
FLC Constitution

(Updated: 09/2022)

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*must use exact wording from 2019 Model Constitution

Chapters in bold – suggested wording is given in ELCA Model Constitution, however, churches can modify as appropriate for their church and with the approval of the Synod

Majority of FLC bylaws are found in Chapters 10-14

**CONSTITUTION OF
FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH OF BECKER MINNESOTA**
Becker, Minnesota

Amendments and Bylaws
Aligned to the 2019 ELCA MODEL CONSTITUTION
(Revised 2022)

***PREAMBLE**

We, baptized members of the Church of Christ, responding in faith to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, desiring to unite together to preach the Word, administer the sacraments, and carry out God's mission, do hereby adopt this constitution and solemnly pledge ourselves to be governed by its provisions, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 1. NAME AND INCORPORATION

- C1.01. The name of this congregation shall be FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH OF BECKER MINNESOTA.
- C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the congregation of FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH OF BECKER MINNESOTA is hereinafter designated as "this congregation".
- C1.11. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

Chapter 2. CONFESSION OF FAITH

- *C2.01. This congregation confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- *C2.02. This congregation confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.
 - a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.
 - b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

- *C2.03. This congregation accepts the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.
- *C2.04. This congregation accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this congregation.
- *C2.05. This congregation accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
- *C2.06. This congregation accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.
- *C2.07. This congregation confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scripture and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

Chapter 3. NATURE OF THE CHURCH

- *C3.01. All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.
- *C3.02. This church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world.
- *C3.03. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints, in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.
- *C3.04. This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in The Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God's mission in the world.
- *C3.05. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or "this church") as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.

Chapter 4. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- *C4.01. The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.
- *C4.02. To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:
- a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
 - b. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
 - c. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as t Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
 - d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs.
 - e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling and use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
 - f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.
- *C4.03. To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:
- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
 - b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
 - c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.
 - d. Teach the Word of God.
 - e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
 - f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
 - g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for this congregation's ministry and the ministry of the other expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

- h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the Churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with Churchwide policy.

*C4.04. This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions. [Such descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions in the section on the Congregational Committees.]

*C4.05. This congregation shall, adopt and periodically review a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

C4.05.01 MISSION STATEMENT

As God’s family, we are inspired by the Holy Spirit to share the joy of Christ’s promise of eternal love and inspire others to share that joy too.

*C4.06. References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God’s mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law

Chapter 5. POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

*C5.01. The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.

*C5.02. The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregation Meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.

*C5.03. Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregation Council or other organizational units in this congregation’s governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by this congregation. This congregation is authorized to:

- a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- c. call a minister of Word and Service;
- d. terminate the call of a minister of Word and Service in conformity with the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- e. adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in Chapter 16, amendments to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 17, and continuing resolutions, as provided in Chapter 18

- f. approve the annual budget;
- g. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
- h. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
- i. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
- j. elect its officers, Congregation Council, boards, and committees, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution and bylaws, and continuing resolutions; and
- k. terminate the relationship with Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.

*C5.04. This congregation shall elect from among its voting members laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by this congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the (insert name of synod) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

*C5.05. This congregation shall have a mission endowment fund that will operate as specified in this congregation's bylaws. The purpose of the mission endowment fund is to provide for mission work beyond the operational budget of this congregation.

Chapter 6. CHURCH AFFILIATION

*C6.01. This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

*C6.02. This congregation accepts the Confession of Faith and agrees to the purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and shall act in accordance with them.

*C6.03. This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which:

- a. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community;
- b. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the bishop of the synod. These special circumstances are limited either to calling a candidate approved for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or to contracting for pastoral services with a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion.

- d. This congregation agrees to consider ministers of Word and Service for call to other staff positions in this congregation according to the procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- e. This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution with the synod for review to ascertain that all of its provisions are in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and with the constitution of the synod;

*C6.04. Affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is terminated as follows:

- a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.
- b. This congregation ceases to exist.
- c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or in accordance with provision 9.23. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- d. The Southwest Synod takes charge and control of the property of this congregation to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of the synod pursuant to †S13.24. of the synod constitution. This congregation shall have the right to appeal the decision to the next Synod Assembly.
- e. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in C6.05.

*C6.05. This congregation may terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the following procedure:

- a. A resolution indicating the intent to terminate its relationship must be adopted at two legally called and conducted special meetings of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at each meeting. The first such meeting may be held no sooner than 30 days after written notice of the meeting is received by the bishop of the synod, during which time this congregation shall consult with the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any. The times and manner of the consultation shall be determined by the bishop in consultation with the Congregation Council. Unless he or she is a voting member of this congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the first meeting.
- b. Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon at the first meeting, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall send copies of the resolution and certification to voting members of this congregation.
- c. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the first meeting, the bishop of the synod and this congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph a. above, during a period of at least 90 days after receipt by the bishop of the attestation and certification as specified in paragraph b. above.

- d. If this congregation, after such consultation, is still considering termination of its relationship with this church, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present. Notice of the second meeting shall be sent to all voting members and to the bishop at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Unless he or she is a voting member of this congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the second meeting.
- e. Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the second special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall send copies of the resolution and certification to the voting members of the congregation. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the second meeting, the relationship between the congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to Synod Council approval as required by paragraphs f. and g. below.
- f. Unless this notification to the bishop also certifies that this congregation has voted to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, this congregation shall be deemed an independent or non-Lutheran church, in which case *C7.04. shall apply.
- g. This congregation shall abide by these covenants by and among the three expressions of this church:
 - 1) Congregations seeking to terminate their relationship with this church which fail or refuse to comply with each of the foregoing provisions in *C6.05. shall be required to receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.
 - 2) Congregations which had been members of the Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to receive synod approval before terminating their membership in this church.
 - 3) Congregations established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to satisfy all financial obligations to this church and receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.
- h. If this congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at this congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above or fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at this congregation's second meeting as specified in paragraph d. above, another attempt to consider termination of relationship with this church must follow all requirements of *C6.05. and may begin no sooner than six months after the meeting at which the two-thirds vote was not achieved.

*C6.06. If this congregation considers relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is taken.

*C6.07. If this congregation considers developing an additional site to be used regularly for worship, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action."

Chapter 7. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

*C7.01. If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the Southwestern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

*C7.02. If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline or pursuant to 9.23. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

*C7.03. If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to transfer to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation provided the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05. has been followed.. Before this congregation takes action to transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod.

C7.04. If f the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body and have followed the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05. , title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with this congregation by the process established by the synod , may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of this congregation. If the Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to continue as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In neither case does title to this congregation's property transfer to the synod.

*C7.05. Notwithstanding the provisions of *C7.02. and *C7.03. above, where this congregation has received property from the synod pursuant to a deed or other instrument containing restrictions under provision 9.71.a. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, this congregation accepts such restrictions and:

- a. Shall not transfer, encumber, mortgage, or in any way burden or impair any right, title, or interest in the property without prior approval of the Synod Council.
- b. Shall—upon written demand by the Synod Council, pursuant to †S13.23. of the constitution of the Southwest ELCA Synod—reconvey and transfer all right, title, and interest in the property to the synod.

Chapter 8. MEMBERSHIP

- *C8.01. Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of this congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.
- *C8.02. Members shall be classified as follows:
- a. **BAPTIZED** members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.
 - b. **CONFIRMED** members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.
 - c. **VOTING** members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of this congregation as well as the other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws. They shall not have voted as a seasonal member of another congregation of this church in the previous two calendar months.

C8.02.01 VOTING MEMBERS RECEIVING COMMUNION

Voting members must have communed *in person* at Faith Lutheran Church or have received communion at home from the pastor or lay leader during the current or preceding calendar year.

- d. **ASSOCIATE** members are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. These individuals have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights or other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.
- e. **SEASONAL** members are voting members of other congregations of this church who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation, including exercising limited voting rights in this congregation. The Congregation Council may grant seasonal membership to such persons provided that this congregation is a member of a synod where the Synod Council has approved seasonal member voting on its territory. Such seasonal members shall have all the privileges and duties of voting members except that:
 - 1) they shall not be eligible for elected office in, or for membership on the Congregation Council or on a call committee of, this congregation;
 - 2) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the call or termination of call of any minister of this congregation;
 - 3) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the affiliation of this congregation with this church;

- 4) they shall not be eligible to serve as voting members from this congregation of the Synod Assembly or the Churchwide Assembly;
- 5) they shall not, even if otherwise permitted by this congregation, vote by proxy or by absentee ballot; and
- 6) they shall not, within any two calendar month period, exercise voting rights in this congregation and in the congregation where they remain voting members.

*C8.03. All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Congregation Council.

*C8.04. It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregation to:

- a. make regular use of the means of grace, both Word and sacraments;
- b. live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran church; and
- c. support the work of this congregation, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.

*C8.05. Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:

- a. death;
- b. resignation;
- c. transfer or release;
- d. disciplinary action in accordance with Chapter 20 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or
- e. removal from the roll due to inactivity in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the Church has a continuing pastoral concern.

C8.05.01 DISCONTINUANCE OF VOTING MEMBER

If after 2 years, member(s) do(es) not meet the basic standard of a voting member, they will be requested to transfer membership or be released from membership.

Chapter 9. ROSTERED MINISTER

*C9.01. Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by this congregation to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.

*C9.02. Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for this congregation the synod bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.

- *C9.03. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:
- a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
 - 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;
 - 3) conduct public worship;
 - 4) provide pastoral care
 - 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 - 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
 - 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; and
 - 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
 - b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
 - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) relate to all schools and organizations of this congregation;
 - 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
 - 4) with the council, administer discipline.
 - 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and of the (insert name of synod) ; and
 - 6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- *C9.04. The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.05. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and this congregation shall be as follows
- a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by the pastor's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for the following reasons
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions,;
 - 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor;
 - 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;;

- 6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement, or
 - 9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months .
- b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
- 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally shall, investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament with disability status. Upon removal of the disability and the restoration of the pastor to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by this congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, this congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.
- *C9.06. At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.
- *C9.07. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in this congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any rostered minister providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.
- *C9.08. This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting.
- *C9.09. When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- *C9.11. With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from C9.05.a, and call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of C9.05.a.
- *C9.12. The pastor of this congregation:
a. shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from this congregation;
b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod; and
c. shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations
- *C9.13. The pastor(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

- *C9.14. The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of this congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his or her hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another call or approval of a request for change in roster status.

C9.14.01 RECORD KEEPING

A. Records will be kept in the church office and be current at such time as their ministry is ended.

B. Maintenance of parochial records may be delegated to staff as necessary for daily operations.

- C9.15. *Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synod bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between this congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synod bishop and approved by this congregation.*
- *C9.21. Authority to call a deacon shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by [this congregation][the Congregation Council] to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.22. Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop may be called as a deacon of this congregation.
- *C9.23. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:
- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
 - b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
 - c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world, witnessing to the realm of God in the community, the nation, and abroad;
 - d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
 - e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
 - f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
 - g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
 - h. Share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
 - i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

- *C9.24. The specific duties of the deacon, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the deacon shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.25. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Service and this congregation shall be as follows:
- a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a deacon, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by the deacon's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the deacon, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the ministry of Word and Service effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon;
 - 5) suspension of the deacon through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the deacon from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months.
 - b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the office of minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
 - 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
 - c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the deacon's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service with disability status. Upon removal of the disability and the restoration of the deacon to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the deacon to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the deacon and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the deacon's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by this congregation and by the deacon, if appropriate. If the deacon and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the deacon's call, this congregation may dismiss the deacon only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

- *C9.26. This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former deacon before calling a successor. A deacon shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting.
- *C9.27. When a deacon is called to serve in company with another rostered minister or other rostered ministers, the privileges and responsibilities of each rostered minister shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the rostered ministers, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- *C9.28. With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from *C9.25.a. and call a deacon for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the deacon and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of *C9.25.a.
- *C9.29. The deacon shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the deacon shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- *C9.31. The deacon(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

Chapter 10. CONGREGATION MEETING

C10.01. This congregation shall have at least one regular meeting per year. The regular meeting(s) of the congregation shall be held at the time specified in the bylaws. Consistent with the laws of the State of Minnesota, the bylaws shall designate one regular meeting per year as the annual meeting of this congregation.

C10.01.01 ANNUAL MEETING.

A. The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held following the last service on the fourth Sunday of January each year.

B. If the annual meeting cannot be held due to inclement weather or other unforeseeable events, the meeting will be held the following Sunday.

C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the [senior] pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of this congregation upon the written request of 5 of the voting members. The president of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synod bishop. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held, and no other business shall be transacted.

C10.03. Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail (if requested) or electronic means, as permitted by state law, to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting.

C10.04. Twenty voting members shall constitute a quorum.

C10.05. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.

C10.06. All actions approved by this congregation shall be by majority vote of those voting members present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution or by state law.

C10.07. "Robert's Rules of Order", latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

C10.08. This congregation may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Chapter 11. OFFICERS

C11.01. The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.

- a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
- b. The officers shall be voting members of this congregation.
- c. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.

C11.01.01 PRESIDENT

A. The President shall be the chief executive officer of this congregation and shall have general active management of the business of this congregation.

B. The president shall, when present, preside at all meetings of the Congregation Council, the congregation, and at all meetings of the Executive Committee

C. In a manner consistent with the Church Constitution and with the Robert's Rules of Order; the President, shall see that all orders and resolutions of the Congregation Council are carried into effect.

D. The President may execute and deliver in the name of this congregation any deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other instruments pertaining to the business of this congregation. This includes without limitation, any instruments necessary or appropriate to enable this congregation to donate income of principal of this congregation to or for the account of such corporations, associations, trusts, foundations, and institutions as this congregation was organized to support.

E. The exception (to D.) is in cases in which such execution and delivery shall be expressly delegated by the council members or by these Bylaws to some other officer or agent of this congregation or shall be required by law to be otherwise executed and delivered.

F. The president shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Congregation Council; and, in general, shall perform all duties usually incident to the office of the President.

C11.01.02 VICE PRESIDENT

A. The Vice President shall have such powers and shall perform such duties as may be prescribed by the Congregation Council or by the President.

B. In the event of absence or disability of the President, the Vice President shall succeed to the powers and duties of the office of President in the order designated by the Congregation Council. They shall then preside over meetings of the Congregation Council and the congregation in a manner consistent with the Church Constitution and with the Robert's Rules of Order.

C11.01.03. SECRETARY

A. The Secretary shall be Secretary of the Church Council and when present, shall record proceedings of all meetings of the Congregation Council and of all of meetings of the Executive Committee.

B. The Secretary shall keep a register of the names and addresses of all members of this congregation;

1. Maintenance of this record may be delegated to staff as necessary for daily operations.

C. The Secretary shall at all times keep on file the most current version of the adopted Constitution including all by-laws and continuing resolutions.

D. The Secretary, when directed to do so, shall give proper notice of meetings of the Congregation Council and meetings of the Executive Committee.

E. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the Council meetings and the Congregational meetings and retain copies of all meeting minutes. Copies of minutes shall also be provided to church staff for filing and preservation in church archives.

F. The Secretary shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be prescribed by the Congregation Council or by the President; and in general, shall perform all duties usually incident to the office of the Secretary.

C11.01.04 TREASURER

A. The Treasurer shall keep accurate accounts of all moneys of this congregation received or disbursed;

B. The Treasurer shall deposit all moneys, drafts, and checks in the name of, and to the credit of, this congregation in such banks and depositories as a majority of the Congregation Council shall from time to time designate;

1. Financial transactions may be delegated to staff as necessary for daily operations.

C. The Treasurer shall have the power to endorse for deposit all notes, checks and drafts received by this congregation;

D. The Treasurer shall be custodian of all funds of this congregation, local and synod, and shall receive and disburse all funds in accordance with decisions of this congregation or the Congregation Council.

1. Issuance of checks may be delegated to staff as necessary for daily operations.

E. The Treasurer shall render to the President and the council members, whenever required, an account of all their transactions as Treasurer and of the financial condition of this congregation.

F. The Treasurer shall present a duly audited report at the congregational meeting and such other reports to the Congregation Council as may be required.

1. Preparation and monitoring of the Annual Budget is among the Treasurer's duties

G. The treasurer shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be prescribed by the Congregation Council or by the President; and, in general, shall perform all duties usually incident to the office of the Treasurer.

C.11.01.05 OTHER OFFICERS, AGENTS AND EMPLOYEES

This congregation may have such other officers, agents, and employees as may be deemed necessary by the Congregation Council. Such other officers, agents, and employees shall be appointed in such manner, have such duties, and hold their offices for such terms as may be determined by resolution of the Congregation Council.

- C11.02. The congregation shall elect its officers and they shall be the officers of the congregation. The officers shall be elected by written ballot and shall serve for **two** years or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they were elected.

C11.02.01 RESIGNATIONS

- A. Any officer may resign at any time by giving written notice of their resignation to the Congregation Council, to the President, or to the Secretary of this congregation.
B. Any such resignation shall take effect at the time, specified in the notice.
C. If no time is specified resignation shall take effect upon receipt of the notice by the Congregation Council, President, or Secretary of this congregation., Unless otherwise specified, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

C11.02.02 REMOVAL

The removal of any officer shall follow the procedures specified in C12.02.03

C11.02.03 VACANCIES

A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, or any other cause shall be filled by a majority vote of the council members.to such office, for the unexpired portion of the term in the manner prescribed in these Bylaws.

- C11.03.** No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. No elected officer shall be eligible to serve more than two full consecutive terms in the same office.

C11.03.01 CONTINUITY OF OFFICERS

- A. For purposes of continuity, it is preferred, if possible that officer elections will be for staggered terms, with two officers elected each year at the annual meeting by the congregation at large.
B. They shall hold office for the duration of their term and until their successor has been duly elected and qualified, or until their death, they resign, or have been removed in the manner provided by this Constitution or its by-laws.

Chapter 12. CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of officers of the congregation, and **not more than 5 members of the congregation**. Any voting member of the congregation may be elected, subject only by the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A members place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause. Consistent with the laws of the state in which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.

C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s), [the deacon(s),] shall be elected by written ballot to serve for 2 years or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

C12.02.01 COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

A. In the interest of continuity, it is preferred, if possible, that the terms of council members should be staggered with the terms of at least two council members being carried over at each election.

C12.02.02 RESIGNATION

A. Any council member of this congregation may resign at any time by giving written notice to the President or to the Secretary of this congregation. The resignation of any council member shall take effect at the time specified in the notice.

B. If no time is specified, resignation shall take effect upon receipt of the notice by the by the officer of this congregation to whom such written notice is given.

12.02.03 REMOVAL OF OFFICERS/ COUNCIL MEMBERS

A. Any officer/council member may be removed at a meeting called for that purpose. The notice of such meeting at which the removal of an officer/council member is to be considered, must state the purpose of the meeting is to vote on the removal of an officer/council member.

B. The person under consideration shall be given an opportunity to be heard at the meeting with sufficient notice of the proposed removal.

C. Removal occurs by 2/3 majority vote of the council present at the meeting, provided that a quorum is present.

D. If the person under consideration of removal is the president, then the vice-president shall preside at the meeting.

E. The vacancy in the Congregation Council caused by such removal shall be filled in the manner specified in C12.03.01

C12.03. Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next **annual** meeting.

C12.03.01 VACANCIES

A. Any vacancy in the Congregation Council caused by death, resignation, removal, an increase in the number of council members, or any other cause, shall be filled by a majority vote of the remaining council members.

B. Each council member so chosen shall hold office until the next annual election and until their successor is duly elected.

C12.04. The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything is done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:

- a. To lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
- b. To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
- c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its function and perform its mission.
- d. To maintain supportive relationships with the **rostered minister(s)** and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.
- e. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
- f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
- g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
- h. To emphasize partnership with the synod and churchwide units of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- j. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

C12.04.01 BOOKS AND RECORDS

A. The Congregation Council of this congregation shall be responsible for the keeping of:

- 1) records of all proceedings of the Congregation Council and the Executive Committee, and**
- 2) such other records and books of account as is necessary and appropriate to the conduct of the business of this congregation.**
- 3) all financial statements of this congregation; and**
- 4) the current church Constitution, Bylaws and continuing resolutions of this congregation.**

B. These records will be kept at the church office of this congregation.

C12.05. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.

- a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of directors of this congregation, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the managing its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Minnesota, except as otherwise provided herein.
- b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.
- c. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to 2% of annual budgeted expenses for items not included in the budget.
- d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations *of not more than 10% in excess of the anticipated receipts only after approval by the Congregation meeting.* The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of wider ministry being carried on in collaboration with the synod and churchwide organization.
- e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of mission support to the synod treasurer.
- f. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.

C.12.05.01 SPECIFIC FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Responsibility for the financial and property matters of this congregation, include:

- 1) signature designations at the bank(s).**
- 2) establishment of rental rates for the property, facilities, and equipment owned by this congregation.**

C12.05.02 ACCOUNTING SYSTEM AND AUDIT

A. The Congregation Council shall cause to be established and maintained, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applied on a consistent basis, an appropriate accounting system for this congregation.

B. The Congregation Council shall cause the records and books of account of this congregation to be audited, at least once in each fiscal year by the Congregation's Audit Committee and **once every five years by an auditing firm.**

C.12.05.03 FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of this congregation shall be determined by the Congregation Council.

C.12.05.04 CHECKS, DRAFTS AND OTHER MATTERS

All checks, drafts, or other orders for the payment of money and all notes, bonds, or other evidences of indebtedness issued in the name of this congregation shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents, employee or employees of this as determined by resolution of the Congregation Council.

C12.06. The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws and the continuing resolutions are carried out.

C12.07. The Congregation Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.

C12.08. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the employment of the staff of this congregation. The Church Council shall appoint the Pastor as lead of staff to supervise the staff of this congregation. Nothing in this provision shall be deemed to affect this congregation's responsibility for the call, terms of call, or termination of call of any employees who are on a roster of this church.

C12.08.01 SALARY OF PASTOR AND STAFF

A. The Congregation Council is responsible for recommending the salary of the Pastor **and staff.**

B. The Congregation Council and the Pastor shall be empowered to secure such staff as necessary to carry on the work of the congregation and recommend their salaries. Said empowerment shall not be inconsistent with or in violation of the Church Constitution.

C. Salaries for the Pastor and staff will be in the annual budget which requires congregation approval at the annual meeting.

C12.09. The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.

C12.11. The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president, and shall be called at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

C12.11.01 PLACE OF MEETINGS.

The Congregation Council may hold its meetings at such place or places, within or without the State of Minnesota, as it may be determined.

C12.11.02 NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETINGS.

A. Notice of each such special meeting shall be sent electronically or mailed to each council member. If mailed, the notice shall be addressed to them at their residence or usual place of business, at least two (2) days before the day on which the meeting is to be held, or be delivered to them personally or by telephone, not later than one (1) day before the day on which the meeting is to be held.

B. Each notice shall state the time and place of the meeting, but need not state the purposes of the meeting except as otherwise expressly provided

C12.11.03 NOTICES EXCUSED.

Notice of any meeting of the Congregation Council need not be given to any council member who shall be present at such meeting.

C12.11.04 WAIVER OF NOTICE

Whenever notice of any meeting is required by these Bylaws or any of the corporate laws of the State of Minnesota, such notice may be waived in writing, signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before, at, or after the time stated therein or before, at, or after the meeting.

C12.11.05 AUTHORIZATION WITHOUT A MEETING

Any action that may be taken at a meeting of the Congregation Council or the Executive Committee may be taken without a meeting when authorized in writing signed by all of the council members or by all of the members of the Executive Committee, as the case may be.

C12.12. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the pastor or interim pastor, except when the pastor or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting, which shall be the only business considered at that meeting. Chronic or repeated absence of the pastor or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Congregation Council, following consultation with the synod bishop.

C12.12.01 ABSENCE OF QUORUM

In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the council members present may adjourn any meeting until a quorum is met. Notice of any adjourned meeting need not be given other than by announcement at the meeting at which adjournment is taken.

C12.13. The Congregation Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference and, to the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

C12.14. Voting by proxy or absentee ballot shall not be permitted.

Chapter 13. CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

C13.01. The officers of this congregation and the pastor shall constitute the **Executive Committee**.

C13. 01. 01 NUMBER, QUALIFICATIONS, TERM OF OFFICE.

A. The Executive Committee shall consist of the elected or appointed officers of the Congregation Council. Only persons who are council members of this congregation shall be eligible for appointment to the Executive Committee.

B. When a member of the Executive Committee ceases to be a council member of this congregation, such person automatically shall cease to be a member of the Executive Committee of this congregation.

C13. 01. 02 POWERS

A. The Executive Committee shall have all the powers and authority of the Congregation Council of this congregation in the management of the property, business, and affairs of this congregation in the intervals between meetings of the Congregation Council, subject always to the direction and control of the Congregation Council.

B. In addition, the Executive Committee or an appointed sub-committee of the Executive Committee, may from time to time recommend proposed amendments to the Bylaws, and the Church Constitution to the Congregation Council for review and consideration. After this review, the Congregation Council may recommend such proposed amendments to the congregation. Final ratification of any such proposed amendments will require affirmative votes by the congregation at large as set forth in the Church Constitution.

C13.01.03 MEETINGS

A. The Executive Committee shall hold such regular or other periodic meetings. Meeting dates and places, may be from time to time or by fixed by resolution adopted by a majority of the members of the Executive Committee.

B. In addition, special meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held whenever called by the President or by any one (1) other member of the Executive Committee. Such notice of the meeting is the same as for special meetings of the Congregation Council, unless excused in accordance with by-law C.12.11.03.

C13.01.04 QUORUM

A. A minimum of two voting members of the Executive Committee shall be required to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any Executive Committee meeting. The act of a majority of the members of the Executive Committee present at any such Executive Committee meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Executive Committee.

B. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the members of the Executive Committee present may adjourn any meeting from time to time until a quorum be had. Notice of any adjourned meeting need not be given other than by announcement at the meeting at which adjournment is taken.

C13.02. A **Nominating Committee** of three voting members of this congregation, two of whom, if possible, shall be outgoing members of the Congregation Council, shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year. Members of the nominating Committee are not eligible for consecutive re-election.

C13.02.01 DUTIES

A. The Nominating Committee shall present one or more names for each officer position to be filled.

B. The Nominating Committee shall present one or more names for the Audit Committee vacancies and three names for Nominating Committee vacancies.

C. The Nominating Committee shall submit at least one name for each of the vacant Congregation Council positions, to meet the minimum, as required by the Constitution.

D. The Nominating Committee shall verify the eligibility of each candidate and to confirm with the candidate their desire to be on the ballot. It is also the responsibility of a prospective candidate to inform the Nominating Committee of their ineligibility, if that is the case.

1) For nominations from the floor at congregational meetings, *it is the responsibility of the nominator* to check the eligibility of a candidate.

2) The person being nominated also shares the responsibility to inform the congregation of their ineligibility to serve in position if that is the case.

E. The slate of nominations from the Nominating Committee shall be delivered to the Congregation Council, not less than 10 days prior to the Annual Congregational Meeting.

F. Nominations shall be announced at regular services the week prior to the annual meeting.

C13.03. An **Audit Committee** of three voting members shall be elected by the congregation at the annual meeting. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council. Term of office shall be three years, with one member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for re-election.

C13.03.01 DUTIES

A. The Audit Committee shall audit the fiscal records of the church and report in writing to the Council at least one week prior to the Annual meeting.

B. They shall also report their findings at the annual meeting.

C13.04. Mutual Ministry Committee (in the absence of a mutual ministry committee, the duties shall be fulfilled by the executive committee) shall be appointed jointly by the president and the rostered minister. Term of office shall be two years, with three members to be appointed each successive year.

C13.05. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a **Call Committee** of six voting members shall be appointed by the Congregation Council. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor.

C13.06 An **Endowment Committee** shall be established for the oversight and management of the mission endowment fund. Three voting members of the congregation will be appointed by the Church Council] for a term of 3 years. Members may serve more than one term. (When the Endowment Committee is first established, initial terms for members will be 3-2-1.)

C13.06.01 ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

A. If a member of the Committee is unable to fulfill their term, the Congregation Council shall appoint a member for the remainder of that term.

B. A quorum shall be met when a majority of members are present.

C. All actions shall pass with a majority vote.

D. The Committee shall meet at least annually.

C13.07 Other committees may be formed as need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council.

C13.08. Duties of the congregation committees shall be specified in the bylaws.

C13.09. The pastor of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of this congregation.

Chapter 14. ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

C14.01. All organizations within this congregation shall exist to aid it in ministering to the members of this congregation and to all persons who can be reached with the Gospel of Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of this congregation's life, the organizations are subject to its oversight and direction. This congregation, at its meeting shall determine their policies, guide their activities, and receive reports concerning their membership, work, and finances.

C14.02. Special interest groups, other than those of official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council.

Chapter 15. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

***C15.01.** Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith, willful or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, continual and intentional interference with the ministry of this congregation, or willful and repeated harassment or defamation of member(s) of this congregation is sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation and repentance will be attempted following Matthew 18:15–17, proceeding through these successive steps, as necessary:

- a) private counsel and admonition by the pastor,
- b) censure and admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses,
- c) written referral of the matter by the Congregation Council to the vice president of the synod, who will refer it to a consultation panel drawn from the Consultation Committee of the synod, and
- d) written referral of the matter by the consultation panel to the Committee on Discipline of the synod.

If, for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by paragraphs a. and b. hereof, those steps may be performed by another pastor chosen by the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council.

***C15.02.** The process for discipline of a member of this congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. If the counseling, censure, and admonitions pursuant to *C15.01. do not result in repentance and amendment of life, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing may be prepared by the Congregation Council, signed, and submitted to the vice president of the synod. The vice president shall select from the synod's Consultation Committee a panel of five members (three laypersons and two ministers of Word and Sacrament). A copy of the written charges shall be provided to the consultation panel and the accused member(s). The consultation panel, after requesting a written reply to the charges from the accused member(s), shall consider the matter and seek a resolution by means of investigation, consultation, mediation, or whatever other means may seem appropriate. The panel's efforts to reach a mutually agreeable resolution shall continue for no more than 45 days after the matter is submitted to it.

***C15.03.** If the consultation panel fails to resolve the matter, that panel shall refer the case in writing, including the written charges and the accused member's reply, to the Committee on Discipline of the synod for a hearing. A copy of the panel's written referral shall be delivered to the vice president of the synod, the Congregation Council, and the accused member(s) at the same time it is sent to the Committee on Discipline of the synod. The Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall then select six members from the Committee on Discipline to decide the case and shall appoint a member of the Synod Council to preside as nonvoting chair. Those six members, plus the nonvoting chair, comprise the discipline hearing panel for deciding the case. The Congregation Council and the accused member(s) are the parties to the case.

C15.03.01 RECONSIDERATION OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Any reconsideration of disciplinary action by the Council must occur prior to Synod Council review.

***C15.04.** The discipline hearing panel shall commence and conduct the disciplinary hearing in accordance with the provisions governing discipline of congregation members prescribed in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

***C15.05.** By the vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the discipline hearing panel who are present and voting, one of the following disciplinary sanctions can be imposed:

- a. suspension from the privileges of congregation membership for a designated period of time;
- b. suspension from the privileges of congregation membership until the pastor and Congregation Council receive evidence, satisfactory to them, of repentance and amendment of life;
- c. termination of membership in this congregation; or
- d. termination of membership in this congregation and exclusion from the church property and from all congregation activities.

- *C15.06. The written decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be sent to the vice president of the synod, the accused member(s), and the Congregation Council as required by the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. The decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be implemented by the Congregation Council and recorded in the minutes of the next council meeting.
- *C15.07. No member of this congregation shall be subject to discipline a second time for offenses that a discipline hearing panel has heard previously and decided pursuant to this chapter.
- *C15.10. Adjudication
- *C15.11. When there is disagreement between or among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president of this congregation of their intent to do so. The synod bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the dispute. If the issue relates directly to the pastor, the bishop may begin the process in †S14.18.d. In all other matters, if the bishop's consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the Council deems necessary. The Synod Council's decision shall be final.

Chapter 16. AMENDMENTS

- *C16.01. Unless provision *C16.04. is applicable, those sections of this constitution that are not required, in accord with the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be amended in the following manner. Amendments may be proposed by at least **10 voting members** or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify this congregation's members of the proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.
- *C16.02. An amendment to this constitution, proposed under *C16.01., shall:
 - a. be approved at any legally called meeting of this congregation by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting;
 - b. be ratified without change at the next regular meeting of this congregation held pursuant to C10.01 by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting; and
 - c. have the effective date included in the resolution² and noted in the constitution.***
- *C16.03. Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in *C16.01. and *C16.02. shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The synod shall notify this congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed changes; the changes shall go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them.

² Such an effective date must be stated in relation to the requirements of *C16.03. to allow time for synod review of the amendment.

- *C16.04.** This constitution may be amended to bring any section into conformity with a section or sections, either required or not required, of the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as most recently amended by the Churchwide Assembly. Such amendments may be approved by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of this congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of this congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, notice to this congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council's recommendations, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of at least two (2) voting members of this congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following a vote of approval.

Chapter 17. BYLAWS

- *C17.01. This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.
- *C17.02. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.
- *C17.03. Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify this congregation's members of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.
- *C17.04. Adopted or amended bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

Chapter 18. CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

- *C18.01. This congregation in a legally called meeting or the Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this congregation
- *C18.02. Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a majority vote of a meeting of this congregation or a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Congregation Council.
- *C18.03. Adopted or amended continuing resolutions shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

Chapter 19. INDEMNIFICATION

- *C19.01. Consistent with the provisions of the laws under which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt provisions providing indemnification for each person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a Congregation Council member, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any committee of this congregation, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.

Chapter 20. PARISH AUTHORIZATION

[Required provisions when congregation is part of a parish]*

- *C20.01.** This congregation may unite with one or more other congregations recognized by the synod named in *C6.01. to form a parish. Except as provided in *C20.02. and *C20.03., a written agreement, developed in consultation with the synod and approved by the voting members of each congregation participating in the parish, shall specify the powers and responsibilities that have been delegated to the Parish Council. The Parish Agreement shall identify which congregation of the parish issues calls on behalf of the member congregations or shall establish a process for identifying which congregation issues calls on behalf of the member congregations.
- *C20.02.** One congregation of a parish shall issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Sacrament or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended by the synod bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a two-thirds vote at a congregational meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.
- *C20.03.** One congregation of a parish may issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Service or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended by the synod bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a two-thirds vote at a congregational meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.
- *C20.04.** Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with the pastor as provided in †S14.18.d. of the synod constitution of the synod named in *C6.01. In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.
- *C20.05.** Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with a minister of Word and Service as provided in †S14.43.d. of the synod constitution of the synod named in *C6.01. In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.
- *C20.06.** Whenever a parish agreement is terminated, the call of any rostered minister serving that parish is terminated. Should any congregation that was formerly part of the parish agreement desire to issue a new call to that rostered minister, it may do so in accordance with the call process of this church.

Note: Certain numbers seem to be missing from the numbering sequence in some chapters. This is intentional. In the style followed here in the Model Constitution for Congregations, the number “.10.” and multiples thereof have been reserved for possible use as section headings in future editions. Therefore, in the sequence, for example, of Chapters 1, 9, and 12, these “.10.” numbers do not appear.