Sharon Lutheran Church

Constitution

By God’s Grace

created
called
committed
to worship
to teach
to serve

Constitution
Sharon Lutheran Church

Feb. 24, 2013
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 Sharon Lutheran Church, Grand Forks, North Dakota.

*C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the congregation of Sharon Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as “this congregation.”

*C1.03. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of North Dakota.

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 Smalcalde Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.

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

Chapter 3

NATURE OF THE CHURCH

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

*C3.02. 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.
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 ministries with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.

d. Serve in response to God’s love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice 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 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 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 Parish Planning Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions.
*C4.05. This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

*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 Parish Planning Council or other organizational units in this congregation’s governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by the congregation. The congregation is authorized to:

a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;

b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;

c. call or terminate the call of associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers in conformity with the applicable policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;

d. adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in Chapter 17, amendments to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 16, and continuing resolutions, as provided in Chapter 18.

e. approve the annual budget;
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 officers, Parish Planning Council, boards, and committees, 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 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 the Eastern North Dakota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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 Eastern North Dakota 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, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers 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.
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 written 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 a 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 synodical 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 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 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 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 Eastern North Dakota 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 the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to transfer to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation, provided the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05.* has been followed. Before this congregation takes action to transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Eastern North Dakota Synod.

*C7.04.* If a two-thirds majority of 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
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.

*C7.05.* Notwithstanding the provisions of *C7.02.* and *C.7.03.* 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 Eastern North Dakota 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 the congregation.

d. **Associate** members are persons holding membership in other Lutheran congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation, or persons who wish to retain a relationship with this congregation while being members of other congregations. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Congregation Council of this congregation.

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

C8.03.01. a. Applicants not familiar with the doctrines and confessions of the Lutheran Church will have the opportunity to learn about them through an orientation process, and to make profession of their faith at worship when they join.

b. Applicants from other evangelical Lutheran churches shall request from their prior congregation a letter of transfer to membership in this congregation.

*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 ELCA constitutional provision 20.40. and the accompanying bylaws;

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.

C8.05.01. A member desiring transfer to another Lutheran congregation shall request that a letter of transfer be issued by the Pastor(s) to the receiving congregation.

C8.05.02. Members who have not participated in the life of this congregation through worship and sacrament for a period of one year shall be removed from the roll due to inactivity, except in circumstances where, in the judgment of the Pastor and Board of Lay Ministry, circumstances prevented such participation and the member has expressed a desire to continue membership.

C8.06. Communion Participation: This congregation invites all its members, who have been prepared to receive the Sacrament, to participate regularly in Holy Communion.

a. Participation in Holy Communion shall be open to members of other congregations who accept the Lutheran teaching in regard to this Sacrament.

b. It shall be made known to prospective participants that the belief of this congregation is that participation in the Lord’s Supper is the reception of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, instituted by Christ Himself. We hold that a
person is well prepared and worthy who believes these words, “given and shed for you for the remission of sins.”

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 legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by this congregation to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.

C9.01.01. Procedure for securing a pastor: When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee will be established according to the procedure in provision 13.04. After consultation by the Call Committee with the bishop of the Eastern North Dakota Synod, or his/her representative, candidates for the pastorate shall be considered. At a subsequent regular or special meeting of the congregation the Call Committee shall submit its recommendation of one pastoral candidate to the congregation for its consideration in conformance to C9.01. of this Constitution. It shall be the duty of the Executive Director to see that notice of his/her selection is delivered promptly to the candidate by Letter of Call in a form approved by The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

*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; and
5) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God’s love for the world.

b. Each ordained minister with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:

1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
2) supervise organizations of the congregation as authorized in Chapter 15;
3) install regularly elected members of the Parish Planning Council; and
4) with the council, administer discipline.

c. Every pastor shall:

1) strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;
2) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
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 Eastern North Dakota 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. Continuity of Call

a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by death or, following consultation with the synodical bishop for the following reasons:

1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions;
4) physical disability, or mental incapacity of the pastor;
5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;
6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of ordained ministries of this church;
7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.

b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of the synod,

1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally with a committee of two ordained 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 the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two ordained ministers and one layperson.

c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity, under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop’s committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of the synod may declare the pastorate vacant and the pastor shall be listed on the clergy roster disabled. Upon removal of the disability and restoration of the pastor to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the 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 the 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 the 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, the congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds majority 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 simple 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 disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church’s constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

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

*C9.12. The pastor of this congregation:

a. shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the 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.

*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.

C9.20. Ecumenical pastoral ministry

C9.21. Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synodical bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, an ordained minister 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.

Chapter 10

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
C10.01. The congregation shall hold an annual congregational meeting to occur in the time frame between Easter and the start of the congregation’s fiscal year.

a. The date and time of the annual meeting shall be set by the Parish Planning Council.

b. The annual meeting of the congregation shall include approval of the budget and election of officers, directors, and board members as specified in provision 12.81.

c. The fiscal year of the congregation shall be July 1 to June 30.

C10.02. Special meetings of this congregation may be called by the Parish Planning Council, the Executive Director, The Pastor(s), any one of the Administrative Boards, or by petition of 30 Voting Members of the congregation. The Executive Director shall call a special meeting upon the request of the synod bishop. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is held and no other business shall be transacted.

C10.03. Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the Sunday worship services no less than seven (7) days prior to the time of the meeting or mailed or electronic means, as permitted by state law, to all Voting Members at least five (5) days in advance of the meeting.

C10.04. Attending Voting Members shall constitute a quorum, unless otherwise specified in the constitution or bylaws.

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.


C10.08. In the following cases voting shall be by written ballot:

a. To elect members for each elective office

b. To adopt or amend the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution, or Bylaws of this congregation
c. To call a pastor or to request his/her resignation

d. To excommunicate a member from this congregation or to remove a member from office in this congregation

e. To sever membership in The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

f. To dispose of, encumber, or purchase real property

g. When requested by ten or more Voting Members present

C10.09. Recessed Meetings - A meeting of this congregation may, by majority vote, recess to reconvene at a specified time and place. A meeting may also recess to meet upon call; provided, however, that the time and place of such a reconvened meeting must be announced at a public service of the congregation, or written notice be mailed to the Voting Membership not less than three (3) days in advance of the reconvened meeting.

Chapter 11

OFFICERS

C11.01 The Officers of this congregation shall consist of an Executive Director, an Assistant Executive Director(s), and a Treasurer, elected from among the Voting Membership in accordance with the bylaws of the congregation.

C11.02. The Executive Director of this congregation shall preside at all meetings of this congregation. He/she shall enforce the Constitution and Bylaws of the congregation and carry out the expressed will of the congregation as embodied in the resolutions of the Voting Membership. He/she shall be welcome at any and all meetings of all boards, committees, and groups within this congregation, either in person or as represented by such person or persons as he/she may appoint. He/she shall also call and preside over the meetings of the Parish Planning Council and shall coordinate the functions, plans, and activities of the congregation in all its parts for the total furtherance of the word of Christ's Kingdom in our midst.
The Executive Director of this congregation (or the Assistant Executive Directors, when acting in the Director's capacity) shall have a voice on all Administrative Boards, but his/her right to vote shall be limited to such Board or Boards on which he/she may hold membership.

C11.03. The Assistant Executive Director(s) of this congregation, in the absence of the Executive Director, shall act for and in the stead of the Executive Director. They shall be available for whatever duties the Executive Director shall assign to them as his/her representatives.

C11.04. The Treasurer shall: Oversee financial activities to assure accurate recording of congregational receipts and disbursements and budgeted and actual expenditures according to proper accounting procedures; present financial reports at Parish Planning and congregational meetings; provide appropriate financial reports to board and external agencies; coordinate the flow of monies from the treasury on behalf of the various boards in such a way that an adequate balance is retained; disburse funds in accordance with board directives and arising financial obligations; and provide for appropriate internal controls and financial systems.

Chapter 12

BOARDS AND COUNCIL

C12.10. Parish Planning Council

C12.11. The Parish Planning Council is the Board of Directors of this congregation. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of North Dakota, except as otherwise provided herein.

C12.12 The Parish Planning Council shall consist of the Pastor(s), the Executive Director, the Assistant Executive Director(s), and the Treasurer of this congregation, and the Directors of the Administrative Boards. They shall hold a position on the Parish Planning Council by virtue of their call or election by the Congregation Meeting of this congregation so long as their term of office continues.
C12.20 General Responsibilities and Powers of the Council

C12.21 Working within the authority granted it by the congregation, the Parish Planning Council has 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.

C12.22 The Parish Planning Council acts as fiduciary on behalf of this congregation, establishes policy for the fulfillment of mission, and oversees the leadership of this congregation. Responsibilities of the Parish Planning 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 so that it may 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 govern the financial and property matters of this congregation.

f. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.

g. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill, and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.

h. To emphasize partnership with 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 see that the provisions of this constitution, its bylaws, and continuing resolutions are carried out.

C12.30 Duties of the Council

C12.31. The Parish Planning Council shall carry out such activities as are authorized and necessary to fulfill its responsibilities. Among its duties are to:

a. Direct and oversee the work of the administrative boards.

b. Present to this congregation at its annual meeting a yearly plan of activity for the entire congregation as well as long-range plans for the development and expansion of Christ's work in our midst.

c. Prepare an annual mission plan and budget for adoption by this congregation, and oversee its accomplishment following adoption.

d. Submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.

f. Put in place policies for the welfare and effective action of this congregation, including personnel administration, stewardship of resources, congregational welfare, outreach, and social action.

e. Approve and evaluate the annual performance plan of the lead pastor.

h. Appoint an Auditing Committee in accordance with C13.03.

i. Fill unexpired terms of vacant board and committee positions and make interim appointments to vacant officer positions pending an election by the congregation.

C12.40 Organization and meetings of the Council

C12.41. The Parish Planning Council shall normally meet at least four (4) times each year. Additional meetings may be called by the
Executive Director of this congregation and/or the Pastor(s) as required.

C12.42. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Parish Planning Council, including the pastor(s).

C12.43. The Parish Planning Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, and, to the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

C12.44. The Parish Planning Council shall keep a permanent set of minutes for each meeting, and such minutes shall be stored in the church files and be property of this congregation.

C12.45. A recording secretary shall be appointed by the Parish Planning Council to memorialize the proceedings of Council and Congregation meetings.

C12.50. Administrative Boards

C12.51. Working within the policy and directives of the Parish Planning Council, the administrative boards organize and coordinate the work of this congregation.

C 12.51.01 The administrative boards of this congregation shall be:

a. Board of Lay Ministry. This Board is responsible for the spiritual welfare of the Pastor(s) and congregation members, individually and corporately, and the supervision of everything pertaining to congregational worship.

b. Board of Evangelism. The basic objectives of this Board are the bringing of the Gospel to the unchurched, the enlistment of all of God's people in the work of spreading the Gospel, and the deepening of faith and activity of the members of this congregation.

c. Board of Christian Education. This Board’s role is to plan and determine educational policies, and to direct and
coordinate the entire educational program of the congregation.

d. Board of Youth. The objective of this Board is to involve the young people of the congregation in the work of Christ, provide for their spiritual growth and nurture, and to promote Christian fellowship for the young people of the congregation.

e. Board of Stewardship. This Board’s responsibility is to initiate programs for the development of good stewardship attitudes in the members of the congregation in regard to time, talents, and treasures. The Board is also responsible to provide for the training and utilization of members of the congregation for the work of Christ’s Kingdom, and to ensure the financial stability of the congregation and its work through a developed program of dedicated, proportionate, first-fruits giving.

f. Board of Church Properties. The function of this Board is to assure the proper maintenance and repair of church property.

g. Board of Parish Fellowship. This Board is responsible to strengthen the fellowship between congregation members spiritually and socially, integrate new members into the life of the congregation, and to build mutual cooperation, trust, and enjoyment among the members of the congregation.

h. Board of Public Relations. The role of this Board is to present to the public a Christian image which will reflect favorably upon the work of Christ and of the congregation as His instrument, to publicize the work of the congregation through various channels and to integrate the congregation’s work into the life of the community.

i. Board of Church in Society. The basic objectives of this board are to heighten congregational awareness of issues in society which the Church can address and to provide an avenue through which congregational members, individually and collectively, can become directly involved in social issues.
C12.51.A16. The job descriptions of the administrative boards are established by this continuing resolution as presented in the document entitled “C12.51.A16 – Administrative Board Job Descriptions”, and hereby incorporated as a part of this governing document.

C12.52. This congregation may establish new administrative boards or eliminate existing ones by congregational bylaw.

C12.53. This congregation may establish or change job descriptions for administrative boards by continuing resolution.

C12.60. General Duties and Powers of Administrative Boards

a. Each administrative board shall initiate and carry out such activities and programs within the congregation as will enable it to effectively perform the functions and duties assigned to it by congregational bylaw, continuing resolution, or Parish Planning Council directive.

b. Each administrative board shall submit a report of its activities at the annual meeting of the congregation and on such other occasions as the congregation shall require. Reports shall include specific recommendations (if any) for congregational action and/or approval.

c. Each administrative board shall keep a permanent set of minutes for each meeting, and such minutes shall be stored in the church files.

C12.70. Organization and Meetings of the Administrative Boards

a. Each administrative board shall be chaired by the director of that board. Boards shall assign such duties and tasks among their members as are required to carry out their responsibilities.

b. The time and frequency of board meetings shall be monthly or at the discretion of the director and the board members, except that for: good and sufficient reason, either the Executive Director of this congregation or the Pastor(s) may call a meeting of the board at any time. Meetings thus called shall be classified as special meetings, and each person involved shall be notified of the date, time, and purpose of such a meeting.
c. The Pastor(s) of this congregation shall be ex-officio a member of all Boards and their associated committees, and may, at his/her discretion, attend any or all meetings related to congregational activity of any kind.

C12.80. Elections

C12.81. Nomination Procedure

a. Prior to congregational elections, a Nominating Committee shall be established according to the process described in provision 13.02.

b. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a list of Candidates drawn from the Voting Members of this congregation and from the list submitted by members of the congregation. This list shall then be made available to the Voting Members of the congregation at least three (3) weeks prior to the meeting to elect officers, directors, and board members.

c. Following the publication of the Nominating Committee's list, any Voting Member of this congregation may submit to the committee additional names for inclusion on the list and such names shall be placed in nomination by the Committee along with the candidates already chosen, provided:

1. That such names shall be submitted at least ten (10) days before the date of the congregational meeting to elect officers, directors, and board members.

2. That the Nominating Committee, through consultation with the Pastor(s) and the Board of Lay Ministry, shall have investigated the status of the proposed candidates and found them spiritually eligible for office and willing to serve.

d. The Nominating Committee at least one week before the date of the congregational meeting shall post conspicuously on the church bulletin board the list of candidates for the following positions: Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director(s), Treasurer, directors of the
various administrative boards, and board members as necessary to complete the membership of each of the administrative boards.

e. Election Procedure - From the list of candidates for each elective office submitted by the Nominating Committee, the Voting Membership shall, at its congregational meeting, elect by ballot and simple majority, persons to the positions listed below. (Only candidates defeated for office may be placed in nomination by the congregation at the election meeting for any office not yet filled.) The following positions in the order indicated are:

1. An Executive Director
2. An Assistant Executive Director
3. A Treasurer
4. Directors specifically nominated for the directorship of one of the administrative boards.
5. Board Members to the number required to complete the membership of each or the administrative boards. The determination of the number of members required on each board shall be an annual function of the Parish Planning Council and shall be decided no later than the January meeting of that body.

f. Installation of Officers - Term of Office -- The new terms of office of all officers and board members shall be 3 years and begin July 1 of the year elected, terminating on June 30th of the third year of their terms. Terms of 1/3 of the members of all the boards and Parish Planning Council shall end each year. Directors or the Treasurer may succeed themselves in the same directorate only once. Board members may succeed themselves in the same position twice.

*C12.90. Disciplinary Process – If any officer, director, or board member of this congregation is determined to have willfully neglected the duties of his/her office, the Parish Planning Council will initiate a plan for discipline/remediation that may include a recommendation for removal from office. Officeholders may be
deposed by a two-thirds majority vote of the Voting Members present in a regular meeting of this congregation. When an office becomes vacant, a successor to such officer or director shall be elected by this congregation at the next meeting.

Chapter 13

COMMITTEES

C13.01. The officers of this congregation and the pastors shall constitute the Executive Committee.

C13.02. A Nominating Committee of six voting members of this congregation shall be elected by the Parish Planning Council not less than 60 days before the annual meeting of the congregation. It shall be the duty of the Nominating Committee to present to the congregation a slate of candidates for elected office as specified in provision 12.81. Nominating Committee members serve for a term of one year.

C13.03. An Audit Committee of three (3) voting members shall be appointed by the Parish Planning Council. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Parish Planning Council, the Treasurer, or the Financial Secretary, and shall be qualified confirmed members of this congregation. Term of office shall be three years with one member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for reelection. The Audit Committee’s report shall be presented at the annual meeting of this congregation each year.

C13.04 When a pastoral vacancy occurs, the Board of Lay Ministry shall select a list of candidates for a Call Committee. This list of candidates will be proposed to the congregation at the annual congregation meeting or at a special meeting for the purpose of selecting the Call Committee. Additional candidates may be proposed by any voting member at this meeting. From the list of candidates a Call Committee shall be elected. The Call Committee shall follow the procedures for securing a pastor set forth in provision 9.01.01. Term of office for Call Committee
members will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor.

C13.05. Other committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Parish Planning Council.

C13.06. Mission Endowment Fund Committee

C13.06.01 A Mission Endowment Fund Committee of five voting members of Sharon Lutheran Church shall be elected at a congregational meeting. The purpose of the Fund shall be to provide annual financial distributions beyond the operating budget of the congregation to ministries as described in C14.07.02.

The term of office shall be three years with the first slate of members serving staggered terms. Each year following the initial election, two members shall be elected, except that every third year only one member shall be elected. Members are eligible for only two consecutive terms on the Committee. At all times at least one member of the Committee shall be a member of the Board of Stewardship or of the Parish Planning Council. Members of the Committee shall elect a chair, a vice-chair, and a secretary of the Committee. Three of the five voting members shall constitute a quorum at the Committee’s meetings.

In addition to the elected members, one of the congregation’s pastors shall be an ex-officio member of the Committee. The Treasurer of the congregation shall maintain the accounts of the Mission Endowment Fund and serve as an ex-officio member of the Committee.

Members of the Committee, while acting in good faith and in conformity with North Dakota law, shall not be personally liable for any losses of the Fund.

C13.06.02 The duties of the Mission Endowment Fund Committee shall include the following:

a. To fulfill the purpose of the Mission Endowment Fund, that is, to provide annual distributions beyond the operating budget of this congregation to ministries as stated below:
1) Minimum of 20% for outreach into the Grand Forks, North Dakota, area, or within the Eastern North Dakota synod of the ELCA, as the Committee determines;
2) Minimum of 20% for ELCA Churchwide ministries, as the Committee determines;
3) Minimum of 20% for extraordinary programs or ministry initiatives within the congregation;
4) Remaining 40% to be distributed through any of the categories described above.

b. To determine how the Fund assets will be invested, including the asset allocation. The assets shall not be invested in any way that would bring private advantage to an individual Committee member. Committee members shall not engage in any self-dealing. The committee shall report at least quarterly to the Parish Planning Council on all activity within the Fund, including current balance, additions, distributions, and any other activity. Annual accounting and a report of ministries supported through the Fund shall be distributed to the congregation at its annual meeting.

c. To make annual distributions. Annual distributions shall be a percentage of the annual earnings of the Fund, and may include interest and dividends received, realized gains, and/or unrealized gains. A fund must be maintained as a permanent irrevocable fund within the meaning of North Dakota law.

d. To encourage gifts to the Fund through education and promotion of the Fund. The Committee may use resources available through the ELCA Foundation and Lutheran Planned Giving Partnership in assisting members in planning for inclusion of the Fund in their current giving and estate plans.

e. To receive and celebrate gifts given for ministry through the Fund, and in the committee’s discretion, to decline to accept a gift if determined to be in the best interest of the Fund and the congregation.

f. To accept undesignated gifts received by the congregation, including but not limited to, bequests, life insurance proceeds and remainders from life income agreements.
g. To establish policies to insure that a fund is operated in accordance with requirements of North Dakota law governing permanent irrevocable funds, and North Dakota law governing management of institutional funds.

h. To consult with professional advisors, and to pay expenses of that consultation from earnings of the Fund, as the committee determines to be necessary.

i. To adopt policies against Committee members’ conflicts of interest, and other policies as the Committee determines to be necessary.

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. (See C4.04.) 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 Parish Planning Council.

Chapter 15

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

*C15.02. The process for discipline of a member of 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 the counseling, censure, and admonitions pursuant to C15.01 do not result in repentance and amendment of life, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing may be prepared by the Congregation Council, signed, and submitted to the vice president of the synod. The vice president shall select from the synod’s Consultation Committee a panel of five members (three lay persons and two clergy). 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 the congregation; or
d. termination of membership in the 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 the 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 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 chair of the Parish Planning Council of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the Consultation Committee of the
Chapter 16

BYLAWS

*C16.01. This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw 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, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Parish Planning Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose and that the Parish Planning Council 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.

*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 may be proposed by at least 30 voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Parish Planning Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Parish
Planning Council shall notify the congregation’s members by mail 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.

*C17.02. An amendment to this constitution, proposed under shall:

a. be approved at a legally called Congregation Meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;

b. be ratified without change at the next regularly scheduled Congregation Meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting; and

c. have the effective date included in the resolution (such an effective date must be stated in relation to the requirements of *C19.03. to allow time for synodical review of the amendment) 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 synod shall notify the 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.

*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 legally called meeting of the congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided that the Parish Planning Council has submitted by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, 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 30 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 Parish Planning 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 the congregation or a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Parish Planning 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 Parish Planning Council member, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any committee of this congregation, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.