

**CONSTITUTION
BYLAWS AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS
of the
Faith Lutheran Church of Bismarck
Bismarck, NORTH DAKOTA**

***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 Bismarck.
- C1.02.** For the purpose of this constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions, the congregation of Faith Lutheran Church of Bismarck is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."
- C1.11.** This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of North Dakota.

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 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 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.
- *C4.03. 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.
- *C4.05. This congregation shall adopt and periodically review 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 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 Congregation Council and require the members of the council to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, and continuing resolutions; and
 - k. terminate its relationship with the 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 Western North Dakota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- C5.05. This congregation may 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.
- C5.05.01. **The Faith Lutheran Church Endowment Fund.**
 Christian stewardship involves the faithful management of all the gifts God has given to humankind - the life in the world, the saving gospel, time, abilities, resources, including accumulated, inherited and appreciated financial wealth. The scriptural principle of proportionate giving, to return to the Lord a portion of the gifts God has first given to his beloved children, is both a privilege and an appropriate response in all times and circumstances. Christians can give through bequests in wills, assignment of life insurance, charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder and other trusts, assignment of certificates of deposit, and transfers of property such as cash, stocks, bonds and real estate. It is the desire of this congregation to encourage, receive and administer these gifts in a manner consistent with the loyalty and devotion to our Lord expressed by the donors and in accord with the policies of this congregation. Therefore, this congregation establishes a new and separate fund to be known as The Faith Lutheran

Church Endowment Fund (hereafter called the “Endowment Fund”), Faith Lutheran Church of Bismarck, 1402 Avenue C East, Bismarck, ND 58501.

- C5.05.02.** The purpose of this Endowment Fund is to enhance the outreach of this congregation apart from the general operation of the congregation. No portion of the income generated by the Endowment Fund shall be used for the annual operating budget of the congregation, except as provided for in these bylaws.
- C5.05.03.** The Stewardship Committee and Faith Lutheran Church Endowment Fund Committee (hereafter called the “Endowment Fund Committee”) shall be the custodians of the Endowment Fund.
- C5.05.04.** The Faith Lutheran Church Executive Committee, through a Resolution adopted on July 14, 2015, has established a separate endowment fund entitled the "Faith Lutheran ND Tax Credit Endowment Fund". This Fund will also be managed by the Faith Lutheran Church Endowment Fund Committee, subject to its own Operating Guidelines and Policies.
- C5.05.05.** The Endowment Fund Committee shall consist of five members, all of whom shall be voting members of this congregation. Except as herein limited, the term of each member shall be three (3) years. Upon adoption of these bylaws by the congregation, the congregation shall elect five (5) members to the Endowment Fund Committee: two (2) for a term of three (3) years; two (2) for a term of two (2) years; and one (1) for a term of one (1) year. Thereafter, at each fall meeting, the congregation shall elect the necessary number for a term of three (3) years. No member shall serve more than two consecutive three (3) year terms. After a lapse of one (1) year, former Endowment Fund Committee members may be re-elected. The senior pastor and the chairperson of the Executive Committee shall be advisory, non-voting members of the Endowment Fund Committee. The Executive Committee of the congregation shall nominate the Endowment Fund Committee and report at the fall congregational meeting in the same manner as for other offices and committees. In the event of a vacancy on the Endowment Fund Committee, the Executive Committee shall appoint a member to fill the vacancy until the next fall meeting of the congregation, at which time the congregation shall elect a member to fill the term of the vacancy.
- C5.05.06.** The Endowment Fund Committee shall meet at least quarterly, or more frequently as deemed necessary by the Endowment Fund Committee in the best interest of the Endowment Fund. Date, time and location of duly called regular or special meeting must be published in the church bulletin the week preceding each meeting.
- C5.05.07.** A quorum shall consist of three (3) members. When only three (3) members are present a unanimous vote shall be required to carry any motion or resolution.
- C5.05.08.** The Endowment Fund Committee shall elect from its membership a chairperson, recording secretary and financial secretary. The chairperson, or member designated by the chairperson, shall preside at all Endowment Fund Committee meetings.
- C5.05.09.** The recording secretary of the Endowment Fund Committee shall maintain complete and accurate minutes of all meetings and supply a copy thereof to each member of the Endowment Fund Committee. Each member shall keep a complete copy of minutes to be delivered to his or her successor. The recording secretary shall also supply a copy of the minutes to the Stewardship Committee and the Executive Committee.
- C5.05.10.** The Endowment Fund Committee shall work with the congregation’s Staff Accountant/Bookkeeper in maintaining and coordinating complete and accurate accounts for the Endowment Fund and shall cause checks and all other documents to be signed on behalf of the congregation in furtherance of the purposes of the Endowment Fund. The Financial Reports shall be reviewed annually by an appropriate person(s) who is not a member of the Endowment Fund Committee.
- C5.05.11.** The Endowment Fund Committee shall report on a quarterly basis to the Stewardship Committee and the Executive Committee. At each fall meeting of the congregation the Endowment Fund Committee shall render a full and complete audited account of the administration of the Endowment Fund during the preceding year. The Endowment Fund Committee shall also report to any duly called special meetings of the congregation if requested to do so.
- C5.05.12.** The Endowment Fund Committee may request other members of the congregation to serve as advisory members and, at the expense of Endowment Fund income, may provide for such professional counseling on investments or legal matters as it deems to be in the best interest of the Endowment Fund.
- C5.05.13.** Members of the Endowment Fund Committee shall not be liable for any losses which may be incurred upon the investments of the assets of the Endowment Fund except to the extent such losses shall have been caused by bad faith or gross negligence. No member shall be personally liable as long as he or she acts in good faith with ordinary prudence. Each member shall be liable only for his or her own willful misconduct or omissions and shall not be liable for the acts or omissions of any other member. No member shall

engage in any “self-dealing” or transactions with the Endowment Fund in which the member has direct or indirect financial interest and shall at all times refrain from any conduct in which his or her personal interests would conflict with the interest of the Endowment Fund.

- C5.05.14.** All assets are to be held in the name of the Endowment Fund.
- C5.05.15.** Define Principal and Income. The Endowment Fund Committee shall determine what is principal and income according to accepted accounting procedures.
- C5.05.16.** Distributions. The Fund will use the moving average method of determining year-to-year spending in order to smooth distributions from the aggregate portfolio. The annual market value will be determined based upon a three year moving average of the annual portfolio market value. Distributions from the Endowment Fund may be made annually and at such other times as deemed necessary or feasible. Funds may not be distributed until the principal of the Endowment Fund has reached a minimum of \$10,000. Programs for support shall be recommended by the Endowment Fund Committee and approved by the Board of Stewardship for funding according to the guidelines established by the congregation and the Parish Planning Council. Disbursement of income from the Endowment Fund need not occur annually in the event causes and programs have not been approved by the Endowment Fund Committee sufficient to utilize income available or if in the judgment of the Endowment Fund Committee annual disbursement of income is not recommended.
- C5.05.17.** Distribution of Principal. When, in the opinion of the Endowment Fund Committee, circumstances are so dire and of such an emergency nature that the future of the congregation is at stake, and that the only recourse seems to be the use of the Endowment Fund principal; or when an endowment principal was designated by the donor for a specific purpose, the Endowment Fund Committee may, upon a simple majority vote, recommend such authorizing action to the congregation.
- C5.05.18.** Disposition or Transfer of Fund. In the event this congregation ceases to exist either through merger or dissolution, disposition or transfer of the Endowment Fund shall be at the discretion of the Executive Committee in conformity with the approved congregational constitution and in consultation with the bishop of the synod to which this congregation belongs at such time. Consultation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be desirable for continuation of Endowment Fund obligations.

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 Western North Dakota 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 Western North Dakota 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 Western North Dakota 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 Western North Dakota Synod.
- *C7.04. If 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 the 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 Western North Dakota 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 the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.
- C8.01A21. The ~~Board of Evangelism and Membership~~ Congregational Life committee is responsible for the care of members. Its programs must include timely visitation and encouragement toward active participation in the congregation and must be coordinated with the Boards of ~~Parish Ministry~~, Education, ~~Fellowship~~, and Stewardship.
- C8.01B21. This congregation will issue, upon a member's request, a letter of transfer to another Lutheran congregation. Should a member, having moved to another community, fail to request a transfer, this congregation will notify a Lutheran congregation in or near that community. The ~~Board of Evangelism~~

~~and Membership~~ Congregational Life committee shall report all transfers to the congregation via church publication.

*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.
- d. **Associate** members are persons holding membership in other full communion partner 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.

C8.05A21. Inactive membership. In accordance with the Constitution of this congregation, membership in this congregation may be terminated by removal from the roll due to inactivity.

- a. This congregation shall, in the event of the removal of a member from the community it serves, encourage the member to request a transfer to a Lutheran congregation that can serve the member effectively.
- b. A confirmed member in good standing desiring to change his or her membership to another Lutheran congregation shall, upon request, receive a letter of transfer.
- c. A confirmed member who does not, for a period of one year, partake of Holy Communion, support the church with his or her offerings, and does not appear to desire to participate in the life and worship of this congregation may be visited by the Pastor and/or a congregational officer and be encouraged by them to reactivate their membership.
- d. A child, neither of whose parents or guardians is a member of the congregation, may be removed from the roster of baptized members if that child fails to participate in the life and worship of this congregation.

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 the Congregation 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 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 by 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 Western North Dakota 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.
- C9.15.** 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 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 a 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 two regular meetings per year. The regular meetings of the congregation shall be held at the time(s) specified in the continuing resolutions. Consistent with the laws of the State of North Dakota, the continuing resolutions shall designate one regular meeting per year as the annual meeting of this congregation.

C10.01A21. Regular meetings of the congregation shall be held two times a year - fall and spring. The fall meeting is designated as the annual meeting, typically held in December. Dates and times shall be set by the Executive Committee.

- a. The fall meeting shall include a review and approval of the program and budget for the next year including an expenditure plan to become effective in the event of a revenue shortfall.
- b. The fall meeting in odd numbered years shall also include the election of the chairperson, one assistant vice-chairperson, secretary, and committee directors of the Confirmation, Property, Human Resources, and Worship and Music, and Youth committees. The fall meeting in even numbered years shall also include the election of one assistant vice-chairperson, treasurer, and committee directors of the Elementary Education, The Learning Resource Center, Stewardship, Evangelism and Fellowship Congregational Life, and Missions committees.
- c. The spring meeting shall include a review and evaluation of the congregation's Mission Statement. The spring meeting shall also include a review of the program objective, goals, and accomplishments for the current year and approval of a prioritized list of long-range goals for the congregation.

C10.01B21. The order of business at the semi-annual meetings of this congregation shall be as follows:

- a. Opening with scripture reading and/or prayer;
- b. Approval of minutes of previous meetings;
- c. Treasurer's report;
- d. Report(s) by Pastor(s);
- e. Reports from administrative boards;
- f. Reports from committees;
- g. Elections;
- h. Approval of budget;
- i. Unfinished business;
- j. New business; and
- k. Closing prayer.

C10.01C21. The chairperson may vary the order or add agenda items as deemed necessary. The Board of Evangelism and Membership Congregational Life shall verify the roster of voting members for all congregational meetings.

C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the senior pastor, the Executive Committee, or the chairperson of this congregation, and shall be called by the chairperson of this congregation upon the written request of fifty members with voting rights or ten percent of the members with voting rights, whichever is less. The chairperson of the Executive Committee 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 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.** Ten percent of the 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 chairperson¹, two vice chairpersons, secretary, and treasurer.
- Duties of the officers shall be specified in the continuing resolutions.
 - The officers shall be voting members of this congregation.
- C11.01A21.** Chairperson: The chairperson shall be the principal executive officer of this congregation and shall in general supervise and lead all of the business and affairs of this congregation. He or she shall preside at all meetings of the members of the Executive Committee. He or she may sign, with the secretary or any other proper officer of this congregation authorized by the Executive Committee, any deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other instruments which the Executive Committee has authorized to be executed, except in cases where the signing and execution shall be expressly delegated by the Executive Committee or by these continuing resolutions or by statute to some other officer or agent of this congregation; and in general he or she shall perform all duties incident to the office of chairperson.
- C11.01B21.** Vice-chairperson: In the absence of the chairperson or in the event of the chairperson's inability to act, the vice-chairperson (or in the event that there be more than one vice-chairperson, the vice-chairperson in the order of their election) shall perform the duties of the chairperson, and when so acting, shall have all the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the chairperson. Any vice-chairperson shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him or her by the chairperson of the Executive Committee.
- C11.01C21.** Treasurer: If required by the Executive Committee, the treasurer shall give a bond for the faithful discharge of his or her duties in such some and with such surety as the Executive Committee shall determine. He or she shall have charge and custody of and be responsible for all funds and securities of this congregation. Daily responsibilities to receive, give receipts for money due and payable to this congregation from any source, and deposit all such monies in the name of this congregation in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories per the congregation's protocols for handling of funds will be performed by the staff of the congregation. In general, the treasurer shall perform all the duties incident to the office of treasurer and such other duties as may be assigned to him or her by the chairperson of the Executive Committee.
- C11.01D21.** Secretary: The secretary shall ensure the minutes of the meetings of the members and of the Executive Committee are kept in the files provided for that purpose; see that all notices are given in accordance with the provisions of these continuing resolutions or as required by law, ensure corporate records are kept; ensure a register is kept of the post office address of each member which shall be furnished to the secretary by that member; and in general perform all duties incident to the office of secretary and such other duties as may be assigned by the chairperson of the Executive Committee.
- C11.02.** The congregation shall elect its officers and they shall be-serve as the officers of this 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 on March 1 following the annual meeting at which they are elected.
- ~~**C11.02A21.** The Nominating Committee shall nominate officer candidates (one candidate per position) drawn from the qualified voting members of the congregation. The list of candidates shall be published and available~~

¹ This congregation has traditionally referred to the president as the "chairperson" or "chair" of the ~~congregation and~~ Executive Committee and congregation. For the purpose of this constitution document, the terms "president," "chairperson," and "chair" ~~and "president"~~ have the same meaning.

~~to the voting members of the congregation at least three Sundays prior to the fall meeting. Following this publication, any voting member of the congregation may submit to the committee additional names for inclusion on the list. Such names shall be placed in nomination along with the candidates already chosen, provided:~~

- ~~a. such names are submitted at least two Sundays before the date of the fall meeting of the congregation; and~~
- ~~b. the nominating committee through consultation with the Pastor(s) has determined the candidates eligible in accordance with the provision of C11.01 of the constitution and also found them willing to serve.~~

~~C11.02B21. The Nominating Committee, at least 1 Sunday before the date of the fall meeting, shall publish the list of candidates for the positions authorized in the C11.01.~~

~~C11.02C21. From the list of candidates for each elective position submitted by the Nominating Committee, the voting members shall, at the fall meeting, elect by simple majority, persons to the positions authorized by C10.01.A21. Candidates nominated, but not elected, may be placed in nomination by the congregation at the election meeting for any position not filled, provided they are willing to serve.~~

~~C11.02D~~A21. The election process shall follow the C13.02 Nominating Committee procedure. The newly-elected officers shall be installed on the last Sunday of February and shall assume their duties as of March 1.

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

C11.03A21. The terms of office for all officers shall be two years, terminating on the last day of February. A term of office is defined as a full two-year term. It will be the responsibility of the Nominating Committee to identify and obtain qualified candidates with consideration given to all who express an interest to serve.

C11.03B21. When an officer's position is made vacant by removal from office, resignation, death, or removal from membership, a successor shall be elected by the voting members of the congregation. The chairperson may appoint a person to fill the vacancy until a successor has been elected according to the C13.02 Nominating Committee procedure.

~~a. The Nominating Committee shall nominate a candidate from the voting membership of the congregation. The name shall be publicized at least two Sundays prior to the duly called congregational meeting. If no candidate is nominated, the vacancy will be announced.~~

~~b. Following this publication, any voting member of the congregation may submit to the nominating committee additional names for inclusion on the list. Such names shall be placed in nomination by the nominating committee along with the candidate already chosen, provided such names are submitted at least one Sunday prior to the duly called congregational meeting; and the nominating committee, through consultation with the pastor(s), has determined the candidates eligible in accordance with the provisions of C11.01 of the Constitution and also found them willing to serve. The Nominating Committee, the same day as the duly called congregational meeting, shall publicize the list of candidates.~~

Chapter 12.

Executive Committee a/k/a Congregation Council²

C12.01. The voting membership of the Executive Committee shall consist of the officers of this congregation. The pastor(s) and deacon(s) shall be members ex officio with voice but no vote. Any voting member of this 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 Executive Committee 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 Executive Committee 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 Executive Committee in other circumstances.

C12.01.01. A member of the Executive Committee may be removed by the congregation at any time, with or without cause, in accordance with North Dakota Century Code section 10-33-36(2) relating to non-judicial removal of directors of non-profit corporations.

² This congregation has traditionally called its governing board of directors the "Executive Committee" and has decided to continue this tradition, where permitted, in this constitution document. Accordingly, in this constitution document, the terms "Congregation Council" and "Executive Committee" have the same meaning.

- C12.02.** The members of the Executive Committee except the pastor(s) and the deacon(s) shall be elected by ~~written~~ ~~ballot~~ vote to serve for two years or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively. Their terms shall begin March 1 following the annual meeting at which they are elected.
- C12.03.** Should a member's place on the Executive Committee be declared vacant, the Executive Committee shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next congregational meeting.
- C12.04.** The Executive Committee shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The duties of the Executive Committee 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 arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
 - h. To emphasize support of 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.
 - 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.
- C12.05.** The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.
- a. The Executive Committee shall be the board of directors of this congregation and, as such, shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and 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 North Dakota, except as otherwise provided herein.
 - b. The Executive Committee shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of this congregation.
 - c. The Executive Committee may enter into contracts of up to \$30,000 for emergency capital items not included in the budget.
 - d. The Executive Committee 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 more than \$30,000 in excess of the anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in collaboration with the synod and churchwide organization.
 - e. The Executive Committee shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of mission support monies to the synod treasurer.
 - f. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.
- C12.06.** The Executive Committee shall see that the provisions of this constitution, its bylaws, and the continuing resolutions are carried out.
- C12.07.** The Executive Committee shall provide for an annual-periodic review of the membership roster.
- C12.08.** The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of 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.
- C12.09.** The Executive Committee shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.

- C12.11.** The Executive Committee 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-half 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 Executive Committee, 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 Executive Committee, following consultation with the synod bishop.
- C12.13.** The Executive Committee 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 COMMITTEES

- C13.01.** The officers of this congregation and the pastor(s) shall constitute the *Executive Committee*.
- C13.02.** A *Nominating Committee* of ~~six-three~~ voting members of this congregation, ~~two of whom, if possible, shall be outgoing members of the Executive Committee,~~ shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of ~~one-three~~ years, with one member elected each year. Members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible for consecutive re-election, but may be outgoing members of the Executive Committee.
- C13.02A21.** The Nominating Committee shall provide one ~~committee~~-candidate per position, drawn from the qualified voting members of the congregation. The list of candidates shall be published and available to the voting members of the congregation at least three Sundays prior to the fall meeting. Following this publication, any voting member of the congregation may submit additional names to the committee for inclusion on the list. Such names shall be placed in nomination along with the candidates already chosen, provided:
- a. such names are submitted at least two Sundays before the date of the fall meeting of the congregation; and
 - b. the nominating committee through consultation with the Pastor(s) has determined the candidates eligible as voting members and found them willing to serve.
 - c. Candidates must be eligible in accordance with provisions for officers in C11 or committees in C13.
- C13.02B21.** The Nominating Committee, at least 1 Sunday before the date of the fall meeting, shall publish the list of candidates for the positions authorized in ~~the C13.06.A21~~ C10.01.A21.
- C13.02C21.** From the list of candidates for each elective position submitted by the Nominating Committee, the voting members shall, at the fall meeting, elect by simple majority, persons to the positions authorized by C10.01.A21 ~~C13.06.A21~~. Candidates nominated, but not elected, may be placed in nomination by the congregation at the election meeting for any position not filled, provided they are willing to serve.
- C13.03.** An *Audit Committee* of three voting members shall be elected by the Executive Committee. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Executive Committee. Term of office shall be three years, with one member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for re-election if necessary.
- C13.04.** *Mutual Ministry Committee(s)* shall be appointed jointly by the chairperson and the rostered minister. Term of office shall be two years, with three members to be appointed each successive year. In the absence of a mutual ministry committee, the duties shall be fulfilled by the executive committee.
- C13.05.** When a vacancy occurs in a position for which this congregation calls a rostered minister, a *Call Committee* of six voting members shall be nominated by the Executive Committee and elected by the congregation. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called rostered minister.
- C13.06.** Other committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Executive Committee.
- C13.06A21.** There is hereby created the following ad hoc boards and committees of this congregation:
- a. The Compass Group shall consist of the Executive Committee and representatives from each of the four Task Groups described below.
 - b. The Learning Task Group (Education Ministries) consists of three committees, each led by a director:
 1. Elementary Education

2. Learning Resource Center (our library)
3. Confirmation
- c. The Resources Task Group (Buildings, People and Finances). The Resources Task Group consists of three ~~sub-groups~~committees, each led by a ~~sub-group~~ director, as follows:
 1. Property
 2. Human Resources
 3. Stewardship
- d. The Community Task Group (Ministry with those within our doors). The Community Task Group consists of three ~~sub-groups~~committees, each led by a ~~sub-group~~ director, as follows:
 1. Music and Worship
 2. ~~Evangelism and Fellowship~~Congregational Life
 3. Youth
- e. Missions (Ministry with those outside of our doors)

C13.06B21. All committees shall have at least three members, which can be increased by the Executive Committee. This determination and a current job description for each committee member shall be submitted to the Nominating Committee.

C13.06C21. The newly-elected committee members shall be installed on the first Sunday of March and shall assume their duties as of March 1.

C13.06D21. The terms of office for all board and committee shall be two years, terminating on the last day of February. A term of office is defined as a full two-year term. It is the responsibility of the Nominating Committee to identify and obtain qualified candidates with consideration given to all who express an interest to serve. This is an opportunity for diversity, inclusivity, and to draw members into service and community.

C13.06E21. The chair~~person~~ may appoint a person to fill the vacancy until a successor has been elected, not considered a term of office. A successor shall be elected by the voting members of the congregation.

C13.07. Duties of committees of this congregation shall be specified below as continuing resolutions.

C13.07A21. The general duties and powers of each committee shall be as follows:

- a. Elementary Education helps to plan, coordinate, and promote the spiritual formation of the youngest members of this congregation, beginning with cradle roll. It helps to foster educational opportunities that imaginatively and effectively help students grow in the Christian faith and life through prayer, song, worship, fellowship, mentorship and study.
- b. Learning Resource Center provides the congregation with educational and inspiration books and media. Communication is vital to make the congregation aware of the resources.
- c. Confirmation helps to plan, coordinate, and promote the spiritual formation of young people in the congregation as they prepare to affirm the promises of their baptism and commit to continuing in their faith journey. The group also coordinates the celebration of the confirmation rite.
- d. Property oversees the maintenance and repair of the church facility and makes recommendations on the renovation of the facility and acquisition of property as necessary.
- e. Human Resources handles matters of staffing, including interviewing, hiring (lay staff), evaluating, and conducting exit interviews. It makes recommendations on compensation and benefits, and engages in strategic planning or “staff evolution” with an eye to changing congregational resources and needs.
 - A specific staff evolution ad hoc committee may be formed for extensive staffing issues including members of HR and other relevant committees.
- f. Stewardship develops, communicates, and implements events and education that encourage good stewardship of time, talents, and financial resources in the members of the congregation.
- g. Worship and Music cultivates vital expressions of praise to God, in various forms of speech, song, instrumentation, and visual arts. It strives for worship content that is consistent with Lutheran emphasis. It seeks to fully enlist the talents of the membership.
- h. ~~Evangelism and Fellowship~~Congregational Life seeks to effectively welcome people into congregational life, to provide ongoing occasions for fellowship, and to empower all the membership in the work of sharing the Gospel.
- i. Youth seeks to promote and support opportunities for fellowship and spiritual growth among the youth and young adults of the congregation.
- j. Missions efforts include our larger church, ecumenism, and community needs.
 - Missions serve in a capacity of “mission interpretation” regarding the ministries of the larger church. It seeks to raise awareness and promote participation in all facets of the larger church, i.e. the Western North Dakota Synod, ELCA, and Lutheran World Federation.

- Missions helps to promote and facilitate common worship and work with sisters and brothers of denominations other than our own. It seeks to initiate opportunities for fellowship with our full communion partner churches and others as well.
- Missions raises awareness of the needs of individuals, families, and groups within our congregation and community. It also initiates efforts to aid with physical, social, financial, and psychological assistance as appropriate to the mission of the Christian Church. The committee seeks to support and cooperate with established social service agencies.

C13.08. The pastors of this congregation shall be *ex officio* members of all committees and boards of this congregation.

Chapter 14.

ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THIS 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 the official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Executive Committee.

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.

- *C15.04. 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 five 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 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 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.
- *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.
- C19.01.01. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution, indemnification of any person who is or was made or threatened to be made a party to any proceeding is prohibited. For purposes of this chapter, the term, "proceeding," means a threatened, pending, or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding, including a proceeding in the right of this church, any other churchwide unit, or any other organization, but excluding (a) a proceeding by this church and (b) a disciplinary hearing or other proceeding described in Chapter 15 of this congregation's Constitution. For purposes of this chapter, the term, "indemnification," includes advances of expenses.
- C19.01.02. To the full extent permitted from time to time by law, each person who is or was made or threatened to be made a party to any proceeding by reason of the present or former capacity of that person as a Church Executive Committee member, officer, employee, or other member of any committee of this church shall be indemnified against judgments, penalties, fines, settlements, excise taxes, and reasonable attorneys' fees and disbursements incurred by that person in connection with the proceeding. While indemnification of any person by reason of that person's capacity as a director, officer, employee, or committee member of a separately incorporated churchwide unit may be made by such separately incorporated unit, indemnification of such person by this church is prohibited. Indemnification of any person by reason of

that person's capacity as a director, officer, employee, or committee member of any other organization is subject to the provisions of section C19.01.03.

C19.01.03. Where a person who, while a member of the Church Executive Committee, officer employee of the churchwide organization, member of the Conference of Bishops, or committee member of this church, is or was serving at the request of this church as (or whose duties in that position involve or involved service in the capacity of) a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee, or agent of another organization, is or was made or threatened to be made a party to the proceeding by reason of such capacity-, then such person shall not be entitled to indemnification unless (a) the Church Executive Committee has established a process for determining whether a person serving in the capacity described in this section shall be entitled to indemnification in any specific case, and (b) that process has been applied in making a specific determination that such person is entitled to indemnification.

C19.01.04. This church may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of itself or any person entitled to indemnification pursuant to this chapter against any liability asserted against and incurred by this church or by such other person in or arising from a capacity described in section C19.01.02 or section C19.01.03.

History:

Updated Nominating Committee terms and consolidated procedure. Drafts Mar 2024

Added Committee continuing resolutions. The final draft was approved by the Executive Committee on September 27, 2022?

Announced to the congregation December 11, 2022

Combined Bylaws into 2019 Model Constitution. The final draft was pre-approved by the Synod Attorney for the Western North Dakota Synod on October 15 and ratified on November 18, 2021.

Adopted by the congregation on December 12, 2021.