Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

FOR

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH

LENA, ILLINOIS

12 SEPTEMBER 2026

In Compliance with the August 2025 ELCA Model Constitution

- Approved by NI Synod 12 Sep 2026
- Approved by Congregation Council 10 Sep 2026
- Approved by Congregation ?? ??? 202?
- Ratified by Congregation ?? ??? 202?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREAMBLE **3**
Chapter 1 - NAME AND INCORPORATION **3**
Chapter 2 - CONFESSION OF FAITH **3**
Chapter 3 - NATURE OF THE CHURCH **4**
Chapter 4 - STATEMENT OF PURPOSE **4**
Chapter 5 - POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION **6**
Chapter 6 - CHURCH AFFILIATION **10**
Chapter 7 - PROPERTY OWNERSHIP **13**
Chapter 8 - MEMBERSHIP **14**
Chapter 9 - ROSTERED MINISTER **16**
Chapter 10 - CONGREGATION MEETING **22**
Chapter 11 - OFFICERS **23**
Chapter 12 - CONGREGATION COUNCIL **25**
Chapter 13 - CONGREGATION COMMITTEES **27**
Chapter 14 - ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THIS CONGREGATION **30**
Chapter 15 - DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION **30**
Chapter 16 - AMENDMENTS **32**
Chapter 17 - BYLAWS **33**
Chapter 18 - CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS **33**
Chapter 19 - INDEMNIFICATION **33**
Chapter 20 - PARISH AUTHORIZATION **34**

KEY

Constitutional provisions are codified with two sets of numbers, preceded by a "C": the chapter number followed by a period and a two-digit sequence number also followed by a period [for example, C1.01.]. Required constitutional provisions are preceded by an asterisk (*) [for example *C2.01.]. Any deviation in exact wording from the *August 2025 Model Constitution* is indicated in Red.

Bylaws are codified with three sets of numbers, each followed by a period: the chapter number, the two-digit sequence number, and a two-digit bylaw number [for example, C4.04.01.]. Bylaws are indicated in Blue.

Continuing Resolutions are codified with three sets of numbers, each followed by a period: the chapter number, the two-digit sequence number, and a third set which is preceded by a capital letter indicating sequence and a two-digit number indicating the year of its adoption [for example, C4.05.A26.]. Continuing Resolutions are indicated in Green.

CONSTITUTION
for
GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH, LENA, ILLINOIS

***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 Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.

C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws and continuing resolutions, the congregation of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."

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

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 Scripture and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

Chapter 3.
NATURE OF THE CHURCH

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

***C3.02.** 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 Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

***C3.04.** 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, 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 group

and shall review their actions. Such descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions in the section on the Congregation Committees.

C4.04.01. The powers of this congregation originate with the members of the congregation and are administered through the calling of a pastor and through the election of lay voting members of the Congregation Council. The Congregation Council shall provide oversight for all committees, ministries, and boards of this congregation. The Pastor shall oversee the day-to-day ministry of the congregation.

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

C4.05.01. The mission statement of this congregation will be reviewed by the Congregation Council at least once every ten years or when a new pastor is called.

C4.05.A26. The mission statement of this congregation is as follows: "Leading All to Christ."

***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.

***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 of 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 Congregation Council 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 or the Congregation Council shall elect from among the voting members of the congregation 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 and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

C5.05. This congregation shall have a mission endowment fund that will operate as specified in this congregation's bylaws. The purpose of the mission endowment fund is to provide for mission work beyond the operational budget of this congregation.

C5.05.01. The Endowment Fund shall consist of a set of separate funds – the Lucille Baker Bequest Fund, the Special Funds Endowment Mission Fund, the Scholarship Fund, the Building Maintenance and Improvement Fund, and the Enduring Gifts Fund – each of which was established at a different time by different donors for different purposes. The amount of principal in each fund may vary as further donations are made, and collectively shall make up a permanently restricted fund to be held in perpetuity. Additions to any of the endowment funds can come through gifts, charitable gift annuities, assignments of life insurance, grants, charitable remainder and other trusts, and bequests of money, securities, and real and personal property of all kinds.

C5.05.02. The Endowment Fund shall be managed by the Endowment Fund Committee. The Congregation Council shall appoint the Endowment Fund Committee, which shall consist of five (5) members, all of whom shall be voting members of this congregation, but not members of the Congregation Council or the Audit Committee, a majority of whom shall constitute a quorum for all meetings. The pastor shall be *ex officio* a member of the Endowment Fund Committee with voice but no vote. Officers of the Endowment Fund Committee shall be the president, vice-president, financial secretary, treasurer and recording secretary. The duties of the officers shall be as follows:

a. The ***Fund President*** shall chair all meetings of the Endowment Fund Committee, shall set the agenda, the date and time of the meeting, and shall be responsible for reporting the activity of the committee to the Congregation Council and to the congregation at the annual meeting.
b. The ***Fund Vice-President*** shall chair the meeting in the absence of the president.
c. The ***Fund Financial Secretary*** shall, in the presence of one (1) other member of the Endowment Fund Committee, receive and make record of all income from donors into the Endowment Fund, shall make

deposits of funds received, shall provide the treasurer reports of income received, shall provide reports to the Congregation Council on a quarterly basis of income received, shall assist in preparing the annual report to the congregation prior to the annual meeting of yearly income received, and shall provide letters of thanks to donors and provide end of year documentation to donors for tax purposes.

d. The ***Fund Treasurer***, shall manage the financial accounting, conduct disbursements with the approval of the Congregation Council from the Endowment Fund and provide the Congregation Council quarterly reports on investments and disbursements as well as assisting in preparing the annual report to the congregation prior to the annual meeting

e. The ***Fund Recording Secretary*** shall be responsible for writing the minutes of all meetings and shall provide for the retention and safe keeping of all documents pertaining to the fund, including all gift instruments.

C5.05.03. The Endowment Fund Committee shall meet at least quarterly. The Endowment Fund Committee shall conduct themselves in such a manner that no member shall personally benefit from the actions or decisions of the committee. The Endowment Fund Committee may engage the services of a professional investment manager, with the expense of such service coming from the proceeds of the Endowment Fund and shall engage in a periodic review of the managing agent's actions reporting their findings to the Congregation Council. The Endowment Fund Committee shall oversee the development of all promotional materials for the fund, accurately depicting the nature and use of the Endowment Fund, including the potential for the release or modification to the donors designation in cases such as dissolution of the congregation or an emergency. "Emergency" expenditures shall require a request in writing from the Congregational Council to the committee, setting forth the nature of and reason for the proposed expenditure.

C5.05.04. In consultation with the congregation secretary, the Endowment Fund Committee shall prepare a written report to the congregation prior to the annual meeting, showing for each separate fund: (a) the principal at the end of the previous year, (b) donations during the current year, (c) current principal, (d) the unused income from the previous year, (e) income for the current year, (f) disbursements and recipients for the current year, and (g) unused income at the end of the current year.

C5.05.05. The Endowment Fund Committee shall be responsible for creating an expenditure policy that provides for the preservation of the funds in perpetuity, shall make recommendations to the Congregation Council on expenditure of the funds, honoring all designations of funds outlined in the gift instruments, shall manage the fund with regard to current economic conditions and provide for any possible effects on the fund because of inflation or deflation, shall determine the expected return from investments, shall make recommendations to the Congregation Council when and with

what frequency disbursement should occur during the fiscal year, and shall engage in a yearly review of the expenditure policy.

C5.05.06. The Endowment Fund Committee shall develop a standardized gift instrument to be used in the congregation when accepting donations to the Endowment Fund. The gift instrument shall offer the donor the option of directing their gift for designated or undesignated purposes. It shall make clear that upon the signature of the donor that the donor understands and agrees that under certain circumstances (such as emergencies declared by the Congregation Council, or as defined in this constitution's provisions, bylaws, or continuing resolutions), the funds that have been designated may be released or modified from such designations. The standardized gift instrument form shall be reviewed by the Endowment Fund Committee on a yearly basis and updated as needed. All completed gift instrument documents by donors shall be kept in a secure location

C5.05.07. The Congregation Council (except in those cases which require congregational approval), after reviewing the recommendations made by the Endowment Fund Committee, shall have the final decision as to when endowment funds shall be disbursed and where the funds shall be spent, honoring all donor designations. This congregation shall provide for the yearly audit of the Endowment Fund and shall maintain crime and dishonesty bonding insurance coverage for the Endowment Fund Committee

C5.05.08. All income from the Endowment Fund shall be used to the glory of God either locally, nationally or globally. All income, be it interest dividends or capital gains, shall be used or disposed in a timely manner unless prohibited by the donor's wishes. Any income not disposed the year after it is earned shall be held in an interest account and under no circumstances shall be used to grow principal.

C5.05.09. Income from each individual fund shall be disbursed as follows:

a. The ***Lucille Baker Bequest Fund*** may be used for any purpose this congregation deems fitting, with congregational approval at a duly called congregational meeting with a quorum of voting members present.

b. The ***Special Funds Endowment Mission Fund*** (also known as the ***Gertrude and Ruby Tull Mission Fund***) has been established primarily for the purpose of enhancing this congregation's benevolent support of charitable organizations outside of this congregation, be they local, national or international. Funds from this source may also be used to implement any new programs, such as educational programs, outreach programs (including mission trips), or improvements to this congregation's building not otherwise possible, as designated by the Congregation Council, but are not to be used for current expenses.

c. The ***Scholarship Fund*** (also known as the ***Cora Diestelmeier Bequest Fund***), is to provide scholarships for graduating high school seniors of the this congregation's families to help with expenses to further their education. It is also available for adult members of this congregation

who may wish to continue their education. The funds, designated by the Congregation Council in consultation with the Scholarship Committee, shall be disbursed after the candidates have successfully completed one semester of college or trade school.

d. The ***Building Maintenance and Improvement (BMI) Fund***, established when the former parsonage was sold, shall be used to pay the pastor's housing allowance as well as maintenance projects at the church, as designated by the Congregation Council in consultation with the Property Committee.

e. The ***Enduring Gifts Fund***, made up from bequests from members' wills at their passing, or from memorials in their names, may be spent at the Congregation Council's discretion, in consultation with the Memorial Committee, to help support the regular budget or for ongoing building maintenance.

C5.05.10. A ***Building Trust Fund*** has been established for the benefit of this congregation, which shall be managed by a Board of Trustees independent of the congregation. This trust fund may receive contributions from the congregation or other sources such as bequests in wills, charitable remainder and other trusts, charitable gift annuities, assignments of life insurance, and unrestricted transfers of property (cash, stocks, bonds, real estate), which shall be placed in the fund. The purpose of the Building Trust Fund shall be to provide a vehicle for the accumulation, investment and disbursement of funds to defray part or all of the cost of a new house of worship for this congregation. The term "house of worship" shall be defined to include land, furniture, fixtures and equipment for a church building; plus ancillary facilities such as an educational building, gymnasium etc. which are for the primary benefit of the congregation to the glory of God.

C5.05.11. Distribution of funds from the Building Trust Fund shall be determined by the Board of Trustees in such a manner as they deem appropriate to carry out the purposes of the trust fund, subject to any donor restrictions. Unless authorized by the donor, the trustees shall not use trust fund principal or income to pay the general operating expenses of the congregation, except in the event of an emergency.

C5.05.12. This congregation shall maintain a ***Good Samaritan Fund*** for the purpose of helping individuals who come to or are referred to the pastor and need specific temporary assistance. Disbursements from this fund are at the pastor's discretion and are to be kept confidential.

C5.05.A26. The Congregation Treasurer may serve as the Fund Treasurer, and the Congregation Financial Secretary may serve as the Fund Financial Secretary.

Chapter 6.
CHURCH AFFILIATION

***C6.01.** This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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

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

a. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
b. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the 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 Northern Illinois Synod 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. This 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 the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are voting members of this congregation, they 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 the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are voting members of this congregation, they 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 Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

***C7.02.** If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline 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 relate 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 relate to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Northern Illinois 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 provision 9.71.a. of the *Constitution, 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 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 Northern Illinois 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.

C8.02.A26. Members who have not communed and made a contribution of record to this congregation within the past two (2) calendar years will be moved from the active Voting list to ***Inactive*** member status by the Congregational Council.

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 Congregation 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 churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.

***C8.05.** Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:
   a. death;
   b. resignation;
   c. transfer or release;
   d. disciplinary action in accordance with 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.

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 the Congregation Council to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.

***C9.02.** This congregation may call as a pastor only:

a. a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or

b. a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop.

***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;
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, proclaiming God's love for the world, 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 Northern Illinois Synod; and
6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, 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 any of 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) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in view of disability or 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 disability or 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, who has 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 disability or 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 resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, 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 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 may 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 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 shall submit a report of ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

***C9.14.** The 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 the secretary's 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 the Congregation Council to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.

***C9.22.** This congregation may call as a deacon only:

a. a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or
b. a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop.

***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, proclaiming God's love for the world, 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 accompaniment 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 this congregation shall be as follows:

a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a deacon, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by the deacon's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of 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) inability to conduct the office effectively in view of disability or 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.
b. When allegations of disability or 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, who has 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 disability or 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 position 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 resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, 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 a 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 shall submit a report of 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 Illinois, the bylaws shall designate one regular meeting per year as the annual meeting of this congregation.

C10.01.01. The regular meeting of the congregation, designated as the Annual Meeting, shall be held on the last Sunday in January at a time called by the Congregational Council. If the meeting cannot be held on that Sunday for any reason, it is postponed until the following Sunday, and likewise until the meeting has been called to order and adjourned. The Annual Meeting agenda shall be set by the Congregation Council.

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 (10%) 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 ten (10) days in advance of the date of the meeting.

C10.04. Fifteen percent (15%) 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 by 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 communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

C10.09. "*Ex officio*" as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited.

Chapter 11.
OFFICERS

C11.01. The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.

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, except for the treasurer, shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.
d. The president, vice president, and secretary shall be selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council. The treasurer shall be appointed by the Congregation Council, and shall have voice but no vote at the meetings of the Congregation Council.

C11.01.01. The ***Congregation President*** shall have the following duties:

a. Preside at all meetings of the congregation, Executive Committee, and Congregation Council.
b. Call special meetings of the congregation, Executive Committee, or Congregation Council when needed.
c. Represent the congregation in matters of business and sign or countersign all legal documents.
d. Assist in preparing the agenda for congregation and Congregation Council meetings.
e. Uphold the constitution and bylaws and ensure policies are being followed.
f. Write the annual report of Congregation Council activities prior to the annual meeting.
g. During a pastoral vacancy, serve as liaison between the congregation, a designated minister, and the synod.
h. Recognize and seek synod advice and assistance in managing congregational matters beyond the Congregation Council's expertise.
i. Ensure congregational participation at synod assemblies.

C11.01.02. The ***Congregation Vice-President*** shall have the following duties:

a. Preside at meetings of the congregation, Executive Committee, or Congregation Council at the request or in the absence of the President.
b. Perform the duties of the Congregation Secretary in the absence of the Secretary.

C11.01.03. The ***Congregation Secretary*** shall have the following duties:

a. Keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation, Executive Committee, and Congregation Council; distribute such minutes; and

preserve them permanently in hard copy format in the congregation's archives.

b. Be authorized and empowered, in the name of the congregation, to attest instruments that require certified authorized signers and may also be signed by the Congregation President or pastor.
c. Work with the pastor and congregation's staff to ensure the storage and protection of all important documents and papers.
d. Work with the pastor and Congregation Treasurer to ensure timely filing of the congregation's annual report.
e. Sign the letter of call for rostered ministers at the time of a call meeting.
f. Attest to the synod office that the congregation's records are up to date at the time of rostered minister transitions.
g. Submit copies of the constitution and bylaw amendments to the synod.
h. Carry out correspondence on behalf of the Congregation Council and the congregation, as directed.

C11.01.04. The ***Congregation Treasurer*** shall have the following duties:

a. Serve as financial officer of the congregation.
b. Attend monthly meetings of the congregation council.
c. Provide oversight of the Financial Secretary's duties and processes.
d. Be responsible for paying all bills, invoices, and charges.
e. Perform or oversee all the bookkeeping functions.
f. Prepare the monthly financial reports for the Congregation Council.
g. File all the required federal and state tax forms.
h. Monitor the cash position of the congregation and report monthly to the Finance Committee chair, congregation president and pastor.
i. Invest available funds as directed.
j. Borrow funds as directed by the Congregation Council.
k. Provide the congregation with financial information deemed appropriate by the Congregation Council.
l. Assist in the preparation of the annual budget for the Congregation Council.
m. Maintain, develop, and improve the reporting and monitoring techniques used to communicate the financial status of the congregation.
n. Prepare the annual report of the financial status of the congregation prior to the annual meeting.
o. Close the books for a yearly audit.

C11.01.05. The Congregation Council shall appoint a ***Financial Secretary*** who is a voting member of this congregation but who is not an officer or a member of the Congregational Council. The Congregation Financial Secretary shall have the following duties:

a. Oversee counting the offerings.
b. Oversee and participate in creating and depositing receipts.
c. Train individuals who count the offerings.

d. Report to the Congregation Treasurer the total offerings each week and any special purpose breakdowns.
e. Oversee recording contributions to the individual contribution records.
f. Report on levels of giving to the Congregation Council and congregation.
g. Provide periodic and annual statements to the contributors for tax reporting.

C11.02. The Congregation Council shall elect its officers, except the treasurer, immediately following the annual meeting, and they shall be the officers of this congregation. They shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

C11.03. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. No elected officer shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

Chapter 12.
CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor, the president, vice-president, and secretary of the congregation, and not more than nine (9) nor fewer than three (3) other members of this congregation, at least one of whom may be a youth (a voting member who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election) and at least one of whom may be a young adult (a voting member between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election). Any voting member of this congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member (a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or (b) is absent from four (4) successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause. Consistent with the laws of the state in which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.

C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council, except the pastor, shall be elected by written ballot to serve for three (3) years or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two (2) full terms consecutively. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected. Newly elected Congregation Council members shall be installed at worship at a time appointed by the Congregation Council.

C12.02.A26. The terms of Congregation Council members shall be staggered so that roughly the same number of members will be elected each year.

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 minister(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.
e. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
h. To emphasize 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 trustees of this congregation and, as such, shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and managing its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Illinois, except as otherwise provided herein.
b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of this congregation.
c. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to $5,000 for items not included in the budget.
d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations of more than ten percent (10%) in excess of the anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in collaboration with the synod and churchwide organization.

e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of mission support monies to the synod.

f. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.

C12.05.01. The fiscal year of this congregation shall run from January 1 to December 31.

C12.06. The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution, its bylaws, and the continuing resolutions are carried out.

C12.07. The Congregation Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.

C12.08. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the staff of this congregation. Nothing in this provision shall be deemed to affect 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-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

C12.12. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the pastor or interim pastor, except when the pastor or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting, which shall be the only business considered at that meeting. Chronic or repeated absence of the pastor or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Congregation Council, following consultation with the synod bishop.

C12.13. The Congregation Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Chapter 13.
CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

C13.01. The president, vice-president, and secretary of this congregation and the pastor shall constitute the ***Executive Committee***.

C13.01.01. The Executive Committee shall have the general supervision of the affairs of this congregation between meetings of the Congregation Council, make recommendations in the Congregation Council, and perform other duties as directed by the Congregation Council or otherwise prescribed by this constitution, bylaws, or continuing resolutions. The committee will provide leadership in the congregation in the absence of a rostered minster.

C13.02. A ***Nominating Committee*** shall consist of the outgoing members of the Congregation Council.

C13.02.01. The Nominating Committee shall seek nominees for the Congregation Council and Synod Assembly voting members to be elected at the annual meeting. The committee shall seek nominees for other elected positions prescribed by this constitution, bylaws, continuing resolutions, or as directed by the Congregation Council.

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 Audit Committee shall audit all financial reports and all financial accounts and funds of this congregation. The committee shall report its findings to the Congregational Council and to the congregation in the annual report prior to the annual meeting.

C13.04. The ***Mutual Ministry Committee*** of five voting members shall be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor. Mutual Ministry Committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council. Term of office shall be three years, with one or two members appointed each successive year. Members shall be eligible for re-appointment.

C13.04.01. The Mutual Ministry Committee shall affirm and strengthen the mission of this congregation and the ministry of the pastor by equipping and supporting the ministry of the staff. The committee will provide a venue for the pastor to air concerns as well as provide counsel to the pastor when making difficult decisions.

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 the Congregation Council. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called rostered minister.

C13.05.01. The Call Committee shall work closely with the Congregation Council and the synod to ascertain and define the needs of this congregation as it prepares to call a pastor. Duties of the committee include but are not limited to working with synod staff in developing a congregational profile contacting and interviewing potential rostered ministers, and recommending a potential candidate to the Congregational Council.

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

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

C13.07.A26. This congregation is a worshiping, 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 ministry through its standing committees. Members of the committees shall be appointed by the Congregational Council.

C13.07.B26. The ***Worship and Music Committee*** shall be responsible for planning all worship services at which the Word of God is preached and the Sacraments are administered. In consultation with the pastor, this committee shall include music selection, choirs, and all worship related activities. It shall oversee the work of the altar guild and ensure that the church is decorated appropriately for the liturgical seasons and festival Sundays.

C13.07.C26. The ***Learning Committee*** shall equip our members of all ages with a firm foundation in Biblical teaching as expressed through a Lutheran perspective. It shall have responsibility for the Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Confirmation classes, family activities and educational events. It also shall have responsibility for programs that promote a life of faith and compassion among all members, including opportunities for deepening prayer life, Bible study, spiritual retreats, and providing devotional materials.

C13.07.D26. The ***Service Committee*** shall encourage participation by members of the congregation in local service projects and support for service ministries of the ELCA. Activities may include visitation of homebound members as well as promoting physical, mental, and spiritual health within the congregation. This includes welcoming visitors and the unchurched, inviting new members, and caring for the inactive.

C13.07.E26. The ***Stewardship Committee*** shall help our congregation grow in our awareness of our role as stewards of all that God has given us and to grow in our sharing of those gifts as a grateful response to God. It shall have responsibility for developing a program of Christian stewardship, encouraging members to contribute time, talents, and financial resources.

C13.07.F26. The ***Property Committee*** shall provide oversight and proper maintenance for all of the congregation's property so that the physical appearance of the church is attractive and provides a welcoming atmosphere to all who participate in the various events and programs of the congregation. It shall make recommendations to the Congregation Council for needed improvements and shall provide cost estimates and bids when requested.

C13.07.G26. The ***Finance Committee*** shall provide oversight and management of the financial condition of the congregation and make appropriate recommendations regarding financial matters. It shall maintain appropriate insurance coverage as well as prepare the proposed budget each year prior to the annual meeting, enabling the congregation to fulfill its purpose and goals.

C13.07.H26. The ***Scholarship Committee*** shall receive applications from those who have completed high school in good standing, or have completed a GED, who will be pursuing higher education in the coming year. The committee shall make recommendations regarding who is to receive the scholarship(s) and in what amount, and present that recommendation to the Congregation Council for approval, and see that the funds are dispersed after applicants have successfully completed their first semester.

C13.07.I26. The ***Memorial Committee*** shall receive and encourage donations in memory of church and community members who have died, acknowledge the memorial gifts that have been given, seek the input and approval of the family of the person in whose memory the funds were given for purchasing

memorial items, and work with the Worship Committee to arrange the dedication of items that are purchased from memorial gifts.

C13.07.J26. The ***Facebook and Website Committee*** shall post pertinent information about the life and activities of the congregation on the congregation's Facebook page, and shall submit information about the life and activities of the congregation to the website manager for inclusion on the congregation's website.

C13.08. The pastor of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of this congregation, with voice but no vote.

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.

Chapter 15.
DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

***C15.01.** Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith, willful or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, continual and intentional interference with the ministry of 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 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 laypersons and two rostered ministers). 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 Church in America*. The decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be implemented by the Congregation Council and recorded in the minutes of the next council meeting.

***C15.07.** No member of 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 *C9.05.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's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire 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 five (5) voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at 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 meeting of this congregation by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting; and
b. be ratified unchanged at the next regular meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.

***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 the congregation's 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 i*nvestigative proceeding.

Chapter 20.
PARISH AUTHORIZATION

[Required provisions when congregation is part of a parish]*

***C20.01.** This congregation may unite with one or more other congregations recognized by the synod named in *C6.01. to form a parish. Except as provided in *C20.02. and *C20.03., a written agreement, developed in consultation with the synod and approved by the voting members of each congregation participating in the parish, shall specify the powers and responsibilities that have been delegated to the Parish Council. The Parish Agreement shall identify which congregation of the parish issues calls on behalf of the member congregations or shall establish a process for identifying which congregation issues calls on behalf of the member congregations.

***C20.02.** One congregation of a parish shall issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Sacrament or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended by the synod bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a two-thirds vote at a congregation meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

***C20.03.** One congregation of a parish may issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Service or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended by the synod bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a two-thirds vote at a congregation meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

***C20.04.** Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with the pastor as provided in *C9.05.d. In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

***C20.05.** Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with a minister of Word and Service as provided in *C9.25.d. In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

***C20.06.** Whenever a parish agreement is terminated, the call of any rostered minister serving that parish is terminated. Should any congregation that was formerly part of the parish agreement desire to issue a new call to that rostered minister, it may do so in accordance with the call process of this church.