

101	CONSTITUTION FOR TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
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124 **PREAMBLE**

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

130 **Chapter 1.**

131 **NAME AND INCORPORATION**

132 **C1.01.** The name of this congregation shall be Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church.

133 **C1.02.** For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the
134 congregation of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as "this
135 congregation."

136 **C1.03.** This congregation shall have a corporate seal, in the form of a circle with the
137 words "Trinity Lutheran Church, Ann Arbor, Michigan" on the outer ring of the circle
138 and the letters "IHS" and the year of the organization, 1893, in the center.

139 **C1.04.** *Reserved for future use.*

140 **C1.05.** *Reserved for future use.*

141 **C1.06.** *Reserved for future use.*

142 **C1.07.** *Reserved for future use.*

143 **C1.08.** *Reserved for future use.*

144 **C1.09.** *Reserved for future use.*

145 **C1.10.** *Reserved for future use.*

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

147 **Chapter 2.**

148 **CONFESSION OF FAITH**

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

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

152 a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and
153 through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.

154 b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God,
155 revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in
156 creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person
157 and work of Jesus Christ.

158 c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God.
159 Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's
160 revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them, God's Spirit speaks to us to create and

161 sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.
162 **C2.03.** This congregation accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New
163 Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its
164 proclamation, faith, and life.
165 **C2.04.** This congregation accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true
166 declarations of the faith of this congregation.
167 **C2.05.** This congregation accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to
168 the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise
169 accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
170 **C2.06.** This congregation accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord,
171 namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise,
172 the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid
173 interpretations of the faith of the Church.
174 **C2.07.** This congregation confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and
175 confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of
176 God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

177 **Chapter 3.**

178 **NATURE OF THE CHURCH**

179 **C3.01.** All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of
180 this congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.
181 **C3.02** This church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is
182 resolved to serve Christian Unity throughout the world.
183 **C3.03.** The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations
184 gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the
185 universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through
186 congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, therefore, derives its
187 character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and
188 from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In
189 length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints;
190 in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.
191 **C3.04.** This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in The Lutheran
192 World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the
193 gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God's mission in the world.
194 **C3.05.** The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or "this church") as
195 used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three
196 expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name
197 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the
198 churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.

199

200 **Chapter 4.**

201 **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

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

205 **C4.02.** To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:

206 a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and
207 through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.

208 b. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith
209 alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and
210 transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.

211 c. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to
212 faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the
213 understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.

214 d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged,
215 advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among
216 the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their
217 needs.

218 e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to
219 see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use
220 the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.

221 f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ
222 and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the
223 unity, which the Spirit gives.

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

225 a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments
226 are administered.

227 b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.

228 c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily
229 lives and in their congregation.

230 d. Teach the Word of God.

231 e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.

232 f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering,
233 and participate responsibly in society.

234 g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for the congregation's ministry and
235 the ministry of other parts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

236 h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the
237 synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

238 i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.
239 **C4.04.** This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the
240 bylaws. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of
241 each commission, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions.
242 **C4.05.** This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement that will
243 provide specific direction for its programs.
244 **C4.06.** References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions
245 of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being
246 interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility
247 of these expressions in God’s mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church
248 as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-
249 ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

250 **Chapter 5.**
251 **POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

252 **C5.01.** The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.
253 **C5.02.** The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregation Meeting called
254 and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.
255 **C5.03.** Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregation Council or other
256 organizational units in this congregation's governing documents is recognized. All
257 remaining authority is retained by the congregation. The congregation is authorized to
258 a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9
259 b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
260 c. call a minister of Word and Service;
261 d. terminate the call of a minister of Word and Service in conformity with the constitution
262 of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
263 e. adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in Chapter 16, amendments to the
264 bylaws, as specified in Chapter 17, and continuing resolutions, as provided in Chapter 18;
265 f. approve the annual budget;
266 g. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
267 h. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
268 i. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
269 j. elect its Congregation Council and boards and require them to carry out their duties in
270 accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions; and
271 k. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as
272 provided in Chapter 6.
273 **C5.04.** This congregation shall choose from among its voting members, laypersons to
274 serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at
275 meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a

276 member. The number of persons to be elected by the congregation and other
277 qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by Southeast Michigan
278 Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

279 **Chapter 6.**

280 **CHURCH AFFILIATION**

281 **C6.01.** This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran
282 Church in America or its successor, and of the Southeast Michigan Synod of the
283 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of
284 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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

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

289 a. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.

290 b. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission
291 of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

292 c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the roster of Ministers of
293 Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with
294 its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the bishop of
295 the synod. These special circumstances are limited either to calling a candidate approved
296 for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in
297 America or to contracting for pastoral services with a minister of Word and Sacrament of
298 a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has
299 established a relationship of full communion.

300 d. This congregation agrees to consider ministers of the Word and Sacrament for call to
301 other staff positions in the congregation according to the procedures of the Evangelical
302 Lutheran Church in America.

303 e. This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this
304 constitution with the synod for review to ascertain that all of its provisions are in
305 agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in
306 America and with the constitution of the synod.

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

309 a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.

310 b. This congregation ceases to exist.

311 c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in
312 America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in
313 America.

314 d. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in C6.05.

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

317 a. A resolution indicating the desire of this congregation to terminate its relationship must
318 be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation by a
319 two-thirds majority of the voting members present. Such meeting may be held no sooner
320 than 30 days after written notice of the meeting is received by the bishop of the synod,
321 during which time the congregation shall consult with the bishop and the bishop's
322 designees, if any. The times and manner of the consultation shall be determined by the
323 bishop in consultation with the Congregation Council. Unless he or she is a voting
324 member of the congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have
325 voice but not vote at the meeting.

326 b. The secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the
327 synodical bishop, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and
328 certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall mail a copy of the resolution to voting
329 members of this congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the
330 resolution has been adopted.

331 c. The bishop of the synod and the congregation shall continue in consultation, as
332 specified in paragraph a. above, during a period of at least 90 days.

333 d. If this congregation, after such consultation, still seeks to terminate its relationship,
334 such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-
335 thirds majority of the voting members present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to
336 all voting members and to the bishop at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Unless
337 he or she is a voting member of the congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees,
338 if any, shall have voice but not vote at the meeting.

339 e. A copy of the resolution attesting that the special meeting was legally called and
340 conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, shall be sent to the bishop within 10
341 days after the resolution has been adopted,, at which time the relationship between this
342 congregation and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be terminated
343 subject to paragraphs g., h., and i. below. Unless this notification to the bishop also
344 certifies that the congregation has voted by a two-thirds vote to affiliate with another
345 Lutheran denomination, the congregation will be conclusively presumed to be an
346 independent or non-Lutheran church.

347 f. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the bishop to the secretary of the ELCA
348 who shall report the termination to the Churchwide Assembly

349 g. This congregation shall abide by these covenants by and among the three expressions
350 of this church:

351 1) Congregations seeking to terminate their relationship with this church which fail
352 or refuse to comply with each of the foregoing provisions in *C6.05. shall be
353 required to receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership
354 in this church.

355 2) Congregations which had been members of the Lutheran Church in America shall
356 be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in C6.05., to

357 receive synodical approval before terminating its membership in this church
358 3) Congregations established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall
359 be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to
360 satisfy all financial obligations to this church and receive Synod Council approval
361 before terminating their membership in this church.

362 h. If this congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members
363 present at the congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above, another
364 special meeting to consider termination of relationship with this church may be called no
365 sooner than six months after that first meeting. If this congregation fails to achieve the
366 required two-thirds vote of voting members present at the congregation's second meeting
367 as specified in paragraph d. above, another attempt to consider termination of relationship
368 with this church must follow all requirements of *C6.05. and may begin no sooner than
369 six months after that second meeting.

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

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

378 **Chapter 7**

379 **PROPERTY OWNERSHIP**

380 **C7.01.** If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the
381 Southeast Michigan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

382 **C7.02.** If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran
383 Church in America according to its procedure for discipline, title to property shall
384 continue to reside in this congregation.

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

391 **C7.04.** If two-thirds of the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called
392 and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate
393 to a non-Lutheran church body and have followed the process for termination of
394 relationship in C6.05., title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this
395 congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after
396 consultation with this congregation by the established synodical process, may give
397 approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church

398 body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of this congregation. If the Synod
399 Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to
400 continue as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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

406 a. Shall not transfer, encumber, mortgage, or in any way burden or impair any right,
407 title, or interest in the property without prior approval of the Synod Council.

408 b. Shall—upon written demand by the Synod Council, pursuant to †S13.23. of the
409 constitution of the Southeast Michigan Synod —reconvey and transfer all right, title, and
410 interest in the property to the synod.

411 **Chapter 8.**

412 **MEMBERSHIP**

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

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

418 a. Baptized members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy
419 Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the
420 Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran
421 congregations or by affirmation of faith.

422 b. Confirmed members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this
423 congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed
424 members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation
425 of faith.

426 c. Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current
427 or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and made a
428 contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have
429 satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular
430 and special meeting of the congregation as well as the other rights and privileges ascribed
431 to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

432 d. Associate members are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations
433 who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission
434 of this congregation. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except
435 voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Congregation
436 Council of this congregation.

437 e. Seasonal members are voting members of other ELCA congregations who wish to
438 retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this

439 congregation, including exercising limited voting rights in this congregation. The
440 Congregation Council may grant seasonal membership to such persons provided that
441 this congregation is a member of a synod where the Synod Council has approved
442 seasonal member voting on its territory. Such seasonal members shall have all the
443 privileges and duties of voting members except that:

- 444 1) they shall not be eligible for elected office in, or for membership on the
445 Congregation Council or on a call committee of, this congregation;
- 446 2) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting
447 the call or termination of call of any minister of this congregation;
- 448 3) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting
449 the affiliation of this congregation with the ELCA;
- 450 4) they shall not be eligible to serve as voting members from this
451 congregation of the Synod Assembly or the Churchwide Assembly;
- 452 5) they shall not, even if otherwise permitted by this congregation, vote by
453 proxy or by absentee ballot; and
- 454 6) they shall not, within any two calendar month period, exercise voting
455 rights in this congregation and in the congregation where they remain
456 voting members.

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

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

- 460 a. make regular use of the means of grace, both Word and sacraments;
- 461 b. live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the
462 Lutheran church; and
- 463 c. support the work of this congregation, the synod, and the churchwide organization of
464 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through contributions of their time, abilities,
465 and financial support as biblical stewards.

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

- 467 a. death;
- 468 b. resignation;
- 469 c. transfer or release;
- 470 d. disciplinary action in accordance with ELCA constitutional provision 20.41. and the
471 accompanying bylaws; or
- 472 e. removal from the roll due to inactivity in accordance with the provisions of this
473 constitution and its bylaws.

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

476 **Chapter 9.**

477 **ROSTERED MINISTER**

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

482 **C9.02.** Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the
483 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of
484 Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for the congregation by the synodical
485 bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.

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

488 a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

- 489 1) preach the Word;
- 490 2) administer the sacraments;
- 491 3) conduct public worship;
- 492 4) provide pastoral care;
- 493 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
- 494 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its
495 communications and publications;
- 496 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; and
- 497 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for
498 justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.

499 b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:

- 500 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
- 501 2) relate to all schools and organizations of this congregation;
- 502 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
- 503 4) with the council, administer discipline and
- 504 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the ELCA
505 churchwide organization and of the Southeast Michigan Synod of the ELCA.

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

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

511 a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing
512 mutual relationship and commitment, which, except in the case of the death of the pastor,

513 shall be terminated only following consultation with the synodical bishop and for the
514 following reasons:

- 515 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
- 516 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, 30
517 days after the date on which it was submitted;
- 518 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local
519 conditions,
- 520 4) the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
- 521 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months on grounds of
522 doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty;
- 523 6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of Ministers of Word and
524 Sacrament of this church;
- 525 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
- 526 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
- 527 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.

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

- 531 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally in
532 together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
- 533 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital
534 of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of
535 the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such
536 conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.

537 c. In case of alleged physical or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the
538 bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the
539 pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop
540 of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the
541 Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament as
542 disabled. Upon removal of the disability and the restoration of the pastor to health, the
543 bishop of the synod shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in
544 the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

545 d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the
546 congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear
547 from all concerned persons shall be heard, after which the bishop together with the
548 committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to the
549 congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the
550 pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance
551 arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken
552 by the congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation

553 agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
554 e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee, the
555 congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation
556 with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting
557 where the bishop and the committee did not recommend terminations of the call or (b by
558 a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the
559 committee recommended termination of the call.

560 f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the
561 bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee
562 shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the
563 provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

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

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

573 **C9.08.** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to
574 a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of
575 all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another
576 congregation or employment in another ministry setting related to the Evangelical
577 Lutheran Church in America.

578

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

584 **C9.10.** *Reserved for future use.*

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

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

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

- 594 congregation;
- 595 b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod; and
- 596 c. shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter
597 of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of
598 the congregations.
- 599 **C9.13.** The pastor(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the
600 synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- 601 **C9.14.** The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and
602 shall remain the property of the congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall
603 attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his or
604 her hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in
605 another field of labor or the granting by the synod of retired status to the pastor.
- 606 **C9.15.** Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synodical bishop and
607 the concurrence of this congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body
608 with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a
609 relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation
610 under a contract between the congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the
611 synodical bishop and approved by the congregation.
- 612 **C9.16.** *Reserved for future use.*
- 613 **C9.17.** *Reserved for future use.*
- 614 **C9.18.** *Reserved for future use.*
- 615 **C9.19.** *Reserved for future use.*
- 616 **C9.20.** *Reserved for future use.*
- 617 **C9.21.** Authority to call a minister of Word and Service shall be in this congregation by
618 at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally
619 called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by the
620 Congregation Council to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop
621 of the synod.
- 622 **C9.22.** Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical
623 Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and
624 Service who has been recommended for this congregation by the synodical bishop may
625 be called as a deacon of this congregation.
- 626 **C9.23.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in
627 America, every minister of Word and Service shall:
- 628 a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;

629 b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and
630 innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to
631 the suffering places in God's world;

632 c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed,
633 calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world, witnessing to the realm of
634 God in the community, the nation, and abroad;

635 d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all
636 people;

637 e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and
638 accompaniment of others in God's mission;

639 f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and
640 resources;

641 g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;

642 h. Share knowledge of the ELCA and its wider ministry of the gospel and
643 advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and

644 i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the
645 gospel.

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

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

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

654 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call
655 for a specific term;

656 2) resignation of the deacon, which shall become effective, unless
657 otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;

658 3) inability to conduct the ministry of Word and Service effectively in
659 this congregation in view of local conditions;

- 660 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon;
- 661 5) suspension of the deacon through discipline for more than three
662 months;
- 663 6) resignation or removal of the deacon from the roster of Ministers
664 of Word and Service of this church;
- 665 7) termination of the relationship between this church and this
666 congregation;
- 667 8) dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish
668 arrangement; or
- 669 9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than
670 six months.

671 b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon
672 under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the office of minister of Word and
673 Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this
674 synod,

675 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such
676 conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one
677 layperson, or

678 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention
679 by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed
680 by at least one-third of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally
681 shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and
682 one layperson.

683 c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph
684 a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion
685 concerning the deacon's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the
686 committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is
687 declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of
688 Word and Service as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and the restoration of the
689 deacon to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the deacon to resume the ministry,
690 either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

691 d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective
692 functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee
693 shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with
694 the committee shall present their recommendations first to the deacon and then to this

695 congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the
696 deacon's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance
697 arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken
698 by this congregation and by the deacon, if appropriate. If the deacon and congregation
699 agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.

700 e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's
701 committee concerning the deacon's call, this congregation may dismiss the deacon only
702 at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds
703 vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did
704 not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members
705 present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the
706 call.

707 f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d.
708 above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the
709 committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance
710 with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

711 **C9.26.** The deacon shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a
712 former congregation before:

713 a. installation in another field of labor, or

714 b. the issuance of a certificate of dismissal or transfer.

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

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

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

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

731 **Chapter 10.**

732 **CONGREGATION MEETING**

733 **C10.01.** The Annual Meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the
734 bylaws.

735 **C10.02.** A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the pastor, the Congregation
736 Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of the
737 congregation upon the written request of twelve (12) voting members. The president of
738 the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synodical
739 bishop. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be
740 held and no other business shall be transacted.

741 **C10.03.** Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of
742 worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail or electronic means, to
743 all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting.

744 **C10.04** Any number of voting members of this congregation present at any Congregation
745 Meeting shall constitute a quorum.

746 **C10.05.** Voting by proxy ballot shall not be permitted. Voting by absentee ballot is
747 permitted as described in the bylaws.

748 **C10.06.** All actions by the congregation shall be by majority vote of those voting
749 members present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution.

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

752 **Chapter 11.**

753 **OFFICERS**

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

756 a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.

757 b. The officers shall be voting members of the congregation.

758 c. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council
759 and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.

760 d. If the Congregation Council elects its officers, the president, vice president, and
761 secretary shall be selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council. [If
762 the treasurer is not selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council,
763 the treasurer shall have voice but not vote at the meetings of the Congregation Council.]

764 **C11.02.** The Congregation Council shall elect the officers of this congregation who shall
765 each serve for one (1) year or until their respective successors are elected and qualified.
766 Their terms shall begin immediately after the Annual Meeting and shall last through the
767 Annual Meeting the following year.

768 **C11.03.** No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. No officer shall be eligible
769 to serve more than two consecutive years in the same office.

770 **Chapter 12.**

771 **CONGREGATION COUNCIL**

772 **C12.01.** The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of not more
773 than eight (8) lay members of the congregation. Any lay voting member of the
774 congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous
775 service permitted in that office. All called and ordained pastors of the congregation shall
776 be voting members of the Congregation Council. A member's place on the Congregation
777 Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this
778 congregation or b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregation
779 Council without cause. Consistent with the laws of the state of Michigan, the
780 congregation may adopt procedures as stated in the bylaws for the removal of a member
781 of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.

782 **C12.02.** The lay members of the Congregation Council shall be elected at a legally called
783 meeting of the congregation during the month of November. Their term of office shall be
784 for three (3) years, with the term of office beginning immediately after the Annual
785 Meeting and shall last through the Annual Meeting the following year. Newly elected
786 Congregation Council members shall be installed at worship on a Sunday prior to the date
787 they assume office. Council members elected but not installed shall be invited, but not
788 required, to attend all Congregation Council meetings in the time following their election
789 until they are installed.

790 **C12.03.** Should a lay member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant,
791 the Congregation Council shall fill the vacancy as instructed in the bylaws.

792 **C12.04.** The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities
793 of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done
794 in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical
795 Lutheran Church in America. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the
796 following:

- 797 a. To lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals
798 and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
- 799 b. To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness,
800 service, and support, including encouraging members and groups to discern and engage
801 in their particular calling in this congregation.
- 802 c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill
803 its functions and perform its mission.
- 804 d. To maintain supportive relationships with the rostered minister(s) and staff and help
805 them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.
- 806 e. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected
807 of all baptized persons.
- 808 f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill, and, as differences and
809 conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
- 810 g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.

- 811 h. To emphasize partnership with the synod and churchwide organization of the
812 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other
813 congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran.
- 814 i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by
815 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- 816 j. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.
- 817 **C12.05.** The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the financial and property
818 matters of this congregation.
- 819 a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of trustees of this congregation, and as
820 such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the management
821 of its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations
822 that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Michigan, except as otherwise
823 provided herein.
- 824 b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real
825 property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.
- 826 c. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to \$10,000 for items not
827 included in the budget.
- 828 d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this
829 congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following
830 its adoption, and may incur obligations of more than 5% in excess of the anticipated
831 receipts only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The Council shall supervise the
832 expenditure of funds in January each year and shall ensure that they are similar to or less
833 than the expenditure of funds planned for a month in the year immediately preceding.
- 834 e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation
835 are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all
836 obligations and to the regular forwarding of synodical benevolence monies to the
837 synodical treasurer.
- 838 f. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and
839 its total insurance program.
- 840 **C12.06.** The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution, its
841 bylaws, and the continuing resolutions are carried out.
- 842 **C12.07.** The Congregation Council shall ensure an annual review of the membership
843 roster is performed.
- 844 **C12.08.** The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the employment, supervision,
845 and evaluation of the staff and employees of this congregation in accordance with the
846 corporation's personnel policies.
- 847 **C12.09.** The Congregation Council shall ensure that an annual report to this congregation
848 is distributed prior to the Annual Meeting and approved in the Annual Meeting.
- 849 **C12.10.** *Reserved for future use.*
- 850 **C12.11.** The Congregation Council shall establish a meeting schedule to be published for

851 the Congregation. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president, and shall
852 be called by the president at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of
853 each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

854 **C12.12.** A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the voting
855 members of the Congregation Council.

856 **C12.13.** The Congregation Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote
857 communication, including electronically and by telephone conference and notice of all
858 meetings may be provided electronically.

859 **Chapter 13.**

860 **CONGREGATION COMMITTEES**

861 **C13.01.** The **Executive Committee** will consist of the Congregation Council President,
862 Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and the Pastor(s).

863 **C13.02** In lieu of a **Nominating Committee**, the current Congregation Council shall
864 solicit/encourage nominees from the congregation and ensure that we have sufficient
865 nominees for the elected positions prior to the Election Meeting.

866 **C13.03.** A **Financial Review Committee** of no less than two voting members shall be
867 elected by the Congregational Council. Financial Review Committee members shall not
868 be members of the Congregational Council. Term of office shall be three years, with one
869 member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for re-election.

870 **C13.04. Mutual Ministry Committee(s)** (in the absence of a mutual ministry committee,
871 the duties shall be fulfilled by the Executive Committee) shall be appointed jointly by the
872 President and rostered minister(s). Term of office shall be two years, with three members
873 to be appointed each successive year.

874 **C13.05.** When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a **Call Committee** of six voting members shall
875 be elected by the Congregational Council. Term of office will terminate upon installation
876 of the newly called pastor.

877 **C13.06.** Other committees and task forces of this congregation may be formed, as the
878 need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council.

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

881 **Chapter 14.**

882 **ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION**

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

889 **C14.02.** Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the
890 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after authorization has

891 been given by the Congregation Council and specified in a continuing resolution.

892 **Chapter 15.**

893 **DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION**

894 **C15.01.** Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith, willful or criminal conduct
895 grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, continual and intentional
896 interference with the ministry of the congregational, or willful and repeated harassment
897 or defamation of member(s) of the congregation is sufficient cause for discipline of a
898 member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation and repentance will be attempted
899 following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps, as necessary: a)
900 private counsel and admonition by the pastor(s), b) censure and admonition by the
901 pastor(s) in the presence of two or three witnesses, and c) written referral of the matter by
902 the Congregation Council to the vice president of the synod, who will refer it to a
903 consultation panel drawn from the Consultation Committee of the synod, and d) written
904 referral of the matter by the consultation panel to the Committee on Discipline of the
905 synod. If for any reason, the pastor(s) is (are) unable to administer the admonitions
906 required by a. and b. hereof, those steps may be performed by another pastor chosen by
907 the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council.

908 **C15.02.** The process for discipline of a member of the congregation shall be governed as
909 prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing
910 Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. If the counseling, censure,
911 and admonitions pursuant to C15.01 do not result in repentance and amendment of life,
912 charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing may be prepared
913 by the Congregation Council, signed, and submitted to the vice president of the synod.
914 The vice president shall select from the synod's Consultation Committee a panel of five
915 members (three lay persons and two ministers of Word and Sacrament). A copy of the
916 written charges shall be provided to the consultation panel and the accused member(s).
917 The consultation panel, after requesting a written reply to the charges from the accused
918 member(s), shall consider the matter and seek a resolution by means of investigation,
919 consultation, mediation, or whatever other means may seem appropriate. The panel's
920 efforts to reach a mutually agreeable resolution shall continue for no more than 45 days
921 after the matter is submitted to it.

922 **C15.03.** If the consultation panel fails to resolve the matter, that panel shall refer the case
923 in writing, including the written charges and the accused member's reply, to the
924 Committee on Discipline of the synod for a hearing. A copy of the panel's written
925 referral shall be delivered to the vice president of the synod, the Congregation Council,
926 and the accused member(s) at the same time it is sent to the Committee on Discipline of
927 the synod. The Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall then select six members
928 from the Committee on Discipline to decide the case, and shall appoint a member of the
929 Synod Council to preside as nonvoting chair. Those six members plus the nonvoting
930 chair comprise the discipline hearing panel for deciding the case. The Congregation
931 Council and the accused member(s) are the parties to the case.

932 **C15.04.** The discipline hearing panel shall commence and conduct the disciplinary
933 hearing in accordance with the provisions governing discipline of congregation members

934 prescribed in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical*
935 *Lutheran Church in America.*

936 **C15.05.** By the vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the discipline hearing panel
937 who are present and voting, one of the following disciplinary sanctions can be imposed:

938 a. suspension from the privileges of congregation membership for a
939 designated period of time;

940 b. suspension from the privileges of congregation membership until the
941 pastor and Congregation Council receive evidence, satisfactory to them, of repentance
942 and amendment of life;

943 c. termination of membership in the congregation; or

944 d. termination of membership in the congregation and exclusion from the
945 church property and from all congregation activities.

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

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

954 **C15.08.** *Reserved for future use.*

955 **C15.09.** *Reserved for future use.*

956 **C15.10.** Adjudication

957 **C15.11.** When there is disagreement among factions within this congregation on a
958 substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation
959 shall have access to the synodical bishop for consultation after informing the President of
960 the Congregation Council of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s),
961 the Consultation Committee of the synod shall consider the matter. If the Consultation
962 Committee of the synod shall fail to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to
963 the Synod Council, whose decision shall be final.

964 **Chapter 16.**

965 **AMENDMENTS**

966 **C16.01.** Unless provision C16.04. is applicable, those sections of this constitution that are
967 not required, in accord with the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical*
968 *Lutheran Church in America*, may be amended in the following manner. Amendments to
969 this constitution may be proposed by at least five (5) voting members or by the
970 Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council
971 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at its regular or special meeting
972 called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the members of the
973 proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the

974 meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state
975 law.

976 **C16.02.** A proposed amendment to this constitution, proposed under C16.01 shall:

977 a. be approved at a legally called meeting according to this constitution by a majority
978 vote of those voting members present and voting;

979 b. be ratified without change at the next Annual Meeting by a two-thirds vote of those
980 voting members present and voting; and

981 c. have the effective date included in the resolution.

982 **C16.03.** Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in
983 C16.01. and C16.02. shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The
984 synod shall notify the congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed
985 changes; the changes shall go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved
986 them. The amendment shall become effective within 120 days from the date of the receipt
987 of the notice by the synod unless the synod informs this congregation that the amendment
988 is in conflict with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in
989 America or the constitution of the Southeast Michigan Synod of the ELCA.

990 **C16.04.** This constitution may be amended to bring any section into conformity with a
991 section or sections, either required or not required, of the *Model Constitution for*
992 *Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as most recently amended
993 by the Churchwide Assembly. Such amendments may be approved by a majority vote of
994 those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of the
995 congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided that
996 the Congregation Council has submitted by mail or electronic means notice to the
997 congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council's
998 recommendations, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of at least two
999 (2) voting members of the congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such
1000 notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the congregation shall
1001 submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately
1002 following a vote of approval.

1003 Whenever the Model Constitution for Congregations is amended by the Churchwide
1004 Assembly, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a simple
1005 majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the congregation without presentation at a
1006 prior meeting of the congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted
1007 by mail notice to the congregation of such an amendment or amendments at least 30 days
1008 prior to the meeting. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the
1009 congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod, consistent with C16.03.

1010 **Chapter 17.**

1011 **BYLAWS**

1012 **C17.01.** This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this
1013 constitution.

1014 **C17.02.** Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this

1015 congregation with a quorum present by a two-thirds vote of those voting members
1016 present and voting.

1017 **C17.03.** Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided,
1018 however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation
1019 Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that
1020 purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify this congregation's members of the
1021 proposal with its recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation
1022 Meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state
1023 law.

1024 **C17.04.** Approved changes to the bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this
1025 congregation to the synod.

1026 **Chapter 18.**

1027 **CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

1028 **C18.01.** The congregation in a legally called meeting or the Congregation Council may
1029 enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the
1030 constitution or bylaws of this congregation.

1031 **C18.02.** Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a majority vote of a
1032 meeting of the congregation or a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the
1033 Congregation Council.

1034 **Chapter 19.**

1035 **INDEMNIFICATION**

1036 **C19.01.** Consistent with the provisions of the laws under which this congregation is
1037 incorporated, this congregation may adopt provisions providing indemnification for each
1038 person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a Congregation Council
1039 member, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any committee of this
1040 congregation, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or
1041 completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.