

Constitution

of

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Stacy, MN

1/24/2021 Edition

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Preamble

We, baptized members of the Church of Christ, responding in faith to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, desiring to unite together to preach the Word, administer the sacraments, and carry out God's missions, do hereby adopt this constitution and solemnly pledge ourselves to be governed by its provisions. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 1: Name and Incorporation

- 1.01 The name of this congregation shall be St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church.
- 1.02 This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Minnesota Chapter 317A.
- 1.03 The seal of this congregation presents a cross surrounded by light.

Chapter 2: Confession of Faith

- 2.01 We believe, teach, and confess the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- 2.02 We believe, teach, and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe in him.
 - 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, 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, through whom God was pleased to reconcile all things to himself.
 - C. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written inerrant 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.
- 2.03 We believe, teach, and confess the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inerrant Word of God and the sole authoritative source and norm of our history, proclamation, faith, and life, and the congregation's pastors and church council serve together as the final interpretive authority on the meaning and application of said Scriptures.
- 2.04 We believe, teach, and confess the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the Scriptural faith.
- 2.05 We believe, teach, and confess the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Word of God, normative for our teaching and practice, confessing that we are one in faith and doctrine with all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
- 2.06 We believe, teach, and confess 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 expositions of the Holy Scriptures.
- 2.07 We believe, teach, and confess 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 priesthood of all believers for God's mission in the world.

2.08 Sinners are made right with God by grace alone through faith alone on account of Christ alone. This is the article of faith by which the church stands or falls (Augustana IV; Smalcald, Part II, Article 1).

2.09 We believe, teach, and confess that God creates each person, either male or female and that these two distinct and complementary genders together reflect the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27).

We believe, teach and confess that the term "marriage" means only the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union (Genesis 2:18-25) and that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only within such a union. Any form of sexual intimacy outside this union (including but not limited to adultery, fornication, homosexual acts, bisexual acts, bestiality, incest) is sinful in the sight of God.

We believe, teach, and confess that God offers plentiful forgiveness and restoration to all who confess and repent of their sin, seeking mercy through Jesus Christ and amendment of life through the Holy Spirit.

We believe, teach, and confess that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Therefore, hateful or harassing behaviors directed toward any individual are to be repudiated. Those committing such behaviors will be subject to the congregation's discipline policy outlined in Chapter 15 of this Constitution. All persons employed by or who serve as volunteers for St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. All persons who become members of this congregation agree to and pledge to abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality.

2.10 The Word of God is Jesus Christ (John 1:1, 14), the proclamation of him (Matthew 18:20; I John 1:1, 2), and the Holy Scriptures (II Timothy 3:16). This Word functions as both law and gospel, which need to be distinguished but not separated. The law orders society and convicts us of sin, showing us our need for a Savior (Smalcald, Part III, Article II. The Law). The gospel is the power of God that liberates us from sin, death, and the power of the devil and brings us, by grace, from death to life (Romans 1:16).

2.11 Christ commanded that his Word be proclaimed (Luke 24:46-47). Through it, the Holy Spirit works faith when and where he pleases (Romans 10:17; Augustana V; Small Catechism Part II, Third Article), and repentant sinners are elected unto salvation. Christians live out their earthly lives as totally justified and totally sinful (Smalcald, Part III, Article III. Penitence).

2.12 Because the church is the assembly of believers among whom the Gospel is taught purely, and the sacraments are administered rightly, it is not necessary that human traditions, rites, and ceremonies, instituted by men, should be alike everywhere (Augustana VII; Smalcald Part III, Article XII). God instituted one office of ministry through which the means of salvation are provided (Augustana V). For the sake of good order, a pastor is authorized to function in this public office by virtue of a church's call (Augustana XIV). Churches band together in fellowship and mission to

strengthen their ministries, acknowledging participation in the universal Church of our Lord (Ephesians 4:4-6).

- 2.13 All persons employed by or who serve as volunteers for St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church engage in furthering the mission of the congregation, and thereby agree to and abide by all items within this Constitution, as well as the congregation's Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions (and, if employed for pay, its employment policies), and will sign a statement affirming their agreement and willingness to abide thereby.

Any violation of the aforementioned Constitution, Bylaws, Continuing Resolutions, and policies constitutes good cause for termination.

Chapter 3: Nature of the Church

- 3.01 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.
- 3.02 The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. The Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ, (heretofore referred to as the LCMC), 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.

Chapter 4: Congregational Function

- 4.01 This congregation is a worshipping, learning, witnessing, and serving community of baptized persons among whom the Word is proclaimed and the Sacraments are celebrated according to the Gospel. It shall provide support to enable the fulfillment of its mission and ministry.
- A. **WORSHIP:** This congregation, remembering God's mighty acts in the past, celebrating His abiding presence, and moving toward His promised fulfillment, shall listen to the Word of God in Scripture and preaching, receive the sacraments, and respond with liturgical acts of confession, prayer, praise, thanksgiving, and with tithes and offerings. In order to assist members to acknowledge God's rule over their lives, their own unity as Christ's body on earth, and to express their relationship with God in public and in private, the congregation shall gather for worship regularly, and, in accordance with the traditions of the Lutheran Church, recruit, equip, and support members for leadership in worship, use appropriate worship materials, and make certain that worship has a place in other functions of the congregation.
 - B. **LEARNING:** This congregation shall develop an educational ministry to assist persons to perceive and respond to God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ, and, in the power of the Holy

Spirit, to participate in God's continuing activity and revelation as they develop as individuals, related to other individuals, groups, institutions, culture, and the physical environment. To clarify its mission the congregation shall study itself in relation to its community and to the church around the world. It shall provide schools and other learning activities, recruit, equip, and support members for educational leadership, use appropriate educational materials, and make certain that adequate study undergirds the other functions of the congregation.

- C. **WITNESS:** This congregation, relying on the Holy Spirit, shall proclaim the Gospel by example and by programs to invite all people to repent and share the Lord's kingdom. The congregation shall motivate its members to witness to their faith at every opportunity in daily life. It shall try to restore those who have lapsed from active membership, bring new members into the fellowship of the church, and recruit, equip, and support members of the congregation for these activities. It shall provide for the communication of the Gospel through fellowship in the wider Christian community. It shall make certain that other functions witness to the faith of the church.
- D. **SERVICE:** This congregation shall live by faith active in love. It shall motivate, equip, and support its members to visit the sick, the infirm, and the imprisoned, and to minister to the poor and the distressed, to serve as Christians in all the institutions and structures of society of which they are a part; and individually and corporately to foster justice, overcome oppression, alleviate suffering and care for the earth. In these efforts the congregation shall cooperate with other Christian churches and other groups in society. It shall make certain that its other functions strengthen the motivation and ability for service.
- E. **SUPPORT:** This congregation in faithfulness to God shall provide leadership, organizational structures, facilities, and funds to enable fulfillment of the functions to their maximum potential. The congregation shall maintain effective communication among its members and with its community, inculcate the motives and practices of stewardship in all members of the congregation, encourage generous giving to the work of the church at home and elsewhere, evaluate regularly the total life and ministry of the congregation, and recruit, equip, and support members of the congregation to provide for these activities.

4.02 An organizational structure to fulfill these functions shall be developed by the church council and approved by the congregation. Appropriate committees shall be responsible to the church council. The church council shall prepare descriptions, including appropriate relationships with synodical structures, of the responsibility of each committee or task group and shall review their actions.

Chapter 4: Church Affiliation

- 5.01 This congregation shall be an independent congregation of the LCMC, an association of congregations.
- 5.02 The Congregation of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church retains its own property and assets. The LCMC makes no claim to any congregational asset or property.
- 5.03 Action taken by the board of trustees of the LCMC may suspend membership of a church for cause

by three-quarters vote of a quorum of the board of trustees of the LCMC. The board of trustees shall give at least sixty (60) days written notice of intent to seek suspension of membership in the association. The board shall adopt rules and regulations, approved by the national convention, governing the suspension of membership in the LCMC and shall report all such membership suspensions to all member churches of the LCMC within 30 days. The suspension shall remain in force until the next regular or special meeting of the association at which time a decision regarding the lifting of the suspension or the termination of the membership of a member church be made by a two-thirds majority vote.

5.04 Affiliation with the LCMC may be terminated as follows:

- A. This congregation takes action to dissolve.
- B. This congregation ceases to exist.
- C. This congregation is removed from membership in the LCMC according to the procedures for discipline of the LCMC.
- D. This congregations follows the procedures outlined in 5.05

5.05 This congregation may terminate its relationship with the LCMC by the following procedure:

- A. A resolution indicating the desire of this congregation to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present.
- B. The secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the LCMC and shall mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of this congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted.
- C. If this congregation still desires to terminate its relationship after ninety (90) days, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present, at which meeting an authorized representative of the LCMC may be present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.
- D. A certified copy of the resolution to terminate its relationship shall be sent to the LCMC at which time the relationship between this congregation and the LCMC shall be terminated.
- E. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the LCMC to the secretary of this church and published in the periodical of this church.

Chapter 6: Powers of the Congregation

6.01 The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.

6.02 The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregational Meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.

6.03 Only such authority as is delegated to the Church Council or other organization units in this congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by the congregation. The congregation is authorized to:

- A. Call a pastor as provided in Chapter 8.
- B. Terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 8.

- C. Appoint or terminate the appointment of associates in ministry.
- D. Approve the annual budget.
- E. Acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means.
- F. Hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose.
- G. Sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means.
- H. Elect its Church Council and require it to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution and bylaws.
- I. Terminate its relationship with the LCMC as provided in Chapter 5.

Chapter 7: Membership

7.01 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 members who, during the twelve months preceding a vote, shall have communed in this congregation at least three (3) times and are active in the life of this congregation.
- D. **Associate** members are persons holding membership in other Lutheran congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation, or persons who wish to retain a relationship with this congregation while being members of other congregations. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Congregation Council of this congregation.

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

7.03 It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregation to do the following:

- 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, the historic Christian faith, and the Lutheran Confessions, as outlined in Chapter 2 of this Constitution.
- C. Support the work of this congregation, and faithful Christian missions and ministries throughout the world through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.

7.04 Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:

- A. death
- B. resignation
- C. transfer or release

- D. disciplinary action by the Congregation Council
- E. removal from the roll due to inactivity as defined in the bylaws

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

7.05 Transferred Members from other Denominations- these are active members of our church who are committed to the mission of the congregation and uphold the statements of Faith of the congregation. have joined our congregation from other Christian denominations (for example Baptist, Catholic & Methodist). They have full rights and voting privileges that come with active membership.

Chapter 8: The Pastor

8.01 A pastor of this congregation shall be a person whose soundness in the faith, aptness to teach, and educational qualifications have been examined and approved by the LCMC, and whose beliefs reflect those of this congregation, has been properly ordained; who accepts and adheres to the Statement of Faith of the LCMC and the Confession of Faith of this congregation (Chapter 2); and whose life and conduct are above reproach.

8.02 Only a member of the clergy roster or a candidate of the roster of ordained ministers, who meets credential requirements of the LCMC and of this congregation, will be considered for a call.

8.03 **SELECTION OF A PASTOR:** Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by the church council to recommend the call, may seek the advice and help of the LCMC. Selection of a pastor shall be by written ballot at a congregational meeting properly called for that purpose. Balloting shall be limited at any one meeting to a single nomination presented by the church council. The nomination must be approved by at least two-thirds of the members present.

After the congregation has determined the salary and other compensation to be offered to the pastor-elect, the church council shall execute a call accordingly and forward the same to the person elected. Unless otherwise agreed, the call shall normally become invalid unless a definite answer is received within thirty days after its receipt. If a nominee fails of election or declines the call, the church council shall make another nomination at a subsequent meeting.

8.04 If this congregation unites with one or more other congregations in calling a pastor, the church councils of all congregations in the parish shall meet jointly and agree on a single nomination for election. Each congregation shall then vote separately on the nomination. Two-thirds of all the votes cast shall be required for election. The joint church council shall issue the call.

8.05 As soon as practicable after beginning work in this congregation, a pastor shall be duly installed in office by a representative of the LCMC.

8.06 A pastor shall:

- A. Preach the Word, administer the sacraments and conduct public worship consistent with the faith and practices of the LCMC.
- B. Care for the people individually and as a congregation, give catechetical instruction, confirm, marry in accordance with the teaching of the church and with the laws of the state, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead.

- C. Inculcate piety in the individual and family life.
- D. Supervise and/or delegate a representative to supervise all schools and auxiliary organizations of the congregation.
- E. Install regularly elected members of the church council.
- F. With the council, administer discipline.
- G. Seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel and strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation and abroad.
- H. Endeavor to increase the support given by this congregation to benevolence and missions.

- 8.07 In order that a pastor of this congregation may be devoted fully to the duties of the office, an adequate salary shall be provided, paid on the first and fifteenth day of each month. Registration fees to attend LCMC or relevant conventions shall be paid by the congregation. A car allowance or a car shall be provided.
- 8.08 A pastor shall be responsible to see that the membership rolls of the congregation are kept, reporting yearly to the Church Council. Pastoral acts shall be recorded in the official parish register, which shall be and remain the property of the congregation. A pastor shall be the custodian of the seal.
- 8.09 When a pastor of this congregation desires to terminate his or her ministry, a letter of resignation shall be submitted to the church council for report to the congregation. Unless otherwise agreed, the resignation shall normally become effective two months after the date on which it is submitted.
- 8.10 The regular call of this congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute an open-ended, mutual commitment which may be terminated only for one or more of the following causes:
1. The death of the pastor or the dissolution of the congregation.
 2. Mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term.
 3. The resignation of the pastor which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, two months after the date on which it is submitted.
 4. The attainment by the pastor of the age of seventy years, after which time pastoral service may be extended from year to year by a two-thirds vote at a congregational meeting
 5. disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, continued neglect of duty; physical or mental incapacity. NEEDS A LEAD IN HERE!!!!
 - a. Any allegations of immorality, physical or mental incapacity, neglect of duty or changes in doctrinal beliefs of the pastor shall be brought to the attention of the Church Council with appropriate documentation.
 - b. The Church Council must investigate any and all allegations submitted to them within thirty (30) days. The accused pastor must then be given the opportunity to respond both orally and in writing to any allegations within thirty (30) days of written notification by the church council, before any action may be taken. The Church Council shall have the option of consulting with another LCMC pastor for recommendation and/or arbitration.
 - c. Any disciplinary action taken must abide by the LCMC standards and chapter 13.02 of the St. John's Constitution. Termination of a pastor must be by council recommendation and two-thirds vote of the congregation.

- 8.11 At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the church council.
- 8.12 During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the church council. The interim pastor and any supply pastor shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a permanent pastor.
- 8.13 This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to the former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of financial obligation to this congregation before accepting another call.
- 8.14 When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors and the church council. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- 8.15 The pastor shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation.

Chapter 9: Congregational Meetings

- 9.01 The annual meeting of the congregation shall be held on the fourth Sunday of January.
- 9.02 The semi-annual meeting of the congregation shall be held on the first Sunday of May.
- 9.03 Special congregational meetings may be called by the pastor or the church council, or shall be called at the written request of one-tenth of the voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held, and no other business shall be transacted.
- 9.04 Notice of all congregational meetings shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail to all voting members at least ten days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or paid, sent to the last known address of such members shall be sufficient.
- 9.05 Fifteen percent (15%) of the average weekly attendance of the preceding year shall constitute a quorum.
- 9.06 The Rules of Order governing the parliamentary law of this congregation shall be specified in the By Laws.
- 9.07 Voting by proxy shall not be permitted.
- 9.08 Voting by absentee ballot shall be permitted, according to the bylaws of this congregation.
- 9.09 All actions by the congregation shall be by majority vote except as otherwise provided in this constitution.

Chapter 10: Church Council

- 10.01 The church council shall consist of the pastor or pastors and between eight (8) and twelve (12) members of the congregation elected to the Church Council. Any voting member may be elected to serve. In addition, one or two baptized member(s) fourteen (14) years or older may be elected as youth representative(s), subject only to the following:

- A. The limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office shall be one year.
 - B. The youth representative vote shall be prorated evenly amongst those present at any business meeting.
- 10.02 The elected member's place on the church council shall at once be declared vacant if the member:
- A. ceases to be a voting member of this congregation, or
 - B. is absent from four successive regular church council meetings. Then church council will vote to either vacate the position or extend absence.
- 10.03 Elected members of the church council shall be chosen by majority vote at the semi-annual congregational meeting. Their term of office shall be for three years. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively. Should a member's place on the church council be declared vacant, the church council shall appoint a successor by majority vote until the next semi-annual meeting.
- 10.04 All elected members of the church council shall be installed by the pastor according to the prescribed order of the church at a designated worship service following their election or as soon thereafter as convenient.
- 10.05 The church council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of the congregation and, in particular, its worship life, to the end that everything is done in accordance with the Word of God. The duties of the church council shall include the following:
- A. To lead the 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 the congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
 - C. To oversee and provide for the administration of the congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
 - D. To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor and other professional leaders and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling.
 - E. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
 - F. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
 - G. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
 - H. To emphasize partnership with the LCMC and other Christian congregations.
 - I. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the LCMC, and to seek to introduce the church's periodicals and books of family devotion into the homes of the congregation.
 - J. To bring the call to the professional leadership of the church to the attention of the congregation, particularly the youth.
- 10.06 The church council shall be the board of trustees of the 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 Minnesota except as otherwise provided herein.

However, the church council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.

The church council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by the congregation and shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption. Obligations and expenditures for each budget line-item shall not exceed 10% of the budgeted amount unless a variance is included in the budget and adopted by the congregation. The budget shall include the congregation's share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in partnership with the synod and churchwide agencies.

The church council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of the congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations.

The church council shall be responsible for the congregation's investments and its total insurance program. The church council shall provide resources for audits of all accounts of the congregation every three years or as deemed necessary.

- 10.07 The church council shall see that the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws are obeyed and that the resolutions of the congregation are carried out.
- 10.08 The church council shall be responsible for the employment of the paid lay workers of the congregation.
- 10.09 The church council shall elect voting members in the congregation as delegates in the permitted numbers to the conventions of the synod and the meetings of the conference to which this congregation belongs. The reasonable expenses incurred by such delegates in connection with their attendance, including travel to the conventions of the synod, shall be paid by the congregation.
- 10.10 The church council shall typically meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president and shall be called at the agreement of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present. If a church council member will be absent, another committee member may attend and vote in their place.
- 10.11 The church council shall submit a comprehensive report to the congregation at the annual meeting.
- 10.12 A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the church council, including the pastor or interim pastor.

Chapter 11: Officers

- 11.01 The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.
- 11.02 At its third meeting following the semi-congregational meeting, the church council shall elect a president, a vice-president, a secretary, and a treasurer who will serve both the church council and the congregation in their several capacities. Their terms shall begin upon election, and they shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected.
- 11.03 The president and the vice president shall be chosen from the church council's membership if other

officers are not members of the church council, they shall be accorded the privilege of voice without a vote in its meetings.

- 11.04 All officers shall be voting members of the congregation. If any officer ceases to be such that office shall at once be declared vacant by the church council. The church council shall fill the vacancy for the unexpired term.
- 11.05 **The president** shall preside at meetings of the congregation and the church council. The president shall represent the congregation in an administrative capacity from time to time at various board and committee meetings, dividing this phase of administration with the Vice President as they shall see fit.
- 11.06 **The vice president** shall preside in the absence or in the event of the president's inability to serve. Should the office of the president becomes vacant the vice president will become the interim president until a successor is elected by the church council.
- 11.07 **The secretary** shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation and of the church council in a volume provided by the congregation, which shall be preserved permanently in its archives.
- 11.08 **The treasurer** shall have executive responsibility for the funds and the financial records of the congregation. If desired, this person may have the assistance of others in keeping the books of account and other duties that are under his or her supervision. This person shall be the disbursing agent of the congregation, signing its checks; and he or she shall have an alternate signer to function in the absence or incapacity of the Treasurer.
- 11.09 The treasurer shall make a written report of all financial transactions to the church council monthly and to the congregation at its annual meetings. All financial officers shall give corporate surety, in amounts determined by the church council, for which the congregation shall pay the premium. Fidelity coverage provided by the LCMC shall be deemed a fulfillment of this requirement.

Chapter 12: Organizations within the Congregation

- 12.01 All organizations within the congregation shall exist to aid it in ministering to its members and to all whom it can reach with the Gospel of Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of the congregation's life, the organizations are subject to its oversight and direction. The congregation at its meetings or the church council shall determine their policies, guide their activities and receive reports concerning their membership, work and finances.
- 12.02 Special interest groups may be organized only after authorization has been given by the church council and specified in a continuing resolution.
- 12.03 The officers of this congregation and the pastor shall constitute the Executive Committee of the congregation.
- 12.04 When a pastor vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of six voting members shall be elected by the Church Council. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor.

Chapter 13: Discipline of Members

- 13.01 The offenses for which a member of this congregation shall be subject to discipline are: denial of the Christian faith; immoral or scandalous conduct; persistent troublemaking, especially within the congregation.
- 13.02 Discipline shall be administered by the church council on behalf of the congregation. The procedure which Christ instructed His disciples to follow (Matthew 18:15-17) shall be adhered to in every case, proceeding through these successive steps:
1. Private admonition by the pastor, member of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
 2. Admonition by the presence of two or three witnesses, and
 3. Citation to appear before the church council.
- 13.03 Persons cited to appear before the church council shall be served with a written summons at least ten days before the hearing. In addition to notifying the accused of the time and place to appear, the summons shall specify the exact charges that have been made against the person. If the accused fails to appear at the appointed hour without valid excuse, the council may proceed with the hearing and may pass judgment in the person's absence.
- 13.04 Should the allegations be sustained by the vote of at least a majority of the members of the church council and renewed admonition prove ineffectual, the council shall impose one of the following penalties:
1. Censure before the council or the congregation;
 2. Suspension from membership until proof is given of sufficient repentance and amendment; or
 3. Exclusion from membership in this congregation. A resolution of the council suspending or excluding from membership a member of this congregation shall be delivered to the person in writing.
- 13.05 Acts of discipline may be reconsidered and revoked by the church council upon receipt of evidence that the injustice has been done and / or remedied.
- 13.06 The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Church Council shall have the right to appeal the decision to the LCMC. Such right may not be abridged.
- 13.07 When there is disagreement among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation shall have access to an LCMC representative for consultation, after informing the president of the church council of their intent. If discussion with the LCMC fails to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall then be referred to the LCMC Board of Ministry, whose decision shall be final.

Chapter 14: Bylaws

- 14.01 Bylaws may be adopted which are not in conflict with this constitution.
- 14.02 Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Church Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregational Meeting called for the purpose and that the Church Council shall notify the members of the proposal with its recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting.

- 14.03 Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting.
- 14.04 Approved changes to the bylaws may be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod as determined by the Church Council.

Chapter 15: Amendments

- 15.01 Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least ten (10) percent of voting members or by the church council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the church council at least sixty days before formal consideration by this congregation at its regular or special meeting called for that purpose. The church council must notify the members by mail of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least thirty days prior to the meeting.
- 15.02 Amendments may be adopted or amended at any properly called meeting of this congregation. With a quorum present, adoption of any amendment becomes immediately effective upon a two-thirds majority vote of those voting members present and voting.

Chapter 16: Continuing Resolutions

- 16.01 The Church Council may enact continuing resolutions which describe the function of the various committees or organizations of this congregation.
- 16.02 Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Church Council.

Chapter 17: Property Ownership

- 17.01 This Congregation is an independent legal entity with rights to purchase, hold, and convey real and personal property in accord with applicable law. The LCMC shall have no right or interest in the property of this congregation unless this congregation expressly conveys such a right or interest to the LCMC. If this congregation dissolves, its property shall be distributed in accord with applicable law and with the congregation's governing documents.