

Constitution
of
St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Salisbury, North Carolina

Ratified November 15, 2015

Constitution

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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 St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Salisbury, N.C.
- C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the St. Paul's Lutheran Church congregation is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."
- C1.11. This congregation is incorporated under the laws of the State of North Carolina.
- C1.12. The seal of this congregation presents a shield with "Spiritus Gladius" in the center of the seal with the words St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Salisbury, North Carolina encircled around it.

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.
- C2.08. This congregation honors and accepts The Common Confession (2005) included below, as a summary of teachings otherwise affirmed in the Lutheran Confessions.

The Common Confession

THE FAITH STATEMENT OF LUTHERAN CORE, ADOPTED NOVEMBER 2005

- (CC1) **The Lord Jesus Christ** We are people who believe and confess our faith in the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We trust and believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.
- (CC2) **The Gospel of Salvation** We believe and confess that all human beings are sinners, and that sinners are redeemed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God alone justifies human beings by faith in Christ—a faith that God creates through the message of the Gospel. As ambassadors for Christ, God uses us to speak his Word and build his kingdom.
- (CC3) **The Authority of Scripture** We believe and confess that the Bible is God's revealed Word to us, spoken in Law and Gospel. The Bible is the final authority for us in all matters of our faith and life.
- (CC4) **A Common Confession of Faith** We accept and uphold that the Lutheran Confessions reliably guide us as faithful interpretations of Scripture, and that we share a unity and fellowship in faith with others among whom the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached and the sacraments are administered in accordance with the Gospel.
- (CC5) **The Priesthood of All Believers** We believe and confess that the Holy Spirit makes all who believe in Jesus Christ to be priests for service to others in Jesus' name, and that God desires to make use of the spiritual gifts he has given through the priesthood of all believers.
- (CC6) **Marriage and Family** We believe and confess that the marriage of male and female is an institution created and blessed by God. From marriage, God forms families to serve as the building blocks of all human civilization and community. We teach and practice that sexual activity belongs exclusively within the biblical boundaries of a faithful marriage between one man and one woman.
- (CC7) **The Mission and Ministry of the Congregation** We believe and confess that the church is the assembly of believers called and gathered by God around Word and Sacrament, and that the mission and ministry of the church is carried out within the context of individual congregations, which are able to work together locally and globally.

Chapter 3. NATURE OF THE CHURCH

- C3.01. All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.
- C3.02. The congregation affirms the priesthood of all believers. It commits itself in function and structure to the equipping and supporting of all members for their ministries within and outside of the household of faith. It is within and from this context of ministry that we declare that some are called by God to the public ministry of Word and Sacrament and other specific ministries. At the same time, all baptized members of our congregation are priests called by God to ministries in their daily lives.
- C3.03. This congregation believes that no sin is greater than another in God's sight. We are all sinners, and undeserving of and saved only by the grace of God. This congregation welcomes all people into its fellowship who come with a repentant heart to turn from their sin, and to seek God's mercy and forgiveness.

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, this congregation shall:
- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached in its purity and the Sacraments are rightly 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 ministries;
 - h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations;
 - i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships;
 - j. Affirm that marriages, civil unions, or blessings of same gender, bi-sexual, or transgender relationships will not be performed on this church property or authorized by its pastor(s).
- 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 descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions.]
- C4.05. This congregation may from time to time, adopt a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

Chapter 5. POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

- C5.01. The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.
- C5.02. The powers of this congregation are vested in the congregation meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.
- C5.03. Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregation Council or other organizational units in this congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by the congregation. The congregation is authorized to:
- a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
 - b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
 - c. call or terminate the call of associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers;
 - d. approve the annual budget;
 - e. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
 - f. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its

- purpose;
 - g. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
 - h. elect its Congregation Council, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions;
 - i. form or terminate relationships with other Lutheran church bodies; and
 - j. seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the gospel.–
- C5.04. This congregation may choose from among its voting members laypersons to serve as delegates to represent it at meetings of any conferences, convocations, etc. where it is entitled to representation. Should the elected delegates be unable to attend, the Congregation Council may appoint alternates.

Chapter 6. CHURCH AFFILIATION

- C6.01. The congregation will affiliate with Lutheran Congregations In Mission for Christ.
- C6.02. This congregation may form or terminate its relationship(s) with Lutheran Congregations In Mission for Christ and/or other Lutheran body(ies) by adopting a resolution indicating the desire at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present and voting.
- C6.03. This congregation may become independent or join a non-Lutheran body by adopting a resolution indicating the desire at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present and voting. Such a decision shall require a second two-thirds vote after a period of at least 90 days.

Chapter 7. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

- C7.01. If this congregation ceases to exist, property shall be disposed of according to majority vote of the remaining members and according to Article VI of its Articles of Incorporation.
- C7.02. If this congregation is removed from membership in another Lutheran body 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 legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to transfer to another Lutheran church body, a non-Lutheran church body, or become independent, title to property shall continue to reside with the majority.

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 maintained their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

- a. Active members are confirmed members who shall have communed of record at least once and made a contribution of record during the preceding 12 month period.
- b. Inactive members are confirmed members who have not communed of record at least once and made a contribution of record during the preceding 12 month period.
- c. Confirmed members in the military service of our country, members away at school, special needs persons, institutionalized persons, or elderly persons, who because of health reasons can not attend worship, or other exceptions granted by majority vote of the Congregation Council are to be considered active members.

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 baptized persons received 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 active members.
- 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. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices, membership on the Congregation Council of this congregation, or burial privileges.

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.

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 by the Congregation Council; or
- e. removal from the roll due to inactivity as defined in the 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

- C9.01. Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting specially called for that purpose by the Congregation Council.
- C9.02. Only a pastor meeting the qualifications of the Lutheran body(ies) to which the congregation belongs may be called to serve.
- C9.03. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Lutheran body(ies) to which the congregation belongs, every ordained minister shall:
1. preach the Word;
 2. administer the Sacraments;
 3. conduct public worship;
 4. provide pastoral care, and
 5. speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
 6. offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 7. supervise all schools and organizations of the congregation;
 8. install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council; and
 9. with the council administer discipline.
 10. strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;
 11. seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 12. impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications; and
 13. endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the body(ies) to which it belongs.
- 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.
- C9.05. a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which, except in the case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated only 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, 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, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor;
 4. the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
 5. disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, entering into an adulterous or same-sex relationship, or continued neglect of duty;

- 6. the dissolution of the congregation.
 - b. When allegations of physical or mental incapacity of the pastor, or ineffective, inappropriate or illegal conduct of the pastoral office have come to the attention of the staff support committee or the Congregation Council and are found by the council to be substantiated, or a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation is presented to the council, the Congregation Council shall appoint a committee of one council member, two members of the congregation outside the Congregation Council and two members from another Lutheran congregation, one a minister, to investigate and recommend a resolution.
 - c. If the above actions do not bring about a resolution, then at a specially called congregational meeting the congregation may dismiss the pastor by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present and voting.
- C9.06. At a time of pastoral vacancy, the Congregation Council may appoint an interim pastor.
- C9.07. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.
- 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.
- 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 and the Congregation Council. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- C9.10. 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. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of C9.05.a.
- C9.11. 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 (these records shall remain the property of the congregation);
 - b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the Congregation Council and congregation; 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.
- C9.12. Pastoral acts outside the congregation:
- a. It shall be the policy of this congregation that its pastor(s), when

undertaking pastoral acts outside the congregation (e.g., presiding at a family wedding out of town or any other marriage, civil union, or relationship blessing) shall conform their behavior to the congregation's beliefs as affirmed in C2.08.CC6 and C4.03.j.

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, or the Congregation Council, or may be called at the written request of ten percent (10%) of the voting members. 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 to all voting members at least ten (10) days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice sent to the last known address of such members shall be sufficient.
- C10.04. Twenty percent (20%) 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 by the congregation shall be by majority vote 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(s).
 - 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.
 - d. The Congregation Council elects its officers; the president, the vice president, and secretary shall be selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council. If the treasurer is not selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council, the treasurer shall have voice but not vote at the meetings of the Congregation Council.
- C11.02. The Senior pastor shall be an ex officio member of the Congregation Council. The Congregation Council shall elect the officers of the congregation who shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin on January 1st and end on December 31st.
- C11.03. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time.
- C11.04. The Congregation Council shall elect the treasurer by majority vote of a quorum of its members present and voting. No limits shall be placed upon the number of

consecutive terms the treasurer may serve .

Chapter 12. CONGREGATION COUNCIL

- C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s), the officers of the congregation, and not more than eighteen (18) members 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 four regular meetings of the Congregation Council without approved excuse during a calendar year. Consistent with the laws of the state in which the congregation is incorporated, the congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.
- C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) shall be elected at a legally called meeting of the congregation during the month of November. Their term of office shall be for three (3) years with the term of office beginning on January 1st following election and ending on December 31st of the third year, one-third of the members rotating off each year. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than one full term without a two year interim. Newly elected Congregation Council members shall be installed at worship on a Sunday prior to the date they assume office.
- C12.03. Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next annual meeting.
- C12.04. 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. 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 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.
- The Congregation Council shall be the board of trustees/directors 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 North Carolina, 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 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 ten percent (10%) in excess of the anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregation Meeting.
 - d. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts up to \$10,000 for items not included in the budget. This shall only be exceeded in urgent circumstances necessary for preservation of property or critical to the functioning of the church.
 - 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.
 - 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 employment and supervision of the salaried lay workers of this congregation.
- C12.09. The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation annually.
- C12.10. The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor(s), the president, or the vice president, and shall be called by the president or the vice president 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.
- C12.11. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the pastor or interim pastor, except when the pastor or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and

has given prior approval to an agenda for a particular regular or special meeting, which shall be the only business considered 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, provided notice has been given to the pastor or pastors.

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 voting members of this congregation, shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year. The outgoing council members shall automatically be considered nominated for the Nominating Committee, with additional nominations coming from the congregation. Members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible for consecutive reelection.
- C13.03. An *Audit Committee* of three voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Term of office will be three years, with one member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for reelection.
- C13.04. A *Staff Support Committee* shall be nominated jointly by the president, the vice president and the pastor(s) and shall be approved by a majority vote of the Congregation Council members present and voting. Term of office shall be three years, two members to be appointed each successive year.
- C13.05. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a *Call Committee* of at least six voting members shall be appointed by the Congregation Council. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly-called pastor.
- C13.06. Other congregation committees may be formed as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council.
- C13.07. Duties of congregation committees shall be specified in the bylaws or continuing resolutions.
- C13.08. The [senior] pastor of this congregation shall be an ex officio member of all committees and boards of the congregation except for the Staff Support Committee.

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 may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council and specified in a continuing resolution.

Chapter 15. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

C15.01. Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps:

- a. private admonition by the pastor,
- b. admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses; and
- c. citation to appear before the Congregation Council.

If for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required in a. and b. hereof, the president or vice president shall administer such admonitions.

C15.02. A member charged with an offense shall be requested to appear before the Congregation Council after having received a written notice, at least ten days prior to the meeting, specifying the exact charges that have been made against the member.

C15.03. Members of the Congregation Council who participate in the preparation of the written charges or who present evidence or testimony in the hearing before the Congregation Council are disqualified from voting upon the question of the guilt of the accused member or serving on the appeals committee. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the Congregation Council who are not disqualified but who are present and voting, and renewed admonition prove ineffectual, the council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:

- a. censure before the council or congregation;
- b. suspension from membership for a definite period of time; or
- c. exclusion from membership in this congregation.

Disciplinary actions b. and c. shall be delivered to the member in writing.

C15.04. The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Congregation Council shall have the right to appeal the decision. In such cases the Congregation Council shall appoint an Appeals Committee comprised of one council member, two members of the congregation outside the Congregation Council and two members from another Lutheran congregation, one a minister, to investigate and recommend a resolution. Such right may not be abridged and the decision of the Appeals Committee shall be final.

C15.05. Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Congregation Council upon receipt of:

- a. evidence that injustice has been done; or
- b. evidence of repentance and amendment.

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 or the Congregation Council, members of this congregation shall have access to an Appeals Committee as described in C15.04 whose decision shall be final.

Chapter 16. BYLAWS

- C16.01. This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.
- C16.02. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting.
- C16.03. Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however, 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 and that the Congregation Council notify the members of the proposal with its recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting.

Chapter 17. AMENDMENTS

- C17.01. 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.
- C17.02. A proposed amendment to this constitution shall:
- a. be approved at a legally called congregation meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting;
 - b. be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those voting members present and voting.

Chapter 18. CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

- C18.01. The Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions. No Continuing Resolution may conflict with this constitution.
- C18.02. Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a two-thirds vote of all 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 acting as a Congregation Council member, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any committee of this congregation, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.

Chapter 20. PARISH AUTHORIZATION

- C20.01. This congregation may unite in partnership with one or more other congregations to form a parish. A written agreement, developed in consultation with and approved by the voting members of each congregation participating in the parish, shall specify the powers and responsibilities that have been delegated to a Parish Council.
- C20.02. Whenever a letter of call is being recommended for extension to an ordained minister to serve the congregations of a parish, such letter of call shall be first approved by a two-thirds vote at congregational meetings forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve extending this call, the other congregation(s) in the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.
- C20.03. Any one of the congregations of a parish may terminate the call of a pastor. In such case, the other congregation(s) in the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.