

Constitution of First Lutheran Church Hope, Minnesota

January, 2020

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

Cl.01. The name of this congregation shall be First Lutheran Church.

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

Cl.03. 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 is fashioning 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 Testament as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of all matters 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.

C3.02. 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.

Chapter 4.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

C4.01. The church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.

C4.02. To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:

- a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
- b. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
- c. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
- d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs.
- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith, hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
- f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

C4.03. To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:

- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
- b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
- c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregations.
- 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 congregations, and the other parts of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.
- h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, and the church wide organization of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.
- i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with church wide 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 descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions in the section of the Congregation Council.]

C4.05. This congregation shall, 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 boards, and committees, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution bylaws.
- i. Terminate its relationship with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ as provided in Chapter 6.

C5.04. This congregation shall choose from among its voting members, laypersons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member.

Chapter 6.

CHURCH AFFILIATION

C6.01. This congregation shall be an interdependent part of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ or its successor. This congregation is subject to the discipline of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.

C6.02. This congregation accepts the Confession of Faith and agrees to the Purposes of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ and shall act in accordance with them.

C6.03. This congregation acknowledges its relationship with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ 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 Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.
- c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the Certified Pastors List of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the congregation.
- d. This congregation agrees to consider associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers for call to other staff positions in the congregation according to the procedures of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.

C6.04. Affiliation with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ 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 Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ according to the procedures for discipline of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.
- d. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in C6.05.

C6.05. This congregation may terminate its relationship with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ by the following procedure:

- a. A resolution indicating the desire of this congregation to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present.
- b. The congregation shall prayerfully consider the issue for a period of at least 90 days.
- c. If this congregation, after prayerful consideration, 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 at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.
- d. A secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to terminate its relationship to the leadership of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ, at which time the relationship between this congregation and Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ shall be terminated.
- e. Notice of termination shall be published in the newsletter of this church.

Chapter 7.

PROPERTY OF OWNERSHIP

C7.01. If this congregation ceases to exist, title to un-disposed property shall be determined by a majority of the membership at the time of its dissolution.

C7.02. If this congregation is removed from membership in Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ according to its procedure for discipline, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

Chapter 8.

MEMBERSHIP

C8.01. Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of this congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have been declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

C8.02. Members shall be classified as follows:

- a. *Baptized* members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.
- b. *Confirmed* members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.
- c. *Voting* members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members shall have communed and made a contribution of record during the current or preceding year.
- d. *Associate* members are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations who wish to retain

such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Congregation Council of this congregation.

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.
- c. Support the work of this congregation, and the church wide organization of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ 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 by the Congregation Council.
- 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 members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by the Congregation Council to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help from the leadership of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.

C9.02. Only a pastor who meets the educational and theological requirements of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ for an ordained pastor may be called as a pastor of this congregation.

C9.03. Consistent with the faith and practice of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ,

- a. Every ordained minister shall:
 - 1) Preach the Word.
 - 2) Administer the sacraments.

- 3) Conduct public worship.
 - 4) Provide pastoral care.
 - 5) Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
- b. Each 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) Oversee all instruction and organizations of this congregation.
 - 3) Install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council.
 - 4) With the Council, administer discipline.
- c. 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.
 - 4) Endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.

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. The call of a 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:

- a. Mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term.
- b. Resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, 30 days after the date on which it was submitted.
- c. 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.
- d. The physical or mental incapacity of the pastor.
- e. Disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality or continued neglect of duty.
- f. The dissolution of the congregation.
- g. Suspension of the congregation as a result of discipline proceedings.

h. A two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present at a legally called congregational meeting.

C9.06. At a time of pastor vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by 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 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 the congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting.

C9.09. When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors 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. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Such a 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.
- b. Shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call
- c. The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of the congregation.

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 by the president of the congregation upon the written request of twenty 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 10 days in advance of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or paid, sent to the last known address of such member shall be sufficient.

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

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

C10.06. All actions 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, treasurer and director of the Board of Education (if needed).

- 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 written ballot and shall serve for three years or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin on the first Sunday after the annual meeting.

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

Chapter 12

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s), the officers of the congregation, the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, the Chairperson of the Board of Deacons, and the Director of the Board of Education (upon need). 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 members' place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the members a.) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b.) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause. Consistent with the laws of the state in which this congregation is incorporated, 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 by written *ballot* to serve for three years or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively. Their terms shall begin on the first Sunday after 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 until the next 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 Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ. 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 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 church wide organizations of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran.
- i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ
- 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 matter of this congregation.

- a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of directors of this congregation and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the 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 estate property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.
- c. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to an aggregate annual amount of \$10,000 for items not included in the budget. Any individual expenditure in excess of \$5,000 must be approved in a congregation meeting.
- d. The Finance Committee shall prepare an annual budget and submit it to the Congregation Council who will in turn present it at the annual meeting for adoption by this congregation.
- 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 and its bylaws, and the continued 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 at the annual meeting.

C12.10. The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president, and shall be called by the 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 the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting, which shall be the only business considered at 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 of the Congregation Council.

Chapter 13

CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

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

C13.02. *Nominating Committee:*

- a. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of five members, two of whom shall be elected by the Church Council from its own membership and three of whom shall be elected at the annual meeting from nominations made on the floor. The pastor shall serve as convener and as an advisory member.
- b. The members of the Nominating Committee shall serve for the year following their election. The members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible for consecutive re-election. They shall nominate one or more candidates for each office to be filled and shall secure the consent of each candidate to serve if elected.
- c. The candidates of the Nominating Committee 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 congregationally elected membership of the Nominating Committee shall be filled by a special Congregation Council meeting called for that purpose.

C13.03. An *Audit Committee* of three voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council. Term of office shall be three years with one member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for re-election. The Audit Committee shall audit all financial records of the congregation proper, and present its report to the annual meeting in writing. The Audit Committee shall carefully examine all insurance policies to determine the amount and kind of insurance in force and include this report in its statement.

C13.04. A *Mutual Ministry Committee* shall be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor. The committee

shall consist of three members appointed for two year terms.

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

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

C13.07. Duties of committees of this congregation not contained in the constitution shall be specified in the bylaws and resolution.

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 authorizations has been given by the Congregation Council.

Chapter 15.

DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

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 by 1.a and b. hereof, the president (if not the pastor) or vice president shall administer such admonitions.

C15.02. If discipline against a member proceeds beyond counseling and admonition by the pastor, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing shall be prepared by member(s) of the congregation who shall sign the charges as the accuser(s). The written charges shall be filed with the pastor, who shall advise the Congregation Council of the need to issue a written citation to the accused and the accusers that specifies the time and place of the hearing before the Congregation Council. The written charges shall accompany the written citation to the accused. A member charged with the offense shall 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. If the member charged fails to appear at the scheduled hearing, the Congregation Council may proceed with the hearing and may pass judgment in the member's absence.

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. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Congregation Council who are not disqualified but who are present and voting, and renewed admonitions prove ineffectual, the Congregation Council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:

- a. Censure before the congregation 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. Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Congregation Council upon request of:

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

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 ten 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 the council's 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 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.

Chapter 18.

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

C18.01. The Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions which describe the function of the various committees or organizations of this congregation.

C18.02. Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by 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.

BY-LAWS

Article I – Communion Participation

1. Participation in Holy Communion shall be open to all prepared and/or confirmed members of this and other Christian congregations who have been baptized and confess Jesus Christ as Lord. Worthy participation includes sincere repentance, faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, and an earnest desire to amend one's sinful life, as well as acceptance of the scriptural teaching regarding the Real Presence of Christ with His Body and Blood in the Sacrament.

Article II – Conflicting Loyalties

1. This congregation rejects all fellowship with organizations, secret or open, which are avowedly religious or which practice forms of religion without confessing faith in the Triune God and in Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God incarnate to be our only Savior from sin, and thus teach salvation by works.
2. Ceremonies of lodges or other such organizations shall not be permitted in the church or on the church premises of this congregation.
3. The pastor of this congregation shall take no part in any such ceremonies even if they are conducted outside of the church premises.

Article III – Membership

A. Admission to Baptized Membership:

1. Children one or both of whose parents or guardians are members of this congregation shall, upon receiving Christian Baptism, be received as baptized members of this congregation.
2. Children neither of whose parents or guardians are members of this congregation shall, upon Christian Baptism duly recorded as a ministerial act performed under the auspices of this congregation, be received as baptized members of this congregation unless there is understanding that, for good reason, they will be enrolled as baptized members of another congregation, in which case notice of the Baptism shall be sent to the congregation in which the child is to be enrolled as a baptized member.
3. Children baptized in other congregations shall be received as baptized members of this congregation upon admission of one or both parents or guardians to membership, or by consent of one or both parents or guardians, or by action of the congregation.
4. Adults not baptized, who have received instruction and have given evidence of having an adequate 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.

B. Admission to Confirmed Membership

1. Baptized adults, not previously members of this congregation, who have received instruction and have given evidence of having adequate understanding and acceptance of the teachings of the Word of God as confessed by the Lutheran Church, shall be admitted to confirmed membership through public profession of faith.
2. However, adults received as baptized members according to the provisions of Section A4 of this part of the bylaws, shall be recognized as confirmed members, whether or not, at the discretion of the pastor, they have participated in the rite of confirmation.

3. Children who are baptized members of the congregation shall be admitted to confirmed membership through participation in the rite of confirmation.
4. Applicants for membership presenting Letters of Transfer showing them to be confirmed members in good standing in other Lutheran congregations, shall be admitted to confirmed membership upon acceptance of their Letters of Transfer by the Congregation Council and the report of their names to the congregation.
5. Applicants for membership who present evidence of confirmation at a Lutheran congregation but do not have Letters of Transfer, shall be admitted to confirmed membership when the Congregation Council has determined that they meet the standards of Christian faith and life indicated in the constitution and bylaws and when they have reaffirmed their faith before the congregation.

C. Admission to Voting Membership

The Congregation Council shall be responsible for determining the voting membership in accordance with the qualifications specified in the constitution and bylaws. Any doubtful cases shall be decided by the congregation.

D. Discontinuance of Membership

1. Members who move away shall be encouraged to transfer their membership. A confirmed member in good standing desiring to change his membership to another Lutheran congregation shall, upon request, receive a Letter of Transfer.
2. Confirmed members who in the judgment of the Congregation Council, show no interest in attending church services, and do not partake of Holy Communion, and who do not contribute to the congregational treasury, according to the congregation's records, for a period of two years, shall be presumed no longer to desire membership, shall lose the right to vote and shall not be counted in the membership statistics of the congregation. However, their names and records shall be kept in the files for a period of five years thereafter. Such persons shall be encouraged to take part in the congregational life, or to transfer elsewhere, as the situation may indicate to be advisable. If they resume activity within the five year period, they shall be restored to the active membership life, if not, they shall be dismissed from the congregation and, if possible, shall be notified of this action.

Article IV – Officers, Boards and Committees

1. The duties of the officers of the congregation and the Congregation Council shall be as follows:
 - a. President – shall preside over meetings of the congregation unless agrees upon otherwise.
 - b. Vice President – shall preside over meetings of the congregation in the president's absence unless agreed upon otherwise.
 - c. Secretary – shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the congregation and Congregation Council and preserve its archives.
 - d. Treasurer – shall be custodian of all funds of the congregation; shall be a member of the Finance Committee; with recommendation from the Finance Committee, will disburse all such funds in accordance with the decisions of the congregation and Congregation Council and shall present an audited report to the congregation annually and to the Congregation Council at such times as it may

be decided. The treasurer shall be bonded.

- e. Director of the Board of Education – shall have oversight of the Sunday School and perform other duties as the congregation or Board of Education may decide.
2. Other duties of the officers shall be those prescribed in the bylaws or decided by the congregation.
3. There shall be a Board of Deacons of three members. Of that Board there shall be one designated Chair representing the Board of Deacons on the Congregation Council. They are elected at the annual meeting in such a way that the terms of approximately one-third of the members expire each year. The term of office shall be three years, and no member shall be eligible for election to more than two consecutive terms. The pastor shall be an ex-officio a member of the Board of Deacons, the president of the congregation shall be an advisory member. The Board of Deacons shall be responsible, under the leadership of the pastor, for the spiritual life of the congregation.
4. There shall be a Board of Trustees of three members. Of that Board there shall be one designated Chair representing the Board of Trustees on the Congregation Council. They are elected at the annual meeting in such a way that the terms of approximately one-third of the members expire each year. The term of office shall be three years and no member shall be eligible for election to more than two consecutive terms. The pastor and the president of the congregation shall be advisory members of the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the upkeep of the church and its facilities.
5. There shall be a Board of Education of three members. Included in that board (based upon the need) there shall be one designated chairperson, known as the Director of the Board of Education representing the Board of Education on the Congregation Council. They are elected at the annual meeting in such a way that the terms of approximately one half of the members expire each year. The term of office shall be three years for the Director, and two years for other members. No member shall be eligible for election for more than two consecutive terms. The pastor and the president of the congregation shall be advisory members of the Board of Education. The Board of Education shall be responsible for the leadership and supervision of the educational programs of the congregation for all ages.
6. There shall be a Finance Committee of four members including the Treasurer, and three others appointed by the Church Council. The term of office shall be three years, and no member shall be eligible for election to more than two consecutive terms. The pastor and the president of the congregation shall be advisory members of the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee shall be responsible for overseeing the financial affairs of the church, preparing an annual budget and monitoring monthly performance to budget, and assuring the church is following sound financial practices.
7. There shall be a Benevolence Committee of three members including one Council member and two other voting members elected by the Church Council. The term of office shall be two years, and no member shall be eligible for election to more than two consecutive terms. The pastor and the president of the congregation shall be advisory members of the Benevolence Committee. The Benevolence Committee shall be responsible for recommending the distribution of benevolence giving and submitting that recommendation to the Council for approval.