

COMO PARK LUTHERAN CHURCH CONSTITUTION

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 Como Park Lutheran Church.

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

C1.03-C1.10 are intentionally left blank.

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

Chapter 2.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

*C2.01. This congregation confesses the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

*C2.02. This congregation confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.

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

*C2.03. This congregation accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.

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

Chapter 3.

NATURE OF THE CHURCH

- *C3.01. All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.
- C.3.02 This church confesses the one, holy, 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.
- *C3.03-05 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, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs;
- e. nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world;
- f. manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

*C4.03. To fulfill these purposes within the local community and beyond, this congregation shall:

- a. provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered;
- b. provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry;
- c. challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation;
- d. teach the Word of God;
- e. witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people;
- f. respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society;
- g. motivate its members to provide financial support for the congregation's ministry and the ministry of other parts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
- h. foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the 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 groups and shall review their actions. [Such description shall be contained in continuing resolutions of the Congregation Committees.]
- *C4.05. This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.
- *C4.06. References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God’s mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

Chapter 5.

POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

- *C5.01. The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.
- *C5.02. The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregation Meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.
- *C5.03. Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregation Council or other organizational units in the congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by the congregation. The congregation is authorized to:
 - a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
 - b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9; ~~call or terminate the call of associates in ministry deaconesses, and diaconal ministers in conformity with the applicable policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;~~
 - 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
 - ~~c.~~e. Adopt amendments to the constitution as provided in chapter ~~17~~ 16, amendments to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter ~~16~~ 17, and continuing resolutions, as provided in Chapter 18
 - ~~d.~~ f. approve the annual budget;
 - ~~e.~~ g. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means, ~~as provided in Chapter Twelve (12)~~
 - ~~f.~~ h. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
 - ~~g.~~ i. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means, ~~as provided in Chapter Twelve (12)~~

- ~~h.~~ j. elect its officers, Congregation Council, boards, and committees, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions; and
- ~~i.~~ k. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.

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

C.5.05 This congregation shall have a mission endowment fund that will operate as specified in ~~this congregation's (bylaws) (continuing resolutions)~~ the Trust Fund Resolution. The purpose of the mission endowment fund is ~~to provide for mission work beyond the operational budget of this congregation.~~ defined within the Trust Fund Resolution as approved by the congregation.

Chapter 6

CHURCH AFFILIATION

***C6.01.** This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the Saint Paul Area 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 ~~clergy~~ roster of the **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 ~~ordained ministers~~ **Ministers of Word and Sacrament** of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or to contracting for pastoral services with an ~~ordained~~ 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 ~~associates in ministry deaconesses, and diaconal ministers for appointment to other staff positions in the congregation~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament for call to other staff positions in the congregation according to the procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- e. This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution with the synod for review to ascertain that all of its provisions are in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or with the constitution of the synod.

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

- a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.
- b. This congregation ceases to exist.
- c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- d. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in *C6.05.

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

- a. A resolution indicating the intent of this congregation to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present. Such meeting may be held no sooner than 30 days after written notice of the meeting is received by the bishop of the synod, during which time the congregation shall consult with the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any. The times and manner of the consultation shall be determined by the bishop in consultation with the congregation council. Unless he or she is a voting member of the congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the meeting.
- b. The secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote and shall mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of the congregation. This notice shall be submitted within ten (10) days after the resolution has been adopted.
- c. The bishop of the synod and the congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph a. above, during a period of at least 90 days after receipt by the synod of the notice as specified in paragraph b. above.
- d. If this congregation, after consultation, still desires to terminate its relationship, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members and to the bishop at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting. Unless he or she is a voting member of the congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the meeting.

- e. A copy of the resolution attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, shall be sent to the bishop within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted, at which time the relationship between the congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to paragraphs g., h., and i. below. Unless this notification to the bishop also certifies that the congregation has voted by a two-thirds vote to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, the congregation will be conclusively presumed to be an independent or non-Lutheran church.
 - f. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the bishop to the secretary of ~~this church~~ the ELCA, who shall report the termination to the Churchwide Assembly.
 - g. This congregation shall abide by these covenants by and among the three expressions of this church:
 - 1) Congregations seeking to terminate their relationship with this church which fail or refuse to comply with each of the foregoing provisions in *C6.05 shall be required to receive synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church
 - 2) Congregations which had been members of the Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C.6.05., to receive synodical 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 *C.6.05., to satisfy all financial obligations to this church and receive synod Council approval before termination their membership in this church.
 - ~~g. 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.~~
 - ~~h. 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 synodical approval before terminating their membership in this church.~~
 - ~~i. 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.~~
 - j. h. If ~~a~~ this congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at the congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above, another special meeting to consider termination of relationship with this church may be called no sooner than six months after that first meeting. If a congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at the 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 that second meeting.
- *C6.06. If this congregation ~~is considering~~ 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 effected.

*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 Saint Paul Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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

*C7.03. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a regularly 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 Saint Paul Area Synod.

*C7.04. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body, and have followed the process for termination of 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 the congregation by the established synodical process, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of the 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.

C7.05. Notwithstanding the provisions of *C7.02. and *C.7.03. 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 St. Paul Area 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 the congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

*C8.02. Members shall be classified as follows:

- a. Baptized members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.
- b. Confirmed members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.
- c. Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, 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 the congregation—~~as well as the other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.~~
- d. Associate members are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation ~~or persons who wish to retain a relationship with this congregation while being members of other congregations. They~~ 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 bylaws. and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Congregation Council of this congregation.~~
- e. Seasonal members are voting members of other ELCA congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation, including exercising limited voting rights in this congregation. The Congregation Council may grant seasonal membership to such persons provided that this congregation is a member of a synod where the Synod Council has approved seasonal member voting on its territory. Such seasonal members shall have all privileges and duties of voting members except that:
 - 1) they shall to 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 the congregation with the ELCA
 - 4) they shall not be eligible to serve as voting members from this congregation at 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 and of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.

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

- a. death;
 - b. resignation;
 - c. transfer or release;
 - d. disciplinary action in accordance with ELCA constitutional provision 20.40: 41 and the accompanying bylaws
- or
- e. removal from the roll due to inactivity ~~as defined in the bylaws.~~ in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws

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

Chapter 9.

~~THE PASTOR~~ ROSTERED MINISTER

*C9.01. Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting ~~regularly~~ legally called for that purpose. ~~except for the call of an incumbent pastor to serve as the senior pastor which shall require an 85% majority vote.~~ Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by this congregation to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.

*C9.02. Only a member of the ~~clergy~~ roster of ~~Ministers of the Word and Sacrament~~ of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of ~~ordained ministers~~ ~~Ministers of Word and Sacrament~~ who has been recommended for ~~it~~ the congregation by the synodical 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 ~~ordained~~ minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

- 1) preach the Word;
- 2) administer the sacraments;
- 3) conduct public worship;
- 4) provide pastoral care; ~~and~~
- 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
- 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its communications and publications;
- 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; and
- 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love in the world.
- ~~5) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love in the world~~

b. Each ~~ordained~~ minister with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:

- 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
- 2) supervise all schools and organizations of this congregation;
- 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council; ~~and~~
- 4) with the council, administer discipline; ~~and~~
- 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the ELCA churchwide organization and of the St. Paul Area Synod of the ELCA.

~~e. Every pastor shall:~~

- ~~1) strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;~~
- ~~2) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;~~
- ~~3) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications; and~~
- ~~4) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and of the Saint Paul Area Synod of the ELCA.~~

*C9.04. The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.

*C9.05. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and this congregation shall be as follows:

- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by death or following consultation with the synodical bishop for the following reasons:

- 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term of years;
 - 2) resignation of the pastor which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions,
 - 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor;
 - 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months or
 - 6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of ordained ministers of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement.
 - 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of the synod,
- 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two ordained ministers and one layperson or,
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the congregation council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two ordained ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of the synod may declare the pastorate vacant. ~~and the pastor shall be listed on the clergy roster as disabled.~~ When the pastorate is declared vacant, the synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and 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 which imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation they agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, the congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting

~~and~~—after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds majority 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 simple 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 disciplinary action, 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 may 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 the congregation** of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any ~~ordained pastor~~ **rostered minister** providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.

*C9.08. This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation: **before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting related to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.**

*C9.09. When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the initial responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors and the Congregation Council. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

*C9.11. With the approval of the bishop of the synod the congregation may depart from C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term ~~of years~~. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop, shall meet with the pastor and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of C9.05.a.

*C9.12. The pastor of this congregation:

- a. shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation,
- b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod,
- c. and 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 the congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his or her hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another field of labor or the granting by the synod of retired status to the pastor.

C9.15. Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synodical bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between the congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synodical bishop and approved by the congregation

C9.15-6– C9.19 are intentionally left blank.

~~C9.20. Ecumenical pastoral ministry~~

~~C9.21. Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synodical bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, an ordained minister of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between the congregation and the ordained minister in a form proposed by the synodical bishop and approved by the congregation.~~

C9.21. Authority to call a minister of Word and Service shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by this congregation to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.

***C9.22.** Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and

Service who has been recommended for this congregation by the synodical bishop may be called as a deacon of this congregation.

***C9.23.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
- b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
- c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world, witnessing to the realm of God in the community, the nation, and abroad;
- d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
- e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
- f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
- g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
- h. Share knowledge of the ELCA and its wider ministry of the gospel and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
- i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

***C9.24.** The specific duties of the deacon, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the deacon shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.

***C9.25.** The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Service and a congregation shall be as follows:

- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a deacon, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by death or, following consultation with the synodical bishop, for the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the deacon, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the ministry of Word and Service effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon;

- 5) suspension of the deacon through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the deacon from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the office of minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
- 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the deacon's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and the restoration of the deacon to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the deacon to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the deacon and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the deacon's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by this congregation and by the deacon, if appropriate. If the deacon and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the deacon's call, this congregation may dismiss the deacon only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds

vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

***C9.26.** The deacon shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:

- a. installation in another field of labor, or
- b. the issuance of a certificate of dismissal or transfer.

***C9.27.** When a deacon is called to serve in company with another rostered minister or other rostered ministers, the privileges and responsibilities of each rostered minister shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the rostered ministers, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

***C9.28.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from *C9.25.a. and call a deacon for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the deacon and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of *C9.25.a.

***C9.29.** The deacon shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the deacon shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

***C9.31.** The deacon(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

Chapter 10.

CONGREGATION MEETING

C10.01. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.

C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called at the written request of ten (10) percent of the voting members. The president of the Congregation Council shall call a

special meeting upon request of the synodical bishop. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.

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

C10.04. Fifty (50) voting members shall constitute a quorum.

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

C10.06. All actions by the congregation shall be by majority vote except the acquiring and disposing of property which requires a two-thirds majority and except as otherwise provided in this constitution.

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

Chapter 11.

OFFICERS

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

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

C11.02. The congregation shall elect its officers and they shall be the officers of the congregation. The officers shall be elected by ballot in a manner determined by the Congregation Council for a one (1) year term. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

C11.03. No officer shall hold more than one (1) office at a time. No elected officer shall be eligible to serve more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office, except the Treasurer, who may serve a maximum of five (5) consecutive terms.

Chapter 12

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the called and ordained pastors, eight (8) members of the congregation and the officers of the congregation. Any voting member of the congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's

place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b) is absent from three (3) successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause.

C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) shall be elected by ballot in a manner determined by the Congregation Council to serve for two (2) year terms. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two (2) full terms consecutively. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

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

C12.04. The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything 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 Congregation Council shall include the following:

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

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

- a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of trustees of this congregation, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the management of its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject

to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Minnesota, except as otherwise provided herein.

- b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.
- c. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts up to 6% of the budget for items not included in the budget.
- d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations more than six (6) percent in excess of the actual 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 partnership with the synod and churchwide organization.
- e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies to the synodical treasurer.
- f. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.

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

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

C12.08. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the appointment and supervision of the ~~salariied lay workers~~ staff of this congregation. Nothing in this provision shall be deemed to affect the 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 Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.

~~C.9.10 is intentionally left blank.~~

C12.11. The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president, and shall be called at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each 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 Congregation Council. All meetings shall include the senior pastor or interim pastor, except when such person requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to an agenda of routine matters which shall be the only business of the meeting. Chronic or repeated absence of the pastor or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Congregation Council, following consultation with the synodical bishop.

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

Chapter 13.

CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEES

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

C13.02. A Nominating Committee shall consist of six (6) voting members of this congregation. Four (4) members shall be elected at the annual meeting and two (2) shall be appointed by the Congregation Council from among its outgoing members. Members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible for consecutive terms.

C13.03. An Audit Committee of three (3) voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council. Term of office will be three (3) years, with one (1) member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for reelection.

C13.04. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of six (6) voting members shall be elected by the Congregation. Term of office will terminate at installation of the newly-called pastor.

C13.05. A Trust Fund Committee shall consist of members elected by the congregation using procedures and for the purposes specified in the Trust Fund Addendum to this constitution as adopted January 21, 1986, or subsequently amended according to its own provisions.

C13.06. Other congregational committees may be formed as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council.

C13.07. Duties of congregational committees shall be specified in the bylaws.

C13.08. The senior pastor of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of the congregation. The president of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of the congregation, except the Nominating Committee.”
This was inadvertently deleted during an earlier cut and paste from the model constitution.

Chapter 14.

ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

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

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

Chapter 15.

DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

*C15.01. Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith, willful or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, continual and intentional interference with the ministry of the congregation, or willful and repeated harassment or defamation of member(s) of the 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 the congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. If the counseling, censure, and 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 lay persons and two ~~clergy~~ **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 the congregation; or
- d. termination of membership in the congregation and exclusion from the church property and from all congregation activities.

*C15.06. The written decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be sent to the vice president of the synod, the accused member(s), and the 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 the 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.

C.15.08 – C. 15.9 intentionally left blank.

***C15.10. Adjudication**

***C15.11.** When there is disagreement among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation shall have access to the synodical bishop for consultation after informing the chair of the Congregation Council of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the Consultation Committee of the synod shall consider the matter. If the Consultation Committee of the synod shall fail to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to the Synod Council, whose decision shall be final.

Chapter ~~16~~. 17

BYLAWS

***C~~16~~. 17.01.**This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.

***C~~16~~. 17.02.**Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by ~~a majority~~ **two-thirds** vote of those voting members present and voting.

***C~~16~~. 17.03.**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 the 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.

***C~~16~~. 17.04.**Approved changes to the bylaws shall be sent **by the secretary of this congregation** to the synod.

Chapter ~~17~~ 16

AMENDMENTS

***C~~17~~ 16.01.**Unless provision *C17.04. 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 to this constitution may be proposed by at least five (5) 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 its regular or special meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the members of the proposal with their recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

~~*C17~~ 16.02. ~~A proposed amendment to this constitution~~ An amendment to this constitution, proposed under *C16.01 shall:

- a. be approved at a legally called ~~Congregation M~~meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;
- b. be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting; and
- c. have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.

~~*C17~~ 16.03. Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in *C17.01. and *C17.02. shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The synod shall notify the congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed changes; the changes shall go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them.

~~*C17~~ 16.04. 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 ~~simple~~ majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of the congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail notice or electronic means, as permitted by state law, to the 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 ten (10) voting members of the congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following a vote of approval.

Chapter 18.

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

*C18.01. The 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 the congregation or a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Congregation Council.

Chapter 19.

INDEMNIFICATION

***C19.01.** Consistent with the provisions of the laws under which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt provisions providing indemnification for each person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a 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.

COMO PARK LUTHERAN CHURCH BYLAWS

Part I.

COMMUNION PARTICIPATION

1. Members and visitors are encouraged to participate in the sacrament and will be informed of these Lutheran teachings regarding discernment of the treasure of the sacrament:
 - a. The real presence of Christ given in, with, and under the bread and the wine.
 - b. Our Lord's trustworthy promise, "given and shed for you for the remission of sins."
2. A record of participation in Holy Communion shall be maintained for all members.

Part II.

FELLOWSHIP

1. The Congregation will cooperate with other organizations whose purposes are compatible with the constitution.
2. The use of the building and facilities of this congregation shall be limited to this congregation's activities and those of outside groups who meet the provision above.
3. Ceremonies of lodges or any organizations, secret or open, which are avowedly religious or which practice forms of religion which do not confess the triune God and Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior shall not be permitted in the buildings or on the premises of this congregation. The pastor will not take part in such ceremonies.

Part III.

MEMBERSHIP

1. Baptized Members (section C.8.02.a of the constitution)
 - a. The congregation is commissioned to baptize candidates for membership into the body of Christ with water and the Holy Spirit in the name of the triune God. The baptized member is thereafter privileged to live in that sacrament forever.
 - b. Admission to the congregation as baptized members are those who:
 - i. are baptized in this congregation; or
 - ii. having been previously baptized in the name of the triune God, are received by letter of transfer, confirmation, or affirmation of faith.
 - c. Unbaptized adults who have received instruction and have given evidence of having a sufficient understanding and acceptance of the teachings of the Word of God as confessed by the Lutheran Church, shall, upon confession of faith and Christian

baptism duly recorded as a ministerial act performed under the auspices of this congregation, be received as baptized members of this congregation.

2. Confirmed Members (section C.8.02.b of the constitution)

- a. Confirmation is a pastoral and educational ministry of the church which helps the baptized member through Word and Sacrament to identify more deeply with the Christian community and participate more fully in its mission.
- b. The Rite of Confirmation (Affirmation of Baptism) will be made available to baptized members after satisfactory completion of courses of study and acknowledgement by the Congregation Council.
- c. Adults received as baptized members according to the provisions of Section 1.c of this Part of the bylaws shall be recognized as confirmed members.

3. Associate Members

The roster of associate members as defined in section C.8.02.d of the constitution will be reviewed annually.

4. Voting Members (section C.8.02.c of the constitution)

The Congregation Council shall be responsible for determining the voting membership in accordance with the qualifications specified in the constitution.

5. Care of Members

- a. Members who move away shall be encouraged to transfer membership. The congregation will issue a letter or certificate of transfer to another Lutheran congregation on a member's request or at the request of the receiving congregation.
- b. A person shall be termed "inactive" when there is no record of either communion or contribution during a six month period. Persons who are termed "inactive" shall be contacted every six months. The purpose of these contacts is to inquire about their well-being, to inform them of their membership status, and to invite them back into active membership.
- c. People 18-25 years of age, members of the military, parents of Sunday Church School children, homebound and those in care facilities shall retain membership status and not be removed from the rolls as long as these conditions remain.
- d. Members who are inactive for two (2) consecutive years are considered to have removed themselves from congregational membership and shall be deleted from the membership rolls. This task is to be completed on an annual basis as provided for in Section C. 8.05 of the constitution. Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the Church has a continuing pastoral concern.
- e. Members who have transferred to other Lutheran congregations, or who are definitely known to have become members of other congregations without transfer, have

thereby terminated their voting membership but may be considered associate members at the discretion of the Congregation Council.

Part IV.

THE PASTOR

1. After the congregation has voted to call a pastor, it shall issue a letter of call to the pastor-elect in a form approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The letter of call shall be signed by the chairman and secretary of the Congregational meeting at which the call was voted and shall be attested by the bishop of the synod. A call to an associate pastor(s) shall be issued in consultation with the senior pastor and in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph.
2. If a pastor receives a call to another ministry, the pastor shall consult the Congregation Council or the congregation before reaching a decision. The pastor shall announce a decision within three (3) weeks and shall notify the bishop. When a call has been accepted, the pastor's ministry in this congregation shall be terminated as soon as feasible, normally within a month.
3. A desire for a change in pastorate by either congregation or pastor shall be brought to the attention of the bishop, who shall advise in the matter in accordance with the constitution (Chapter 9) and with the established procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
4. The term of an associate pastor shall be co-terminous with the senior pastor. Said termination shall be effective within six (6) months following the senior pastor's termination.
5. The call to a pastor shall normally be for an indefinite time. A call to an associate pastor may be for a definite time.

Part V.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

1. The annual congregational meeting will be held within the first six (6) weeks of the calendar year.
2. The agenda for the annual meeting shall include:
 - a. opening devotion
 - b. approval of agenda
 - c. approval of minutes of the previous meeting
 - d. reports of pastor, Congregation Council, boards, committees, treasurer, and others
 - e. elections
 - f. unfinished business
 - g. new business (presentation and adoption of budget and other matters)

- h. closing prayer.
- 3. A quorum shall consist of fifty (50) voting members.
- 4. In the following cases voting shall be by ballot in a manner determined by the Congregation Council:
 - a. to elect the officers and members of the Congregation_Council;
 - b. to adopt or amend the articles of incorporation, constitution, or bylaws of the congregation;
- 5. In the following cases voting shall be by written ballot:
 - a. to call a pastor or to request a pastor's resignation;
 - b. to remove a member from office in the congregation;
 - c. to sever membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
 - d. to dispose of, encumber, or purchase real property;
 - e. when requested by ten (10) or more voting members present.
- 5. Except as herein provided, parliamentary procedures shall be according to Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition.

Part VI.

OFFICERS

- 1. The president shall:
 - a. preside at all meetings of the congregation, the Congregation Council, the executive committee and the personnel committee;
 - b. coordinate the work of the committees and be an ex officio member without vote;
 - c. carry out the will of the congregation as ordered by this constitution, bylaws, and resolutions of the congregation;
 - d. deliver an annual report to the congregation;
 - e. name delegates to conference, synod, and other conventions as required.
- 2. The vice-president shall:
 - a. perform the duties of the president in the president's absence, incapacity, or at the president's request;
 - b. chair the budget and/or planning committee;
 - c. serve as a member of the Executive Committee and the Personnel Committee;
 - d. act as parliamentarian at congregational and Congregation Council meetings or designate a parliamentarian
 - e. convene the nominating committee by November 15
- 3. The secretary shall:

- a. record proceedings of the congregation, Executive and Personnel Committees and Congregation Council; submits minutes to the congregation's Administrative Secretary for copying and distribution to council members and filing permanently in the church office
 - b. keep attendance records of each Congregation Council meeting;
 - c. announce all congregational and Council meetings and arrange for meeting places;
 - d. assist president on agenda items, calling to attention matters deferred or referred to committees for further study and recommendation;
 - e. be responsible for safekeeping of all official congregational documents (e.g., deeds, mortgages, articles of incorporation, constitution and bylaws, tax returns, etc.);
 - f. works with the Administrative Secretary to compile and distribute the annual report of the congregation;
 - g. notify the nominating committee by November 1 of all offices to be filled at the annual meeting
 - h. serve as a member of the Congregation Council, Executive Committee, Personnel Committee and the Budget and/or Planning Committee
4. The treasurer shall:
- a. supervise the financial procedures, records, and investments of the congregation;
 - b. render a monthly statement of income and expense compared to budget to the Congregation Council;
 - c. countersign all checks;
 - d. be a member of the Budget and/or Planning Committee and Finance Committee;
 - e. recommend written financial policies and procedures for cash management (e.g., annual budgeting, fund accounting, and annual audit) to the Congregation Council;
 - f. direct the counting, depositing, and recording of all contributions, fees collected, gifts, and bequests received;
 - g. reconcile each deposit to contributors' records;
 - h. issue quarterly statements to contributors;
 - i. keep individual giving records confidential;
 - k. monitor cash management policies and procedures; make recommendations for changes.
 - l. serve as a member of the Finance Committee, Budget and/or Planning Committee, Congregation Council, Executive Committee and Personnel Committee

Part VII.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

The Congregation Council of this congregation shall consist of the called and ordained pastors, the elected officers of the congregation and eight (8) members, four (4) elected at each annual meeting for a term of two (2) years each. The responsibilities of the Congregation Council shall include the following:

- 1. Congregational Membership
 - a. supervise the rosters of baptized, confirmed, associate, and voting members;

- b. appoint eligible candidates to fill vacancies of Congregation Council members, except for president and vice-president (an unexpired term shall not be considered a term of office);
- c. provide procedures for the reception of new members and the departure of members of the congregation;
- d. activate and motivate all members of the congregation to participate in ministries of worship, learning, witness, service, fellowship, and support;
- e. support the inactive member through prayer, visitation, and caring ministries;
- f. recognize the service of members to congregational and community ministry.

2. Finance

- a. prescribe a process for developing the annual budget
- b. recommend the budget to the congregation
- c. encourage the congregation members of all ages to participate in the stewardship initiatives of the congregation
- d. determine congregation's proportion of income to be committed to ELCA mission support and benevolence;
- e. adopt a written audit procedure for both income-expense and balance sheet transactions; inspect all insurance policies for adequacy of coverage; report findings to congregation;
- f. authorize all extra-budgetary appeals for funds and fund-raising events to the congregation from sources both inside and outside the congregation;
- g. adjust allocation of funds should income fall short of expectations or expenses exceed budgeted amounts; account for any contingency or emergency funds;
- h. approve all depositories of congregational funds;
- i. consolidate all funds of the congregation and its organizations into a unified budget
- j. use a voucher system for disbursements;
- k. provide a fidelity bond for the treasurer and others who have access to congregational funds.

3. Personnel

- a. secure necessary staff other than the full time pastor(s) and set their salaries;
- b. review salaries annually;
- c. develop and maintain written position descriptions and personnel policies for all staff, covering at least salaries, hours, and working conditions;
- d. provide procedures for staff support and performance evaluation;
- e. provide for the services of an interim pastor in consultation with the bishop should the office of pastor be vacant;
- f. adopt office policies for the church office and staff (e.g., office hours, records retention, vacations, sick leave, etc.).

4. Property Management

- a. As the legal board of trustees:

- i. Except as limited by the constitution and bylaws, act as managing authority and may make contracts proper to the purpose of the organization--including to borrow money, pledge or mortgage property, and settle claims, but not including radical changes which affect the corporate purpose.
 - ii. Act only as a body, never as individuals, at regular or special meetings upon notice, through resolutions, by a majority vote of a quorum present.
 - iii. May delegate specified authority to appointed or hired agents and servants, but not discretionary responsibilities.
 - iv. Are liable to the corporation for their willful breaches of trust or misapplication of funds, and acts in excess of corporate power, but are not liable for mere errors of judgment provided acting in good faith.
- b. Maintain the buildings and premises of the congregation including equipment and furnishings; keep a record inventory of physical assets and maintenance performed thereon.
- c. Approve or reject the use of congregational facilities by outside groups who have made written application to the Congregation Council and assess usage fees and restrictions. Only groups and activities compatible with the purposes of the congregation shall be granted approval for use of its facilities. Applications for occasional use will be approved by the pastor and application for regular use will be approved by the Council.
- d. Fire safety inspections will be performed annually with or without the assistance of the local fire department; fire drills will be randomly called at least annually in the Sunday School.
- e. Prescribe a policy for building and premises security: distribution of keys, fire extinguishers, burglar alarms, smoke and heat detectors, responsibility for locking the buildings following various events, especially for evenings and week-ends.
- f. Inspect the premises regularly for the purpose of sound maintenance, safety accessibility, insurance, and building code compliance.

5. Administration

- a. Designate standing committees and specify their number, duties, authority, budget, and accountability to the Congregation Council. Standing committees shall be responsible--individually, collectively, or in part--for the areas of Worship, Evangelism, Education, Social Concerns, Youth, Property Management, Senior Ministry, Stewardship, Finance, Personnel, and other important areas of responsibility for the congregation's life together and mission in the world.

- b. Appoint members of the Congregation Council to each standing committee for one (1) year terms renewable.
- c. Offer opportunities to serve on special-purpose Congregation Council task force to members of the congregation (e.g., hunger appeal, community celebration, tax hearing, etc.).
- d. Render annual and special reports of activities to the congregation.
- e. Administer discipline in the congregation.
- f. Support the pastor according to the letter of call.
- g. Require each organization of the congregation to be accountable to the mission statement of the congregation.
- h. Coordinate the programs and ministries of the congregation, direct ministry functions not otherwise specified to the most appropriate committee.

6. Spiritual Care

- a. provide for spiritual care of congregational members.
- b. acknowledge candidates for the Rite of Confirmation in consultation with the pastor;
- b. determine the age for baptized members to receive their first Holy Communion in consultation with the pastor;
- c. exercise general oversight of the spiritual life, mission, and ministry of the congregation that all may be done according to the Word of God and the constitution;
- d. approve modifications in worship as recommended by the worship committee;
- e. acknowledge applications for membership into the congregation;

Part VIII.

CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEES

1. Nominating Committee (Refer to Constitution Chapter C. 13.02)

- a. The vice president shall serve as the convener and as member.
- b. The members of the nominating committee shall serve for the year following their election. They shall nominate one (1) or more candidates for each office to be filled and shall secure the consent of each candidate to serve if elected.
- c. The slate of nominees shall be made known to the congregation in conjunction with the announcements of the special or annual meeting at which the election is to take place.
- d. In addition to the candidates submitted by the nominating committee, additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- e. A vacancy in the nominating committee shall be filled by action of the Congregation Council.

2. Audit Committee (Refer to Constitution Chapter C. 13.03)

- a. Audit the financial books and procedures of records prior to the annual meeting and also at least once during the year without prior announcement.
- b. Follow the written audit procedures adopted by the Congregation Council.

- c. Report their findings to the congregation in writing and include them with the annual report, signed and dated by each member of the committee.
3. Executive Committee (Refer to Constitution Chapter C. 13.01)
- The officers of the congregation and senior pastor shall constitute the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council, which shall have all the power and authority of the Congregation Council between meetings of the Congregation Council, except for:
- a. Recommending candidates for call to pastoral positions, and
 - b. Recommending action directly to the congregation which requires congregational action.
4. Call Committee (Refer to Constitution Chapter C. 13.04)
- a. Notify the bishop when a pastoral vacancy occurs.
 - b. Study the congregation's mission and pastoral needs; share results with district.
 - c. Receive recommendations of nominees from the bishop, synod call committee, congregation, or other sources for study.
 - d. Evaluate pastoral candidates by interview and other means; furnish information about the congregation and its mission to each candidate.
 - e. Recommend one candidate to the congregation at a special meeting called for that purpose.
5. Trust Fund Committee (Refer to Constitution Chapter C. 13.05)
- Trust Fund of the Congregation shall:
- a. Report directly to the congregation
 - b. Be governed by the Trust Fund Addendum to the Constitution

Part IX

REPORTS OF ORGANIZATIONS

All committees and organizations of the congregation shall submit reports of their activities to the annual meeting.

Part X

CONGREGATIONAL RECORDS

- 1. The records of the congregation shall be the property of the congregation and shall not be removed or used for commercial purposes. The records are:
 - a. the roster of baptized, confirmed, associate, and voting members;
 - b. the ministerial acts performed by the pastor;
 - c. the minutes of the meetings of the congregation and Congregation Council;
 - d. the financial records of the congregation; all official and legal documents including the constitution and bylaws, deeds, mortgages, contracts, etc.

2. The pastor shall be responsible for the maintenance and security of the records, except as provided herein.
3. The pastor and executive committee shall furnish an annual congregational report to the general secretary of the ELCA. A report of ministerial acts performed shall be made to the congregation.
4. In the event of dissolution or cessation of ministry, the official records of the congregation shall be deposited in the archives of the ELCA or its successor.

Approved at the Congregational Meeting 1/25/2015