



**Constitution
Bylaws
Continuing
Resolutions**

Hope Lutheran Church in The Villages, Inc.

located in

The Villages of Lake, Sumter and Marion Counties

The Villages, Florida 32162

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The provisions herein marked by an asterisk [*] are those that are indicated as required in Evangelical Lutheran Church in America constitutional provision 9.25.b.

NOTES: Missing Numbers: You will find that some numbers are missing. This is intentional. In the style followed here, the number “.10.” and multiples thereof have been reserved for possible use as section headings in future editions. Therefore, in the sequence, for example, of Chapters 1, 9, and 12, these “.10.” numbers do not appear.

Bylaws are codified with three sets of numbers: the chapter number, the related constitutional provision number, and a two-digit number. Thus, one bylaw related to “Membership” would be codified C8.02.01.

Continuing Resolutions also are codified with three sets of numbers, except that the third set is preceded by a capital letter. Thus, a continuing resolution might be numbered C13. to designate the chapter; C13.07 to designate subject matter within the chapter; and the third set might be numbered A96 in the codification C13.07.A96 to indicate by the “A” that it is the first continuing resolution regarding that subject and by the “96” that it was adopted in 1996.

***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 **Hope Lutheran Church in The Villages, Inc.**

C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution, the accompanying bylaws, and continuing resolutions, the congregation of **Hope Lutheran Church in The Villages, Inc.** is hereinafter designated as **“this congregation”**.

C1.03. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Florida.

Chapter 2.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

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

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

- a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.
- b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

***C2.03.** This congregation accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.

***C2.04.** This congregation accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this congregation.

***C2.05.** This congregation accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

***C2.06.** This congregation accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.

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

Chapter 3.

NATURE OF THE CHURCH

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

***C3.02.** This church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian Unity throughout the world.

***C3.03.** The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

***C3.04.** This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in The Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God's mission in the world.

***C3.05.** The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or "this church") as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three expressions—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.

Chapter 4.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

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

- a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
- b. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
- c. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
- d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity 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 Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions. [Such descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions in the section on the Congregation Committees.]

***C4.05.** This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

C4.05.01. The Mission Statement for Hope Lutheran Church in The Villages, Inc. is as follows:

TO KNOW CHRIST AND TO MAKE CHRIST KNOWN

In Our Living Charter:

We Believe

It is the purpose of Hope Lutheran Church in The Villages, Inc. to engage as many persons as will share its confession of faith in a fellowship of worship, learning, witness and service so that the Word of God in Jesus Christ may become effective in their lives. Together and individually, we seek to fulfill our mission as a congregation and work in relationship with other Christian fellowships and social institutions at home and throughout the world.

In order to develop the individual ministries, we will remain flexible and open to meet the changing needs of the church, the community, and the world. It is our aim to draw on the talents of all persons to involve them in the life and mission of the church.

We Pledge

In our desire to unite with Hope Lutheran Church in The Villages, Inc. we pledge faithful support and active participation to ensure and further the goals of this congregation, which we may express, through our church and our life, the love and faith of Jesus Christ.

We, baptized members of Hope Lutheran Church in The Villages, Inc. responding in faith to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, desire to unite to preach the Word,

administer the sacraments, and carry out God's mission. In order to follow in the way of our Lord and reflect his gracious spirit, we hereby constitute ourselves as his church in The Villages and Summerfield, Florida. We will make decisions with the guidance of the Holy Spirit in accord with our Mission Statement and in accordance with the constitution of Hope Lutheran Church. We will be a purpose-driven church. We will share the power of love and shun the love of power. To this gracious purpose and spirit, we will seek leaders (pastors, administrators, council members, team leaders, small group leaders, and teachers) who will serve God as equals among equals, achieve consensus through prayer, consultation, and respectful communication, yet remain focused on our purpose as a congregation. We will move forward as God's people in mission. We realize that we will not always agree, yet we will be kind, considerate, and forgiving. This we do in the love of Jesus Christ and for the glory of God. We 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.

This charter shall be reviewed annually by this congregation, the Congregation Council, and the ministry teams. This charter will be examined for changes or affirmation once per year at a congregation meeting where such a consideration is a specific item listed on the meeting agenda.

***C4.06.** References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God's mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

Chapter 5.

POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

***C5.01.** The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.

***C5.02.** The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregation Meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.

***C5.03.** Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregation Council or other organizational units in this congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by 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 a minister of Word and Service;
- d. terminate the call of a minister of Word and Service in conformity with the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;

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

C5.03.A99. This congregation's fiscal year will coincide with the calendar year.

***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 Florida-Bahamas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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

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 Florida-Bahamas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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

***C6.03.** This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran

Church in America in which:

- a. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
- b. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the bishop of the synod. These special circumstances are limited either to calling a candidate approved for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or to contracting for pastoral services with a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion.
- d. This congregation agrees to consider Ministers of Word and Service for call to other staff positions in 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 outline in *C6.05.

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

- a. A resolution indicating the intent to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of the congregation by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting members present. Such meeting may be held no sooner than thirty (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 ten (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 ninety (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 ten (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 (2/3) 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 the ELCA, who shall report the termination to the Churchwide Assembly.
- g. This congregation shall abide by these covenants by and among the three expressions of this church:
 - 1) Congregations seeking to terminate their relationship with this church which fail or refuse to comply with each of the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., shall be required to receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.
 - 2) Congregations which had been members of the Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to receive synodical approval before terminating their membership in this church.
 - 3) Congregations established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05. to satisfy all financial obligations to this church and receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.

- h. If this congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds (2/3) 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 (6) months after that first meeting. If this 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 (6) 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 Florida-Bahamas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

C7.01.A06. In the event of the closure or move of Hope Lutheran Church, arrangements are to be made with a cemetery or other Lutheran Church with a memorial garden to transfer remains and records from the Hope Lutheran Church Memorial Garden. Money from the Hope Endowment Fund may be used for this purpose.

***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 two-thirds (2/3) 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 Florida-Bahamas Synod.

***C7.04.** If two-thirds (2/3) 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 *C.7.02 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 Florida-Bahamas 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 the 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 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 as well as the other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

- d. **Associate** members are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. These individuals have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights or other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.
- e. **Seasonal** members are voting members of other ELCA congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation, including exercising limited voting rights in this congregation. The Congregation Council may grant seasonal membership to such persons provided that this congregation is a member of a synod where the Synod Council has approved seasonal member voting on its territory. Such seasonal members shall have all the privileges and duties of voting members except that:
 - 1) they shall not be eligible for elected office in, or for membership on the Congregation Council or on a call committee of, this congregation;
 - 2) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the call or termination of call of any minister of this congregation;
 - 3) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the affiliation of this congregation with the ELCA;
 - 4) they shall not be eligible to serve as voting members from this congregation of the Synod Assembly or the Churchwide Assembly;
 - 5) they shall not, even if otherwise permitted by this congregation, vote by proxy or by absentee ballot; and
 - 6) they shall not, within any two calendar month period, exercise voting rights in this congregation and in the congregation where they remain voting members.

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

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

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

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

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

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

C8.05.01. Removal from the church roll shall be by Council action at the recommendation of the Lead Pastor and only after said members cease to fulfill the constitutional definition of voting membership, have been afforded adequate pastoral care, and/or have moved from the community without providing the church office with a forwarding address.

Chapter 9.

ROSTERED MINISTER

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

***C9.02.** Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament 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 minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
 - 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;
 - 3) conduct public worship;
 - 4) provide pastoral care;
 - 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the

Gospel;

- 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its communications and publications;
- 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;
and
- 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.

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

- 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
- 2) relate to all schools and organizations of this congregation;
- 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
- 4) with the council, administer discipline; and
- 5) endeavor to increase the support given by this congregation to the work of the ELCA churchwide organization and of the Florida-Bahamas 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.** The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and this congregation shall be as follows:

- a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by 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 thirty (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 (3) months;

- 6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline proceedings 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 condition personally together with a committee of two (2) rostered ministers and one (1) 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 (1/3) of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two (2) rostered ministers and one (1) 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. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament as 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 (2/3) vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the

committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

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

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

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

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

***C9.09.** When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the Congregation Council, 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. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

***C9.13.** The pastor(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least ninety (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.

C9.15. Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synodical bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between the congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synodical bishop and approved by the congregation.

***C9.21.** Authority to call a minister of Word and Service shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds (2/3) vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by this congregation to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.

***C9.22.** Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended for this congregation by the synodical bishop may be called as a deacon of this congregation.

***C9.23.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
- b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
- c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world, witnessing to the realm of God in the community, the nation, and abroad;
- d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
- e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
- f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;

- g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
- h. Share knowledge of the ELCA and its wider ministry of the gospel and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
- i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

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

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

- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a deacon, 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 deacon, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than thirty (30) days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the ministry of Word and Service effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon;
 - 5) suspension of the deacon through discipline for more than three (3) months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the deacon from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six (6) months.
- b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the office of minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,

- 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two (2) rostered ministers and one layperson, or
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third (1/3) of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two (2) rostered ministers and one (1) 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 deacon's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and the restoration of the deacon to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the deacon to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
 - d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the deacon and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the deacon's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by this congregation and by the deacon, if appropriate. If the deacon and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
 - e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the deacon's call, this congregation may dismiss the deacon only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
 - f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.
- *C9.26.** The deacon shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:
- a. installation in another field of labor, or

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 10.

CONGREGATION MEETING

C10.01. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.

C10.01.01. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held on the first Sunday of February.

C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the Lead Pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of this congregation upon the written request of at least ten percent (1 0 %) of the voting members. The president of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synodical bishop. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.

C10.03. Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two (2) consecutive Saturdays and Sundays and by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, to all voting members at least ten (10) days in advance of the date of the meeting.

C10.04. A quorum for all Congregational Meetings shall be five (5%) percent of the voting members based on the church roll at the end of the prior fiscal year, but never less than fifty (50) voting members.

C10.05. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.

C10.06. All actions approved by this congregation shall be by majority vote of those voting members present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution or by state law.

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

Chapter 11.

OFFICERS

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

- a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
- b. The officers shall be voting members of this congregation.
- c. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.
- d. If a vacancy occurs in the office of president, the vice president shall assume the office of president and serve until the next annual meeting at which time a successor shall be elected to complete the president's term of office. If a vacancy occurs in the office of vice president, the Congregation Council shall appoint a person from the remaining council members to fill the office of vice president and serve until the next annual meeting at which time a successor shall be elected to complete the vice president's term of office.
- e. If a vacancy occurs in the offices of secretary or treasurer, the Congregation Council shall elect by majority vote, a voting member of this congregation, including present council members, to serve in that office until the next annual meeting at which time a successor shall be elected to complete the officer's term of office. The person elected must not have completed his/her term limits on the Congregation Council.

C11.01.01. The duties of the officers of this congregation and Congregation Council are as follows:

- a. **President** – the president shall preside at all meetings of the Council and this congregation, shall assist the pastor(s) in setting the tone and direction for this congregation's ministry, and shall provide an agenda for all meetings of the Council and this congregation.
- b. **Vice president** – the vice president shall preside in the absence of the president and lead ad hoc ministry areas or team meetings as needed.

- c. **Secretary** – the secretary shall be responsible for the minutes at all meetings of the Congregation Council and this congregation. The Secretary will provide copies of the minutes to members of the Congregation Council, and will make copies available to members of this congregation upon request. The secretary will also initiate certain correspondence on behalf of the Congregation Council and this congregation and lead ad hoc ministry areas as needed.
- d. **Treasurer** – the treasurer shall ensure that this congregation's financial obligations are paid in a timely manner while adhering to an approved spending plan and shall provide monthly and annual reports to Council members and for congregation review. The treasurer shall also lead ad hoc ministry areas as needed.

C11.02. This congregation shall elect the officers of the Congregation.

C11.03. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time.

C11.04. A member nominated for President shall have served on the Congregation Council prior to his/her nomination.

C11.05. A member may serve as president to fulfill an unexpired term and may serve as president for (1) elected three (3) year term. Upon completion of the three (3) year elected term as president, a member cannot serve another term as president or vice president.

Chapter 12.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the called pastor(s), the officers of this congregation, and five (5) at large members of this congregation. Any voting member of this congregation except seasonal members may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member:

- a. Ceases to be a voting member of this congregation; or
- b. Is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause.
- c. Consistent with the laws of the state of Florida, this congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council.

C12.01.01. Members serving on the Congregation Council should:

- a. Possess appropriate spiritual gifts, according to individual spiritual gift inventories, especially in leadership, wisdom, and discernment.
- b. Be faithful in weekly worship and at other worship services of this congregation.

- c. Have a strong understanding of biblical stewardship and faithfully act on that understanding.
- d. Study God's Word on a regular basis and pray daily for the ministry and people of this congregation.

C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council, except the called pastor(s), shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of this congregation. Their terms of office shall be three (3) years or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the Annual Meeting at which they are elected. Newly elected Council members shall be installed at the Annual Meeting at which they are elected.

C12.02.01. The Congregation Council shall appoint a nominating team annually at its October meeting. The term for members of the nominating team shall be one year. Members of the nominating team are not eligible for consecutive reappointment. The nominating team shall consist of three (3) voting members of the congregation. Excluding the Congregation Council president, one shall be a council member whose term of office will not expire or who is not eligible for re-election to the Congregation Council. Two (2) shall be voting members of the congregation who are not on the Congregation Council.

- a. The Congregation Council shall ensure the names of all nominating team members are listed in the weekly newsletter from the time they are appointed until the 1st weekend in December.
- b. The nominating team shall nominate at least one person for each open position on the Congregation Council. They shall submit a list of these nominees to the Congregation Council at least 10 days before the regularly scheduled December Council meeting.
- c. The Congregation Council shall ensure that a list of open positions for election is communicated to the congregation beginning November 1st.

C12.02.02 Nominations and Elections for Congregation Council members shall be as follows:

- a. Except as provided for in section g, election of Congregation Council members shall be by ballot.
- b. The ballot shall contain the names of persons nominated for each position. The nominees for each position shall be ordered by random draw. Write-ins are not permitted.
- c. All At-Large positions regardless of term length will appear in a single group on the ballot. Nominations shall be to this group of positions as a whole.
- d. Nominations may only be made in the following ways:
 - 1) By the nominating team,

- 2) By a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Congregation Council,
- 3) By a petition signed by at least one hundred (100) voting members of this congregation. This petition must be submitted to the Council Secretary no later than 21 days prior to the Annual Meeting.

Nominations from the floor are not permitted.

- e. Election of Officers shall be by majority vote.
- f. Elections of At Large members of the Congregation Council shall be by plurality vote with the nominees receiving the highest number of votes being elected. Those elected will be given terms in accord with the size of their vote. The person receiving the highest number of votes shall be given the longest term. The person with the second highest number of votes shall be given the second longest term. The assignment shall proceed in a like manner until all the positions are filled.
- g. Should there be only one nominee for a position, election shall be by acclamation with the Chair declaring the nominee elected.

C12.02.03. The cycle of elections shall be staggered so that three (3) positions are elected each year. The President, Vice President and one At Large member shall be elected in the first year. The Secretary and two (2) At Large members shall be elected the second year. The Treasurer and two (2) At Large members shall be elected in the third year. Excluding past presidents, any council member of this congregation past or present may serve on the Congregation Council after February 1, 2020 pursuant to C12.02.04.

C.12.02.04. Except as specified in C11.05, no member may serve on the Congregation Council for more than two elected three (3) year terms unless elected to fill out an unexpired term. If elected to fill out an unexpired term, members are permitted to serve two (2) additional elected three (3) year terms in addition to the unexpired term.

C12.03. Should an at large member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor to serve until the next annual meeting at which time an election will take place for filling the balance of the unexpired term. The member elected by the Congregation Council will be installed at a regular scheduled worship service.

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

- a. To lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
- b. To involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.

- c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
- d. To maintain supportive relationships with the rostered minister(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling, appointment, or employment.
- e. To be examples of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
- f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, to foster mutual understanding.
- g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness and/or absence of the called pastor(s).
- h. To emphasize partnership with the synod and churchwide units of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- j. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

C12.04.01. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for:

- a. Spiritual development in individuals and congregational life.
- b. Articulation of this congregation's mission.
- c. A vision and direction for ministry for all members and ministry teams.
- d. Stewardship.
- e. Long-range planning.
- f. Church finances.
- g. Outreach and evangelism.

C12.05. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.

- a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of directors of this congregation, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the management of its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be

subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Florida, except as otherwise provided herein.

- b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property, unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of this congregation.
- c. The Congregation Council may enter into obligations for items not included in the budget with a sum total not to exceed seven (7%) percent of the anticipated current and benevolent receipts. Any further expenditure(s) must be approved at a legally called Congregation Meeting.
- d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget of income and expenditures for adoption by this congregation and shall supervise the expenditures of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and it may incur obligations of more than seven percent (7%) in excess of the anticipated current and benevolent receipts only after approval by a congregation meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in partnership with the synod and churchwide organization.
- e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations, including pastor(s) and administrative salaries and benefits, and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies to the synodical treasurer.
- f. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.
- g. The Congregation Council shall ensure that an annual review of the congregation's financial records, procedures, and controls is performed by an outside independent accountant.

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

C12.07. The Congregation Council shall direct that an annual review of the membership roster be performed, and the results delivered to the Congregation Council by the January council meeting.

C12.08. In consultation with, and with the approval of the Congregation Council, the Lead Pastor shall be responsible for the employment or termination of commissioned or contracted pastors and any other pastoral positions. The employment or termination of all non-pastoral staff, as well as the supervision of all staff, shall be the responsibility of the Lead Pastor and/or his/her designee. Nothing in this provision shall be deemed to affect the congregation's responsibility for the call, terms of call, or termination of call of any rostered leaders who are on a roster of this church.

C12.09. The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive written report to this congregation at the annual meeting.

C12.09.01. The Congregation Council is responsible for making available to the congregation the minutes of all Congregation Council, Congregation Council Executive Committee, and congregation meetings.

C12.11. The Congregation Council shall meet regularly as stipulated in the bylaws. Special meetings may be called by the Lead Pastor or the president and shall be called by the president at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

C12.11.01. The Congregation Council shall meet monthly. Any member of this congregation shall be afforded the privilege of attending Congregation Council meetings and may, by vote of the Congregation Council, be afforded voice privileges also. However, the Congregation Council shall reserve the right, under specific circumstances it deems appropriate, to meet in executive session.

C12.11.02. The Congregation Council shall provide liaison with ministry teams and other congregation organizations to foster a shared vision for this congregation's ministry.

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

C12.13. The Congregation 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.

Chapter 13.

CONGREGATION COMMITTEES/MINISTRY TEAMS

C13.01. The officers of this congregation and the Lead Pastor shall constitute the Congregation Council **Executive Committee**. A quorum for the transaction of business by the Executive Committee shall consist of a majority of the officers, including the Lead Pastor or Interim pastor, except when the Lead Pastor or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to the agenda for a particular Executive Committee meeting. That agenda shall be the only business considered at that meeting.

C13.01.01. Except as stipulated in the succeeding paragraphs of section C13.07.B99. of the continuing resolutions, the vision for ministry for all ministry teams shall be established through the assistance of the Congregation Council, along with such instructions as in its judgment are in the best interests of this congregation. All actions of the ministry teams shall be subject to evaluation by the Congregation Council.

C13.02. A **Nominating Team** shall be appointed annually by the Congregation Council as prescribed in the bylaws.

C13.04. A Mutual Ministry Team for each rostered leader shall be comprised of three (3) to six (6) voting members of this congregation appointed jointly by the president and each rostered leader for his or her individual Mutual Ministry Team

C13.05. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a **Call Committee** of seven (7) voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly-called pastor.

C13.06. Other congregation committees and ministry teams may be formed as the need arises by decision of the Congregation Council.

C13.07. Duties of congregation committees and ministry teams shall be specified in the continuing resolutions.

C13.07.A99. All ministry areas of this congregation shall function under the following guidelines:

- a. Ministry teams will function in accordance with this congregation's Mission Statement and this congregation and council's expressed vision for this congregational ministry.
- b. The Congregation Council is responsible for appointing the respective team leaders.
- c. Ministry teams shall report to the Congregation Council and the Lead Pastor. A Congregation Council liaison shall work with each team leader.
- d. The Congregation Council, in coordination with the Lead Pastor, shall review and re-approve the current team leaders after the annual congregation meeting. The Congregation Council and the Lead Pastor shall approve all new team leaders.
- e. Any new area of ministry that supports this congregation's Mission Statement shall be approved by the Lead Pastor and the Congregation Council.
- f. Ministry team members shall include persons on this congregation's role of voting, seasonal and associate members. Other persons may be included as team members after consultation with the Lead Pastor and the Congregation Council.

C13.07.B99. The ministry areas of this congregation:

a. Mission and Outreach ministry area communicates God's love through evangelism. Ministry teams are responsible for:

- 1) calling persons into active involvement in the mission of Christ's Church, including its global dimension;
- 2) seeking out unchurched persons in our community to offer them the joy and support of our Christian fellowship and to call them into a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ;
- 3) engaging in dialogue with those members who drift away from active participation in Christian fellowship in order that their concerns may be heard;
- 4) providing awareness of global church and community with a vision for the call to participate; and
- 5) encouraging the study of social conditions in the local community to bring Christian truth to bear upon critical problems through thoughtful Christian discussion of facts and issues with a vision for the call to participate.

b. Shepherding and Visiting ministry area demonstrates God's love through service. Ministry teams are responsible for:

- 1) extending Christian compassion;
- 2) facilitating communication and helpfulness to persons of all ages in need, including programs for assisting families of this congregation during times of need;
- 3) enlisting help from as many individual members and organizations of this congregation as possible;
- 4) encouraging and equipping members to continue in their witness to Jesus Christ in their daily life experiences and relationships; and
- 5) involving those who respond to our invitation by integrating new members into the mainstream of congregation life and mission in such a way that their spiritual gifts may be actualized, and their faith nurtured.

c. Worship and Music ministry area celebrates God's presence through Worship. Ministry teams are responsible for:

- 1) promoting the individual prayer life of the membership;
- 2) planning the worship life of the congregation;
- 3) assisting the Congregation Council in providing strong musical leadership for services of worship that are conducted regularly and in accordance with Lutheran tradition;

- 4) encouraging the recruitment, training, and scheduling of the various worship leaders and assistants;
- 5) arranging for the care of all worship items and musical instruments; and
- 6) enhancing worship by coordinating the supportive activities prior to, and during services. These activities include, but are not limited to, banner and altar preparation, audio and visual provision, ushers, readers, communion assistants, choir anthems, and special music. Providing these ministries enables the Pastor(s) to focus on shepherding the congregation, and the congregation to focus on worship.

d. Groupings, Education, Recreation, and Program ministry area educates God's people through discipleship and incorporates God's family into our fellowship. Ministry teams are responsible for:

- 1) conducting and promoting a church school or similar program of regular learning for all ages and all other education programs of the congregation, especially in the area of Bible study and personal spiritual development;
- 2) encouraging the use of teaching materials that are in accord with the confession of faith of the congregation;
- 3) the development of small growth groups and their associated leadership;
- 4) fostering programs that help the youth of the congregation claim their Christian heritage and live out their faith in daily life;
- 5) providing programs to enhance interpersonal relationships and congregation fellowship; and
- 6) responding to needs generated within our own congregation life.

e. Administration, Support, and Finance ministry area includes the administration, communication and support for the programs and mission of this congregation. The Congregation Council is responsible for initiating the annual independent review of the fiscal accounts, procedure and records as well as any other accounts of this congregation or its auxiliaries and this congregation's financial investments and insurance programs on property and staff.

f. Maintenance and Landscaping ministry area supports the programs and mission of this congregation. Ministry teams are responsible for caring for the environment, church building, signage, parking areas and landscaped areas.

C13.08. The Lead Pastor of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees, ministry teams, and boards of this congregation. The president of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees, ministry teams, and boards

of the congregation, except the Nominating Committee. All *ex officio* members shall have voice and vote.

C13.08.A20 PREAMBLE

In thanksgiving to God for the gifts of life and all its blessings, the gift of faith and hope through Jesus Christ, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the gift of love and nurture through the church where we have shared faith and fellowship, we now respond with the decision to establish the **St. John-Hope Endowment Fund** ("FUND"), consisting of and combining the St. John Endowment Fund described in the St. John Endowment Fund Agreement dated April 4, 2018 ("Agreement") and the present Hope Endowment Fund.

PURPOSE

1. The FUND shall be owned by Hope Lutheran Church in The Villages, Inc., ("Hope Lutheran Church") and held in a special reserve fund in perpetuity for the continued ministry of Hope Lutheran Church, and any successor or successors in interest, and shall be invested and reinvested as a special reserve fund of Hope Lutheran Church in such securities as may be lawful investments. This FUND shall be administered by the Hope Endowment Committee ("Committee").
2. Only the incomeⁱ/earnings of the endowment shall be used for the religious, charitable, benevolent and educational purposes of Hope Lutheran Church, including preventative maintenance, ongoing restoration, and major emergency repairs of its physical properties, and may not be used for any other ordinary operating expenses of Hope Lutheran Church.
3. The FUND will not knowingly invest the endowment into any entity which derives a preponderance of its revenues from business operations which contradict basic Christian values.
4. Earnings may be distributed at least annually, or otherwise as determined by the Hope Lutheran Church Congregation Council after consultation with the Committee.

C13.08.B20 HOPE ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE ("Committee")

The Committee shall be comprised of seven voting members of Hope Lutheran Church. Five members shall be appointed by the Congregation Council. The term of office will be three years with the members serving staggered terms. Each year two members shall be appointed (with one appointed every third year). Members are eligible for only two consecutive terms. In addition to the five appointed members, the Pastor or designated representative and the Treasurer will also be members. All seven members will have an equal vote in matters concerning the FUND. The Treasurer shall maintain the account records of the FUND, received from the investment manager. The purpose of the Committee shall be to administer the guidelines of this FUND.

Duties:

1. To determine the amount of an annual distribution.
2. To select and monitor a professional investment manager such as the ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust – Fund A, the ELCA Mission Investment Fund, a state bank, a federal bank, a FINRA registered broker-dealer, trust company, or a foundation. The Committee will use professional, outside advice to manage

investments. The investment objective is to provide long term growth so the annual distribution will keep pace with inflation, i.e., the annual distribution will maintain its purchasing power

3. The Committee shall report at least quarterly to the Congregation Council on any and all activity within the FUND, current balance, additions, and distributions. Annual accounting and a report of ministries supported through the FUND shall be distributed to the Congregation at its annual meeting.
4. Members of the Committee will not be held liable for any investment losses but will be held liable for his or her own willful misconduct.
5. Members of the Committee will not be able to provide services to the Fund for a fee.
6. Members of the Committee will not be able to engage in transactions of the Fund in which he or she has a direct or indirect financial interest.
7. The President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer of Hope's Congregation Council and/or the Business Administrator will serve as required signers for transactions.
8. To encourage gifts to the FUND through education and promotion of the FUND.
9. To receive and celebrate gifts given for ministry through the FUND and to maintain and display a permanent book of remembrance of donors to the FUND. The Committee has the discretion to decline acceptance of a gift if deemed to be in the best interests of the Fund and the congregation.

C13.08.C20 DISTRIBUTIONS FROM THE FUND

Distribution shall take into consideration, but not be boundⁱⁱ by the following:

- a. Up to ¼ for capital improvements, debt reduction or building programs of Hope Lutheran Church.
- b. Up to ¼ for scholarships or grants to members of Hope Lutheran Church for the purpose of attending college, seminary, nursing, or medical school; for church related camping or leadership conferences; or such other training which enables members of Hope Lutheran Church to grow in Christian faith and service to God's people.
- c. At least ¼ for outreach into the community including, but not limited to, grants to Florida-Bahamas Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America supported colleges, seminaries, social services agencies, institutions and agencies to which Hope Lutheran Church relates; to mission congregations of "Pinelands Conference" of the Florida-Bahamas Synod, ELCA; and to special programs designed for those persons in the Hope Lutheran Church area who are in spiritual and/or economic need.
- d. At least ¼ for missions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at home and overseas, including but not limited to, grants to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for new congregational development in North America, professional

leadership training, educational ministries, global mission, ecumenism, evangelism, social ministries and capital financing.

- e. Any distribution specified herein may, but shall not be required to, take into consideration Hope Lutheran Church's worship community and facilities in Summerfield, Florida.
- f. This FUND shall be administered in accordance with all terms, conditions, and provisions of this Continuing Resolution, Constitution, Bylaws, and other Continuing Resolutions, as in effect and amended from time to time, unless in direct conflict with the Agreement referenced in the Preamble of this Continuing Resolution.
- g. All or any part of the principal of the endowment may be expended for any church purpose in the nature of extreme emergency, other than ordinary operating expenses, provided that such emergency use shall first be approved by the affirmative vote of not less than two thirds of the Committee, and shall also be approved by the affirmative vote of three fourths of Hope Lutheran Church's Congregation Council and shall be approved by a three-fourths super majority of voting members present at a properly called special congregation meeting for that purpose.

C13.08.D20 DISPOSITION OF FUND

In the event our congregation ceases to exist either through merger or dissolution, disposition or transfer of the FUND shall be at the discretion of the Congregation's Council in conformity with the Congregation Constitution and Bylaws, and in consultation with the Bishop of our synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to which this congregation belongs.

Chapter 14.

ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THIS CONGREGATION

C14.01. All organizations within this congregation shall exist to aid 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 oversight and direction of the Congregation Council. This congregation at its annual meeting shall receive reports concerning their membership, work, and finances.

C14.01.01. The Congregation Council shall require any and all committees, ministry teams, task forces, and organizations within this congregation or sponsored by this congregation to submit an annual written report. This will provide this congregation with information for an Annual Report and enable the Congregation Council to review the ministries of said groups to ensure that they are in overall accord with this congregation's Mission Statement.

C14.02. Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council.

Chapter 15.

DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

***C15.01** Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith, willful or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, continual and intentional interference with the ministry of 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 ministers of Word and Sacrament). 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 Congregation Council of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the Consultation Committee of the synod shall consider the matter. If the Consultation Committee of the synod shall fail to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to the Synod Council, whose decision shall be final.

Chapter 16.

AMENDMENTS

***C16.01.** Unless provision *C16.04. is applicable, those sections of this constitution that are not required, in accord with the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be amended in the following manner. Amendments may be proposed by at least ten percent (10%) of the voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the congregation's members of the proposal together with the Council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

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

- a. be approved at a legally called Congregation Meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting;
- b. be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting; and
- c. have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.

***C16.03.** Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in ***C16.01.** and ***C16.02.** shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The synod shall notify 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.

***C16.04.** This constitution may be amended to bring any section into conformity with a section or sections, either required or not required, of the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as most recently amended by the Churchwide Assembly. Such amendments may be approved by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of the congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided that the Congregation 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 thirty (30) days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of at least two (2) 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 17.

BYLAWS

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

***C17.02.** Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.

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

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

Chapter 18.

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

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

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

Chapter 19.

INDEMNIFICATION

***C19.01.** Consistent with the provisions of the laws under which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt provisions providing indemnification for each person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a Congregation Council member, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any 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.

Chapter 20.

PARISH AUTHORIZATION

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

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

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

***C20.03.** One congregation of a parish may issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Service or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended by the synodical bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a

two-thirds vote at a congregational meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

***C20.04.** Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with the pastor as provided in †S14.18.d. of the synodical constitution of the synod named in *C6.01. In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

***C20.05.** Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with a minister of Word and Service as provided in †S14.43.d. of the synodical constitution of the synod named in *C6.01. In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

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

Congregation Ministry Organizational Circle of Hope Lutheran Church

Areas of Ministry



ⁱ Realized gains are considered income.

ⁱⁱ Clause “not be bound” allows for exceptions such as scholarships to Conference members, individuals connected to the congregation, etc.