

**Constitution and Bylaws of  
Christ Our Redeemer  
Lutheran Church  
of Temple Terrace, Florida  
Revised January 22, 2006;  
June 27, 2010  
June 24, 2012  
January 19, 2014  
January 21, 2018  
January 26, 2020  
January 28, 2024**

**\*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 Christ Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Inc.

**C1.02.** For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the Christ Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Inc. congregation is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."

**C1.03.** The seal of this congregation presents the cross within a crown and the words "Christ Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Temple Terrace, Florida, 1984".

**C1.11.** This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Florida.

**Chapter 2. Confession of Faith**

**\*C2.01.** This congregation confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**\*C2.02.** This congregation confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe

- a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.
- b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

**\*C2.03.** This congregation accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.

**\*C2.04.** This congregation accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this congregation.

**\*C2.05.** This congregation accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

**\*C2.06.** This congregation accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.

**\*C2.07.** This congregation confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

### **Chapter 3. Nature of the Church**

**\*C3.01.** All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.

**\*C3.02.** This church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world.

**\*C3.03.** The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Church service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

**\*C3.04.** This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in the Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God's mission in the world.

**\*C3.05.** The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or "this church") as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three expressions – congregations, synods and the churchwide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.

### **Chapter 4. Statement of Purpose**

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

**\*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 and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.
- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
- f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

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

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

**\*C4.04.** This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational groups and shall, review their actions. [Such descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions in the section on the Congregational Committees.]

**\*C4.05.** This congregation shall adopt and periodically review a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

**C4.05.A17.** Our mission as Christ Our Redeemer Lutheran Church is to be people of God gathered around Word and Sacrament. Therefore, we proclaim the love of God in Christ Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. We do this through Worshipping, Learning, Supporting, Witnessing and Serving.

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

## **Chapter 5. Powers of the Congregation**

**\*C5.01.** The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.

**\*C5.02.** The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregation Meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.

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**\*C5.03.** Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregation Council or other organizational units in this congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by this congregation. This congregation is authorized to:

- a. Call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- b. Terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- c. Call a minister of Word and Service;
- d. Terminate the call of a minister in Word and Service in conformity with the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
- e. Adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in Chapter 16, amendments to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 17, and continuing resolutions, as provided in Chapter 18.
- f. Approve the annual budget;
- g. Acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
- h. Hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
- i. Sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
- j. Elect its officers, Congregation Council, boards, and committees, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions; and
- k. Terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.

**\*C5.04.** This congregation shall elect from among its voting members, laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by this congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the Florida-Bahamas 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 and continuing resolutions. The purpose of the mission endowment fund is to provide for mission work beyond the operational budget of this congregation.

**C5.05.01.** The Christ Our Redeemer Mission Endowment Fund, hereafter referred to as the "Mission Endowment Fund," is established to assist with benevolent causes and endeavors, both locally and worldwide, that reflect the love of God in Christ Jesus for all people. Every action and disbursement from this mission fund should bear witness to this congregation's confession of faith and mission.

**C5.05.02.** The principal of the Mission Endowment Fund shall always be held intact, and only the interest or earnings of the mission fund are to be expended. These earnings shall normally be withdrawn at the close of the calendar year and expended in the following manner:

- a. Up to one-fourth (1/4) for capital improvements, debt reduction or building programs of this congregation;
- b. Up to one-fourth (1/4) for scholarships or grants to members of this congregation for the purpose of attending college, seminary, nursing or medical school, or for attending church related camping or leadership conferences, or for participating in other such training events that enable them to grow in the Christian faith and service to others in God's world;
- c. At least one-fourth (1/4) for outreach into the community including, but not limited to, grants to: ELCA supported colleges, seminaries, and social service agencies; institutions and agencies to which this congregation relates through outreach; mission congregations within the Tampa Conference of ELCA congregations; and, special programs designed to address the spiritual and/or economic needs of persons in the parish area of this congregation.
- d. At least one-fourth (1/4) for missions at home or overseas, including, but not limited to, grants to the ELCA Churchwide expression for new congregation development in North America, professional leadership training, educational ministries, global mission, ecumenism, evangelism, social ministries and capital financing.

**C5.05.03.** The assets of the Mission Endowment Fund shall not be pledged as collateral. The principal, in its entirety or in part, may be expended only in the circumstance of an emergency, provided that such emergency use shall first be approved by written ballot by three-fourths (3/4) of voting members present and voting at a legally called and conducted special meeting of the congregation.

## 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 Florida-Bahamas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**\*C6.02.** This congregation accepts the Confession of Faith and agrees to the Purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and shall act in accordance with them.

**\*C6.03.** This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which:

- a. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
- b. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the bishop of the synod. These special circumstances are limited either to calling a candidate approved for the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or to contracting for pastoral services with a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion.
- d. This congregation agrees to consider ministers of Word and Service for call to other staff positions in this congregation according to the procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- e. This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution with the synod for review to ascertain that all of its provisions are in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and with the constitution of the synod.

**\*C6.04.** Affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is terminated as follows:

- a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.
- b. This congregation ceases to exist.
- c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or in accordance with provision 9.23. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- d. The Florida-Bahamas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church takes charge and control of the property of this congregation to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of the synod pursuant to S13.24 of the synod constitution. The congregation shall have the right to appeal the decision to the next Synod Assembly.
- e. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in \*C6.05.

**\*C6.05.** This congregation may terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the following procedure:

- a. A resolution indicating the intent to terminate its relationship must be adopted at two legally called and conducted special meetings of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at each meeting. The first such meeting may be held no sooner than 30 days after written notice of the meeting is received by the bishop of the synod, during which time this congregation shall consult with the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any. The times and manner of the consultation shall be determined by the bishop in consultation with the Congregation Council. Unless he or she is a voting member of this congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the first meeting.
- b. Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon at the first meeting, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall send copies of the resolution and certification to voting members of this congregation.
- c. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the first meeting, the bishop of the synod and this congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph a. above, during a

period of at least 90 days after receipt by the bishop of the attestation and certification as specified in paragraph b. above.

- d. If this congregation, after such consultation, is still considering termination of its relationship with this church, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present. Notice of the second meeting shall be sent to all voting members and to the bishop at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Unless he or she is voting member of this congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the second meeting.
- e. Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the second special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall send copies of the resolution and certification to the voting members of the congregation. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the second meeting, the relationship between the congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to Synod Council approval as required by paragraphs f and g below.
- f. Unless this notification to the bishop also certifies that this congregation has voted to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, this congregation shall be deemed an independent or non-Lutheran church, in which case \*C7.04 shall apply.
- g. This congregation shall abide by these covenants by and among the three expressions of this church:
  - 1) Congregations seeking to terminate their relationship with this church which fail or refuse to comply with each of the foregoing provisions in \*C6.05., shall be required to receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.
  - 2) Congregations which had been members of the Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in \*C6.05., to receive synod approval before terminating their membership in this church.
  - 3) Congregations established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in \*C6.05. to satisfy all financial obligations to this church and receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.
- h. If this congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at this congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above, or fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at this congregation's second meeting as specified in paragraph d. above, another attempt to consider termination of relationship with this church must follow all requirements of \*C6.05. and may begin no sooner than six months after the meeting at which the two-thirds vote was not achieved.

**\*C6.06.** If this congregation considers relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is taken.

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

## **Chapter 7. Property Ownership**

**\*C7.01.** If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the Florida-Bahamas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**\*C7.02.** If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline or pursuant to 9.23 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

**\*C7.03.** If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to transfer to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation, provided the process for termination of relationship in \*C6.05. has been followed. Before this congregation takes action to transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Florida-Bahamas Synod.

**\*C7.04.** If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body and have followed the process for termination of relationship in \*C6.05., title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with this congregation by the process established by the synod, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of this congregation. If the Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to continue as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In neither case does title to this congregation's property transfer to the synod.

**\*C7.05.** Notwithstanding the provisions of \*C7.02. and \*C7.03. above, where this congregation has received property from the synod pursuant to a deed or other instrument containing restrictions under provisions 9.71.a. of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, this congregation accepts such restrictions and:

- a. Shall not transfer, encumber, mortgage, or in any other way burden or impair any right, title, or interest in the property without prior approval of the Synod Council.
- b. Shall—upon written demand by the Synod Council, pursuant to S13.23. of the constitution of the Florida-Bahamas Synod—reconvey and transfer all right, title and interest in the property to the synod.

## Chapter 8. Membership

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

**\*C8.02.** Members shall be classified as follows:

- a. **Baptized** members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.
- b. **Confirmed** members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.
- c. **Voting** members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of this congregation as well as the other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws. They shall not have voted as a seasonal member of another congregation of this church in the previous two calendar months.
- d. **Associate** members are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. These individuals have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights or other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.
- e. **Seasonal** members are voting members of other congregations of this church who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation, including exercising limited voting rights in this congregation. The Congregation Council may grant seasonal membership to such persons provided that this congregation is a member of a synod where the Synod Council has approved seasonal member voting on its territory. Such seasonal members shall have all the privileges and duties of voting members except that:
  - 1) They shall not be eligible for elected office in, or for membership on the Congregational Council or on a call committee of, this congregation;

- 2) They shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the call or termination of call of any minister of this congregation;
- 3) They shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the affiliation of this congregation with this church;
- 4) They shall not be eligible to serve as voting members from this congregation of the Synod Assembly or the Churchwide Assembly;
- 5) They shall not, even if otherwise permitted by this congregation, vote by proxy or by absentee ballot; and
- 6) They shall not, within any two calendar month period, exercise voting rights in this congregation and in the congregation where they remain voting members.

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

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

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

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

- a. Death;
- b. Resignation;
- c. Transfer or release;
- d. Disciplinary action in accordance with Chapter 20 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or
- e. Removal from the roll due to inactivity in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws. Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the church has a continuing pastoral concern.

**C8.05.01.** When members have failed to receive Holy Communion, failed to make a contribution of record for a period of two consecutive calendar years and in general have not participated in the life and worship of the congregation, they may be removed from the roll of members by the Congregation Council. This procedure will take place only when there is a pastor under call to serve this congregation or with the approval of the bishop of the synod and after such members have been counseled about the matter, if possible.

## **Chapter 9. Rostered Minister**

**\*C9.01.** Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by this congregation to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.

**\*C9.02.** Only a member of the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.

**\*C9.03.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

- a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

- 1) Preach the Word;
- 2) Administer the sacraments;
- 3) Conduct public worship;



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- 4) Provide pastoral care;
  - 5) Seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
  - 6) Impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
  - 7) Witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation and abroad; and
  - 8) Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, advocating dignity, justice and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.
- b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
- 1) Offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
  - 2) Relate to all schools and organizations of this congregation;
  - 3) Install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
  - 4) With the council, administer discipline;
  - 5) Endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and of the Florida-Bahamas Synod; and
  - 6) Encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

**\*C9.04.** The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.

**\*C9.05.** The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and this congregation shall be as follows:

- a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by the pastor's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for 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 this 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 Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church;
  - 7) Termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;
  - 8) Dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
  - 9) Suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- b. When allegations of 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 rostered ministers and one layperson, or
  - 2) When such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged 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. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament with disability status. Upon 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 this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by this congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and the congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, this congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

**\*C9.06.** At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.

**\*C9.07.** During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in this congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any rostered minister providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.

**\*C9.08.** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting.

**\*C9.09.** When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

**\*C9.11.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from \*C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of \*C9.05.a.

**\*C9.12.** The pastor of this congregation:

- a. Shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from this congregation;
- b. Shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod; and
- c. Shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

**\*C9.13.** The pastor(s) shall submit a report of 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 this 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 call or approval of a request for change in roster status.

**C9.15.** Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synod bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between this congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synod bishop and approved by this congregation.

**\*C9.21.** Authority to call a deacon shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by this congregation to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help on the bishop of the synod.

**\*C9.22.** Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop may be called as a deacon for this congregation.

**\*C9.23.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
- b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
- c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, advocating dignity, justice and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.;
- d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
- e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniments of others in God's mission;
- f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
- g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
- h. Share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
- i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

**\*C9.24.** The specific duties of the deacon, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the deacon shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.

**\*C9.25.** The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Service and a congregation shall be as follows:

- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a deacon, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by deacon's death or, following consultation with the synod 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 deacon, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
  - 3) Inability to conduct the ministry of Word and Service effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions;
  - 4) Physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon;
  - 5) Suspension of the deacon through discipline for more than three months;
  - 6) Resignation or removal of the deacon from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church;
  - 7) Termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;
  - 8) Dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
  - 9) Suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months.

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- b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the office of minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
  - 1) The bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
  - 2) When such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the deacon's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the office vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service with disability status. Upon removal of the disability and the restoration of the deacon to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the deacon to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the deacon and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the deacon's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by this congregation and by the deacon, if appropriate. If the deacon and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the deacon's call, this congregation may dismiss the deacon only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

**\*C9.26.** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former deacon before calling a successor. A deacon shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting.

**\*C9.27.** When a deacon is called to serve in company with another rostered minister or other rostered ministers, the privileges and responsibilities of each rostered minister shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the rostered ministers, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

**\*C9.28.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from \*C9.25.a. and call a deacon for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of the term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the deacon and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of \*C9.25.a.

**\*C9.29.** The deacon shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the deacon shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

**\*C9.31.** The deacon(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

## **Chapter 10. Congregation Meeting**

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

**C10.01.01.** The annual congregational meeting shall be held during 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 this congregation upon the written request of ten percent of the voting members. The president of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synod bishop. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose 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.** Ten percent of the 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 this congregation shall be by majority vote of those voting members present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution or state law.

**C10.07.** *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

**C10.08.** This congregation may hold meetings by remote communications, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

## **Chapter 11. Officers**

**C11.01.** The officers of this congregation shall be a president, president-elect, secretary, treasurer, and financial secretary.

- a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
- b. The officers shall be voting members of this congregation.
- c. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.

**C11.01.01.** The president of the congregation shall:

- a. Be the administrative coordinator of congregational activities;
- b. Chair and provide agendas for congregation and council meetings;
- c. Make appointments as directed by the constitution, congregation, or Congregation Council;
- d. Request reports from all committees, and assist and encourage them in carrying out their functions; and
- e. Serve as an advisory member of all committees.

**C11.01.02.** The president-elect shall:

- a. Assist the president in carrying out administrative duties;
- b. In the absence of the president or vacancy of that office, assume those duties;
- c. Present a preliminary budget to the Congregation Council in accordance with Bylaw C12.05.01.; and
- d. Assume the office of president in the succeeding term.

**C11.01.03.** The secretary shall:

- a. Be responsible for accurate records of meetings of the congregation and the Congregation Council;
- b. Provide for notification to the congregation of meetings of the congregation; and
- c. Request and file written minutes from committees.

**C11.01.04.** The treasurer shall:

- a. Be responsible for all funds received by the congregation;
- b. Present a weekly report of all receipts to the financial secretary; and
- c. Recruit and train a sufficient number of tellers so that receipts may be counted by teams of no less than two tellers and banked promptly.
- d. Oversee the maintenance of accurate records of receipts and expenditures by budget category;
- e. Present a monthly report to the Congregation Council; and
- f. Appoint an individual(s) to write checks, as funds are available for all properly authorized bills. Bills are properly authorized by the appropriate person for budget items, or by the Congregation Council or congregation for non-budget items.

**C11.01.05.** The financial secretary shall keep records of individual giving to the congregation and furnish to each member quarterly and annual reports of that member's contributions.

**C11.02.** The officers shall be elected by this congregation by written ballot. The president-elect shall serve a term of two years; the first year of this office is served in the capacity of president-elect and the second year in the capacity of president. The secretary and financial secretary shall serve terms of one year; the treasurer shall serve a term of two years. The election of the treasurer shall be in even years. The terms of officers shall begin on the Sunday that they are installed.

**C11.03.** No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. The president-elect is not eligible for a successive term. The secretary, treasurer, and financial secretary shall be eligible to serve no more than four consecutive terms in the same office.

## **Chapter 12. Congregation Council**

**C12.01.** The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s), the deacon(s) and not more than nine members of this congregation and the officers of this congregation. Any voting member of this congregation (except for regular paid staff) may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b) is absent from two successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause.

**C12.01.01.** Eight voting members of the congregation shall be elected to the Congregation Council and shall chair one of the following ministry committees: Worship, Outreach, Stewardship, Social Ministry, Fellowship, Education, Property, and Member Care.

**C12.01.02.** Should a council member who is chairperson of one of the ministry committees be unable to attend a meeting of the Congregation Council, that person may designate another member of the committee to attend the council meeting, without voting privileges.

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**C12.02.** The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) and deacon(s) shall be elected at a legally called meeting of this congregation during the month of January. The term of office of non-officer members shall be for two years with the term of office beginning on the Sunday they are installed. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively.

**C12.02.01.** Installation Sunday shall be a Sunday following the January congregation meeting.

**C12.02.02.** The council members who represent and chair the Worship, Outreach, Stewardship, and Social Ministry committees shall be elected on odd years and those who represent and chair the Fellowship, Education, Properties, and Member Care committees shall be elected on even years.

**C12.03.** Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next 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 rostered ministers 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.
- h. To emphasize support of the synod and churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- j. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

**C12.05.** The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.

- a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of 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 Florida, except as otherwise provided herein.
- b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of this congregation.
- c. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts costing not more than 5% of the total annual budget 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 more than 5% in excess of the anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full congregationally approved share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in collaboration with the synod and churchwide organization.
- e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently with appropriate oversight and review, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of mission support monies to the synod treasurer.
- f. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.

**C12.05.01.** The president-elect shall collect the preliminary budget requests from the various ministry committees and present them to the Congregation Council for review. The council shall approve a recommended budget for distribution to the congregation and shall provide opportunities for congregation discussion of it.

**C12.06.** The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution and 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 this congregation's responsibility for the call, terms of call, or termination of call of any employees who are on a roster of this church.

**C12.09.** The Congregation Council shall 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 third 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 an 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 synod bishop.

**C12.13.** The Congregational 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.

**C12.14.** All non-monetary gifts or donations shall be subject to approval by the Congregation Council.

## **Chapter 13. Congregation Committees**

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

**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 a regularly called meeting for a term of one year. Members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible for consecutive reelection.

**C13.02.A91.** The Nominating Committee shall:

- a. Be chaired by the president-elect;
- b. Be responsible for selecting and submitting a slate of candidates for all congregational elections;
- c. Assist the Congregation Council members in developing a slate of candidates for their respective ministry committees to be presented for approval at the February Congregation Council meeting;
- d. Assist the Congregation Council in selecting candidates for any vacancies that may arise during the year; and
- e. Assist in the election procedures as directed by the president.

**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.

**C13.03.01.** The members of the Audit Committee shall be independent of the financial functions of this congregation and shall provide, at least annually, an independent evaluation of the financial records and the internal controls of the



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congregation for the purpose of providing an opinion on the reasonableness of the congregation's financial statements and recommending improvements to its internal controls.

**C13.04.** A Staff Support Committee shall be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor(s). Term of office shall be two years with three members to be appointed each successive year.

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

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

**C13.06.01.** Each ministry committee shall consist of at least six members including its chairperson. A slate of candidates for each ministry committee shall be presented by the respective committee chairperson for approval at the first council meeting following the January elections. Term of office for ministry committee members is one year.

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

**C13.07.A91.** The Worship Committee shall include the organist and choir director as advisory members and shall be responsible for:

- a. The worship life of the congregation including all worship services and the personnel and materials necessary to conduct the services;
- b. Developing staffs of ushers, acolytes, liturgical assistants, lectors, Altar Guild, musical assistants, music groups, sound system operators, and nursery personnel, as desired.

**C13.07.B91.** The Outreach Committee shall be responsible for:

- a. Providing greeters at each service, calling on visitors, and organizing community surveys and evangelism programs;
- b. Communicating our ministry to the community; and
- c. Providing materials for local, national, or international mission emphasis programs in the congregation.

**C13.07.C91.** The Stewardship Committee shall be responsible for:

- a. Conducting an annual stewardship emphasis program as approved by the Congregation Council;
- b. Providing stewardship education materials and activities; and
- c. Conducting an annual time and talent survey.

**C13.07.D91.** The Social Ministry Committee shall be responsible for:

- a. Social ministry programs such as sponsoring refugees, advocacy program, aid for migrants;
- b. Identifying special needs within the local and worldwide communities; and
- c. Providing social ministry materials to the congregation.

**C13.07.E91.** The Fellowship Committee shall be responsible for:

- a. Coordinating and encouraging the activities of congregational auxiliary groups such as adult, sports, and other special interest groups, and shall encourage the development of such groups as needs arise; and
- b. Selecting one or more sub-committees to be responsible for the regular Sunday morning coffee fellowship, other regular congregation fellowship activities, and special activities as may be desirable.

**C13.07.F91.** The Education Committee shall include the director of Christain education as advisory member, and shall be responsible for:

- a. The Christian education of members and visitors of this congregation;
- b. Directing the Sunday School (including nursery roll), confirmation classes, adult Bible classes, first communion classes and Vacation Bible School;
- c. Selecting a Sunday School superintendent and a Vacation Bible School coordinator;
- d. Regularly reviewing the educational needs of the congregation, and recommending necessary action;
- e. Developing and maintaining a church library; and

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- f. Directing youth ministry programs. The committee may appoint a youth council.

**C13.07.G91.** The Property Committee shall include the Property Manager as an advisory member and shall be responsible for:

- a. All upkeep, repair, change, or addition to the properties of the congregation;
- b. The hiring of personnel necessary for maintenance, as authorized by the Congregation Council;
- c. Securing competitive estimates, bids and contracts for repair or construction to submit to the Congregation Council for approval, but shall have the authority to contract for emergency repairs up to \$3000;
- d. Annually appointing a design committee with approval of the Congregation Council to coordinate the aesthetics of design changes, decorations, furniture additions, accessories, etc.; and
- e. Assisting the building committee, should such committee be formed, and the chairperson of the Property committee shall serve as an ex-officio member of such building committee.

**C13.07.H91.** The Member Care committee shall be responsible for:

- a. Assisting the pastor(s) in ministering to the spiritual needs of the congregation;
- b. Contacting members when there is a significant variation in their attendance;
- c. Providing ministry to members in special need, particularly in times of crisis;
- d. Maintaining an active prayer chain;
- e. Overseeing the Stephen Ministry program, and such program shall:
  - 1) maintain a system of training and organizing laypersons for caring ministry in and around the congregation;
  - 2) submit a report to the Member Care committee on a quarterly basis;
  - 3) have a leader regularly attend the Member Care committee meeting, in an advisory capacity.
- f. Overseeing other member ministry programs such as the parish nurse program.

**C13.07.02.** The Memorial Committee shall consist of three voting members of the congregation appointed by the Congregation Council for three year terms with terms so staggered that one member is appointed each year. The Memorial Committee shall be responsible for:

- a. Maintaining a directory of memorial gift opportunities and reviewing suggestions for additional memorial gift opportunities in keeping with the established memorial guidelines.
- b. Encouraging families at the death of a loved one to consider inviting those who so desire to make gifts to the Memorial Fund of this congregation. The pastor or a member of the Memorial Committee may consult with the family of the deceased as to how these funds should be used.
- c. Reviewing proposed gifts to the memorial fund for acceptability and utility in the overall mission of this congregation seeking the guidance of the Congregation Council.
- d. Publishing periodically information to the congregation on donations to the Memorial Fund and arrangements for use of memorials including reproducing materials from ELCA organizations and similar programs.
- e. Keeping a memorial book in a central location that lists donors, purposes, and honorees. The use of such memorial book is in lieu of the use of plates on objects with the names of donors. Actual amounts of donations will be kept by the financial secretary and/or treasurer. A recorder or other staff member will send appropriate notes of appreciation to donors. A memorial may be designated in memory or in honor of a person or persons, and may be given for a specific designated purpose.
- f. Meeting from time to time as determined by the committee, but not less than two times per year.

**C13.07.A17.** Memorial Funds

- a. The Congregation Council shall authorize expenditures from memorial funds.
- b. Designated memorial funds are to be used only for the purpose designated or as authorized by the representative of the donor.
- c. Undesignated memorial funds are to be expended only for lasting additions or improvements or items of similar durable value used in worship and other ministries of the congregation.
- d. Information of the status of specific memorial funds will be provided to the donor(s) as actions related to the use of the funds are anticipated or completed.
- e. General information on the status of the memorial funds will be provided to the congregation annually.

**C13.07.B17.** Memorial Garden

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- a. Cremated remains (ashes only) of members may be buried directly into the ground or in a biodegradable container within the confines of the Memorial Garden, and with the approval of the pastor.
- b. The Congregation Council may grant special approval for the burial of the cremated remains of a non-member in the Memorial Garden.

**C13.07.03.** The Mission Endowment Committee shall consist of six voting members of the congregation including the pastor, the president-elect, and the treasurer. The remaining three members shall be appointed by the Congregation Council for three year terms with terms so staggered that one member is appointed each year. Such appointed members of the Mission Endowment Committee shall not serve more than two consecutive full three-year terms. The terms of office shall begin after the annual organizational meeting of the Congregation Council at which time the committee appointments shall be made and continue until new members are duly appointed. The Mission Endowment Committee shall be responsible for:

- a. Recommending to Congregation Council the acceptability of all gifts, especially gifts with stipulations attached.
- b. Distributing information on donations and arrangements for memorials, bequests, and similar gifts, based upon material received from various ELCA organizations and other programs, and approved by the council.
- c. Selecting for Congregation Council approval applicants and potential recipients of the earnings of the Mission Endowment Fund.
- d. Authorizing all disbursements based on Congregation Council approval of such funding of approved programs, applicants and recipients, including those of capital or program nature.
- e. Monitoring, with the treasurer and financial secretary, the receiving, recording, safekeeping, and disbursing of all monies, deeds, properties, titles, certificates, and securities of the Mission Endowment Fund.
- f. Requiring the treasurer and financial secretary to keep the monies of the Mission Endowment Fund separate from all other monies or funds of this congregation and receive from these officers annual reports, or updates as may be requested by the committee.
- g. Monitoring periodically the investment policies with respect to the Mission Endowment Fund.
- h. Providing for the audit of the records of the Mission Endowment Funds annually by the Audit Committee.
- i. Reporting the operations of the committee to the Congregation Council and the congregation annually, or at such other times as requested.

**C13.07.C17.** Mission Endowment Committee Officers

- a. There shall be a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and a secretary of the Mission Endowment Committee, elected by the committee from the appointed members at the first meeting each year,
- b. The term of office shall be for one year, or until the successor is duly elected or appointed.
- c. Vacancies in the unexpired terms of the officers shall be filled by majority vote of the committee.
- d. The chairperson shall call and preside over committee meetings, and shall report annually to the Congregation Council and to the Congregation, as well as perform other duties as mandated by the committee or Congregation Council.
- e. The secretary shall give notice of all committee meetings, record minutes, keep attendance figures and perform such other duties as mandated by the committee.

**C13.07.D17.** Mission Endowment Committee Meetings

- a. Meetings shall be held from time to time as determined by the committee, but not less than two times per year; advance notice of all meetings shall be given to the members.
- b. The first meeting of each year shall be held no later than 30 days following the date of appointment by the Congregation Council. At this meeting, the By-Laws and guidelines shall be reviewed.
- c. Special meetings shall be held when called by the chairperson or by request of any three members of the committee; twenty-four hours advance notice, either verbal or written, shall be given each member and the purpose of the meeting shall be stated. No other business shall be conducted at the special meeting.
- d. Three members of the committee plus the pastor shall be sufficient to transact business and shall constitute a quorum at any meeting. A majority of those present, but not less than three affirmative votes, shall be required to pass any motion.

**C13.07.E17.** Mission Endowment Committee Guidelines

- a. All information provided by a donor, prospective donor, or other advisors will be treated with utmost discretion and confidentiality.

- b. Donors may be urged to seek competent legal counsel; committee members shall seek the advice of the congregation's legal counsel in all matters pertaining to the planned gifts program and shall execute no planned giving agreement without the advice of such counsel.
- c. The committee may use a professional investment firm or firm for advice in the purchase and sale of investments.
- d. The committee shall keep the preservation of principal as its primary investment goal, seeking also a maximization of yield as a secondary Investment goal.
- e. The Committee shall promote wills emphasis and estate planning to the members of this congregation from time to time.
- f. Gift opportunities and avenues of planned giving will be brought to the attention of the congregation through the use of printed materials and mailings; this solicitation effort may be supplemented by coverage in the congregation's newsletter, announcements and presentations at worship services, special programs, and personal follow-up by committee members and/or Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Foundation representatives.
- g. Any written acceptance of gifts of real or personal property should simply be in the form of a written receipt of the items(s) and should not express or confirm an opinion of the value thereof.
- h. In the matter of gifts that will or may require the expenditure of funds, the Congregation Council shall approve such gifts either at the time of the gift or before such expenditures are made. Examples of such gifts that would need council approval are assets going into any form of charitable trust or charitable gift annuity, bargain sale, or outright gifts such as real estate that may place present or future obligations on this congregation.
- i. The planned giving program of this congregation will assume a low-key, informational approach. Members with an active interest in the planned giving program will respond and a carefully devised follow-up plan will help determine which inquirers are genuinely interested in further consideration. Those members with confirmed interest will then be contacted on a regular basis by the committee, with the goal of educating and informing them of their own potential for giving through the planned giving program.

**C13.07.A04.** A Finance ~~Audit~~ Committee shall be comprised of at least five members appointed by the president and approved by the Congregation Council. The president-elect shall chair the committee. Responsibilities and duties of this committee should consist of the following:

- a. Submit an annual budget to the Congregation Council for approval;
- b. Oversee the financial activity of the church;
- c. Perform a quarterly review of the "Treasurer Checklist" to verify that all items have been completed;
- d. Assist the Audit Committee in performing an annual review of the actions of the treasurer of the congregation by validating the bank and fund balances reported by the treasurer in the treasurer's annual report to the congregation and confirming that all monies received by the congregation and its organizations are reported in cash accounts in an accurate and timely manner;
- e. Assist the Audit Committee to annually determine that expenditures for personal and real property are properly recorded in the list of assets of the congregation;
- f. Make or cause to be made an annual physical examination of the personal property of the congregation and confirm that significant liabilities, e.g., mortgage, pensions, salaries, and insurance premiums are current and, if not, so disclose to the Congregation Council;
- g. Arrange with the treasurer to complete its review in a timely manner and report its finding to the congregation at the annual meeting of the congregation.

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

## **Chapter 14. Organizations within this Congregation**

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

**C14.02.** Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council and specified in a continuing resolution.

**C14.02.A91.** The Stephen Series of Care Ministry is authorized by the Congregation Council. A minimum of two volunteer lay leaders shall assist the pastor(s) in administering and executing this ministry. They shall maintain a system of training and organizing laypersons for caring ministry in and around the congregation; they shall report to the Member Care Committee.

## 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 with the ministry of this congregation, or willful and repeated harassment or defamation of member(s) of this congregation is sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation and repentance will be attempted following Matthew 18:15 – 17, proceeding through these successive steps, as necessary: a) private counsel and admonition by the pastor, b) censure and admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, c) written referral of the matter by the Congregation Council to the vice president of the synod, who will refer it to a consultation panel drawn from the Consultation Committee of the synod, and d) written referral of the matter by the consultation panel to the Committee on Discipline of the synod. If, for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by paragraphs a, and b, hereof, those steps may be performed by another pastor chosen by the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council.

**\*C15.02.** The process for discipline of a member of this congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. If the counseling, censure, and admonitions pursuant to \*C15.01 do not result in repentance and amendment of life, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing may be prepared by the Congregation Council, signed, and submitted to the vice president of the synod. The vice president shall select from the synod's Consultation Committee a panel of five members (three lay persons and two ministers of Word and Sacrament). 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:

- a. Suspension from the privileges of congregation membership for a designated period of time;
- b. Suspension from the privileges of congregation membership until the pastor and Congregation Council receive evidence, satisfactory to them, of repentance and amendment of life;
- c. Termination of membership in this congregation; or

- d. Termination of membership in this congregation and exclusion from the church property and from all congregation activities.

**\*C15.06.** The written decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be sent to the vice president of the synod, the accused member(s), and the Congregation Council as required by the *Constitution Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran in America*. The decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be implemented by the Congregation Council and recorded in the minutes of the next council meeting.

**\*C15.07.** No member of this congregation shall be subject to discipline a second time for offenses that a discipline hearing panel has heard previously and decided pursuant to this chapter.

**\*C15.10. Adjudication**

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

## **Chapter 16. Amendments**

**\*C16.01.** Unless provision \*C16.04 is applicable, those sections of this constitution that are not required, in accord with the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be amended in the following manner. Amendments may be proposed by at least 50 voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify this congregation's members of the proposal together with the Council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

**\*C16.02.** An amendment to this constitution, proposed under \*C16.01., shall:

- a. Be approved at any legally called by meeting of this congregation by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting;
- b. Be ratified without change at the next regular meeting of this congregation held pursuant to C10.01. by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting; and
- c. Have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.

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

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

secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following a vote of approval.

## **Chapter 17. Bylaws**

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

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

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

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

## **Chapter 18. Continuing Resolutions**

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

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

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

## **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.

### **History of changes to this constitution:**

1992-01-01      First constitution of Christ Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, ELCA

2005-06-12      Major revision approved by congregation, second reading June 12, 2005.

**Christ Our Redeemer Lutheran Church Constitution and Bylaws, revised January 26, 2020**

- 2006-01-22 Required change due to 2005 Churchwide Assembly amendment to the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. Change approved at the congregational meeting January 22, 2006. (Single reading as of C16.04.)
- 2010-06-27 Required change due to 2009 Churchwide Assembly amendment to the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. Change approved at the congregational meeting June 27, 2010. (Single reading as of C16.04.)
- 2012-06-24 Required change due to 2011 Churchwide Assembly amendment to the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. Change approved at the congregational meeting June 24, 2012. (Single reading as of C16.04.)
- 2014-01-19 Required change due to 2013 Churchwide Assembly amendment to the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. Change approved at the congregational meeting January 19, 2014. (Single reading as of C16.04.) Also deleted School Board Committee.
- 2018-01-21 Required change due to 2016 Churchwide Assembly amendment to the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. Change approved at the congregational meeting January 21, 2018. Also approved revisions to bylaws and continuing resolutions related to the Mission Fund, and to committees of this congregation and their responsibilities. (Single reading as of C16.04.)
- 2020-01-26 Required change due to 2019 Churchwide Assembly amendment to the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. Change approved at the congregational meeting January 26, 2020. (Single reading as of C16.04.)
- 2024-01-28 Required change due to 2022 Churchwide Assembly amendment to the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. Change approved at the congregational meeting January 28, 2024. (Single reading as of C16.04.)