Church Council shall initiate an annual Independent Examination. The Annual Church Meeting shall approve the report of the Independent Examiner
For further instructions see also text in point 7.10.
- 9.5 All money and financial assets must be held in accounts the Church has with recognized financial institutions
- 9.6 Payments from the Church's accounts in principle require authorisation by any combination of two signatories who have been formally authorised by the KV to this effect. The Treasurer and up to 3 members of the Church Council (Trustees) shall normally receive such authorisation.

Exceptions to this must be agreed and managed by the Church Council. Any additional procedures concerning payment will be determined and agreed to by the Church Council. Such agreements will be recorded in the minutes of the Church Council meetings.
- 9.7 Trustees do not receive any remuneration for their roles and service.

10. Pastoral Office

- 10.1 The Pastor is elected according to the rules and procedures for the appointment of Pastors laid down in the constitution of the *Synod of German-Speaking Lutheran, Reformed and United Congregations in Great Britain*.
- 10.2 The usual residence of the Pastor is Cambridge.
- 10.3 The pastoral office lies within the area of *East Anglia*, comprised of Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex.

11. Dissolution and/or Merger

- 11.1 A dissolution of the *German-Speaking Lutheran Church in East Anglia* can occur due to the possible foundation of a new charity within the same church. This may arise in the case of a merger with another church congregation.
- 11.2 In the case of the total dissolution of the *German-Speaking Lutheran Church in East Anglia*, any remaining assets will fall to the *Synod of German-Speaking Lutheran, Reformed and United Congregations in Great Britain*, unless other legal requirements prevail.

12. Validity/Conclusion/Authorisation

This Church Constitution has been accepted by the Church Meeting on 27 June 2021 and comes into force once it has been signed by the Chair, Secretary and one other member of the Church Council.

All earlier constitutions are hereby replaced and become null and void.

Place... _____ Date _____

Seal of the Church

Signatures:

Chair of the Church Council _____

Secretary of the Church Council _____

Member of the Church Council _____

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