

**CONSTITUTION OF
ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH**
A member congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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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 Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church of Belvidere, IL.
- C1.02.** For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the congregation of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church of Belvidere is hereinafter designated as “this congregation.”
- C1.11.** This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois.
- C1.12.** Said corporation is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501C(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

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.

* Required provision

- a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.
 - b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.
- *C2.03.** This congregation accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.
- *C2.04.** This congregation accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this congregation.
- *C2.05.** This congregation accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
- *C2.06.** This congregation accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.
- *C2.07.** This congregation confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scripture and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

Chapter 3.

NATURE OF THE CHURCH

- *C3.01.** All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.
- *C3.02.** 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.
- *C3.03.** 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 church wide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the church wide organization to which specific references may be made herein.

Chapter 4.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- *C4.01.** The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.
- *C4.02.** To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:
- a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
 - b. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.

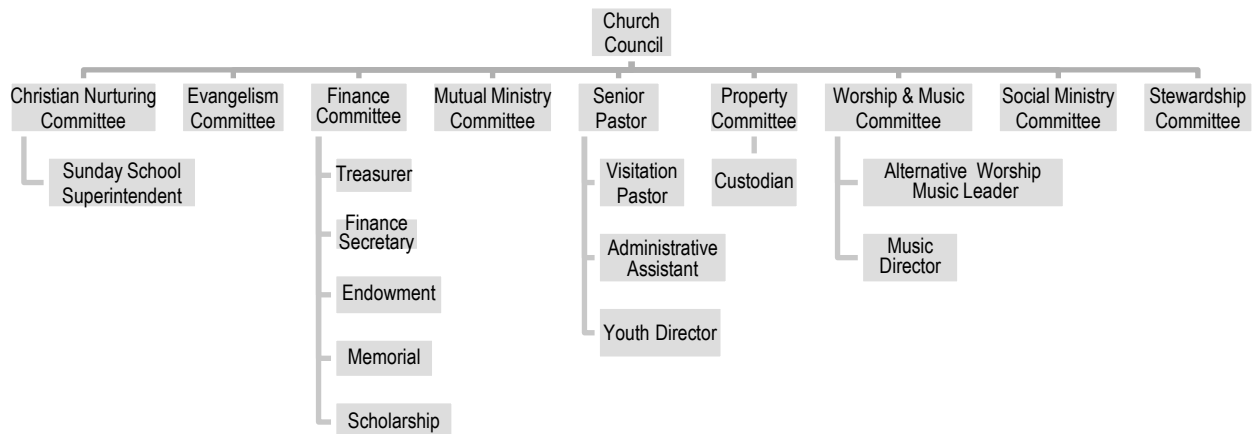
- c. Carry out Christ’s Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
- d. Serve in response to God’s love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs.
- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
- f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

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

- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
- b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
- c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.
- d. Teach the Word of God.
- e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
- f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
- g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for the congregation’s ministry and the ministry of other parts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the church wide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with church wide policy.

***C4.04.** This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions. (12.04.A15. – 12.04.F15.)

C4.04.01. Zion’s Organizational Structure



***C4.05.** This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

C4.05.A15. We are a caring congregation committed to sharing Christ’s love with the world.

***C4.06.** References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the church wide 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 the congregation. The congregation is authorized to:
 - a. Call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
 - b. Terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
 - c. Call or terminate the call of associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers in conformity with the applicable policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
 - d. Adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in Chapter 17, amendments to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 16, and continuing resolutions, as provided in Chapter 18.
 - e. Approve the annual budget;
 - f. Acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
 - g. Hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
 - h. Sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
 - i. Elect its Congregation Council, boards, and committees, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions; and
 - j. Terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.
- *C5.04.** This congregation shall choose from among its voting members laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by the congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- C5.05.** This congregation shall have a mission endowment fund that will operate as specified in this congregation's bylaws. The purpose of the mission endowment fund is to provide for mission work beyond the operational budget of this congregation.
 - C5.05.01.** The Fund is established to promote a continuing program of special gifts, deferred gifts and bequests by members and supporters of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Belvidere, IL by providing financial support for special religious, charitable, educational and benevolent projects and capital expenditures not usually in the general budget.
 - C5.05.02.** The purposes of the Fund program are to:
 - a. Encourage and promote special giving for the advancement of the benevolent works of the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church.
 - b. Provide funds to augment the regular income of Zion Lutheran Church for the financial support of special missions and ministries and capital improvement projects not within the general budget of the Church.
 - c. Provide a secure and financially stable vehicle to receive gifts and bequests to the Fund and to invest proceeds derived from such gifts and bequests.
 - d. Provide assistance and encouragement to individuals desiring to establish special gifts or bequests through wills and annuities and other such instruments.
 - C5.05.03.** Congregational Actions
 - a. Amendment to congregational bylaws
 - A Mission Endowment Fund, whose purpose, governance, and operational procedures shall be defined by special resolution adopted by the congregation, shall be established."
 - b. Resolution to implement the Mission Endowment Fund

1. Whereas, Christian stewardship involves the faithful management of all the gifts God has given to humankind – the created world, the gospel, life, time, abilities, money, including accumulated, inherited and appreciated resources; and
2. Whereas, the Scriptural principle of proportionate giving, to return to the Lord a portion of the gifts God has first given to his beloved children, is both a privilege and an appropriate response in all times and circumstances; and
3. Whereas, Christians can give to the work of the church through bequests in wills, assignment of life insurance, charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder and other trusts, assignment of certificates of deposit, and transfers of property (cash, stocks, bonds, real estate); and
4. Whereas, it is the desire of ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH to encourage, receive and administer these gifts in a manner consistent with the loyalty and devotion to our Lord expressed by the donors and in accord with the policies of this congregation:
5. Therefore be it resolved, that this congregation in annual meeting assembled on January 1992, approve and establish on the records of the church a new and separate fund to be known as THE MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND (hereafter called the “fund”) of the ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF BELVIDERE, IL.
6. Be it further resolved, that the purpose of this FUND is to enhance the mission outreach of ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH apart from the general operation of the congregation; that no portion of the income generated by the FUND shall be used for the annual operation budget of the congregation;
7. Be it further resolved, that the Mission Endowment Fund Committee (hereinafter called the “COMMITTEE”) shall be the custodian of the FUND;
8. Be it further resolved, that the following Plan of Operation set forth the administration and management of the FUND:

C5.05.04. Bylaws to Implement the Plan of Operation

a. Committee membership

The committee shall consist of five members, all of whom shall be voting members of ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH. Except as herein limited, the term of each member shall be three (3) years. Upon adoption of this resolution by the congregation, it shall elect five (5) members to the COMMITTEE: two (2) for a term of three (3) years; two (2) for a term of two (2) years; and one (1) for a term of one (1) year. Thereafter, at each annual meeting, the congregation shall elect the necessary number for a term of three (3) years. No member shall serve more than two consecutive three (3) year terms. After a lapse of one (1) year, former COMMITTEE members may be re-elected. The senior pastor and the president/vice president of the Church Council shall be advisory members of the COMMITTEE. The Church Council of the congregation shall nominate for the COMMITTEE and report at the annual congregational meeting in the same manner as for other offices and committees. In the event of a vacancy on the COMMITTEE, the Church Council shall appoint a member to fill the vacancy until the next annual meeting of the congregation, at which time the congregation shall elect a member to fulfill the term of the vacancy.

- b. The COMMITTEE shall meet at least quarterly, or more frequently as deemed by it in the best interest of the FUND.
- c. A quorum shall consist of three (3) MEMBERS. When only three (3) members are present a unanimous vote shall be required to carry any motion or resolution.
- d. The committee shall elect from its membership a chairperson, recording secretary and financial secretary. The chairperson, or member designated by the chairperson, shall preside at all committee meetings.
- e. The recording secretary of the COMMITTEE shall maintain complete and accurate minutes of all meetings and supply a copy thereof to each member of the committee. Each member

shall keep a complete copy of minutes to be delivered to his or her successor. The recording secretary shall also supply a copy of minutes to the Church Council.

- f. The financial secretary of the COMMITTEE shall work with the congregation's treasurer in maintaining and coordinating complete and accurate accounts for the FUND and the congregation's treasurer shall sign checks and all other necessary documents on behalf of the congregation in furtherance of the purposes of the FUND. The books shall be audited annually by a certified public accountant or other appropriate person who is not a member of the COMMITTEE.
- g. The COMMITTEE shall report on a quarterly basis to the Church Council and, at each annual or duly called special meeting of the congregation, shall render a full and complete audited account of the administration of the FUND during the preceding year,
- h. The COMMITTEE may request other members of the congregation to serve as advisory members and, at the expense of FUND income, may provide for such professional counseling on investments or legal matters as it deems to be in the best interest of the fund.
- i. Members of the COMMITTEE shall not be liable for any losses which may be incurred upon the investments of the assets of the FUND except to the extent such losses shall have been caused by bad faith or gross negligence. Each member shall be liable only for his/her own willful misconduct or omissions, and shall not be liable for the acts of omissions of any other member. No member shall engage in any self dealing or transactions with the FUND in which the member has direct or indirect financial interest and shall at all times refrain from any conduct in which his/her personal interests would conflict with the interest of the FUND.
- j. All assets are to be held in the name of the ZION Mission Endowment Fund.
- k. Recommendations to hold, sell, exchange, rent, lease, transfer, convert, invest, reinvest, and in all other respects to manage and control the assets of the FUND, including stocks, bonds, debentures, mortgages, notes, or other securities, as in their judgment and discretion they deem wise and prudent, are to be made by the COMMITTEE for approval by the Church Council, with subsequent execution by the delegated member of the COMMITTEE.

C5.05.05. Distribution of income

- a. The committee shall determine what is principal and income according to accepted accounting procedures.
- b. Gifts and bequests to the fund shall accumulate for one year, after which the income generated from the investment of the principal shall be expended.
- c. Income from the principal of restricted gifts and bequests shall be allocated in accordance with their stated restrictions. The remaining income can be allocated as follows:
- d. Minimum of 20% for outreach into the community and synod, including, but not limited to, grants to ELCA seminaries, colleges, or students attending such schools, social service agencies, institution and agencies to which this congregation relates, and to special programs designed for those persons in our parish area who are in spiritual and/or economic need.
- e. Minimum of 10% for missions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in this continent and worldwide, including, but not limited to, grants to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for new congregational development in North America, professional leadership, educational ministries global mission, ecumenism, evangelism, social ministries, and capital financing or Lutheran Resource Center, Clear Lake, Iowa.
- f. Minimum of 20% for capital improvements, debt reduction, or a building program of ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH.
- g. Up to 40% for any one or all of the above designated areas in any proportion as determined by the COMMITTEE, or for causes and programs, which at the discretion of the COMMITTEE are consistent with the fund purpose of enhancing the mission outreach of ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH.
- h. Programs for support shall be recommended by the COMMITTEE and approved by the Church Council for funding according to the guidelines established by the congregation.

- I. Disbursement of income from the FUND need not occur annually in the event causes and programs have not been approved by the COMMITTEE sufficient to utilize total income available, or if in the judgment of the COMMITTEE total annual disbursement of income is not recommended.

C5.05.06. Distribution of Principal

When, in the opinion of the COMMITTEE circumstances are so dire and of such an emergency nature that the future of the congregation is at stake, and that the only recourse seems to be the use of the FUND principal, the COMMITTEE may, upon a two-thirds majority vote, recommend such authorizing action to the congregation.

C5.05.07. Amending the Resolution

Be it further resolved, that any amendment to this resolution, which will change, alter or amend the purpose for which the FUND is established shall be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the members present at an annual meeting of the congregation or at a special meeting called specifically for the purpose of amending this resolution.”

C5.05.08. Disposition or Transfer of Fund

Be it further resolved, that in the event ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH ceases to exist either through merger or dissolution, disposition or transfer of the FUND shall be at the discretion of the Church Council in conformity with the approved congregational constitution and in consultation with the bishop of the synod to which this congregation belongs at such time. Consultation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in American may be desirable for continuation of Mission Endowment Fund obligations.”

Chapter 6.

CHURCH AFFILIATION

- *C6.01.** This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- *C6.02.** This congregation accepts the Confession of Faith and agrees to the Purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and shall act in accordance with them.
- *C6.03.** This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which:
- a. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
 - b. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the bishop of the synod. These special circumstances are limited either to calling a candidate approved for the roster of ordained ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or to contracting for pastoral services with an ordained minister of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion.
 - d. This congregation agrees to consider associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers for call to other staff positions in the congregation according to the procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - e. This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution with the synod for review to ascertain that all of its provisions are in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and with the constitution of the synod.
- *C6.04.** Affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be terminated as follows:
- a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.
 - b. This congregation ceases to exist.
 - c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

- d. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in *C6.05.
- *C6.05.** A congregation may terminate its relationship with this church by the following procedure:
- a. A resolution indicating the intent to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of the congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present. Such meeting may be held no sooner than 30 days after written notice of the meeting is received by the bishop of the synod, during which time the congregation shall consult with the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any. The times and manner of the consultation shall be determined by the bishop in consultation with the Congregation Council. Unless he or she is a voting member of the congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the meeting.
 - b. The secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of the congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted.
 - c. The bishop of the synod and the congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph a. above, during a period of at least 90 days after receipt by the synod of the notice as specified in paragraph b. above.
 - d. If the congregation, after such consultation, still seeks to terminate its relationship, 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 meeting shall be mailed to all voting members and to the bishop at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Unless he or she is a voting member of the congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the meeting.
 - e. A copy of the resolution, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, shall be sent to the bishop within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted, at which time the relationship between the congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to paragraphs g., h., and i. below. Unless this notification to the bishop also certifies that the congregation has voted by a two-thirds vote to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, the congregation will be conclusively presumed to be an independent or non-Lutheran church.
 - f. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the bishop to the secretary of this church, who shall report the termination to the Churchwide Assembly.
 - g. Congregations seeking to terminate their relationship with this church which fail or refuse to comply with each of the foregoing provisions in *C6.05. shall be required to receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.
 - h. Congregations which had been members of the Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to receive synodical approval before terminating their membership in this church.
 - i. Congregations established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to satisfy all financial obligations to this church and receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.
 - j. If a congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at the congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above, another special meeting to consider termination of relationship with this church may be called no sooner than six months after that first meeting. If a congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at the congregation's second meeting as specified in paragraph d. above, another attempt to consider termination of relationship with this church must follow all requirements of *C6.05. and may begin no sooner than six months after that second meeting.
- *C6.06.** If this congregation considers relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.

- *C6.07.** If this congregation considers developing an additional site to be used regularly for worship, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action.

Chapter 7.

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

- *C7.01.** If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- *C7.02.** If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.
- *C7.03.** If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a 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 Northern Illinois Synod.
- *C7.04.** If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body and have followed the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05., title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with this congregation by the established synodical process, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of this congregation. If the Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to continue as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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 the congregation.
 - d. Associate members are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation, or persons who wish to retain a relationship with this congregation while being members of other congregations. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Congregation Council of this congregation.
- *C8.03.** All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Congregation Council.
- *C8.04.** It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregation to:

- a. Make regular use of the means of grace, both Word and sacraments;
 - b. Live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran church; 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 ELCA constitutional provision 20.40. and the accompanying bylaws; or
 - e. Removal from the roll due to inactivity as defined in the bylaws.
- C8.05.01.** Any confirmed member who, despite pastoral care and counseling, has failed for a period of a year to receive Holy Communion and/or to make any contribution of record to the congregation shall be classified by the congregation council as not in good standing, and may be removed from the roll of confirmed members.
- C8.05.02.** Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the Church has a continuing pastoral concern.
- C8.05.03.** They shall be restored by the congregation council to the roll of confirmed members in good standing when they receive the Lord's Supper and/or enter once more upon the other rights and obligations of the congregation.

Chapter 9.

THE PASTOR

- *C9.01.** Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by the Congregation Council to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.02.** Only a member of the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of ordained ministers who has been recommended for the congregation by the synodical bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.
- *C9.03.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
- a. Every ordained minister shall:
 - 1. Preach the Word;
 - 2. Administer the sacraments;
 - 3. Conduct public worship;
 - 4. Provide pastoral care; and
 - 5. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
 - b. Each ordained minister with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
 - 1. Offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2. Supervise all schools and organizations of this congregation;
 - 3. Install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council; and
 - 4. With the council, administer discipline.
 - c. Every pastor shall:
 - 1. Strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;
 - 2. Seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 - 3. Impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications; and

4. Endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and of the Northern Illinois Synod of the ELCA.
- *C9.04.** The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.05.**
- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by death or, following consultation with the synodical bishop, for the following reasons:
 1. Mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 2. Resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 3. Inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions;
 4. Physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor;
 5. Suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;
 6. Resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of ordained ministers of this church;
 7. Termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
 8. Dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 9. Suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.
 - b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
 1. The bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two ordained ministers and one layperson, or
 2. When such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two ordained ministers and one layperson.
 - c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant and the pastor shall be listed on the clergy roster as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and the restoration of the pastor to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
 - d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
 - e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, the congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a simple majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
 - f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

- *C9.06. At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor 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 the congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.
- *C9.08. This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting related to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- *C9.09. When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the 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, the congregation may depart from *C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of *C9.05.a.
- *C9.12. The pastor of this congregation:
 - a. Shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation;
 - b. Shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod; and
 - c. Shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- *C9.13. The pastor(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- *C9.14. The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of the congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his or her hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another field of labor or the granting by the synod of retired status to the pastor.
- C9.20. Ecumenical pastoral ministry**
- C9.21.** Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synodical bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, an ordained minister of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between the congregation and the ordained minister in a form proposed by the synodical bishop and approved by the congregation.

Chapter 10.

CONGREGATION MEETING

- C10.01.** The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.
- C10.01.01.** The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held in the month of January.
- C10.02.** A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of the congregation upon the written request of 15% of the voting members. The president of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synodical bishop. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held, and no other business shall be transacted.

- C10.03.** Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting.
- C10.04.** 15% voting members shall constitute a quorum.
- C10.05.** Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- C10.06.** All actions approved by the congregation shall be by majority vote of those voting members present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution or by state law.
- C10.07.** *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation. The Congregation Council shall appoint a voting member of the congregation to act as Parliamentarian during each Congregational Meeting. The appointed Parliamentarian shall advise the President or his/her designee concerning parliamentary matters during meetings. The President or his/her designee will have final authority to rule on questions of order.

Chapter 11.

OFFICERS

- C11.01.** The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer(s).
- a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
- C11.01.01.** The president:
- a. Preside at Congregation Council and Congregational meetings;
- b. Serve as liaison with the Northern Illinois Synod when the Pastor(s) is/are not available.
- c. Serve as liaison with the Northern Illinois Synod when conflict exists between the congregation and Senior Pastor;
- d. Develop and implement a plan for prayer and devotional life to be a part of every meeting of the Congregation and Congregational Council;
- e. Work to establish and maintain a healthy line of communication among the Congregation Council, Staff, and congregation;
- f. Work to ensure that continuity of leadership is maintained through mentoring others and development of leaders.
- g. Be responsible, along with the congregational Vice President, for conducting the Senior Pastor's annual performance review.
- C11.01.02.** The vice-president:
- a. Function as President in the absence of the President;
- b. Be responsible for the implementation and execution of all human resource policies and procedures;
- c. Be responsible for the handling of all human resource issues relating to staff or congregational ministries.
- d. Be responsible, along with the congregational President, for conducting the Senior Pastor's annual performance review;
- e. Carry out other duties as necessary and as assigned by the President;
- f. Work to ensure that continuity of leadership is maintained through mentoring others and development of leaders.
- C11.01.03.** The secretary:
- a. Keep the minutes of Congregation Council and Congregational meetings.
- b. Provide leadership for the Congregation Council on matters that pertain to establishing policies to maintain congregational archives;
- c. Provide leadership to the Congregation Council on the policies that guide the regular review of the membership roster as outlined in C12.07;
- d. Carry out other duties as necessary and as assigned by the President;
- e. Work to ensure that continuity of leadership is maintained through mentoring others and development of leaders.

C11.01.04. Treasurer(s):

- a. Provide primary custodial oversight and accept primary responsibility for all the funds of the congregation subject to policies established by the Congregation Council;
- b. Provide leadership to the Congregation Council as policies and strategies are developed to receive and disburse such funds;
- c. Provide leadership to the Congregation Council in the establishment of policies and strategies that ensure accurate and complete records of all contributions;
- d. Guide the Congregation Council in the review and response to budget recommendations presented by the staff through the Senior Pastor; to provide guidance to the Congregation Council in the presentation of the budget for congregational approval;
- e. Carry out other duties as necessary and as assigned by the President;
- f. Provide leadership to the Congregation Council in the establishment of policies and strategies that provide for financial review, including an annual audit.
- g. Work to ensure that continuity of leadership is maintained through mentoring others and development of leaders.

C11.01.05. The financial secretary: shall keep record of all income from contributing members and other sources.

C11.01.06. All financial officers shall give corporate surety, in amounts determined by the church council, for which the premium shall be paid by the congregation. Fidelity coverage provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be deemed a fulfillment of this requirement.

- a. The officers shall be voting members of the congregation.
- b. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council. Except as noted in C.11.02.

C11.02. The Congregation Council shall elect its officers and they shall be the officers of the congregation. officers shall be elected by the Congregation Council at the first meeting of the newly elected council by written ballot and shall serve for one year. The president and vice-president shall be chosen from the membership of the Congregation Council. The other officers, if not members of the council, shall be accorded the privilege of voice without vote in its meetings. Their terms shall begin at the close of the meeting at which they are elected.

C11.03. No elected officer shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office except with two-thirds majority vote by the Congregation Council.

Chapter 12.**CONGREGATION COUNCIL**

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of 9 to 12 voting members of the congregation, and the pastor(s) serving under call. The membership shall include:

- a. the pastor(s) called by this congregation, including duly appointed interim pastors. Pastors are not included in the count of Council members;
- b. And 9 to 12 members of the congregation including the officers of the congregation.
- c. Any voting member of the congregation may be elected subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office.
- d. 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. Consistent with the laws of the state in which this congregation is incorporated, the congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.
- e. A confirmed member of the congregation who is an active participant in the senior high youth group, may be appointed to serve on the Congregation Council by the Executive Committee. Recommendations for this position will come from of the Youth Advisors. This is a position with voice but no voting privileges. Because the position has no vote, it shall not be included in the count of twelve voting members.

C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) shall be elected by written ballot to serve 1 or 3 years or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no

more than 7 consecutive years. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

- a. A minimum of 3 three year terms will be elected each year.
- b. The remaining openings may be a 1 year term.

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

C12.04. The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:

- a. To lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
- b. To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
- c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
- d. To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.
- e. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
- f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill, and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
- g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
- h. To emphasize partnership with the synod and church wide 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.

C12.04.01. At its first meeting in each congregational year, the congregation council shall appoint as many standing committees as the local and wider concerns of the congregation shall require. Each such committee shall be composed of a representative of the council, and in addition, other confirmed members of the active role of the congregation. Although appointed by and responsible to the church council, these committees shall be recognized as representative of the interests of, and performing essential services for, the congregation as a whole. The pastor(s) shall have voice and vote in all committees. Except as stipulated in the following paragraphs, the duties of all committees shall be assigned by the congregation council, along with such instructions as in its judgment are in the best interests of the congregation. All actions of committees shall be subject to review by the council.

C12.04.A15. Christian Nurture (formerly Christian Education): This committee, in association with the pastor(s), shall oversee the conduct and promotion of the school(s) and the activities of all organizations within the congregation. It shall encourage the use of teaching and worship materials published or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and seek to introduce the church's periodicals and books of family devotion into the homes of the congregation. One of the primary aims of the committee on Christian Education shall be to bring the call to the ministry of the Gospel and to other full-time church vocations to the attention of qualified youth of the congregation.

C12.04.B15. Evangelism: This committee shall stimulate and lead all members of the congregation in continuous and, from time to time, concerted endeavors to reawaken the spiritually indifferent and to reach others, who are as yet unwon, with the Gospel and attach them to Christ's Church. To this end, the

committee shall devote itself to deepening spiritual life and shall periodically study the congregation in the context of its surrounding community.

C12.04.C15. Social Ministry: The purpose of this committee shall be to extend Christian compassion and helpfulness to the ill, the aged, the underprivileged, the imprisoned and , in general, to persons of all ages in need of aid. It shall strive to enlist in these efforts as many as possible of the individual members and organizations of the congregation. This committee shall further have the duty to study social conditions, primarily in the local community, in order to bring the cleansing and healing light of Christian truth to bear upon critical problems through thoughtful Christian discussion of facts and issues. It shall lay before the congregation council proposals for action issuing from each study and discussion.

C12.04.D15. Stewardship: The treasurer(s) shall be a member (members) ex officio. It shall be the function of this committee to evoke and promote the expression of Christian faith in daily living; to teach the Christian use of money; to diffuse knowledge of the congregation's local, national and world-wide ministries; and to lead all its members to higher levels of proportionate giving for the Lord's work. This committee shall also be responsible for the annual Every Member Response and other congregational efforts which lead to informed and grateful giving.

C12.04.E15. Worship and Music: It shall assist the congregation council in seeing that the services of God's house are conducted regularly and in accordance with the liturgy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, that competent ushers are recruited and trained, and that hymnals and other devotional materials are provided and properly cared for. This committee shall supervise, and strive to advance the welfare and effective service of, the choirs of the congregation. It shall arrange for care of paraments, vestments and musical instruments and, in consultation with the pastor(s), the organist, and the choir director(s), it shall furnish music supplies appropriate for use in the worship of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

C12.04.F15. Scholarship: The Scholarship Committee was started in 1976 to reward Zion's active young adults with a scholarship. Money from donations, memorials, and gifts is deposited into the Scholarship Fund with only the earnings being is used as scholarships. Guidelines for the Committee are:

1. An application form must be completed stating that the applicant has been accepted at an institution of higher learning that offers an educational degree or certificate beyond a high school diploma. The list of institutions includes colleges and universities, vocational-trade schools and the various branches of the armed services.
2. The applicant must be an active member of Zion Lutheran Church. The committee will consider church, school and community involvement with emphasis being placed on the involvement that has "made a difference" at Zion.
3. The committee will try to keep some parity with the previous year's recipients when determining the amounts of the awards.
4. Scholarship recipients will be notified by mail concerning the date and time of the award presentation.
5. The Scholarship Committee may designate names to be placed on the *Outstanding Service* plaque.
6. Scholarships for continuing education are granted only once to an individual. Scholarships are not loans and do not have to be paid back to Zion Lutheran Church.
7. Confirmation camp attendance is required in our confirmation program, thus the church has agreed to provide financial assistance to those determined to be in need. The Scholarship Committee will grant camp scholarships upon request made by the pastor. As stated in #6, this money is not a loan.
8. The Scholarship Committee will entertain application for a second scholarship from a member of Zion Lutheran Church who has previously received a financial scholarship from the Church if the individual has been accepted at an ELCA seminary school. This award will follow the same guideline as outlined in # 6 of the above criteria wherein it will be granted only once.

- 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/directors of this congregation, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the management of its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Illinois, except as otherwise provided herein.
 - b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.
 - c. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to \$7,500.00 for items not included in the budget.
 - d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations of more than \$1000.00 in excess of the anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in partnership with the synod and church wide organization.
 - e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies to the synodical treasurer.
 - f. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.
- C12.05.01.A15.** Church Property: This committee shall see to the proper maintenance and protection of all property of the congregation, and shall take care that the same is kept in good repair.
- C12.05.02.B15.** Finance Committee: The treasurer(s) shall be a member (members) ex officio. It shall prepare a draft budget for the succeeding year, including this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on it its behalf by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the synod and shall submit such draft budget to the congregation council for its action and later presentation to a congregational meeting. The committee shall exercise oversight of all the financial affairs of the congregation to make sure that they are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence moneys to the synodical treasurer. It shall be subject to the approval of the church council, be responsible for the congregation's investments and its total insurance program. It shall also provide for annual audits of the accounts of the treasurer(s) and the financial secretary, if there be one, as well as the accounts of the school(s) and organizations within the congregation.
- 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. Nothing in this provision shall be deemed to affect the congregation's responsibility for the call, terms of call, or termination of call of any employees who are on a roster of this church.
- C12.09.** The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.
- C12.11.** The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president, and shall be called by the president at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.
- C12.12.** 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 given prior approval to the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting, which shall be the only business considered at that meeting. Chronic or repeated absence of the pastor or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Congregation Council, following consultation with the synodical bishop.
- C12.13.** The Congregation Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, and, to the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Chapter 13.**CONGREGATION COMMITTEES**

- C13.01.** The Executive Committee shall be made up of the officers of this congregation and the pastor.
- C13.02.** A Nominating Committee of six voting members of this congregation, two of whom, if possible, shall be outgoing members of the Congregation Council, shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year. Members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible for consecutive re-election.
- C13.03.** An Audit Committee of three voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council. Term of office shall be three years, with one member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for re-election.
- C13.04.** A Mutual Ministry Committee (in the absence of a Mutual Ministry Committee, the duties shall be fulfilled by the executive committee) shall be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor. Term of office shall be two years, with three members to be appointed each successive year.
- C13.04.01.** The Mutual Ministry Committee is an important congregational leadership activity that affirms and strengthens the mission of the congregation and the ministry of the various rostered leaders (Pastor, Diaconal Ministers and Associates in Ministry) in the ELCA congregations by:
1. Listening and clarifying
 2. Sharing and communicating
 3. Reviewing and reflecting
- C13.04.02.** Mutual Ministry Function and Structure
1. Mutual Ministry is an energizing activity that encourages partnership in ministry between the congregation and the rostered leader.
 2. Partnership ministry implies common goal setting for the ministry.
 3. The Mutual Ministry Committee should be proactive in enhancing the ministry and to plan collaboratively for future mission.
 4. Mutual Ministry is an activity where confidences are honored, where the "truth can be spoken in love" and that will be a safe sounding board for a committee and rostered leader.
 5. Mutual Ministry Committee can offer support to congregational and rostered leaders and will encourage more out of the box thinking.
 6. Regular meetings are recommended, with the agenda being compiled by the rostered leader and chairperson with input from other members.
 7. The committee meets only when the rostered leader and a majority of the Mutual Ministry Committee members are present.
 8. The Mutual Ministry Committee reports its meeting to the Congregational Council and to the congregation in the Annual Report in order to provide transparency.
 9. Mutual Ministry is not a Personnel Committee or Human Resource Committee therefore issues of conflict are addressed by Executive Committee and Council.
- C13.04.03.** Benefits of a Mutual Ministry Committee:
1. Communicate openly honestly
 2. Provide early warning signs of misunderstandings;
 3. Serve as a group where the rostered leader could test new ideas;
 4. Provide affirmation for rostered leader;
 5. Serve as a sounding board in time of personal, professional stress;
 6. Discuss continuing education that benefits the mission of the congregation and the ministry of the rostered leader;
- C13.04.04.** Committee Structure
- A Mutual Ministry Committee shall be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor. Term of office shall be two years, with three members to be appointed each successive year. (ELCA Model Congregation recommendation C13.04) Qualities and Skills of Mutual Ministry Committee members:
1. Ability to keep confidences,
 2. Open to be a listening post and liaison for the rostered leader and congregation with permission to share comments and feedback with names provided,

3. Sensitivity to the feelings of others and be self-aware,
4. Understanding of the Christian faith and the vision of the ELCA,
5. Ability to speak candidly but with care, and
6. A calm and objective demeanor.

C13.04.05. Mutual Ministry Resources

1. Mutual Ministry Committees, a Vision for Building Up the Body of Christ, Rev. George Keck, 1988
2. Pastor and People, Making Mutual Ministry Work, Augsburg Fortress' Congregational Leader Series, 2003
3. Refer to Northern Illinois Synod Personnel Committee Guidelines (fall 2013)

C13.04.06. Supporting and Encouraging Rostered Leaders

Adapted from Pastoral Advice from Bishop Wollersheim on October 16, 2007

1. Pray regularly for rostered leaders
2. Become a partner in ministry
3. Encourage and respect time off
4. Promote supportive communication
5. Create a sabbatical policy
6. Assist in seminary debt retirement
7. Keep the parsonage in good shape
8. Be considerate of the rostered leader's family and friends
9. Remember special occasions: ordination, birthday, spouse's birthday, anniversary, anniversary of being in position, pastor appreciation day, Christmas, etc.
10. Support and encouragement not limited to only those items above...be creative!

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

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

C13.07. Duties of committees of this congregation shall be specified in the continuing resolutions.

C13.08. The pastor of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of the congregation. The president of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of the congregation, except the Nominating Committee.

Chapter 14.**ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION**

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

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.

Chapter 15.**DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION**

***C15.01.** Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith, willful or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, continual and intentional interference with the ministry of the congregation, or willful and repeated harassment or defamation of member(s) of the congregation is sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation and repentance will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps, as necessary: a) private counsel and admonition by the pastor, b) censure and admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, c) written referral of the matter by the Congregation Council to

the vice president of the synod, who will refer it to a consultation panel drawn from the Consultation Committee of the synod, and d) written referral of the matter by the consultation panel to the Committee on Discipline of the synod. If, for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by paragraphs a. and b. hereof, those steps may be performed by another pastor chosen by the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council.

- *C15.02.** The process for discipline of a member of the congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. If the counseling, censure, and admonitions pursuant to C15.01 do not result in repentance and amendment of life, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing may be prepared by the Congregation Council, signed, and submitted to the vice president of the synod. The vice president shall select from the synod's Consultation Committee a panel of five members (three lay persons and two clergy). A copy of the written charges shall be provided to the consultation panel and the accused member(s). The consultation panel, after requesting a written reply to the charges from the accused member(s), shall consider the matter and seek a resolution by means of investigation, consultation, mediation, or whatever other means may seem appropriate. The panel's efforts to reach a mutually agreeable resolution shall continue for no more than 45 days after the matter is submitted to it.
- *C15.03.** If the consultation panel fails to resolve the matter, that panel shall refer the case in writing, including the written charges and the accused member's reply, to the Committee on Discipline of the synod for a hearing. A copy of the panel's written referral shall be delivered to the vice president of the synod, the Congregation Council, and the accused member(s) at the same time it is sent to the Committee on Discipline of the synod. The Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall then select six members from the Committee on Discipline to decide the case, and shall appoint a member of the Synod Council to preside as nonvoting chair. Those six members plus the nonvoting chair comprise the discipline hearing panel for deciding the case. The Congregation Council and the accused member(s) are the parties to the case.
- *C15.04.** The discipline hearing panel shall commence and conduct the disciplinary hearing in accordance with the provisions governing discipline of congregation members prescribed in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- *C15.05.** By the vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the discipline hearing panel who are present and voting, one of the following disciplinary sanctions can be imposed:
- Suspension from the privileges of congregation membership for a designated period of time;
 - Suspension from the privileges of congregation membership until the pastor and Congregation Council receive evidence, satisfactory to them, of repentance and amendment of life;
 - Termination of membership in the congregation; or
 - Termination of membership in the congregation and exclusion from the church property and from all congregation activities.
- *C15.06.** The written decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be sent to the vice president of the synod, the accused member(s), and the Congregation Council as required by the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. The decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be implemented by the Congregation Council and recorded in the minutes of the next council meeting.
- *C15.07.** No member of the congregation shall be subject to discipline a second time for offenses that a discipline hearing panel has heard previously and decided pursuant to this chapter.
- *C15.10. Adjudication**
- *C15.11.** When there is disagreement among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation shall have access to the synodical bishop for consultation after informing the chair of the Congregation Council of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the Consultation Committee of the synod shall consider the matter. If the Consultation Committee of the synod shall fail to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to the Synod Council, whose decision shall be final.

Chapter 16.**BYLAWS**

- *C16.01. This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.
- *C16.02. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting.
- *C16.03. Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member, provided that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the congregation's members of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.
- *C16.04. Approved changes to the bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

Chapter 17.**AMENDMENTS**

- *C17.01. Unless provision *C17.04. is applicable, those sections of this constitution that are not required, in accord with the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be amended in the following manner. Amendments may be proposed by at least 5 % 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 the 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.
- *C17.02. An amendment to this constitution, proposed under *C17.01., shall:
 - a. Be approved at a legally called Congregation Meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;
 - b. Be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting; and
 - c. Have the effective date included in the C.19. and noted in the constitution.
- *C17.03. Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in *C17.01. and *C17.02. shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The synod shall notify the congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed changes; the changes shall go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them.
- *C17.04. 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 Church wide Assembly. Such amendments may be approved by a simple majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of the congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, notice to the congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council's recommendations, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of 5 % voting members of the congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following a vote of approval.

² Such an effective date must be stated in relation to the requirements of *C17.03. to allow time for synodical review of the amendment.

Chapter 18.

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

- ***C18.01.** The congregation in a legally called meeting or the Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this congregation.
- ***C18.02.** Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a majority vote of a meeting of the congregation or a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Congregation Council.

Chapter 19.

INDEMNIFICATION

- ***C19.01.** Consistent with the provisions of the laws under which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt provisions providing indemnification for each person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a Congregation Council member, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any committee of this congregation, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.