

**CONSTITUTION**  
for  
**ST. JOHN’S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH (Vilmar)**  
**16073 Keystone Avenue**  
**Greene, IA 50636**

**Adopted as of Dec. 9, 2018**

**Ratified as of Jan. 27, 2019**

**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**

- 1.01. The name of this congregation shall be St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church (Vilmar).
- 1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and any accompanying bylaws, the congregation of St. John’s Lutheran is hereinafter designated as “this congregation”.
- 1.03. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Iowa.

**Chapter 2.**

**CONFESSION OF FAITH**

This congregation incorporates Article 2 of the constitution of the North American Lutheran Church (the NALC), confessing:

- 2.01. The Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- 2.02. 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 the Holy Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God’s revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them the Holy Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.
- 2.03. 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, “according to which all doctrines should and must be judged.” (Formula of Concord, Epitome, Part 1)
- 2.04. The Apostles’, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of the Church.

- 2.05. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession as 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.
- 2.06. 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. The Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.
- C2.08 This congregation honors and accepts The Common Confession (2005), attached in an appendix hereto, as a summary of teachings otherwise affirmed in the Lutheran Confessions.

### **Chapter 3.**

#### **NATURE OF THE CHURCH**

- 3.01. The Church is the universal assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel. (Augsburg Confession VII)
- 3.02. 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.
- 3.03. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations.
- 3.04. This congregation exercises ministry within the mission of the NALC. This congregation embodies the Church in its community and, for the sake of mission, lives in cooperative partnership with other congregations and within the other structures of the NALC. This congregation shall share responsibility for the decision-making processes of the NALC.

### **Chapter 4.**

#### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

- 4.01. The hearers of the Gospel are a people, called and sent by God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to be a community of faith, hope and love, who witness to Christ and His coming Kingdom before all the world.
- 4.02. To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:
  - a. Give honor and glory to God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, worshipping Him in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, obedience and service.
  - b. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by proclaiming to all the world the Gospel of justification by grace through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in Holy Scripture and in accordance with the Lutheran Confessions.
  - c. Preserve and transmit the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
  - d. Foster Christian fellowship and love, and extend a helping hand to humans in need.
  - e. Manifest the unity of our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior, and join with other Christians in prayer and action.
  - f. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, and to develop a sense of Christian vocation in daily life.

- 4.03.** To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:
- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is rightly preached and the sacraments are rightly administered.
  - b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
  - c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.
  - d. Teach the Word of God.
  - e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
  - f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
  - g. Encourage its members to provide appropriate financial support for the congregation's ministry and the ministry of other parts of the NALC.
  - h. Foster and participate in relationships with other congregations and structures of the NALC.
  - i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relations consistent with NALC policy.
- 4.04.** This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Church Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions. (Such descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions in the section on the Church Council.)
- 4.05.** This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement, which will provide specific direction for its program.

## **Chapter 5.**

### **POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

- 5.01.** The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.
- 5.02.** The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregational Meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.
- 5.03.** Only such authority as is delegated to the Church 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. appoint or terminate the service of commissioned lay leaders,
  - d. approve the annual budget;
  - e. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
  - f. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
  - g. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
  - h. elect its Church Council, boards, and committees, and requires the members of the council, boards, and committees to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.
  - i. Adopt amendments to this constitution and to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 16.
  - j. Establish or terminate a relationship with a church body.
- 5.04.** This congregation may select voting members of this congregation to serve as lay delegates and alternates to represent it at meetings of any conferences, convocations, and other meetings where this congregation is entitled to such representation.

## Chapter 6.

### CHURCH AFFILIATION

- 6.01. This congregation is a member of the NALC or any successor and is subject to the procedures of the NALC.
- 6.02. This congregation subscribes to the constitution of the NALC and will act in accordance with it.
- 6.03. This congregation will conduct its ministry in a manner consistent with its membership in the NALC:
- a. This congregation is responsible for its life as a Christian community.
  - b. This congregation pledges its participation in the life and mission of the NALC, including prayerful consideration of appropriate financial support.
  - c. This congregation shall call only pastors who are members of the NALC or otherwise are authorized by the NALC to serve.
  - d. This congregation shall appoint only commissioned lay leaders who are members of the NALC or otherwise are authorized by the NALC to serve.
- 6.04. Affiliation with the NALC may be terminated as follows:
- a. This congregation dissolves.
  - b. This congregation ceases to exist.
  - c. This congregation is removed from membership in the NALC according to the procedures for discipline of the NALC.
  - d. This congregation, at a legally called and conducted special meeting, approves by at least a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those present and voting a resolution directing that this congregation withdraw from the NALC, all provisions of this constitution binding this congregation to the NALC shall be immediately ineffective. The congregation shall promptly deliver a copy of the withdrawal resolution to the NALC General Secretary.

## Chapter 7.

### PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

- 7.01. This congregation is an independent legal entity with rights to purchase, hold, and convey real and personal property in accord with applicable law. The NALC shall have no right to or interest in the property of this congregation unless this congregation expressly conveys such a right or interest to the NALC. If this congregation dissolves, its property shall be distributed in accord with applicable law. A congregational meeting shall decide the future of the church property and cemeteries.

## Chapter 8.

### MEMBERSHIP

- 8.01. Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons (a) who are on the roll of this congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted or who are admitted thereafter, and (b) who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.
- 8.02. 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 who have communed and made a contribution of record during the current preceding calendar year. 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. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Church Council of this congregation.
- 8.03. All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Church Council.
- 8.04. 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 NALC, and their ministries and structures (through contributions of time, abilities and financial support as biblical stewards).
- 8.05. Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:
- a. death;
  - b. resignation;
  - c. transfer or release;
  - d. disciplinary action by the Church Council.

## Chapter 9.

### THE PASTOR

- 9.01. Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least two thirds (2/3) majority vote of members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose.
- 9.02. Consistent with the faith and practice of the NALC,
- a. Every ordained minister shall:
    - 1) preach the Word;
    - 2) administer the sacraments;
    - 3) conduct public worship;
    - 4) provide pastoral care;
    - 5) serve as the chief evangelist in his or her ministry, and
    - 6) proclaim God's love to 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 Church Council; and
    - 4) with the Church 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; and
  - 3) impart knowledge of the NALC and its wider ministry through public provision of information, distribution of publications and other appropriate means.
- 9.03.** 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.
- 9.04.** a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which, except in the case of death of the pastor, shall be terminated for the following reasons:
- 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
  - 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
  - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor;
  - 4) the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
  - 5) disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds or doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty; or
  - 6) the dissolution of the congregation.
- b. If the Church Council determines that it may be appropriate to end a call for one of the reasons set out in sub-section (a), the Council shall consult with the pastor regarding the matter in accord with Biblical principles. If the Church Council and pastor do not reach agreement, the Church Council shall inform the Bishop of the NALC, who shall consult with the Church Council and the pastor and shall attempt to reach an agreed resolution. If the Bishop fails to facilitate an agreed resolution, the Church Council or pastor may call a special Congregational Meeting to consider the matter. At such a meeting, the pastor and the Church Council leadership shall have a full and fair opportunity to present their positions on all matters relevant for consideration. Thereafter, the congregation by a two-thirds (2/3) vote may terminate the pastor's call. In all events, the Church Council by majority vote may suspend a pastor with pay if the Church Council determines that such suspension is necessary to protect the congregation and all whom it serves. No such suspension may last more than ninety (90) days unless the pastor agrees otherwise.
- 9.05.** At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor may be appointed by the Church Council.
- 9.06.** 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 Church Council. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.
- 9.07.** 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.
- 9.08.** When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors and the Church Council. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through the same consultation process.

- 9.09. The congregation may depart from the requirements in section 9.04 (a) by calling a pastor for a term of years. Details of such a call shall be in writing that sets forth the purpose and conditions involved. Such call may be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions in section 9.04 (a) and 9.04 (b).
- 9.10. 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 Church Council; 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.
- 9.11. The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of the congregation.

## Chapter 10.

### CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

- 10.01. The annual meeting and any other regular meetings of this congregation shall be held at times set by the congregation in bylaws or in other resolutions.
- 10.02. A special Congregational Meeting may be called by the Church Council, or the pastor with the consent of three (3) members of the Church Council, or by a written request of twenty-five percent (25%) of the voting members. The call for a special meeting shall specify the purpose of which the meeting is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.
- 10.03. 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 e-mail to all voting members at least ten (10) days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with regular postage affixed or paid, sent to the last known address of such members, or sent to the last known e-mail address of such members, shall be sufficient.
- 10.04. Ten percent (10%) of voting members shall constitute a quorum.
- 10.05. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- 10.06. 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 applicable law.
- 10.07. *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

## Chapter 11.

### CHURCH COUNCIL

- 11.01. The Church Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God, the Lutheran Confessions and the faith and practice of the NALC. The duties of the Church 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 foster resolution of such conflicts according to Biblical principles.
  - g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
  - h. To emphasize partnership with the NALC as well as cooperation with other Christian congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran.
  - i. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.
- 11.02.** The Church Council shall consist of the pastor, four (4) deacons, two (2) trustees, one (1) secretary, one (1) treasurer, one (1) elected chairperson from each of the Parish Education and Youth Committee, the Stewardship and Finance Committee, the Worship and Parish Fellowship Committee, and the Mission and Outreach Committee. All except the pastor shall be elected by the congregation at its annual meeting in January. A majority of all votes cast by ballot shall decide the election. The Church Council shall elect a president from among its members, excluding the secretary, treasurer, and the pastor, for a one year term. Each elected member of the Education and Youth Committee, the Stewardship and Finance Committee, the Worship and Fellowship Committee, and the Mission and Outreach Committee shall choose, with Church Council approval, two (2) more voting age members for the congregation to form each committee. The elected member of the committee shall serve as chairperson.
- 11.03.** All confirmed members twenty-one (21) years of age and older may serve on the Church Council, but only active members of the congregation shall be elected. The members of the Church Council are elected for a term of two years in such a manner that half the members are elected each year. Members are eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively. In case of extreme necessity, when an office becomes vacant for some reason, the Church Council may fill the vacancy and the appointee shall hold office until the next regular congregational meeting in January.
- 11.04.** The Church Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God, the faith and practice of the NALC.
- 11.05.** The Church Council of this congregation shall be responsible for maintaining, protecting and managing its property and business in accordance with the laws of the State of Iowa. The Church Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a legally called meeting of the congregation.
- 11.06.** The Church Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation and shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance with the budget, but may not incur other obligations of more than five percent (5%) of the annual local budget, except for maintenance or repair of the church property. The total annual budget shall include this congregation's support of the wider ministry being carried on.
- 11.07.** The Church Council shall normally meet once a month with the Church Council president presiding, but the president has the option of calling on the pastor to preside. Special

meetings may be called by the pastor or president. Notice of special meetings shall be given to all members of the Church Council. A quorum for transactions of all Church Council business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Church Council.

- 11.08. The duties of the Church Council officers and the Church Council members shall be specified in the bylaws.
- 11.09. The Church Council shall promote a climate of peace and goodwill in the congregation, and, as differences and conflicts arise, seek to foster mutual understanding and harmony.
- 11.10. The Church Council shall arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor, or at the time of a pastoral vacancy.
- 11.11. Should a member's place on the Church Council be declared vacant, the Church Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next annual meeting.

## **Chapter 12.**

### **CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEES**

- 12.01. Cemetery Committee – The Cemetery Committee shall consist of three (3) members from the congregation. They shall be elected at the annual congregational meeting for a term of three (3) years in such a manner that one new member shall be elected every year. No outgoing member shall succeed him / herself. The committee is bound by the Code of Iowa in maintaining and managing the two (2) cemeteries owned by St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, but as elected members of St. John's congregation, they shall draw up regulations and guidelines for the management of the cemeteries, be responsible for the sale of lots, and keep an updated plat. They shall maintain the cemetery grounds, keep gravesites level, control weeds and rodents, and hire people to mow the grass. They shall be accountable for and invest cemetery monies. They shall contact family members of lot owners when foundation repair is needed underneath markers or gravestones.
- 12.02. Nominating Committee – The Nominating Committee shall consist of those former members of the Church Council and Cemetery Committee whose term of office expired one (1) year preceding the annual meeting. They shall present a ballot for the offices on the Church Council, Cemetery Committee and for delegate(s) to the Synod Convention. The pastor shall be an *ex-officio* member of the Nominating Committee. The ballot shall be published three (3) weeks prior to the annual meeting. Additional names may be nominated from the floor at the annual meeting.
- 12.03. A Mutual Ministry Committee of six (6) voting members may be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor. Term of office shall be two (2) years, with three (3) members to be appointed each successive year.
- 12.04. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of six (6) voting members shall be elected by the congregation OR by the Church Council. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor.
- 12.05. Other committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Church Council.
- 12.06. The president of this congregation may be *ex officio* member of all committees and boards of the congregation.

## **Chapter 13**

### **ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION**

**13.01.** 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.

## **Chapter 14**

### **DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION**

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

- a. private admonition by the pastor,
- b. admonition by the pastor in the presence of two (2) or three (3) witnesses, and
- c. citation to appear before the Church Council. If for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by a. and b. hereof, the president or vice president shall administer such admonitions.

**14.02.** If discipline against a member proceeds beyond counseling and admonition by the pastor, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing shall be prepared by member(s) of the congregation who shall sign the charges as the accuser(s). The written charges shall be filed with the pastor, who shall advise the Church 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 Church Council. The written charges shall accompany the written citation to the accused. The written citation that specifies the time and place of the hearing before the Church Council and requests the presence of a member charged with an offense shall be sent at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting. If the member charged with the offense fails to appear at the scheduled hearing, the Church Council may proceed with the hearing and may pass judgment in the member's absence.

**14.03.** Members of the Church Council who participate in the preparation of the written charges or who present evidence or testimony in the hearing before the Church 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 Church 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 the member in writing.

**14.04.** The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Church Council shall have the right to appeal to a Congregational Meeting, which may revise or overturn the Church Council's decision by a majority vote. Any such vote will be by secret ballot.

- 14.05. Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Church Council upon receipt of
- a. evidence that injustice has been done, or
  - b. evidence of repentance and amendment.

## **Chapter 15**

### **BYLAWS**

- 15.01. This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.
- 15.02. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a super majority vote of those voting members present and voting.
- 15.03. Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however,
- a. that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Church Council at least sixty (60) days before a regular or special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose and
  - b. that the Church Council notify the members of the proposal with any recommendations regarding the disposition of the proposal at least thirty (30) days in advance of the Congregational Meeting.

## **Chapter 16.**

### **AMENDMENTS**

- 16.01. Amendments may be proposed by at least ten percent (10%) voting members or by the Church Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Church Council sixty (60) days before a regular or special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose. The Church Council shall notify the members of the proposal with the council's recommendations regarding disposition of the proposal at least thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting.
- 16.02. An amendment to this constitution, shall:
- a. be approved at a legally called Congregational Meeting according to this constitution by a simple majority vote of those present and voting;
  - b. be ratified without change at the next annual Congregational Meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those present and voting;
  - c. have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.

## **Chapter 17.**

### **CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

- 17.01. This congregation in a legally called Congregational Meeting or the Church Council may enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this congregation.
- 17.02. Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a majority vote of a Congregational Meeting or a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Church Council.
- 17.03. Continuing resolutions shall be attached to this constitution and by-laws, and kept with the official church records.
- 17.04. Continuing resolutions may be rescinded by a majority vote of a legally called Congregational Meeting or a two-thirds (2/3) vote of all voting members of the Church Council.

## **Chapter 18.**

### **INDEMNIFICATION**

**18.01.** 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 Church Council member, officer, employee, agent or other member of any committee of this congregation, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.

## **Chapter 19.**

### **ORGANIZATION AND DISSOLUTION**

**19.01** The purpose for which this congregation is formed, and the business and objectives to be carried on and promoted by it are to operate a religious organization exempt from income taxation under Section 501c(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or corresponding section of any future federal tax code and as the same may be amended at any time and from time to time. This congregation 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 any corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

**19.02.** Upon dissolution of this congregation, the assets of this congregation shall be distributed for one (1) or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501c(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code and as the same may be amended at any time and from time to time.

## **BYLAWS**

### **Duties of the Church Council**

As examples to the congregation, all Church Council members shall be encouraged to regularly attend worship services; participate in the sacraments, Bible Study, and prayer; and assist the pastor in any way requested.

Job descriptions listed below are only guidelines, and are subject to variance and change. Many responsibilities for each office are to be dictated by common sense and willingness to fulfill the duties incurred by the office.

**PRESIDENT:** The President of the Church Council shall keep abreast of all phases of congregational life, seeking to lift up strengths and to strengthen points of weakness. The president will preside over annual meetings, monthly Church Council meetings, compile monthly agenda and be welcome as an *ex-officio* member of all committees. The president shall be responsible for implementing the decisions of the Church Council. In the event of a forced absence, the president shall appoint a member of the Church Council to preside.

**SECRETARY:** The Secretary shall accurately record the minutes and decisions of the Church Council and congregational meetings, participate in decision making, and also handle all required correspondence. All the secretary's records shall be available to the pastor. The secretary records all congregational monies, credits each member for his/her contribution toward the budget. If the Church Council so directs, the secretary shall send each member a record of his/her annual budget contribution by December 1.

**TREASURER:** The Treasurer shall receive and deposit all congregational monies. A deacon or other council member will assist treasurer in counting the funds and completing deposit report. In the absence of the treasurer, another council member will assist the deacon or other council member in counting the funds and completing deposit report. This will be done after the church service, in the Secretary's office. The Treasurer will then forward a copy of the deposit report to the Secretary for recording. The Treasurer will report each month's income and budget expenditures to date to the Church Council and pastor, keep a bookkeeping record, and shall pay all approved bills each month. The treasurer shall compile a year-end report and help prepare a budget for the next year.

**DEACONS:** The Deacons shall handle dissension problems in the congregation, visit sick members, prepare the sanctuary for worship services, assist in serving communion, and be responsible for the ushering program at all services and funerals. Deacons will assist the Treasurer in counting congregational monies after church services.

**TRUSTEES:** The Trustees shall be responsible for maintaining, protecting and governing the use of the church property. They shall conduct an annual inspection of the property for needed repairs and check the adequacy of all types of insurance policies. They shall maintain the church grounds and control weeds and insects. They shall organize an annual spring clean-up of grounds. They shall arrange for mowing of the church lawn and shoveling walks. They shall communicate and cooperate with the custodial staff. They shall file records of major improvements and locations of underground utilities, etc. with the secretary.

**PARISH EDUCATION AND YOUTH:**

1. The Parish Education and Youth Committee shall plan and direct all educational programs and curricula for teachers; and continually review, encourage and direct youth participation in all church functions and activities. The pastor shall be included on this committee.
2. It is our desire to permit the children of our congregation who are in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade or older to participate in the Sacrament of Holy Communion after proper instruction, and mutual agreement by the child, his or her parents, and the pastor.

**STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE:** The Stewardship and Finance Committee shall prepare an annual budget, be responsible for the raising of funds to meet the budget and special causes. They shall be responsible for and make recommendations for memorial monies, endowments, and investments. They shall audit the treasurer's books annually. They shall be responsible for development of a stewardship program in accordance with scriptural principles of total stewardship.

**WORSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP:** The Worship and Fellowship Committee shall be responsible for all church activities that have to do with worship: choirs, organists, pulpit supply when needed, lectors, greeters, special worship services, the Christmas tree and Christmas treats. They shall cooperate with the deacons for ushering. They shall plan activities that bring members together and help them to get to know each other better in the congregation. They shall encourage lay ministry and lay leadership.

MISSION AND OUTREACH: The Mission and Outreach Committee shall encourage congregational members to share Christ with one another, minister to inactive members, and reach out toward all people world-wide, inside and outside the Church, offering them more than membership in a church – a saving relationship with Christ. They shall cooperate with the Parish Education and Youth Committee for promoting spiritual growth in the congregation. The Committee shall research possible mission projects, and make recommendations to the Church Council.

#### **APPENDIX: THE COMMON CONFESSION (2005)**

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