

The Constitution of Geneva Evangelical Lutheran Church Geneva, Illinois

Adopted January 1990

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 the of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Article 1. NAME AND INCORPORATION

Section 1:1: The name of this congregation shall be Geneva Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Section 1:2: For the purpose of the this constitution and accompanying bylaws the Geneva Evangelical Lutheran Church congregation is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."

Section 1:3: This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois.

Section 1:4: The seal of this congregation presents the name of this congregation, the

Section 1:5: Geneva Evangelical Lutheran Church, Geneva, Illinois.

Article 2. CONFESSION OF FAITH

Section 2:1: This congregation confesses the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Section 2:2: 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.

Section 2:3: 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.

- Section 2:4:** This congregation accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this congregation.
- Section 2:5:** 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 the likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
- Section 2:6:** This congregation accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.
- Section 2:7:** This congregation confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

Article 3. NATURE OF THE CHURCH

- Section 3:1:** 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.
- Section 3:2:** The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as a local congregation 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.

Article 4. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- Section 4:1:** 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.
- Section 4:2:** 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 serving 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.

Section 4:3: 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 churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- (I) Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.

Section 4:4: This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational groups and shall review their actions. Such descriptions shall be contained in the continuing resolutions of the Congregation Council.

Section 4:5: This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

Article 5. POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

Section 5:1: The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.

Section 5:2: The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregational Meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.

Section 5:3: Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregation Council or other organizational units in the congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by the congregation. The congregation is authorized to:

- (A) call a pastor or pastors as provided in Article 9.
- (B) terminate the call of a pastor or pastors as provided in Article 9

- (C) appoint or terminate the appointment of associates in ministry in conformity with the applicable policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- (D) Adopt amendments to the constitution as provide in Article 17 and amendments to the bylaws as provided in Article 16.
- (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 except as otherwise provided in this constitution or bylaws and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution [and] bylaws, [and continuing resolutions];

Section 5:4: Geneva Evangelical Lutheran Church retains the power to terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6

Section 5:5: 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 Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Article 6. CHURCH AFFILIATION

Section 6:1: This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Section 6:2: 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.

Section 6:3: 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 may call a pastor or pastors as provided in Article 9.
- (D) This congregation agrees to consider associates in ministry for appointment 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.

Section 6:4: 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.

Section 6:5: This congregation may terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the following procedure:

- (A) A resolution recommending that this congregation terminate its relationship with the ELCA must be adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of the Congregation Council at a legally called and conducted meeting of the Congregation Council.
- (B) The Secretary of this congregation shall mail notice of the Congregation Council's recommendation to all voting members of this congregation.
- (C) This congregation shall consider the Congregation Council's recommendation for a period of not less than 60 days following the mailing of said notice.
- (D) Following this period of consideration, a resolution indicating this congregation's desire to terminate its relationship with the ELCA must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present. When a meeting of the congregation is called for this purpose, twenty percent (20%) of the active confirmed members, at least 18 years of age, shall be necessary for a quorum.

Section 6:6: Before this congregation terminates its relationship it shall consult with a representative of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod. A certified copy of the approved resolution to terminate affiliation shall be sent to the Bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod.

Section 6:7: If this congregation is considering relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.

Article 7. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

Section 7:1: All real and personal property that is currently owned by or titled to Geneva Evangelical Lutheran Church, or that is later acquired by Geneva Evangelical Lutheran Church, shall be and is hereby from the date of this instrument, solely owned by Geneva Evangelical Lutheran Church..

Section 7:2: If Geneva Evangelical Lutheran Church ceases to exist, title of undisposed property shall pass to the ELCA

Section 7:3: If Geneva Evangelical Lutheran Church is removed from membership of the ELCA according to its procedure for discipline, title to real and personal property shall remain

with Geneva Evangelical Lutheran Church

Section 7:4: If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of Geneva Evangelical Lutheran Church present at a legally called and conducted Congregational Meeting, vote to transfer to another Lutheran church body, title to real and personal property shall remain with Geneva Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Section 7:5: If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of Geneva Evangelical Lutheran Church present at a legally called and conducted Congregational Meeting vote to become independant but also vote to contine to adhere in full to the Confession of Faith set out in Article 2, or vote to relate to a non-Lutheran church body which is then in full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (as the term “full communion” is defined in the Statement of Ecumenism of the ELCA), then in such event title to real and personal property of Geneva Evangelical Lutheran Church shall continue to reside with the two-thirds majority vote.

Section 7:6: Before Geneva Evangelical Lutheran Church taks action to transfer to another church body, it shall consult with a representative of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod.

Article 8. MEMBERSHIP

Section 8:1: Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of the congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

Section 8:2: 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 who shall have communed and/or made a contribution of record during the current or preceding year.
- (D) Associate members are persons holding membership in other Lutheran Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Congregation Council of this congregation.

Section 8:3: All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Congregation Council.

Section 8:4: It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregations 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.

Section 8:5: Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:

- (A) death;
- (B) resignation;
- (C) transfer or release;
- (D) disciplinary action by the Congregation Council; or
- (E) removal from the roll due to inactivity as defined in the bylaws.

Section 8:6: Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the Church has a continuing pastoral concern.

Article 9. THE PASTOR(S)

Section 9:1: Authority to call a pastor or pastors shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting regularly 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.

Section 9:2: This congregation may call as a pastor a member of the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America an ordained clergy member who has been recommended for said roster by the synodical bishop; or a member of the ordained clergy roster of any Lutheran Church body.

Section 9:3: The obligations and responsibilities of every called pastor include the following:

- (A) Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the pastor(s) of this congregation 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) The pastor(s) of this congregation shall, within the congregation:
 - (1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead
 - (2) supervise all schools and organizations within the congregation;
 - (3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council; and
 - (4) with the council, administer discipline.
- (C) The pastor(s) of this congregation shall:

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

Section 9:4: The specific duties of each pastor, compensation and other matters pertaining to the service of each pastor shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.

Section 9:5: The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which except in the case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated only following consultation with the synodical bishop and for the following reasons:

- (A) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term.
- (B) resignation of the pastor(s), which, unless otherwise agreed, shall be effective thirty days after notice to this congregation thereof.
- (C) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor.
- (D) the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor.
- (E) disqualification of the pastoral office through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty; or
- (F) the dissolution of the congregation.

Section 9:6: When allegations of physical or mental incapacity of the pastor or pastors or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office have come to the attention of the bishop of the synod, the bishop in his or her sole discretion may, or 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 shall, investigate such conditions personally in company with a committee of two ordained ministers and one layperson.

Section 9:7: In case of alleged physical or mental incapacity, competent medical testimony shall be obtained. When such disability is evident, the bishop of the synod with the advice of the committee shall declare the pastorate vacant. Upon the restoration of a disabled pastor to health, the bishop of the synod shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another field of labor.

Section 9:8: In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation, all concerned persons shall be heard, after which the bishop of the synod together with the committee described in Section 9:6 shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor(s) and the congregation. If they agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action shall be taken by the synod. If either party fails to assent, the congregation may dismiss a pastor or pastors 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.

- Section 9:9:** If, in the course of proceedings described in Section 9:8, the committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action to the synodical bishop, who may bring charges in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the constitution of this synod.
- Section 9:10:** If, following the appointment of the committee described in Section 9:6 or Section 9:8, it should become apparent that the pastoral office cannot be conducted effectively in the congregations being served by the ordained minister due to local conditions, the bishop of the synod may temporarily suspend a pastor or pastors from service in the congregation without prejudice and with pay provided through a joint synodical and churchwide fund and with housing provided by the congregation.
- Section 9:11:** At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor or pastors may be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.
- Section 9:12:** 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 or pastors with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor(s) and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor or pastors.
- Section 9:13:** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. Each departing pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation.
- Section 9:14:** 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. 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.
- Section 9:15:** With the approval of the bishop of the synod the congregation may depart from Section 9.5a. and call a pastor or pastors for a specific term of years. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop, shall meet with the pastor(s) and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of Section 9.5A.
- Section 9:16:** The pastor(s) shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, and shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod. The pastor(s) shall be a member of the congregation that has extended the letter of call.

- Section 9:17:** Each pastor 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.
- Section 9:18:** The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor(s) 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.

Article 10. CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

- Section 10:1:** The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.
- Section 10:2:** A special Congregational Meeting may be called by the pastor(s), the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called at the written request of 10% of voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.
- Section 10:3:** Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail to all [voting] members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or paid, sent to the last known address of such members shall be sufficient.
- Section 10:4:** Five percent (5%) of voting members shall constitute a quorum except as stated in the bylaws.
- Section 10:5:** Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- Section 10:6:** All actions by the congregation shall be by majority vote except as otherwise provided in this constitution.
- Section 10:7:** Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

Article 11. OFFICERS

- Section 11:1:** The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and financial secretary.
- (A) Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
 - (B) The officers shall be voting members of the congregation.
 - (C) 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 Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be voting members of the congregation but may or may not be voting members of the Congregation Council.
- Section 11:2:** The Congregation Council shall elect its officers and they shall be the officers of the congregation. The officers shall be elected by written ballot and shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual

meeting at which they are elected.

Section 11:3: 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.

Section 11:4: The Financial Secretary and Treasurer are accorded voice without vote at meetings of the Congregation Council unless they are Congregation Council members.

Article 12. CONGREGATION COUNCIL

Section 12:1: The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s) and not more than 18 members of the congregation. Any voting member of the congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregatio 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 meeting of the Congregation Council without cause.

Section 12:2: The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) shall be elected by written ballot to serve for 3 years or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

Section 12:3: Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next annual meeting.

Section 12:4: The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:

- (A) To lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
- (B) To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
- (C) To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
- (D) To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling, appointment, or employment.
- (E) To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
- (F) To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
- (G) To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor(s).
- (H) To emphasize partnership with the synod and churchwide units of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations,

both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

- (I) To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Section 12:5: 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 shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption. In any fiscal year the Congregation Council may incur obligations that in the aggregate constitute more than 2% in excess of the anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregational Meeting, except as provided for in Section 12.5 E. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in partnership with the synod and churchwide organization.
- (D) The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to 2% of current approved budget for items not included in the budget, except as provided for in Section 12.5 E.
- (E) Notwithstanding the limitations in Section 12.5 C & D, the Congregation Council shall have the authority to approve emergency expenditures over the 2% limit to address events or issues that imperil the functionality or integrity of this congregation's building, grounds or other property or the safety of the congregation or public, and which, if not addressed before a special congregational meeting could be called, could prove to be catastrophic or lead to significantly increased costs. In the event this provision is exercised, it is the duty of the congregational council to call a special meeting to report on the reason for expenditure and to take further action as required by the situation.
- (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 benevolence monies to the synodical treasurer.
- (G) The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.

Section 12:6: The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws and the continuing resolutions are carried out.

Section 12:7: The Congregation Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.

Section 12:8: The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the appointment and supervision of

the salaried lay workers of this congregation.

- Section 12:9:** The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.
- Section 12:10:** The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor(s) or the president, and shall be called at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.
- Section 12:11:** A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the pastor(s) or interim pastor(s), except when such person requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to an agenda of routine matters which shall be the only business of the meeting.

Article 13. CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEES

- Section 13:1:** The officers of this congregation and the pastor(s) shall constitute the Executive Committee.
- Section 13:2:** A Nominating Committee shall consist of five voting members of this congregation. Two members shall be, if possible, outgoing members of the Congregational Council appointed by said Council for a term of one year. The remaining three members shall be elected at the Annual Meeting. Term of office of these elected members shall be three years with one member elected each year. No member may serve in consecutive terms.
- Section 13:3:** 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 or Finance Committee. Term of office will be three years, with one member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for reelection.
- Section 13:4:** A Staff Support Committee may be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor(s). Term of office shall be two years, three members to be appointed each successive year. Committee members will hold no other office in the congregation during their term.
- Section 13:5:** When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of six voting members shall be elected by this congregation. Term of office will terminate at installation of the newly-called pastor(s).
- Section 13:6:** Other congregational committees may be formed as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council.
- Section 13:7:** Duties of congregational committees shall be specified in the bylaws (continuing resolutions).

Article 14. ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

- Section 14:1:** 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.

Section 14:2: 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.

Article 15. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

Section 15:1: Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps:

- (A) private admonition by the pastor(s),
- (B) admonition by the pastor(s) in the presence of two or three witnesses, and
- (C) citation to appear before the Congregation Council. If, for any reason, a pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by a. and b. hereof, the president (if not the pastor(s)) or vice president shall administer such admonitions.

Section 15:2: 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 discipline against a member proceeds beyond counseling and admonition by the pastor(s), charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing shall be prepared by member(s) of the congregation who shall sign the charges as the accuser(s). The written charges shall be filed with the pastor(s), who shall advise the Congregation Council of the need to issue a written citation to the accused and the accusers that specifies the time and place of the hearing before the Congregation Council. The written charges shall accompany the written citation to the accused. A member charged with the offense shall appear before the Congregation Council after having received a written citation, at least ten days prior to the meeting. If the member charged with the offense fails to appear at the scheduled hearing, the Congregation Council may proceed with the hearing and may pass judgment in the member's absence.

Section 15:3: Members of the Congregation Council who participate in the preparation of the written charges or who present evidence or testimony in the hearing before the Congregation Council are disqualified from voting upon the question of the guilt of the accused member. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Congregation Council who are not disqualified but who are present and voting, and renewed admonition prove ineffectual, the council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:

- (A) censure before the council or congregation;
- (B) suspension from membership for a definite period of time; or
- (C) exclusion from membership in this congregation.

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

Section 15:4: The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Congregation Council shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Synod Council. Such right may not be abridged and the decision of the Synod Council shall be final.

- Section 15:5:** Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Congregation Council upon receipt of
- (A) evidence that injustice has been done or
 - (B) evidence of repentance and amendment.
- Section 15:6:** For disciplinary actions in this congregation, “due process” shall be observed as specified in 20.41.04. in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- Section 15:7:** No member of a congregation shall be subject to discipline for offenses that the Congregation Council has previously heard and decided, unless so ordered by the Synod Council after an appeal.
- Section 15:8:** 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.

Article 16. BYLAWS

- Section 16:1:** This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.
- Section 16:2:** 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.
- Section 16:3:** Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose and that the Congregation Council notify the members of the proposal with its recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregational Meeting.
- Section 16:4:** Approved changes to the bylaws shall be sent to the synod.

Article 17. AMENDMENTS

- Section 17:1:** Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least 5 voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at its regular or special meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the members of the proposal with their recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.
- Section 17:2:** A proposed amendment to this constitution shall:
- (A) be approved at a properly called meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;
 - (B) be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting; and
 - (C) have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.

Section 17:3: Any amendments to this constitution shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The amendment shall become effective within 120 days from the date of the receipt of the notice by the synod unless the synod informs this congregation that the amendment is in conflict with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or the constitution of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod.

Article 18. CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

Section 18:1: The Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions which describe the function of the various committees or organizations of this congregation.

Section 18:2: Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Congregation Council.