

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS
OF
UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH
Crystal Falls, Michigan
Amended June 12, 2017**

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

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**BASED ON THE 2013 MODEL CONSTITUTION for CONGREGATIONS OF THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA (ELCA)**

Code number explanation - Constitution provisions have two sets of numbers with the chapter being the first number in the sequence followed by a period, the second set of numbers being the numbered sequence. Bylaw provisions have three sets of numbers: the chapter number, related constitution provision number, and then the bylaw sequence number. Sections marked by an asterisk () are required by the ELCA.*

***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 United Lutheran Church.

C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the congregation of United Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."

C1.11. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Michigan.

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 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 Scriptures 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.** The church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world.
- *C13.03** 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.
- *C13.04** The 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 of the 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 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 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, and 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 to 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.
- C4.02.01.** Pray for the pastor(s), leaders, and all members of this congregation.
- C4.02.a.01.** Marriages, civil unions, or blessings of persons in same gender relationships will not be performed in this church building or authorized by this congregation.
- *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 the congregation's ministry and the ministry of other parts 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 Church 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 Congregation Committees.]
- *C4.05.** This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.
- *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 the congregation. The 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 16, 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 Church Council and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution and bylaws; and
 - k. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.
- *C5.04.** This congregation shall choose 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 the congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the Northern Great Lakes Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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 Northern Great Lakes 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 the 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 the 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 the 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 may be 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.
 - d. 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 desire of this congregation to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present. 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 the 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 church council. Unless he or she is a voting member of the congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice, but not vote at the meeting.
 - b. 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 mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of this congregation. This notice shall be submitted within

10 days after the resolution has been adopted.

- c. The bishop of the synod and the congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph a. above, during a period of at least 90 days after receipt by the synod of the notice as specified in paragraph b. above.
- d. If this congregation, after consultation, still seeks to terminate its relationship, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present, at which meeting the bishop of the synod or an authorized representative shall be present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed 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 the congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice, but not vote at the meeting.
- e. A copy of the resolution, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, shall be sent to the bishop within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted, at which time the relationship between this congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to paragraphs g., h., and i. below. Unless this notification to the bishop also certifies that the congregation has voted by two-thirds vote to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, the congregation will be conclusively presumed to be an independent or non-Lutheran church.
- f. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the bishop to the secretary of the ELCA, who shall report the termination to the Churchwide Assembly.
- 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 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 the congregations first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above, another special meeting to consider termination of relationship with this church may be called no sooner than six months after that first meeting. If this congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at the congregations 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 that second meeting.

***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 affected.

***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 Northern Great Lakes 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, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

*C7.03. If two-thirds of 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 Northern Great Lakes Synod.

*C7.04. If two-thirds of 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 relationships in *C6.05., title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with this congregation by the established synodical process, 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.

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 the 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 shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation at least once in the past two years. 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 the congregation as well as the rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.
- 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. The 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 ELCA congregations 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 the ELCA;

- 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 Church 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 ELCA constitutional provision 20 and the accompanying by-laws; or
- e. removal from the active 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.

Chapter 9. ROSTERED MINISTER

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

***C9.02.** Only a member of the roster 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 the congregation by the synod bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.

C9.02.01. This congregation will not call a pastor or lay rostered leader who is or intends to be in a same-gender relationship.

***C9.03.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Every ordained 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 distribution of its communications and publications;
- 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:

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 Church Council;
- 4) with the council, administer discipline; and
- 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the ELCA churchwide organization and of the Northern Great Lakes Synod of the ELCA.

***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 death or following consultation with the synodical 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 the congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor;
 - 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty 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) terminations of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of the congregation or termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of the 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 the 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 the 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 the 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 as disabled. 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 the 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 the 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 ar-

rangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and the 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, the 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 Church Council.

***C9.07.** During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the 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 Church 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 related to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

***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 Church 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, the 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 the 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 the 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 record of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of the 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 field of labor or the granting by the synod of retired status to the pastor.

C9.15. Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synodical 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 the congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synodical bishop and approved by the congregation.

- *C9.21. Authority to call a minister of Word and Service 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 synodical 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 the ELCA 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 a congregation shall be as follows:
 - a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a deacon, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by death or, following consultation with the synodical 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 as disabled. 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.** The deacon shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:
- a. installation in another field of labor, or
 - b. the issuance of a certificate of dismissal or transfer.
- *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. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in bylaw C10.01.01.

C10.01.01. The congregation will conduct its affairs at an annual meeting held in January or February with the date determined by the Church Council.

C10.01.02. The agenda for the annual meeting will be as follows:

- a. approval of the minutes of the past annual congregational meeting and any special congregation meetings held since the last annual congregation meeting.
- b. election of Church Council, and voting members to the Northern Great Lakes Synod Assembly, and Fortune Lake Bible Camp delegates.
- c. review and approval of financial report.
- d. report of Church Council.
- e. report of Pastor(s).
- f. review and approval of budget.
- g. other items as determined by the congregation, Church Council or Pastor(s).

C10.01.03. All minutes, reports and the budget, collectively referred to as “Advance Reports”, shall be prepared and be available at the church for voting members 15 days before the date of the annual congregation meeting.

C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the senior pastor, the Church Council, or the chairperson of this congregation. The chairperson of the Church Council shall call a special meeting upon the request of the synodical 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 or by electronic means, as permitted by state law to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the meeting date.

C10.04. Twenty-five (25) voting members shall constitute a quorum.

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

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

C10.06.01. Four council members will be elected each year at the annual meeting for three year terms.

C10.07. *Robert’s Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this church.

Chapter 11. OFFICERS

C11.01. The officers of this congregation shall be a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer, and shall be voting members of the congregation.

- a. Officers of this congregation shall serve the same offices on the Church Council and shall be voting members of the Church Council.
- b. Duties of the officers shall be specified in following bylaw C11.01.01

C11.01.01. All officers shall be ex-officio members of all of the Administrative Boards.

Chairperson of the congregation shall:

1. preside at all meetings of the congregation and Church Council.
2. enforce the Constitution and Bylaws of the congregation.
3. sign official approved documents of the Church when possible.
4. enforce all actions approved by the congregation at congregation meetings and Church Council meetings.
5. prepare the agenda for the Church Council meetings in conjunction with Church Council members and the Pastor(s).

Vice-Chairperson of the congregation shall:

1. assume the duties of the Chairperson in his/her absence.
2. perform other duties as assigned by the Chairperson.

Secretary - The Secretary of the congregation shall:

1. record the proceedings of any congregation meetings and Church Council meetings.
2. sign official approved documents of the Church when possible.
3. appoint a recording secretary to record the proceedings of the congregation meeting(s) and/or Church Council meetings, if desired. Such recording secretary will not assume other duties of the Secretary including, but not limited, to voting.

Treasurer - The Treasurer of the congregation shall:

1. follow and enforce all internal accounting procedures adopted by the Board of Financial Stewardship.
2. prepare a monthly financial report including the income, expenses, budget, and variances for each of the individual Council Boards and church accounts.
3. prepare a summary of the financial position of the Church each week showing the actual offerings, budgeted offerings and overage/shortage for the prior week and year-to-date. Such information shall be included in the church bulletin.
4. sign all checks after reviewing the invoices being paid for appropriateness and pricing when possible.
5. be available to answer questions and make available the congregation financial records to the Audit Team.
6. prepare a monthly financial report of all project fund raising. The report will show the projected amount needed, actual amount raised, actual expenditures, and when the project fund raising is expected to cease.
7. Ensure that all church and auxiliary financial checkbooks are stored within the church building and easily accessible to the church treasurer.

C11.02. The Church Council shall elect its officers at the first church council meeting following the annual meeting and they shall be the officers of the congregation. The officers shall be elected by written ballot and shall serve one year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin immediately upon election.

C11.03. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time.

Chapter 12. CHURCH COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Church Council shall consist of the pastor(s), and shall ideally consist of twelve congregation members, but not more than fourteen or fewer than ten members, with youth and young adult members encouraged to participate. Any voting member of the congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Church Council shall be declared vacant if the member ceases to be a voting member of this congregation. Consistent with the laws of the state in which this congregation is incorporated, the congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Church Council in other circumstances.

C12.03. Should a member's place on the Church Council be declared vacant, the Church Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor to serve the remaining unexpired term.

C12.04. The Church Council shall have oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The duties of the Church 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 functions 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 emphasize partnership with the synod and churchwide organization 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.
- h. to recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- i. to seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

C12.04.01. Specifically, the Church Council shall:

- 1. inform the congregation of actions approved by the Church Council.
- 2. inform the Chairperson of items that require Church Council consideration.
- 3. set the time and date of congregational meetings.
- 4. appoint a team to interview, hire, and approve compensation for all non-pastoral employees and contractors of the Church.
- 5. keep an official record of the proceedings of all meetings.
- 6. approve depositories used by the Church.
- 7. review and respond to fund raising requests within the congregation and by others affiliated with the Church.
- 8. appoint a financial secretary with the duties to be defined by the Church Council.
- 9. review and approve all outside requests for fund raising activities to be conducted within the Church.
- 10. review and approve all offers of non-solicited gifts to the congregation.
- 11. arrange and review an annual audit of the congregation's financial records.
- 12. annually review and update all church policies.

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

- a. The Church Council shall be the board of trustees of this congregation, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the management of 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 Michigan, except as otherwise provided herein.
- b. The Church 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 Church Council may enter into contracts of up to an amount not exceeding five percent of the total annual operating expenses for items not included in the budget.
- d. The Church Council, in cooperation with the individual Boards, shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption. The Council shall have the authority to amend the budget by no than 10 percent.
- e. The Church Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations.
- f. The Church Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its insurance program.

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

C12.07. The Church council shall provide an annual review of the membership roster.

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

- C12.11.** The Church Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the Chairperson, and shall be called by the Chairperson at the request of at least one-fourth of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.
- C12.12.** A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Church Council, including the senior pastor or interim pastor, except when the senior 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 senior pastor or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Church Council, following consultation with the synod bishop.
- C12.13.** The Church 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.

Chapter 13. CONGREGATION BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

- C13.01.** The officers of this congregation and the pastor shall constitute the *Executive Committee*.
- C13.01.01.** The Executive Committee need only act when it is impossible or impractical for decisions to await the next regular or special church council meeting. Decisions may not conflict with the Constitution and Bylaws of this congregation. All actions of the committee will be reported at the next church council meeting.
- C13.01.02.** Notifications may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.
- C13.01.03.** The Executive Committee will set the church council agenda at least five days prior to the next scheduled church council meeting.
- C13.02.** A *Nominating Committee* of three voting members of this congregation and the pastor, shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the congregation at the annual meeting for a term of one year.
- C13.02.01.** The Nominating Committee will identify and propose candidates for all positions requiring a vote of this congregation. In addition to the candidates submitted by the committee, additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- C13.03.** An *Audit Committee* of three voting members shall be elected by the Church Council. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Church Council. Term of office shall be one year. Members shall be eligible for reelection. The audits of all organizations within the church shall be done prior to the annual meeting.
- C13.03.01.** The Audit Committee will:
 - a. Examine and review all church financial accounts and records.
 - b. Exercise supervision and oversee the work of an audit conducted by an outside auditor.
 - c. Examine all insurance policies and lists of coverage.
 - d. Examine all securities and investments and prepare a list of the securities and investments in need of review by the Board of Financial Stewardship.
 - e. Report its findings, in writing, to the church council with recommendations for improvement.
- C13.04.** *Mutual Ministry Committee(s)* (in the absence of a mutual ministry committee, the duties shall be fulfilled by the Executive Committee) shall be appointed jointly by the Executive Committee and the rostered minister. The board will consist of the Executive Committee plus a minimum of two additional members. At least one of these members will be elected by the congregation chairperson and one by the pastor.
- C13.05.** When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a *Call Committee* of six to ten voting members shall be elected by the Church Council. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor.
- C13.05.01.** The Call Committee will screen, interview, and recommend pastoral candidates to the congregation.
- C13.06.** The Boards of this congregation shall be: Mutual Ministry, Worship and Music, Christian Education and Youth Ministry, Church Fellowship, Church Properties, Financial Stewardship, and Public Relations and Outreach.

- C13.06.01.** Each of the boards shall consist of interested congregation members. At least one member must be a Church Council member.
- C13.06.02.** Board membership is open to any congregation member and is attained by asking the specific board chairperson to join their board.
- a. The board chairperson is responsible for providing a current board membership list to the church office manager.
- C13.06.03.** Chairpersons are to be elected by the board members at their first board meeting following the annual congregation meeting. This will be an annual occurrence with terms lasting one year.
- C13.07.** Duties of the Boards shall be specified in bylaw C13.07.03.
- C13.07.01.** Each of the Boards shall consist of the Board Chairperson and as many additional members as needed. At least one member must be a representative of the Church Council.
- C13.07.02.** When a Board Chair is on a leave of absence for an extended time, the Council may appoint another member of that Board to serve temporarily as Board Chair.
- C13.07.03.** Duties of the Boards.

BOARD OF MUTUAL MINISTRY

The objectives of this Board are the spiritual welfare of the pastor(s) and congregation members and the supervision of the personnel staff. This Board shall:

1. encourage the Pastor(s) in their work by word and action.
2. assist the Pastor(s) in counseling with difficult cases and in finding peaceful and equitable solutions to problems within the congregation, church staff, and board members.
3. annually review the salary and performance of the pastor, church office staff, and music staff and make recommendations to the Church Council for adjustments, as necessary.
4. make recommendations regarding eligibility for membership of individuals and families applying for membership in this congregation.
5. review the transfer of members who move away and of new Lutheran families moving into the community.
6. prepare and submit an annual budget and report for the Board at the time requested by the Church Council.

BOARD OF WORSHIP AND MUSIC

The objective of this Board is to glorify God and our Lord, Jesus Christ in our corporate worship.

1. Approve interns, assistants, substitute pastors, and guest speakers as needed.
2. Train and supervise the ushers, greeters, lectors, and acolytes.
3. Assist the Pastor(s) with communion distribution, reading of scripture, preaching, and other duties.
4. Approve new forms of worship, liturgies, and hymns.
5. Approve the hymns and coordinate musical and dramatic offerings to be used during the worship services.
6. Instruct the altar guild in the care, use, and maintenance of the sacred vessels, the altar furnishings, and vestments.
7. Arrange, plan, and promote the worship services for the year.
8. Prepare and submit an annual budget and report for the Board at the time requested by the Church Council.

BOARD OF PUBLIC RELATIONS/ OUTREACH

The objectives of this Board is to reach out and present to the public a positive Christian image and to bring the Gospel to the unchurched, as well as enlist God's people in the work of spreading the Gospel. This Board shall:

1. share with the Pastor(s) in the entire mission of proclaiming the Gospel to all people.
2. encourage prayer in the church and homes for sincere evangelistic concern toward all people.
3. develop and maintain a visitation program.
4. promote, publicize, and direct congregation-wide evangelism undertakings.
5. study, adopt, or adapt suggested social statements of the church, ELCA, and Synod.

6. oversee the church bulletin boards and recommend appropriate messages and themes.
7. work for the overall enhancement of the congregation's image in various news media and publications in the community.
8. prepare and submit an annual budget and report for the Board at the time requested by the Church Council.

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION/YOUTH MINISTRY

The objectives of this Board are to plan and administer the total education and spiritual growth of the congregation and to involve youth (18 years of age and younger) in the work of Christ. This Board shall:

1. review and supervise the total program for each educational program in the congregation i.e., released time, vacation bible school, confirmation, etc.
2. determine whether all age groups are being served and recommend revisions and additions. Also make an annual analysis, by age group, of the degree of participation of the congregations in its education programs.
3. enlist and train lay teachers and leaders.
4. provide for the growth of the congregation through conferences, conventions, and continuing education;
5. develop and maintain the church library including audiovisual aids and periodicals.
6. periodically examine the education facilities and equipment, and make recommendations to the Church Council of any changes as needed.
7. develop and maintain a program for the social fellowship of the youth of the congregation;
8. engage in the selection and training of youth leadership.
9. staff, train and supervise the nursery staff.
10. plan and coordinate, along with the pastor(s) and the Board of Worship and Music, a Youth Sunday.
11. oversee the checking account for youth activities.
12. prepare and submit an annual budget and report for the Board at the time requested by the Church Council.

BOARD OF FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

The objectives of this Board are to initiate programs for the development of good stewardship attitudes in the members of the congregation and to ensure the financial stability of the congregation. This Board shall:

1. inform the congregation of the financial requirements needed to accomplish the mission and programs of the congregation.
2. develop the church budget for Church Council review.
3. establish and maintain a program for endowments, wills, bequests, trusts and the like and recommend methods of implementation to the Church Council.
4. oversee financial aspects of the congregation.

BOARD OF CHURCH PROPERTIES

The objectives of the Board are the proper maintenance and repair of all church property. This Board shall:

1. regularly inspect all church property and equipment for fire and other hazards and recommend to the Church Council needed repairs, improvements and/or replacements.
2. maintain an inventory of all church properties, equipment, and supplies including acquisition date and approximate value.
3. recommend to the Church Council adequate custodial help as well as develop salaries and duties for the custodial staff and review their performance annually.
4. maintain, update, and notify the Church Council of policies regarding building rental and use of equipment (tables, chairs, projection screens, etc.).
5. annually review the insurance for the church property and equipment and make recommendations for changes to the Church Council.
6. negotiate and recommend to the Church Council service contracts for equipment.
7. prepare and submit an annual report and budget for the Board at the time requested by the Church Council.

BOARD OF CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

The objective of this Board is to strengthen the fellowship between congregation members both spiritually and socially. This Board shall:

1. plan and supervise social gatherings of the congregation.
2. maintain an adequate group of workers who will help plan, coordinate, and execute the work necessary for the accomplishment of the Boards goals.
3. prepare and submit an annual report and budget for the Board at the time requested by the Church Council.

C13.08. The pastor of this congregation shall be *ex officio* member of all committees and boards of the 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.

C14.01.01. All organizations and special interest groups within the congregation with financial accounts shall be audited prior to the annual meeting

C14.02. Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Church 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 the congregation or will full and repeated harassment or defamation of members of the congregation is sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation and repentance will be attempted following Mathew 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 Church 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 of Discipline of the synod. If for any reason the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required in paragraph a. and b. hereof, those steps may be performed by another pastor chosen by the Executive Committee and Church Council.

***C15.02.** The process for discipline of a member of the 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 admonition 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 church 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 lay person 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.

- *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 of 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 Church Council, and the accused member(s) at the same time it is sent to the Committee of Discipline of the synod. The Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall then select six members from the Committee of 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.
- *C15.04. 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 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 the Church Council receive evidence, satisfactory to them, of repentance and amendment of life.
 - c. termination of membership in the congregation; or
 - d. termination of membership in the 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 Church 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 Church Council and recorded in the minutes of the next council meeting.
- *C15.07. No member of a 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 among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation shall have access to the synod bishop for consultation after informing the chair of the Church Council of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the Consultation Committee of the synod shall consider the matter. If the Consultation Committee of the synod fail to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to the Synod Council, whose 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 of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be amended in the following manner. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least twenty five voting members or by the Church Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Church Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at its regular or special congregation meeting called for that purpose. The Church Council shall notify the congregation's members of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Notification may take place by mail or by electronic means as permitted by state law.
- *C16.02. A proposed amendment to this constitution, proposed under *C16.01. shall:
 - a. be approved at a legally called meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting;
 - b. be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting; and

c. have the effective date included in the resolution 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 the 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.

***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 the congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided that the Church Council has submitted by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, notice to the congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council's recommendations, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the 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.** Approved changes to the bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

Chapter 18. CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

***C18.01.** The Church 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 two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Church Council.

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 Church 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 in partnership 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 synodical 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 synodical 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 synodical 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 synodical 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.