



Constitution for Epiphany Lutheran Church

Amended as approved by the 2011 Churchwide Assembly of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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CHANGE RECORD

Chapter/ Section	Change Date	Change Description	Reason for Change	Requestor
Change Record	Nov 2011	Add change record to document	No change record existed on original document	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
Table of Contents	Nov 2011	Amend Ch 12 & Ch 13 titles to reflect current structure	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C1.03	Nov 2011	Changed number only from C1.11	Corrected numerical error	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
*C3.03	Nov 2011	Add section to define ELCA	ELCA mandated change for 2011	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
C3.04	Nov 2011	Added section to provide primary calling of church	Biblical reference for nature of church	Pastor Rick Barger – Lead Pastor
*C4.04.	Nov 2011	Added : as defined in chapter 12	Clarify where to find Epiphany Council definition	Pat Barron – Congregation President
*C4.06	Nov 2011	Add section for clarification of partnership between congregations, synod etc	ELCA mandated change for 2011	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
C4.07	Nov 2011	Add section to define the location of Mission, Vision and Guiding Principals	Clarify where to find Mission, Vision and Guiding Principals in Bylaws	Pastor Rick Barger – Lead Pastor
*C5.03d	Nov 2011	Add continuing resolutions as provided in chapter 18	ELCA mandated change for 2011	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
*C5.05	Nov 2011	Added : as defined in chapter 12	Clarify where to find Epiphany Council definition	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C5.04	Nov 2011	Added: a. Lead Servant Team acts on behalf of congregation in order to choose	Clarification for C5.04	Pastor Rick Barger – Lead Pastor
*C6.03c	Nov 2011	Add further definition to special circumstances allowing a congregation to call a candidate not on the clergy roster of the ELCA	ELCA mandated change for 2011	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
*C6.05a-h	Nov 2011	Amend to strike all and add a-j to address how a church may leave the ELCA	ELCA mandated change for 2011	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
*C6.06	Nov 2011	Amend and add to make the process for establishment of additional sites for worship parallel to the process for relocation	ELCA mandated change for 2009	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
*C6.07	Nov 2011	Add to provide an interdependent process for the establishment of additional sites for worship	ELCA mandated change for 2009	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
*C7.03.	Nov 2011	Amend to clarify that process defined in C6.05 must be followed in order to retain property title	ELCA mandated change for 2011	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
*C7.04.	Nov 2011	Amend to clarify process defined in C6.05 must be followed ...if church votes to go to non-Lutheran church body	ELCA mandated change for 2011	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
*C8.02.d	Nov 2011	Added : as defined in chapter 12	Clarify where to find Epiphany Council definition	Pat Barron – Congregation President
*C8.03.	Nov 2011	Added : as defined in chapter 12	Clarify where to find Epiphany Council definition	Pat Barron – Congregation

Chapter/ Section	Change Date	Change Description	Reason for Change	Requestor
				President
*C8.05.d	Nov 2011	Added : as defined in chapter 12	Clarify where to find Epiphany Council definition	Pat Barron – Congregation President
*C8.02.c	Nov 2011	Amend to ensure the protection of the voting rights of members of congregations	ELCA mandated change for 2007	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
*C9.03a	Nov 2011	Added: 6) equip the saints	Fully define role of ordained minister	Pastor Rick Barger – Lead Pastor
*C9.03b 3,4	Nov 2011	Added : as defined in chapter 12	Clarify where to find Epiphany Council definition	Pat Barron – Congregation President
*C9.03b	Nov 2011	Added: 5) serve as a role model of the life of discipleship	Fully define role of ordained minister w/ congregation	Pastor Rick Barger- Lead Pastor
*C9.05.b	Nov 2011	Added : as defined in chapter 12	Clarify where to find Epiphany Council definition	Pat Barron – Congregation President
*C9.05.b, c,d, e, f	Nov 2011	Amend committee to team	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
*C9.07.	Nov 2011	Amend to define when an interim pastor may be called to congregation they are serving	ELCA mandated change for 2011	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
*C9.07.	Nov 2011	Added : as defined in chapter 12	Clarify where to find Epiphany Council definition	Pat Barron – Congregation President
*C9.09	Nov 2011	Added : as defined in chapter 12	Clarify where to find Epiphany Council definition	Pat Barron – Congregation President
*C9.13	Nov 2011	Added: entire section previously not included from ELCA model	ELCA assembly change 2005	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
*C9.14	Nov 2011	Added: entire section previously not included from ELCA model	ELCA assembly change 2005	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
C10.02.	Nov 2011	Amend Congregation Council to Lead Servant Team	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President -
C10.03	Nov 2011	Amend to include use of electronic delivery, strike: postage and last known address	Permits use of electronic mail	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C10.07	Nov 2011	Add: The meeting will follow the agenda... strike: govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings	Clarify congregational meeting structure	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C11.01	Nov 2011	Amend vice president to president elect in the final year of the president's term, serves as advisor	Clarify officer titles, role as a result of Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C11.01d	Nov 2011	Amend Congregation Council to Lead Servant Team	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C11.02	Nov 2011	Amend Congregation Council to Lead Servant Team, Changed election of officers process to appointing of Mission Team members	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregation meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C11.03	Nov 2011	Add: unless approved by a vote of the congregation	Clarification of when an officer may serve more than two consecutive	Pat Barron – Congregation

Chapter/ Section	Change Date	Change Description	Reason for Change	Requestor
			terms	President
C11.03 a, b, c, d	Nov 2011	Added 4 sections to address appointed position limitations	Appointed positions limitations were not addressed	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
C12.01	Nov 2011	Added definition of Congregation Council	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C12.02	Nov 2011	Amend elected to appointed, Strike by written ballot	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C12.03	Nov 2011	Add: Lead Servant Team definition, renumbered remaining sections of chapter accordingly	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C12.04	Nov 2011	Amend Congregation Council to Lead Servant Team	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C12.05	Nov 2011	Add: which includes all members of the Mission Teams...	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C12.06	Nov 2011	Amend Congregation Council to Lead Servant Team	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C12.06a	Nov 2011	Amend Congregation Council to Lead Servant Team, Add: serve as the executive team...	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09 Define Lead Servant team	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C12.06b	Nov 2011	Add: Lead Servant Team nor the full	Includes the Lead Servant team in requirement to seek authorization during congregational meeting	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C12.06c	Nov 2011	Amend Congregation Council to Lead Servant team, Change to 10% and \$50K for spending plan and contract amounts respectively Add: Exception to general rule	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09 Defines perimeters considering a larger congregation Defines exception criteria	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C12.06d	Nov 2011	Add: Lead Servant Team in full collaboration with all Mission Teams comprising full Strike: and may incur obligation of more than \$1000 Add: As well as others who receive designated first fruits	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09 Congregational meeting not required for Mission Team to incur obligation of more than \$1000 First fruits giving not previously included in mission spending plan statement	Pat Barron – Congregation President Pat Barron – Congregation President Pastor Rick Barger – Lead Pastor
C12.06.e	Nov 2011	Add: Lead Servant Team in full collaboration with all Mission Teams comprising full	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C12.06.f	Nov 2011	Amend Congregation Council to Lead Servant team	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C12.07	Nov 2011	Add: Lead Servant Team in full collaboration with all Mission Teams comprising full	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President

Chapter/ Section	Change Date	Change Description	Reason for Change	Requestor
		Strike: Congregation council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster	No longer applicable	
C12.08	Nov 2011	Add: Lead Servant Team with advisory support from the Personnel Team Amend: salaried lay workers to paid servants	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09 Reflects current role	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C12.09	Nov 2011	Add: Lead Servant Team with the full support of all Mission Teams comprising full	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C12.10	Nov 2011	Add: Lead Servant Team and all Mission Teams, generally, not less than every sixty days Strike: Congregational Council, normally	Defines meeting timelines for Lead Servant and all Mission Teams	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C12.11	Nov 2011	Add: Individual Mission Team, Lead Servant Team meetings Strike: Congregation Council, chronic or repeated absence section	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C13	Nov 2011	Amend Committees to Mission and Ministry Teams	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C13.01	Nov 2011	Strike: Entire section defining Executive committee, renumbered section as appropriate Amend: Committee to Team, six to five, Congregation Council to Lead Servant Team	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09 Nominating Team is effective with five representatives	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C13.02	Nov 2011	Amend committee to Team, Congregation Council to Lead servant Team Add: not less than two, but more than Strike: Term of office Add: Responsibilities and service terms defined in the bylaws	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09 Define perimeters of nominating Team Term defined in bylaws	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C13.03	Nov 2011	Amend Staff Support committee role and responsibility to Personnel Team role and responsibility	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C13.04	Nov 2011	Amend Committee to Team, six to seven	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09, increase in voting members of Team prevents deadlock due to tie vote	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C13.05	Nov 2011	Amend committees to Teams and task forces Add: Lead Servant Team in collaboration of the Mission Teams as appropriate	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
C13.06	Nov 2011	Amend committees to Teams and task forces.	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting	Pat Barron – Congregation

Chapter/ Section	Change Date	Change Description	Reason for Change	Requestor
			12/6/09	President
C13.07	Nov 2011	Add: Mission Team duties may be found in the Bylaws	Bring constitution in alignment with ELCA model constitution.	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
C13.08	Nov 2011	Add: Lead Pastor and Congregation president ex-officio member of all Mission Teams	ELCA assembly change 2005	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
*C15.02	Nov 2011	Amend Congregation Council to Lead Servant Team Add: Lead Servant Team or where warranted the full congregational Amend because a member cannot be compelled to appear	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09 ELCA assembly change 2009	Pat Barron – Congregation President Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
*C15.03	Nov 2011	Amend Congregation Council to Lead Servant Team Add: or congregational council as appropriate	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
*C15.04	Nov 2011	Add: Lead Servant Team or full	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
*C15.05	Nov 2011	Add: Lead Servant Team and/or	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
*15.11	Nov 2011	Amend: chair of the Congregation Council to president of the congregation	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09	Pat Barron – Congregation President
*C16.03	Nov 2011	Amend: Congregation Council to Lead Servant Team Amend to correct grammar	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09 ELCA mandated change 2011	Pat Barron – Congregation President Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
*C17.01	Nov 2011	Amend Congregation Council to Lead Servant Team Add: The Lead Servant Team must work in close collaboration with the full council ... Amend regarding incorporation of amendments adopted by the Churchwide Assembly	Mission leadership matrix approved during congregational meeting 12/6/09 ELCA mandated change for 2007	Pat Barron – Congregation President Susan – Lead Servant Team
*C17.04	Nov 2011	Amend regarding incorporation of amendments adopted by the Churchwide Assembly Grammar corrections	ELCA mandated change for 2007 ELCA mandated change for 2011	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
C18.01	Nov 2011	Amend regarding adoption of continuing resolution	ELCA mandated change for 2007	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
C18.02	Nov 2011	Amend regarding adoption of continuing resolution	ELCA mandated change for 2007	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
*C19	Nov 2011	Add chapter that had been removed in earlier version	ELCA portion that is required in congregation constitution	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team
*C20	Nov 2011	Chapter not included in 2003 document	Noting section is not included nor required because Epiphany is not a part of a Parish	Susan Heck – Lead Servant Team

***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 Epiphany Lutheran Church of Suwanee, Inc.
- C1.02.** For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the congregation of Epiphany Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."
- C1.03.** This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Georgia.

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 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 the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith and life.
- *C2.04.** This congregation accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this congregation.
- *C2.05.** This congregation accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
- *C2.06.** This congregation accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.
- *C2.07.** This congregation confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

Chapter 3. NATURE OF THE CHURCH

- *C3.01.** All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of the congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.
- *C3.02.** The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. The 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 impression 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.
- *C3.03.** 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 church wide organization to which we specific references may be made herein.
- C3.04.** The church’s primary identity and calling is to be a “witness to the resurrection” (see Acts 1:22). It serves as a sign of God’s reign in the world and of the future that God promises. As a community united with Christ through Baptism, it is the Body of Christ in the world. It serves as both continuation and embodiment of Christ in the world. It courageously walks with a vulnerable world and always points to an empty tomb.

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 Scriptures, 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 a Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
 - d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless and committing itself to their needs.
 - e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their 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 the congregation's ministry and the ministry of other parts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.
- *C4.04.** This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Congregation Council (as defined in Chapter 12.) shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each Mission Team, task force, or other organizational groups and shall review their actions. (Such descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions in the section of the Congregation Council, as defined in footnote chapter 12
- *C4.05.** This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its program.
- *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.
- C4.07** Epiphany’s mission, vision and guiding principles are further defined in By-Law Section 1.

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 Congregational Meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.
- *C5.03.** Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregational Council or other organizational units in this congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by the congregation. The congregation is authorized to:
- a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
 - b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided is Chapter 9;
 - c. call or terminate the call of associates in ministry in conformity with the applicable policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;

- d. adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in Chapter 17, and amendments to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 16, and continuing resolutions, as provided in Chapter 18
- e. approve the annual spending plan;
- f. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
- g. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
- h. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
- i. elect its Congregation Council(as defined in Chapter 12) and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions; and
- j. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.

C5.04. This congregation annually shall choose from among its voting members laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by the congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by this synod.

- a. The Lead Servant Team acts on the behalf of the congregation in order to choose those who will serve as noted in Chapter 5.04.

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 Southeastern 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 clergy roster 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 ordained ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or to contracting for pastoral services with an ordained minister 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 associates in ministry for call to other staff positions in the congregation according to the procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- e. This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution with the synod for review to ascertain that all of its provisions are in

agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and with the constitution of the synod.

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

- a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.
- b. This congregation ceases to exist.
- c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- d. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in *C6.05.

***C6.05.** A congregation may terminate its relationship with this church by the following procedure:

- a. A resolution indicating the intent to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of the congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present. Such meeting may be held no sooner than 30 days after writing notice of the meeting is received by the bishop of the synod, during which time the congregation shall consult with the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any. The times and manner of the consultation shall be determined by the bishop in consultation with the congregation council. Unless he or she is a voting member of the congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the meeting.
- b. The secretary of the 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 mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of the congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted.
- c. The bishop of the synod and the congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph a. above, during a period of at least 90 days after receipt by the synod of the notice as specified in paragraph b. above.
- d. If the congregation, after such consultation, still seeks to terminate its relationship, 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 meeting shall be mailed to all voting members and to the bishop at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Unless he or she is voting member of the congregation, the bishop, and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the meeting.
- e. A copy of the resolution, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, shall be sent to the bishop within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted, at which time the relationship between the congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to paragraphs g., h., and i. below. Unless this notification to the bishop also certifies that the congregation has voted by a two-thirds vote to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, the congregation will be conclusively presumed to be an independent or non-Lutheran church.
- f. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the bishop to the secretary of this church, who shall report the termination to the churchwide assembly.
- g. 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.
- h. 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.
- i. 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.
- j. If a congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at the congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above, another special meeting to consider termination of relationship with this church may be called no sooner than six months after that first meeting. If a congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting

members present at the 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 that second meeting.

- *C6.06. If this congregation is considering relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate program 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 effected.
- *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 program 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 Southeastern 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, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.
- *C7.03. If a two-thirds majority of voting members of this congregation present at a regularly called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to transfer to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation provided the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05. has been followed. Before this congregation takes action to transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Southeastern Synod.
- *C7.04. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a regularly 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 the congregation by the established synodical process, 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.

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 shall have communed and made a contribution of record during the current or preceding year. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of the congregation.
- d. Associate members are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Congregation Council (as defined in Chapter 12) of this congregation.

***C8.03.** All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Congregation Council (as defined in Chapter 12).

***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 by the Congregation Council(as defined in Chapter 12); or
- e. removal from the roll due to inactivity as defined in the bylaws. Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the church has a continuing pastoral concern.

Chapter 9. THE PASTOR

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

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

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

- a. Every ordained minister shall:
 - 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;
 - 3) conduct public worship;
 - 4) provide pastoral care;

- 5) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love to the world; and
 - 6) equip and empower the saints for ministry.
- b. Each ordained minister with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
- 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) supervise all schools and organizations of this congregation;
 - 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council (as defined in Chapter 12); and
 - 4) with the Congregation Council (as defined in Chapter 12), administer discipline.
 - 5) serve as a role model of the life of discipleship to which Jesus calls us.
- c. Every pastor shall:
- 1) strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;
 - 2) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 - 3) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications; and
 - 4) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and of the Southeastern Synod of the ELCA.

***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.**
- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which, except in the case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated only following consultation with the synodical bishop and for the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions, without reflection on the competence or moral and spiritual character of the pastor;
 - 4) the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
 - 5) disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty;
 - 6) the dissolution of the congregation; or suspension of the congregation as a result of discipline proceedings,
 - b. When allegations of physical or mental incapacity of the pastor or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office have come to the attention of the bishop of the synod, the bishop in his or her sole discretion may, or when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council (as defined in Chapter 12), or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the

congregation, the bishop shall investigate such conditions personally in company with a team of two ordained ministers and one layperson.

- c. In case of alleged physical or mental incapacity, competent medical testimony shall be obtained. When such disability is evident, the bishop of the synod with the advice of the team shall declare the pastorate vacant. Upon the restoration of a disabled pastor to health, the bishop of the synod shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another field of labor.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation, all concerned persons shall be heard, after which the bishop of the synod together with the team described in *C9.05.b. shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor and the congregation. If they agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action shall be taken by the synod. If either party fails to assent, the congregation may dismiss the pastor by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present at a regularly called meeting after consultation with the bishop.
- e. If, in the course of proceedings described in *C9.05.d., the team concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the team shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action to the synodical bishop who may bring charges, in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church America and the constitution of this synod.
- f. If, following the appointment of the team described in *C9.05.b. or d., it should become apparent that the pastoral office cannot be conducted effectively in the congregation being served by the ordained minister due to local conditions, the bishop of the synod may temporarily suspend the pastor from service in the congregation without prejudice and with pay provided through a joint synodical and churchwide fund and with housing provided by the congregation.

- *C9.06.** At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.
- *C9.07.** During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the 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 (as defined in Chapter 12). The interim pastor and any ordained pastor 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 related to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- *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 (as defined in Chapter 12), and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- *C9.10.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, the 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 the 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.
- *C9.11.** The pastor shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmands, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, and shall, submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod. The pastor

shall be a member of the congregation that has extended the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

- *C9.12. The pastor(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- *C9.13. The pastor(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- *C9.14. The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of the congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his or her hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another field of labor or the granting by the synod of retired status to the pastor.

Chapter 10. CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

- C10.01. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.
- C10.02. A special Congregational meeting may be called by the pastor, the Lead Servant Team, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of this congregation upon the written request of 15% of the voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.
- 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 U.S. Mail or electronic mail, if appropriate, to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting.
- C10.04. 15% of confirmed members shall constitute a quorum.
- C10.05. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- C10.06. All actions approved by the congregation shall be by majority vote of those voting members present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution or by state law.
- C10.07. The meeting will follow the agenda as developed by the congregational president, including those things mandated in the bylaws. The president or his /her designee shall conduct the meeting in an open manner seeking group affirmation and consensus of the gathered body. If consensus is not possible, or if conflict arises, then the presider shall invoke Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, for structuring motions, discussion, and action.

Chapter 11. OFFICERS

- C11.01. The officers of this congregation shall be a president, president-elect, (in the final year of the president's term) secretary, and treasurer, who serves as an advisor to the Lead Servant Team.
 - a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
 - b. The officers shall be voting members of the congregation.
 - c. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Lead Servant Team and shall be voting members of the Lead Servant Team.
 - d. The Lead Servant Team shall appoint a secretary for the congregation and the Lead Servant Team from those members that were elected to the Lead Servant Team.
- C11.02. The Lead Servant Team shall appoint other Mission Teams or ministry task forces as necessary for the mission of the congregation in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the bylaws.

- a. After serving two consecutive, two- year terms, an appointed officer must not serve in an appointed position for one, two year term
- b. If an officers replacement is appointed to serve one year or less, this will not be considered a full term.
- c. Ratification of a replacement officers- appointment will take place at the next congregational meeting. Official notification to the congregation, of the replacement officers-appointment will take place within 30 days of replacement acceptance of appointed role.

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, unless approved by a vote of the congregation.

Chapter 12. CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL AND LEAD SERVANT TEAM

C12.01. The membership of the Congregational Council shall consist of, the officers of the congregation, and not less than 28 and not more than 36 members of the congregation. The full congregation council is currently comprised of six Mission Teams: Worship Life, Formation, Reach, Congregational Life, Outreach and Lead Servant. Any voting member of the congregation may be elected, except those voting members currently employed by the congregation (pastors excepted) as a salaried employee or providing contract services for remuneration, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregational Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregational Council without cause.

C12.02. After the first election, the members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) shall be appointed to serve for two years or until their successors are appointed. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively. Their term shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

C12.03 The Lead Servant Team, which serves much like a congregational council in many ELCA churches, will consist of at least seven members of the Congregation Council, but not more than ten members. The Lead Servant Team serves as the Executive Team of the Congregation Council with the commensurate authorities of such.

C12.04 The officers shall be nominated by the Nominating team as set forth in the bylaws and elected at the regular annual meeting of the congregation. Vote shall be by oral acclamation. If there is not a clear consensus, then the officers shall be elected by written ballot.

C12.04. Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Lead Servant Team shall appoint, a successor until the next annual meeting.

C12.05. The Congregation Council, which includes all members of the Mission Teams including the Lead Servant Team, shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:

- a. To lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
- b. To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
- c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
- d. To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling 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 partnership with the synod and churchwide units of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- j. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

C12.06. The Lead Servant Team shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.

- a. The Lead Servant Team shall serve as the Executive Team of the Congregational Council and congregation and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the management of its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Georgia, except as otherwise provided herein.
- b. Neither the Lead Servant Team nor the full Congregational Council shall have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.
- c. The Lead Servant Team may enter into contracts totaling no more than 10% of the annual spending plan, not to exceed \$50,000, for items not included in the spending plan. The exception to this general rule applies to expansion and building projects that were approved by the congregation. In such cases the Lead Servant Team is charged with the responsibility to carry out the directives of the congregation as it relates to the specified project.
- d. The Lead Servant Team in full collaboration with the Mission Teams comprising the Congregational Council shall prepare an annual spending plan for adoption by this congregation and shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption. The spending plan shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in partnership with the synod and churchwide organization.
- e. The Lead Servant Team in full collaboration with Mission Teams comprising the full Congregational Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies to the synodical treasurer.
- f. The Lead Servant Team shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and total insurance program.

C12.07. The Lead Servant Team in full collaboration with all Mission Teams comprising the Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution, its bylaws, and the continuing resolutions are carried out.

C12.08. The Lead Pastor, with advisory support from the Lead Servant Team and the Personnel Team, shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the paid servants of this congregation.

- C12.09.** The Lead Servant Team along with the full support of all Mission Teams comprising the full Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.
- C12.10.** The Lead Servant Team and all Mission Teams shall generally meet once a month, but not less than every sixty days. Special meetings of Mission Teams and or the Lead Servant Team may be called by the Mission Team leader, 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.
- C12.11.** A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the individual Mission Team, and in the case of Lead Servant Team meetings, shall include the pastor or interim pastor(s), except when the pastor(s) 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

Chapter 13. CONGREGATION MISSION AND MINISTRY TEAMS

- C13.01.** A **Nominating Team** of five voting members of this congregation, two of whom, if possible, shall be outgoing members of the Lead Servant Team, shall be appointed by the Lead Servant Team for a term of one year. Members of the Nominating Team are not eligible for consecutive reelection.
- C13.02.** An **Audit Team** of not less than two, but not more than four voting members-shall be elected by the Lead Servant Team. Audit Team Responsibilities and service terms are defined in the bylaws.
- C13.03.** A **Personnel Team** shall be appointed to support the Lead Pastor in all matters related to the administration activities of the paid servants. These responsibilities and terms of office are defined in the bylaws.
- C13.04.** When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a **Call Team** of seven voting members shall be elected by this congregation. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor.
- C13.05.** Other teams and task forces of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Lead Servant Team in collaboration with the Mission Teams as appropriate.
- C13.06.** Duties of teams and task forces of this congregation shall be specified in the bylaws.
- C13.07.** Duties of Mission Teams of this congregation shall be specified in the bylaws.
- C13.08.** The Lead Pastor of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all Mission Teams and mission task forces of the congregation. The president of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all Mission Teams and mission taskforces of the congregation, except the Nominating Team.

Chapter 14. ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE 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 Lead Servant Team.

Chapter 15. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

- *C15.01.** Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps: a) private admonition by the pastor, b) admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, and c) citation to appear before the Congregation Council.
- *C15.02.** The process for discipline of a member of the congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. If discipline against a member proceeds beyond counseling and admonition by the pastor, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing shall be prepared by member(s) of the congregation who shall sign the charges as the accuser(s). The written charges shall be filed with the pastor, who shall advise the Lead Servant Team of the need to issue a written citation to the accused and the accusers that specifies the time and place of the hearing before the Lead Servant Team. The written charges shall accompany the written citation to the accused. The written citation that specifies the time and place of the hearing before the Congregation Council and requests the presence of a member charged with the offense shall be sent at least ten days prior to the meeting. If the member charged with the offense fails to appear at the scheduled hearing, the Congregation Council may proceed with the hearing and may pass judgment in the member's absence.
- *C15.03.** Members of the Congregation Council who participate in the preparation of the written charges or who present evidence or testimony in the hearing before the Congregation Council are disqualified from voting upon the question of the guilt of the accused member. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Lead Servant Team or Congregation Council as appropriate, who are not disqualified but who are present and voting, and renewed admonition prove ineffectual, the council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:
- a. censure before the Lead Servant Team, Congregation Council or congregation;
 - b. suspension from membership for a definite period of time; or
 - c. exclusion from membership in this congregation.
- Disciplinary actions b. and c. shall be delivered to the member in writing.
- *C15.04.** The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Lead Servant Team or Congregation Council shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Synod Council. Such right may not be abridged and the decision of the Synod Council shall be final.
- *C15.05.** Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Lead Servant Team and/or Congregation Council upon receipt of a) evidence that injustice has been done or b) evidence of repentance and amendment.
- *C15.06.** For disciplinary actions in this congregation, "due process" shall be observed as specified in 20.41.03. 20.41.04. in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- *C15.10.** **Adjudication** - When there is disagreement among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation shall have access to the synodical bishop for consultation after informing the president of the congregation of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the Consultation Committee of the synod shall consider the matter. If the Consultation Committee of the synod shall fail to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to the Synod Council, whose decision shall be final.

Chapter 16. BYLAWS

- *C16.01. This congregation may adopt bylaws. No by-law may conflict with this constitution.
- *C16.02. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting.
- *C16.03. Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member, provided that such additions or amendments submitted in writing to the Lead Servant Team at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose. The Lead Servant Team must notify the congregation's members by mail of the proposal with the Congregational Council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregational Meeting.
- *C16.04. Approved changes to the bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

Chapter 17. AMENDMENTS

- *C17.01. Unless provision *C17.04. 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 to this constitution may be proposed by at least 5 voting members or by the Lead Servant Team. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Lead Servant Team 60 days before formal consideration by the congregation at a regular or special Congregational meeting called for that purpose. The Lead Servant Team must work in close collaboration with the Congregation Council during the 60-day review process. The Lead Servant Team shall notify the congregation's members by mail of the proposal together with the Congregation Council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.
- *C17.02. A proposed amendment to this constitution, proposed under *C17.01. shall:
 - a. be approved at a legally called Congregational meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;
 - b. be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting; and
 - c. have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.
- *C17.03. Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in *C17.01. and *C17.02. shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The amendment shall become effective within 120 days from the date of the receipt of the notice by the synod unless the synod informs this congregation that the amendment is in conflict with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or the constitution of the Southeastern Synod of the ELCA.
- *C17.04. 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 simple majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any subsequent meeting of the congregation, without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail notice to the 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 15% of the voting members of the congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following a vote of approval.

Chapter 18. CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

- *C18.01.** The congregation in a legally called meeting or the Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions which describe the function of the various teams or organizations of this congregation.
- *C18.02.** Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a majority vote of a meeting of the congregation or a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Congregation Council.

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 Mission Team of this congregation, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.