

Constitution and Bylaws of Trinity Lutheran Church

**CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS
of
TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH**
of Franklin Park Borough

Approved: 11/19/2023

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*** Indicates required provisions**

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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 Trinity Lutheran Church of Franklin Park Borough.
- C1.02.** For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the congregation of Trinity Lutheran Church of Franklin Park Borough is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."
- C1.11.** This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

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.

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

Chapter 3.

NATURE OF THE CHURCH

- ***C3.01.** All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.
- ***C3.02.** This church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world.
- ***C3.03.** The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.
- ***C3.04.** This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in The Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God's mission in the world.
- ***C3.05.** The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or "this church") as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.

Chapter 4.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

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- *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, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.
 - e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
 - f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.
- *C4.03.** To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:
- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
 - b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
 - c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.
 - d. Teach the Word of God.
 - e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
 - f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
 - g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for this congregation's ministry and the ministry of the other expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.
- *C4.04.** This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions.
- *C4.05.** This congregation shall adopt and periodically review a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

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***C4.06.** References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God’s mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

Chapter 5.

POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

- *C5.01.** The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.
- *C5.02.** The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregation Meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.
- *C5.03.** Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregation Council or other organizational units in this congregation’s governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by this congregation. This congregation is authorized to:
- a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
 - b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
 - c. call a minister of Word and Service;
 - d. terminate the call of a minister of Word and Service in conformity with the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
 - e. adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in Chapter 16, amendments to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 17, and continuing resolutions, as provided in Chapter 18;
 - f. approve the annual budget;
 - g. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
 - h. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
 - i. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
 - j. elect its Congregation Council and require the members of the council to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions; and
 - k. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.
- *C5.04.** This congregation shall elect from among its voting members laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by this congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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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 Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- ***C6.02.** This congregation accepts the Confession of Faith and agrees to the purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and shall act in accordance with them.
- ***C6.03.** This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which:
 - a. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
 - b. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the bishop of the synod. These special circumstances are limited either to calling a candidate approved for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or to contracting for pastoral services with a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion.
 - d. This congregation agrees to consider ministers of Word and Service for call to other staff positions in this congregation according to the procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - e. This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution with the synod for review to ascertain that all of its provisions are in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and with the constitution of the synod.
- ***C6.04.** Affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is terminated as follows:
 - a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.
 - b. This congregation ceases to exist.
 - c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or in accordance with provision 9.23. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - d. The Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod takes charge and control of the property of this congregation to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of the synod pursuant to 13.24. of the synod constitution. This congregation shall have the right to appeal the decision to the next Synod Assembly.
 - e. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in *C6.05.

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- *C6.05.** This congregation may terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the following procedure:
- a. A resolution indicating the intent to terminate its relationship must be adopted at two legally called and conducted special meetings of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at each meeting. The first such meeting may be held no sooner than 30 days after written notice of the meeting is received by the bishop of the synod, during which time this congregation shall consult with the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any. The times and manner of the consultation shall be determined by the bishop in consultation with the Congregation Council. Unless the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are voting members of this congregation, they shall have voice but not vote at the first meeting.
 - b. Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon at the first meeting, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall send copies of the resolution and certification to voting members of this congregation.
 - c. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the first meeting, the bishop of the synod and this congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph a. above, during a period of at least 90 days after receipt by the bishop of the attestation and certification as specified in paragraph b. above.
 - d. If this congregation, after such consultation, is still considering termination of its relationship with this church, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present. Notice of the second meeting shall be sent to all voting members and to the bishop at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Unless the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are voting members of this congregation, they shall have voice but not vote at the second meeting.
 - e. Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the second special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall send copies of the resolution and certification to the voting members of the congregation. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the second meeting, the relationship between the congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to Synod Council approval as required by paragraphs f. and g. below.
 - f. Unless this notification to the bishop also certifies that this congregation has voted to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, this congregation shall be deemed an independent or non-Lutheran church, in which case *C7.04 shall apply.
 - g. This congregation shall abide by these covenants by and among the three expressions of this church:
 - 1) Congregations seeking to terminate their relationship with this church which fail or refuse to comply with each of the foregoing provisions in *C6.05. shall be required to receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.
 - 2) Congregations which had been members of the Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to receive synod approval before terminating their membership in this church.

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- 3) Congregations established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to satisfy all financial obligations to this church and receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.
- h. If this congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at this congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above, or fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at this congregation's second meeting as specified in paragraph d. above, another attempt to consider termination of relationship with this church must follow all requirements of *C6.05. and may begin no sooner than six months after the meeting at which the two-thirds vote was not achieved.
- *C6.06.** If this congregation considers relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is taken.
- *C6.07.** If this congregation considers developing an additional site to be used regularly for worship, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action.

Chapter 7. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

- *C7.01.** If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- *C7.02.** If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline or pursuant to 9.23. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.
- *C7.03.** If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to transfer to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation, provided the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05. has been followed. Before this congregation takes action to transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod.
- *C7.04.** If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body and have followed the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05., title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with this congregation by the process established by the synod, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of this congregation. If the Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire

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to continue as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In neither case does title to this congregation's property transfer to the synod.

- *C7.05. Notwithstanding the provisions of *C7.02. and *C7.03. above, where this congregation has received property from the synod pursuant to a deed or other instrument containing restrictions under provision 9.71.a. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, this congregation accepts such restrictions and:
- a. Shall not transfer, encumber, mortgage, or in any way burden or impair any right, title, or interest in the property without prior approval of the Synod Council.
 - b. Shall—upon written demand by the Synod Council, pursuant to †S13.23. of the constitution of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod—reconvey and transfer all right, title, and interest in the property to the synod.

Chapter 8. MEMBERSHIP

- *C8.01. Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of this congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.
- *C8.02. Members shall be classified as follows:
- a. **Baptized** members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.
 - b. **Confirmed** members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.
 - c. **Voting** members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of this congregation as well as the other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws. They shall not have voted as a seasonal member of another congregation of this church in the previous two calendar months.
 - d. **Associate** members are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. These individuals have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights or other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.
 - e. **Seasonal** members are voting members of other congregations of this church who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation, including exercising limited voting rights in this congregation. The Congregation Council may grant seasonal membership to such persons

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- provided that this congregation is a member of a synod where the Synod Council has approved seasonal member voting on its territory. Such seasonal members shall have all the privileges and duties of voting members except that:
- 1) they shall not be eligible for elected office in, or for membership on the Congregation Council or on a call committee of, this congregation;
 - 2) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the call or termination of call of any minister of this congregation;
 - 3) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the affiliation of this congregation with this church;
 - 4) they shall not be eligible to serve as voting members from this congregation of the Synod Assembly or the Churchwide Assembly;
 - 5) they shall not, even if otherwise permitted by this congregation, vote by proxy or by absentee ballot; and
 - 6) they shall not, within any two calendar month period, exercise voting rights in this congregation and in the congregation where they remain voting members.

***C8.03.** All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Congregation Council.

***C8.04.** It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregation to:

- a. make regular use of the means of grace, both Word and sacraments;
- b. live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran church; and
- c. support the work of this congregation, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.

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

- a. death;
- b. resignation;
- c. transfer or release;
- d. disciplinary action in accordance with Chapter 20 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or
- e. removal from the roll due to inactivity in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

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

B8.05.01. A member who ceases to meet the requirements to be a voting member of this congregation as set forth in *C8.02.c. may be deemed to have resigned from membership due to inactivity, and shall be removed from the membership rolls upon vote of the Congregation Council. Removal from membership for inactivity shall not be disciplinary in nature, and shall not be governed by Chapter 15 of this constitution.

B8.05.02. To be re-instated as a member of this congregation after being removed from the rolls, a former member must be approved by Congregation Council in accordance with section *C8.03.

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Chapter 9.

ROSTERED MINISTER

- *C9.01.** Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by 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 roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.
- *C9.03.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
- a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
 - 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;
 - 3) conduct public worship;
 - 4) provide pastoral care;
 - 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 - 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
 - 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; and
 - 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.
 - b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
 - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) relate to all schools and organizations of this congregation;
 - 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
 - 4) with the council, administer discipline;
 - 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod; and
 - 6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- *C9.04.** The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.05.** The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and this congregation shall be as follows:
- a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by the pastor's death, or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:

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- 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the pastor;
 - 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- b. When allegations of disability or incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
- 1) the bishop, who has 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 disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by this congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, this congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of

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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 discipline in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws and continuing resolutions.

- ***C9.06.** At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.
- ***C9.07.** During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in this congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any rostered minister providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.
- ***C9.08.** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting.
- ***C9.09.** When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- ***C9.11.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from *C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of *C9.05.a.
- ***C9.12.** The pastor of this congregation:
 - a. shall keep accurate records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from this congregation;
 - b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod; and
 - c. shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- ***C9.13.** The pastor(s) shall submit a report of ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

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- *C9.14.** The records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of this congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in the secretary's hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another call or approval of a request for change in roster status.
- C9.15.** Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synod bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between this congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synod bishop and approved by this congregation.
- *C9.21.** Authority to call a deacon shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by 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 synod bishop may be called as a deacon of this congregation.
- *C9.23.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:
- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
 - b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
 - c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;
 - d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
 - e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
 - f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
 - g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
 - h. Share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
 - i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.
- *C9.24.** The specific duties of the deacon, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the deacon shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.25.** The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Service and this congregation shall be as follows:
- a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a deacon, shall constitute a

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continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by the deacon's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of 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) inability to conduct the office effectively in view of disability or 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 disability or 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, who has 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 disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the deacon's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, 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

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a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

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

- ***C9.26.** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former deacon before calling a successor. A deacon shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting.
- ***C9.27.** When a deacon is called to serve in company with another rostered minister or other rostered ministers, the privileges and responsibilities of each rostered minister shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the rostered ministers, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- ***C9.28.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from *C9.25.a. and call a deacon for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the deacon and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of *C9.25.a.
- ***C9.29.** The deacon shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the deacon shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- ***C9.31.** The deacon(s) shall submit a report of ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

Chapter 10.

CONGREGATION MEETING

C10.01. This congregation shall have at least one regular meeting per year. The regular meeting(s) of this congregation shall be held at the time(s) specified in the bylaws. Consistent with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the bylaws shall designate one regular meeting per year as the annual meeting of this congregation.

B10.01.01. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held on the third, fourth or fifth Sunday of January on a date and at a time determined by the Congregation Council.

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- 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 this congregation upon the written request of 10% of the voting members. The president of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synod bishop. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose(s) for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted. The vote(s) for the main question(s) for which a special meeting is called shall be taken by written ballot at the request of any two voting members present.
- C10.03.** Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, to all voting members at least 10 calendar days in advance of the date of the meeting.
- C10.04.** Ten percent of the voting members shall constitute a quorum.
- B10.04.01.** The Council secretary shall bring a current listing of voting members to each congregation meeting and be responsible for determining whether a quorum exists for the purpose(s) for which such meeting was called.
- C10.05.** Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- C10.06.** All actions approved by this congregation shall be by majority vote of those voting members present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution, the bylaws or by state law.
- C10.07.** *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.
- C10.08.** This congregation may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Chapter 11. OFFICERS

- C11.01.** The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.
- Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
 - The officers shall be voting members of this congregation.
 - The president, vice president, and secretary of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.
 - The president, vice president, and secretary shall be selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council. If the treasurer is not selected from the membership of the Congregation Council, the treasurer shall have voice but not vote at the meetings of the Congregation Council.

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C11.02. The Congregation Council shall elect the president, vice president and secretary, and appoint a treasurer, and they shall be the officers of this congregation. The president, vice president and secretary shall be elected by written ballot, and the treasurer appointed, at a special Congregation Council meeting (notice for which shall be waived) to be held no later than two weeks following the annual meeting of this congregation. Each officer's term shall begin at the close of the special Congregation Council meeting at which they are elected or appointed and shall end at the close of the following year's special Congregation Council meeting at which their successor is elected or appointed.

B11.02.01. The duties of the president shall be to:

- a. enforce the constitution and bylaws of this congregation and carry out the expressed will of this congregation as embodied in the continuing resolutions;
- b. convene and preside at meetings of the Congregation Council and this congregation;
- c. be an ex officio member of all committees of this congregation, except the Audit and Nominating committees;
- d. receive and respond to congregational correspondence; and
- e. address members' concerns.

B11.02.02. The duties of the vice president shall be to:

- a. fulfill the duties of the president of this congregation during the president's absence or upon the president's request;
- b. chair the Constitution Review Committee as provided in the continuing resolutions; and
- c. serve as parliamentarian to provide non-binding advice at the president's request.

B11.02.03. The duties of the secretary shall be to:

- a. keep accurate minutes of all meetings of this congregation and of the Congregation Council in a manner prescribed by the Congregation Council, which shall be preserved permanently in its archives;
- b. be responsible for delivery of notice of congregation and Congregation Council meetings;
- c. hold in safekeeping all documents designated by the Congregation Council (including, but not limited to, the constitution, its bylaws and the continuing resolutions);
- d. bring a current listing of voting members to each congregation meeting to determine whether a quorum exists for the purpose(s) for which such meeting was called; and
- e. conduct or supervise the counting of votes at meetings of this congregation and Congregation Council, and announce the results thereof.

B11.02.04. The duties of the treasurer shall be to:

- a. be the fiscal officer of this congregation;
- b. maintain accurate books of account of this congregation and make such books available for inspection by any voting member of this congregation upon reasonable notice and at a reasonable time;

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- c. receive from the financial secretary a record of all funds received by and belonging to this congregation;
- d. be responsible for receiving all bills and paying out all moneys upon proper authorization by this congregation or Congregation Council;
- e. ensure the timely and accurate filing of all payroll and other financial reports required by governmental agencies;
- f. make a written report setting forth receipts, expenditures, fund balances and indebtedness in reasonable detail to the Congregation Council monthly and to this congregation at its annual meeting; and
- g. submit to the Audit Committee any financial reports and records it reasonably requests to carry out its audit of the financial records.

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, except the office of the treasurer, who shall serve at the discretion of Congregation Council.

C11.04. Should an office specified in C.11.01. be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect or appoint a successor to serve until the next special Congregation Council meeting referred to in C11.02. Such successor's term of office shall begin at the close of the Congregation Council meeting at which they are elected or appointed. If such appointment is effective for 6 months or less, it shall not count as a term for purposes of the term limit specified in C11.03.

B11.04.01. In the event of a vacancy in the office of the president, and until such time as a new president has been duly elected, the order of succession to conduct the duties of the president shall be (a) the vice president, then (b) the secretary and then (c) the treasurer.

C11.05. The Congregation Council may appoint a financial secretary, the duties of whom shall be specified in the bylaws. Term of office shall be one year or until a successor is appointed, with no limit on the number of consecutive terms.

B11.05.01. The duties of the financial secretary shall be as follows:

- a. be responsible for ensuring there are adequate procedures in place for receiving, recording and placing in safe-keeping all moneys received by and belonging to this congregation;
- b. furnish the treasurer with a record of such receipts;
- c. be in charge of the accounts of individual contributions;
- d. issue a statement of year-to-date contributions to each confirmed member at least twice annually;
- e. annually furnish the Congregation Council with a list of members who did not make a contribution of record in the current or preceding calendar year so that Council may undertake the review of the membership rolls required by C12.07 and B8.05.01.;
- f. make a written report setting forth receipts in reasonable detail to the Congregation Council monthly and to this congregation at its annual meeting;

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- g. except as provided above for purposes of maintaining the membership rolls, ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that the amounts of specific members' financial contributions to this congregation are kept confidential. To avoid doubt, this includes not disclosing the names or rank order of members belonging to categories based on the amounts of their financial contributions (e.g., "major," "top," "bottom," etc.);
- h. upon request of Congregation Council:
 - 1) create analytical reports (e.g., number of members whose giving has increased or decreased, number of members who are ahead or behind on financial pledges, etc., and the aggregate monetary amounts for such categories, all without disclosing any names or individual financial contributions);
 - 2) provide the names (but not amounts or rank order of financial contributions) of members who donated to specific initiatives for purposes of issuing acknowledgments or thank-you notes;
- i. notify the Congregation Council of an expected material change in financial contributions (without disclosing any names) that may affect the operating budget;
- j. notify the pastor of a member's name (but not monetary amounts) when a change in financial contributions may, in the financial secretary's sole discretion, indicate a cause for pastoral concern for that member.
- k. The above notwithstanding, any member of this congregation may at any time grant the financial secretary the right to disclose the amount of their financial contributions to the pastor or Congregation Council. In such cases, the pastor and Congregation Council shall be allowed to create the type of category lists otherwise prohibited under B.11.05.01. g., but still must not disclose the amounts or rank order of such members' financial contributions (e.g., a list of such financial contributors would have to be in alphabetical order only).

Chapter 12. CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s) and not more than 12 nor fewer than 8 members of this congregation. Any voting member of this congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the 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 successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause. Consistent with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, this congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.

B12.01.01. This congregation may recall an elected member of Congregation Council for cause. Cause shall include among other things: conduct not in keeping with the tenets of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, failure to fulfill their duties as a member of Council, behavior which may reflect negatively to this congregation's position within the community, criminal activity, or acts of hate that do not portray the love of Christ. A petition signed by at least 10% of the voting members of this congregation may initiate such recall. In requiring cause to be shown, it shall be

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sufficient that:

- a) the petition states the reasoning for the recall being initiated, and
- b) the required signatures have been obtained.

Such petition shall be provided to the president, who shall call a special Congregation Meeting for the sole purpose to consider such recall. The Council member shall be recalled upon the majority vote of the voting members present and voting at such meeting.

B12.01.02. For purposes of C12.01., cause for absence from regular meetings of Council shall be limited to temporary illness or incapacity of an elected member of Council or their immediate family. The Congregation Council on its own initiative may also seek the removal of an elected member of Council based upon one or more of the reasons set forth in section B12.01.01. In such case, removal shall require that the member to be removed be informed in advance of the time and date of the meeting at which Council will consider that Council member's removal. Notice shall be deemed sufficient if given with the normal notice and material provided for any monthly Council meeting. If a special meeting is to be called (that is a meeting which is not a regularly scheduled Council meeting), written notice shall be given at least 2 weeks in advance of the time when the meeting is intended to be held. Upon ascertaining the necessary quorum, removal shall occur upon the agreement of two-thirds (2/3) of the entire Council (not just those members present and voting at such meeting).

B12.01.03. A member of Congregation Council may resign voluntarily, and such member's seat on Council shall be deemed vacant upon delivery of the resignation to the president or to the officer presiding at any regular meeting of the Congregation Council.

C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council (except the pastor(s)) shall be elected at the annual Congregation meeting by written ballot to serve for the shorter of (1) the remaining term of a vacancy that is being filled, (2) 2 years or (3) until the beginning of their successors' terms. Their terms shall begin at the commencement of the special Congregation Council meeting referred to in C11.02. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively. Newly elected Congregation Council members shall be installed at worship at a time appointed by the Congregation Council.

C12.03. Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote of those members present, a successor until the next annual meeting. Such successor's term of office shall begin at the close of the Congregation Council meeting at which they are elected.

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.

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

C12.05. The 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 managing its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 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 this congregation.
- c. The Congregation Council shall have charge of the cemetery of this congregation. They shall adopt rules from time to time to properly administer it. Such rules shall be outlined in the continuing resolutions and shall be binding on all members and lot holders.
- d. Congregation Council shall establish a Cemetery Fund to receive and hold monies paid by cemetery deed holders and other contributions designated as being for the cemetery. To the maximum extent possible, monies in the Cemetery Fund shall be held separate from other funds of this congregation. The Cemetery Fund shall be used exclusively for maintenance, repair and other expenses of operating the cemetery, and shall not be borrowed from nor used for any other purpose.
- e. The Congregation Council shall oversee the preparation and presentation of an annual operating budget for adoption by this congregation and supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption. The operating budget shall include an allocation of funds in support of the wider ministry being carried on in collaboration with the synod and churchwide organization.
- f. 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 mission support

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monies to the synod.

- g. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments (which shall include, but not be limited to, overseeing the work of the Endowment Committee) and its total insurance program.

B.12.05.01. The Congregation Council may incur operating expenses not included in the operating budget which in the aggregate do not exceed 5% of the annual operating expense budget approved by this congregation. The Congregation Council may also incur non-operating expenses (e.g., property improvements, Steeple renovation, stained glass windows, etc.) which in the aggregate are not more than 15% greater than the funds on hand or pledged for such purposes. The Congregation Council may incur expenses in excess of these limits only after securing approval by a majority vote of voting members present at a Congregation meeting.

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 staff of this congregation. Council may appoint an individual to direct and supervise the functions and operations of the staff on a daily basis. Nothing in this provision shall be deemed to affect this congregation's responsibility for the call, terms of call, or termination of call of any employees who are on a roster of this church.

C12.09. The Congregation Council shall oversee the preparation of a comprehensive report to be submitted to this congregation at the annual meeting.

C12.11. The Congregation Council shall normally meet at least twice per calendar quarter. 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 at least 3 calendar days in advance 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, including the pastor or interim pastor, except when the pastor or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and has been given the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting, which shall be the only business acted upon at that meeting. Chronic or repeated absence of the pastor or interim pastor shall not preclude action by the Congregation Council, following notification to the synod bishop.

C12.13. The Congregation Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

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- C12.14.** Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- C12.15.** All actions approved by the Congregation Council shall be by majority vote of those voting members present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution, the bylaws or by Commonwealth of Pennsylvania law.
- C12.16.** *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of the Congregation Council.

Chapter 13.

CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

- C13.01.** All Congregation Committee positions must be advertised in the Church Bulletin for at least two consecutive Sundays.
- C13.02.** A ***Nominating Committee*** of four to six voting members of this congregation, two of whom, if possible, shall be outgoing members of the Congregation Council, shall be elected by this congregation at the annual meeting for a term of one year. Members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible for consecutive re-election.
- B13.02.01.** The Nominating Committee recruits candidates for Congregation Council, the Endowment Fund Committee, and Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee should attempt to broaden the involvement of members of this congregation in the life of the Church.
- C13.03.** An ***Audit Committee*** of three voting members of this congregation shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Audit Committee members shall not have been the treasurer or financial secretary, nor a pastor, paid employee or officer of this congregation, at any time during the fiscal year(s) under audit. Term of office shall be three years, with one member appointed each year. Members shall be eligible for re-election, but shall not serve more than 2 consecutive terms.
- B13.03.01.** The Audit Committee shall:
- a. perform annual audits (following the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Audit Guide to the extent applicable to this congregation) of the accounts maintained by the financial secretary, treasurer, and the Endowment Fund Committee;
 - b. recommend potential improvements in financial policies and procedures that come to its attention as a result of such audits; and
 - c. report directly to the Congregation Council and present its most recently completed audit report to this congregation at the annual congregation meeting.
- C13.04.** A ***Mutual Ministry*** of four to six voting members of this congregation shall be selected by the president and the rostered minister. Term of office shall be two years, with two or three members to be selected each year. Members shall not be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms.

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B13.04.01. The Mutual Ministry Committee, together with the pastor, shall:

- a. be responsible for affirming and strengthening the mission of this congregation and the ministry of the staff, through listening and clarifying, sharing and communicating and reviewing and reflecting;
- b. develop open communications about expectations, attitudes and concerns with the pastor and the staff, within this congregation, and in the community;
- c. advise planned continuing education that benefits both the mission of this congregation and the ministry of the staff;
- d. act as a "sounding board" in time of personal or professional stress; and
- e. serve as a group where the pastor and staff can test new ideas.

C13.05. When a vacancy occurs in a position for which this congregation calls a rostered minister, a **Call Committee** of six voting members shall be nominated by the Congregation Council and elected by this congregation. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called rostered minister.

B13.05.01. The Call Committee shall work with the synod so that necessary guidelines are followed.

C13.06. An **Endowment Fund Committee** of four voting members of this congregation shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by this congregation at the annual meeting. The term of office will be two years, with two members elected each year. Members shall not be eligible to serve more than two full terms consecutively .

B13.06.01. The Endowment Fund Committee shall:

- a. encourage gifts to the Endowment Fund;
- b. accept undesignated gifts received by this congregation that Congregation Council determines should be placed in the Endowment Fund;
- c. receive and celebrate gifts given to the Endowment Fund and maintain a permanent book of remembrance of donors to the Endowment Fund;
- d. use discretion to decline a gift if deemed to be in the best interest of the Endowment Fund;
- e. determine how the Fund assets will be invested, including the asset allocation. The investment objective will be to provide long-term growth in order to maintain the purchasing power of the Fund's assets. In any event, all investments shall be invested with independent investment institutions not affiliated with any voting member of this congregation. No committee member shall invest the assets in a way that would bring private remuneration to that individual;
- f. report at least quarterly to the Congregation Council on any and all activity within the Fund. An annual accounting and a report of ministries supported through the Fund shall be distributed to this congregation at its annual meeting;
- g. in any year in which the Endowment Fund balance exceeds \$100,000 as of September 30, declare a distribution of not less than 3% nor more than 6% of the average fair market value of the Endowment Fund balance for the previous eight calendar quarters. Such distribution is to be declared by November 30 and paid out of the Fund on or about the following February 1;

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- h. fulfill the purpose of the Endowment Fund by entrusting Congregation Council to allocate the annual distribution to the missions, ministries, and operations of this congregation as it deems advisable during the annual budgeting process; and
- i. respond to Congregation Council's request to use money from the Endowment Fund in excess of the annual distribution set forth above. Any such "excess distribution" must be approved by two-thirds of the voting members of this congregation present and voting at a special Congregation Meeting called for this purpose or at the annual meeting of this congregation (in which latter case notice of the proposed "excess distribution" shall be included with the notices for such annual meeting).

C13.07. Other committees of this congregation may be formed, merged or discontinued, as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council.

B13.07.01. Duties of Congregation Committees are to be set forth in the bylaws. Congregation Council may establish, review and change duties of standing and ad hoc ministries and committees as it deems necessary or desirable to carry out the mission of the church. The duties of standing and ad hoc ministries and committees are to be set forth in the continuing resolutions.

B13.07.02. Congregation Council is responsible for the oversight of all committees (which may also be referred to as "ministries"). Council, at its discretion, may assign one or more of its members to act as liaisons with any of the committees. Council liaisons may attend and participate in committee meetings but shall not vote on committee business unless they were already a member of that committee.

B13.07.03. Standing committees are ongoing committees that meet regularly to carry out the normal functions of this congregation. As stewards of Christ's work, each standing committee shall proactively seek to include new participants in the working of the committee and encourage this congregation's involvement in the projects and activities of the ministry.

B13.07.04. Ad Hoc Committees are temporary committees formed to address specific needs, with members appointed by the Congregation Council.

B13.07.05. Except as specified in the constitution or bylaws, there shall be no limit to the size of any standing or ad hoc committee, no requirement for membership thereon other than being a voting member of the congregation, and no limit to the term thereon. The chair of each standing or ad hoc committee, however, shall be limited to a term of two years as chair, and shall not be eligible to serve as chair more than two consecutive terms.

B13.07.06. Each congregation and standing committee shall submit a report of its activities in such format and according to such timetable as may be reasonably requested by the Congregation Council. Each such committee shall also prepare a summary of its activities and future plans and objectives for Council's use in overseeing the preparation of a comprehensive annual report to this congregation as per C.12.09.

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- C13.08.** The pastor and the president of this congregation shall be ex officio members of all committees and boards of this congregation, except the Audit Committee and the Nominating Committee.
- C13.09.** “Ex officio” as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited.

Chapter 14.

ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THIS CONGREGATION

- C14.01.** All organizations within this congregation shall exist to aid it in ministering not only to the members of this congregation, but also to all God’s children. 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 this congregation, or willful and repeated harassment or defamation of member(s) of this congregation is sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation and repentance will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps, as necessary: a) private counsel and admonition by the pastor, b) censure and admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, c) written referral of the matter by the Congregation Council to the vice president of the synod, who will refer it to a consultation panel drawn from the Consultation Committee of the synod, and d) written referral of the matter by the consultation panel to the Committee on Discipline of the synod. If, for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by paragraphs a. and b. hereof, those steps may be performed by another pastor chosen by the Congregation Council.
- *C15.02.** The process for discipline of a member of this congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. If the counseling, censure, and admonitions pursuant to C15.01 do not result in repentance and amendment of life, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing may be prepared by the Congregation Council, signed, and submitted to the vice president of the synod. The vice president shall select from the synod’s Consultation Committee a panel of five members (three laypersons and two rostered ministers). A copy of the written charges shall be provided to the

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consultation panel and the accused member(s). The consultation panel, after requesting a written reply to the charges from the accused member(s), shall consider the matter and seek a resolution by means of investigation, consultation, mediation, or whatever other means may seem appropriate. The panel's efforts to reach a mutually agreeable resolution shall continue for no more than 45 days after the matter is submitted to it.

- *C15.03.** If the consultation panel fails to resolve the matter, that panel shall refer the case in writing, including the written charges and the accused member's reply, to the Committee on Discipline of the synod for a hearing. A copy of the panel's written referral shall be delivered to the vice president of the synod, the Congregation Council, and the accused member(s) at the same time it is sent to the Committee on Discipline of the synod. The Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall then select six members from the Committee on Discipline to decide the case, and shall appoint a member of the Synod Council to preside as nonvoting chair. Those six members plus the nonvoting chair comprise the discipline hearing panel for deciding the case. The Congregation Council and the accused member(s) are the parties to the case.
- *C15.04.** The discipline hearing panel shall commence and conduct the disciplinary hearing in accordance with the provisions governing discipline of congregation members prescribed in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- *C15.05.** By the vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the discipline hearing panel who are present and voting, one of the following disciplinary sanctions can be imposed:

 - a. suspension from the privileges of congregation membership for a designated period of time;
 - b. suspension from the privileges of congregation membership until the pastor and Congregation Council receive evidence, satisfactory to them, of repentance and amendment of life;
 - c. termination of membership in this congregation; or
 - d. termination of membership in this congregation and exclusion from the church property and from all congregation activities.
- *C15.06.** The written decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be sent to the vice president of the synod, the accused member(s), and the Congregation Council as required by the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. The decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be implemented by the Congregation Council and recorded in the minutes of the next council meeting.
- *C15.07.** No member of this congregation shall be subject to discipline a second time for offenses that a discipline hearing panel has heard previously and decided pursuant to this chapter.

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*C15.10. Adjudication

*C15.11. When there is disagreement between or among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president of this congregation of their intent to do so. The synod bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the dispute. If the issue relates directly to the pastor, the bishop may begin the process in †S14.18.d. In all other matters, if the bishop's consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the Council deems necessary. The Synod Council's decision shall be final.

Chapter 16. AMENDMENTS

*C16.01. Unless provision *C16.04 is applicable, those sections of this constitution that are not required, in accord with the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be amended in the following manner. Amendments may be proposed by at least 10 voting members, or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify this congregation's members of the proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

*C16.02. An amendment to this constitution, proposed under *C16.01., shall:
a. be approved at any legally called meeting of this congregation by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting; and
b. be ratified without change at the next regular meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.

*C16.03. Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in *C16.01 and *C16.02 shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The synod shall notify this congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed changes; the changes shall go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them.

B16.03.01. This constitution, its bylaws and the continuing resolutions may be changed to correct editorial errors as long as such corrections do not alter the intent and meaning of these governing documents. Such changes may be approved by, and shall become effective upon, a simple majority vote of the entire Congregation Council (not just those present and voting). Following the adoption of such a change, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod.

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B16.03.02. The nullification of any section, clause or portion of any amendment or series of amendments to this constitution by ruling of the synod shall have no impact upon the remaining sections, clauses or portions of the amendments to this constitution previously approved by this congregation, which shall remain in full force and effect.

***C16.04.** This constitution may be amended to bring any section into conformity with a section or sections, either required or not required, of the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as most recently amended by the Churchwide Assembly. Such amendments may be approved by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of this congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of this congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail, or electronic means, as permitted by state law, notice to this congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council's recommendations, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of at least two (2) voting members of this congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following the congregation's vote of approval.

Chapter 17. BYLAWS

***C17.01.** This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.

***C17.02.** Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.

***C17.03.** Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member, provided that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify this congregation's members of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

***C17.04.** Adopted or amended bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

Chapter 18. CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

***C18.01.** This congregation in a legally called meeting or the Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this congregation.

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***C18.02.** Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a majority vote of a meeting of this congregation or a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Congregation Council.

***C18.03.** Adopted or amended continuing resolutions shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

B18.03.01. Continuing resolutions shall be reviewed by the Congregation Council at least every three years during the constitution review period. The review will consist of determining whether or not a continuing resolution needs to be rescinded, modified, or left in place.

B18.03.02. Amendment of the constitution or bylaws shall have the effect of repealing any and all continuing resolutions previously enacted by this congregation or the Congregation Council in so far as they are inconsistent with the constitution and bylaws, as amended.

B18.03.03. Continuing resolutions are to be appended to the end of the constitution and bylaws, and are to be numbered according to the section of the constitution or bylaws to which they relate, and also note the date of adoption.

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.

B19.01.01. In conformity with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania found at 15PA.C.S.A., subchapters B and D, this congregation maintains that the members of Congregation Council, acting in their capacity as directors for this non-profit corporation, shall not be personally liable for any action taken in their capacity as members of Congregation Council, and this congregation shall, upon effectuation of the procedures set forth in the afore-mentioned statutes, defend and indemnify such Council members from claims of liability to this congregation or to the third parties, unless: 1) the Council members has breached or failed to perform the duties of the office as set forth in Subchapter B of Chapter 57 of Title 15 Pa. C.S.A., and 2) such breach or failure to perform constitutes an act of self-dealing, willful mis-conduct, or recklessness. This congregation hereby incorporates by reference the provisions and protections of subchapters B and D of 15 Pa. C.S.A. in order to protect all those who serve on Council, and any and all other officers, agents and/or members of this congregation who are permitted to be indemnified by this non-profit corporation by said statute and for the purposes set forth therein.

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Chapter 20.

PARISH AUTHORIZATION

[Required provisions when congregation is part of a parish]*

- *C20.01.** This congregation may unite with one or more other congregations recognized by the synod named in *C6.01. to form a parish. Except as provided in *C20.02. and *C20.03., a written agreement, developed in consultation with the synod and approved by the voting members of each congregation participating in the parish, shall specify the powers and responsibilities that have been delegated to the Parish Council. The Parish Agreement shall identify which congregation of the parish issues calls on behalf of the member congregations or shall establish a process for identifying which congregation issues calls on behalf of the member congregations.
- *C20.02.** One congregation of a parish shall issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Sacrament or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended by the synod bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a two-thirds vote at a congregation meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.
- *C20.03.** One congregation of a parish may issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Service or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended by the synod bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a two-thirds vote at a congregation meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.
- *C20.04.** Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with the pastor as provided in †S14.18.d. of the synod constitution of the synod named in *C6.01. In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.
- *C20.05.** Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with a minister of Word and Service as provided in †S14.43.d. of the synod constitution of the synod named in *C6.01. In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.
- *C20.06.** Whenever a parish agreement is terminated, the call of any rostered minister serving that parish is terminated. Should any congregation that was formerly part of the parish agreement desire to issue a new call to that rostered minister, it may do so in accordance with the call process of this church.