

**CONSTITUTION**  
**SAINT PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, INC.**  
**WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT**  
*(Amended Jan. 30, 2011)*

\* *Indicates provisions required by the ELCA.*

**\*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 Saint Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Inc., Wethersfield, Connecticut.
- C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the Saint Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church congregation is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."
- C1.03. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Connecticut.

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

### **Chapter 3.**

#### **NATURE OF THE CHURCH**

- \*C3.01. All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.
- \*C3.02. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. This church, 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.

## **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 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 groups and shall review their actions.
- \*C4.05. This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs. Such a mission statement shall be adopted by the congregation at one of its duly called meetings.

## **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 or terminate the call of associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers in conformity with the applicable policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
  - d. approve the annual budget;
  - e. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
  - f. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
  - g. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
  - h. elect its officers, Congregation Council, boards, and committees, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws and continuing resolutions; and
  - i. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.
- \*C5.04. This congregation shall choose from among its voting members laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by the congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by this synod.

## **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 New England Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the

discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

- \*C6.02. This congregation accepts the Confession of Faith and agrees to the Purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and shall act in accordance with them.
- \*C6.03. This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which:
  - a. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
  - b. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the bishop of the synod.
  - d. This congregation agrees to consider associates in ministry for appointment 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 or 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 to discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - d. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in C6.05.
- \*C6.05. This congregation may terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the following procedure:

- a. A resolution indicating the desire of this congregation to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present.
  - b. The secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the synodical bishop and shall mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of the congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted.
  - c. The bishop of the synod shall consult with this congregation during a period of at least 90 days.
  - d. If this congregation, after consultation, still desires to terminate its relationship, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present, at which meeting the bishop of the synod or an authorized representative shall be present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.
  - e. A certified copy of the resolution to terminate its relationship shall be sent to the synodical bishop, at which time the relationship between this congregation and ELCA shall be terminated.
  - f. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the synodical bishop to the secretary of this church and published in the periodical of this church.
  - g. If this congregation was a member of the Lutheran Church in America it shall be required, in addition to the provision in C6.05., to receive synodical approval before terminating its membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- \*C6.06. If this congregation is considering relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.

## **Chapter 7.**

### **PROPERTY OWNERSHIP**

- \*C7.01. If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the New England Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- \*C7.02. If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline, title to property

shall continue to reside in this congregation.

- \*C7.03. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a regularly called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to transfer to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation. Before this congregation takes action to transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the New England Synod.
- \*C7.04. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a regularly called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body, title property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with the congregation by the established synodical process, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of the congregation. If the Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to continue as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

## **Chapter 8.**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

- \*C8.01. Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of the congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.
- \*C8.02. Members shall be classified as follows:
  - a. Baptized members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.
  - b. Confirmed members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.
  - c. Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members shall have communed and made a contribution of record during the current or



preceding year.

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

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

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

- a. death;
- b. resignation;
- c. transfer or release;
- d. disciplinary action by the Congregation Council; or
- e. removal from the roll due to inactivity as defined in the bylaws.

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

## **Chapter 9.**

### **THE PASTOR**

\*C9.01. Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting regularly

called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a 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 clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or who has been recommended for it by the synodical bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.

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

a. Every ordained minister shall:

1) preach the Word;

2) administer the sacraments;

3) conduct public worship;

4) provide pastoral care; and

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

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

1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;

2) supervise all schools and organizations of this congregation;

3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council; and

4) with the council, administer discipline.

c. Every pastor shall:

1) strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;

2) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;

3) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications; and

4) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and of the New England 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.

\*C9.05. a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which, except in the case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated only following consultation with the synodical bishop and for the following reasons:

- 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term of years;
- 2) resignation of the pastor;
- 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor;
- 4) the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
- 5) disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty; or
- 6) dissolution of the congregation.

b. In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity of the pastor or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office, it shall be the responsibility of the bishop of the synod, when such difficulties are personally known or have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council, or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, to investigate such conditions personally in company with a committee of two ordained ministers and one layperson.

c. In case of alleged physical or mental incapacity competent medical testimony shall be obtained. When such disability is evident, the bishop of the synod with the advice of the committee shall declare the pastorate vacant. Upon the restoration of a disabled pastor to health, the bishop of the synod shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another field of labor.

d. In the case of alleged local difficulties which imperil the effective functioning of the congregation, all concerned persons shall be heard, after which the bishop of the synod together with the committee described in \*C9.05.b. shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor and the congregation. If they agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action shall be taken by the synod. If either

party fails to assent, the congregation may dismiss the pastor by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present at a regularly called meeting after consultation with the bishop.

- e. The foregoing procedure shall never be invoked when questions of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty are involved, all such cases being treated as disciplinary matters.
  - f. If in the course of the proceedings, it should become apparent that the pastoral office cannot be conducted effectively in the congregation being served by the ordained minister due to local conditions, the bishop of the synod may temporarily suspend the pastor from service in the congregation without prejudice and with pay provided through a joint churchwide/synod fund and with housing provided by the congregation.
- \*C9.06. At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor may be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.
  - \*C9.07. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties 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 ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.
  - \*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.
  - \*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 of years. 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 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 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.
- C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called at the written request of twenty-five voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.
- C10.03. Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or paid, sent to the last known address of such members shall be sufficient.
- C10.04. Twenty-five voting members shall constitute a quorum.
- C10.05. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- C10.06. All actions by the congregation shall be by majority vote except as otherwise provided in this constitution.
- C10.07. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

## **Chapter 11.**

### **OFFICERS**

- C11.01. The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice-president, secretary, financial secretary and treasurer.
- a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
  - b. The officers shall be voting members of the congregation.
  - c. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council. The president, vice-president and secretary shall be voting members of the Congregation Council. The treasurer and financial secretary may be voting members of the Congregation Council.
- C11.02. The Congregation Council shall elect its officers and they shall be the officers of the congregation. The officers shall be elected at the first regularly scheduled meeting of the Congregation Council after the annual meeting of the congregation and shall serve for a period of one year thereafter or until their successors are elected.
- C11.03. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. No officer, other than the Treasurer and the Financial Secretary, shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive Congregation Council terms.

## **Chapter 12.**

### **CONGREGATION COUNCIL**

- C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall be elected by the congregation and shall consist of the pastor(s), and not more than ten members of the congregation (of which three members shall be the President, Vice President and Secretary). Any voting member of the congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member (a) resigns, (b) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or (c) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause.
- C12.02. Except for the Pastor(s), the members of the Congregation Council shall be elected for a term of three years or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are

elected.

- C12.03. In the event of a vacancy on the Congregation Council as provided in C12.01 above, the Congregation Council may elect a member to fill the vacant position until the next annual meeting of the congregation at which time the congregation will elect a member to complete the vacancy term.
- C12.04. The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:
- a. To lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
  - b. To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
  - c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
  - d. To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.
  - e. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
  - f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill, and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
  - g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
  - h. To emphasize partnership with the synod and churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- 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 Connecticut , 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 the congregation.
  - c. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to \$5,000 for items not included in the budget.
  - d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations of more than five percent in excess of the anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in 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 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.
- C12.06. The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution, its bylaws, and the continuing resolutions are carried out.
- C12.07. The Congregation Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.
- C12.08. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the salaried lay workers of this congregation.
- C12.09. The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.
- C12.11. The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president, and shall be called at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting



shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

C12.12. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the pastor or interim pastor, except when the pastor or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting, which shall be the only business considered at that meeting.

C12.13 It is the goal of this congregation that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Congregation Council, committees, and organizational units of this congregation be youth and young adults. The Congregation Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this Congregation, the term "youth" means a voting member of this congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term "young adult" means a voting member of this congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.  
(This becomes part of the constitution if passed without amendment a 2<sup>nd</sup> time in Jan. 2012.)

### **Chapter 13.**

#### **CONGREGATION COMMITTEES**

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

C13.02. An Audit Committee of two voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. The term of office shall be three years, with the initial terms being three years for one member and two years for one member and elections held as the expiration of such terms require or a vacancy occurs. Members shall be eligible for reelection.

C13.03. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of six voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor.

C13.04. Other committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council.

C13.05. Duties of committees of this congregation shall be specified in the bylaws.

### **Chapter 14.**

## **ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION**

- C14.01. All organizations within this congregation shall exist to aid it in ministering to the members of this congregation and to all persons who can be reached with the Gospel of Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of this congregation's life, the organizations are subject to its oversight and direction. This congregation at its meeting shall determine their policies, guide their activities, and receive reports concerning their membership, work, and finances.
- C14.02. Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council.

## **Chapter 15.**

### **DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION**

- \*C15.01. Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps: a) private admonition by the pastor, b) admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, and c) citation to appear before the Congregation Council. If for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by a. and b. hereof, the president (if not the pastor) or vice president shall administer such admonitions.
- \*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. A member charged with the offense shall appear before the Congregation Council after having received a written notice, at least 10 days prior to the meeting, specifying the exact charges that have been made against the member.
- \*C15.03. Members of the Congregation Council who participate in the preparation of the written charges or who present evidence or testimony in the hearing before the Congregation Council are disqualified from voting upon the question of the guilt of the accused member. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Congregation Council who are not disqualified but who are present and voting, and renewed admonition prove ineffectual, the council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:

- a. censure before the council or congregation;
- b. suspension from membership for a definite period of time; or
- c. exclusion from membership in this congregation.

Disciplinary actions b. and c. shall be delivered to the member in writing.

- \*C15.04. The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Congregation Council shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Synod Council. Such right may not be abridged and the decision of the Synod Council shall be final.
- \*C15.05. Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Congregation Council upon receipt of a) evidence that injustice has been done or b) evidence of repentance and amendment.
- \*C15.06. Adjudication
- \*C15.07. 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.**

### **BYLAWS**

- \*C16.01. This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.
- \*C16.02. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting.
- \*C16.03. Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose and that the Congregation Council notify the members of the proposal with its recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting.

- \*C16.04. Approved changes to the bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

## **Chapter 17.**

### **AMENDMENTS**

- \*C17.01. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least 20 percent 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 its regular or special meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the members of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.
- \*C17.02. A proposed amendment to this constitution shall:
  - a. be approved at a legally called meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;
  - b. be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting; and
  - c. have the effective date included in the resolution. Such an effective date must be stated in relation to the requirements of \*C17.03. to allow time for synodical review of the amendment. and noted in the constitution.
- \*C17.03. Any amendments to this constitution shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The amendment shall become effective within 120 days from the date of the receipt of the notice by the synod unless the synod informs this congregation that the amendment is in conflict with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or the constitution of the New England Synod of the ELCA.
- \*C17.04. Whenever the Model Constitution for Congregations is amended by the Churchwide Assembly, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a simple majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail notice to the congregation of such an amendment or amendments at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod, consistent with \*C17.03.

## **Chapter 18.**

### **CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

- \*C18.01. The Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions which describe the function of the various committees or organizations of this congregation.
- \*C18.02. Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by 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.

## **BY-LAWS**

### **Annual Meeting**

1. An annual meeting of the congregation shall be held no earlier than the tenth nor later than the 31st of January, the exact date to be determined by the Congregation Council.

### **Congregation Council**

2. A nominating committee shall be appointed by the Congregation Council to select candidates for the Congregation Council pursuant to the requirements of Chapter 12 of the Constitution. The committee shall be composed of three members of the continuing council.
3. Candidates receiving the majority of the vote are elected. Voting shall be done at the appointed annual meeting. If there are more nominees for Congregation Council than offices to be filled, those candidates receiving a majority vote shall be elected. If, after two successive ballots, there are offices still vacant, the nominee(s) with the lesser amount of votes shall be dropped from the ballot so that there remains one more candidate for office than the number of offices to be filled. In subsequent ballots the candidate(s) who receive(s) the majority vote is/are elected. If after two more successive ballots there are offices yet to be filled, the required number of candidate(s) with the most votes shall be elected.
4. Congregation Council members are expected to be active in the Church. A Congregation Council member shall be required to be actively involved in at least one committee or organization of the church.
5. The Congregation Council shall meet regularly on the fourth Tuesday of each month. At its option in cases of conflict of schedule, the Congregation Council may agree to hold its regular monthly meeting on another date within the calendar month. Any such change in regular schedule shall be an agenda item to be voted upon at the previous month's meeting, to apply to the following month's council meeting only.
6. When it is impractical to call a special meeting of the Congregation Council, and when circumstances necessitate its usage, a vote by telephone or email correspondence may be conducted under the following conditions and procedural guidelines. This procedure shall be restricted to a single item of business.
  - a. Except in the case of extraordinary circumstances where time is of the essence, the issue must have been discussed previously at a meeting of the Congregation Council.
  - b. The council president or the pastor shall conduct any and all voting by telephone or email correspondence.

- c. All council members must be called or sent an email correspondence, and at least a quorum of members must be contacted personally by telephone, or have communicated their vote by email correspondence, for a vote to take place.
  - d. Non-council officers must be contacted personally, for advisement, if the motion pertains to their position.
  - e. The issue shall be stated in the form of a motion, the same as at an actual meeting.
  - f. The motion must require immediate council action as determined by the council president.
  - g. If three or more contacted members prefer a meeting, or vote against the motion, addressing the issue by telephone or email correspondence becomes null and void, with the motion to be decided at a future meeting of the Congregation Council.
  - h. A record shall be kept of the members participating in the vote by telephone or email correspondence and their vote, for inclusion in the minutes of the next council meeting.
  - i. A defeated motion may be amended, and the entire procedure repeated according to the above guidelines.
  - j. When communication is by email, and when a vote either for or against the motion or an acknowledgement of receipt of the motion has not been returned by a council member within 48 hours of the sending of the initial email correspondence, a reasonable effort will be made to contact that council member by phone or other means by either the Council President or Pastor.
7. When appropriate to the completion of the Congregation Council's duties, action may be taken pursuant to written resolution signed by all of the Members of the Congregation Council. Such unanimous written consent shall have the same authority as if the action were approved at a Congregation Council meeting.
  8. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of the Congregation Council.
  9. OFFICERS
    - a. Title, Election and Duties. The Congregation Council shall elect a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and, if authorized, a Financial Secretary. The duties of each officer shall be the duties prescribed by these By-laws and those prescribed by the Congregation Council.
    - b. President. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Congregation and the Congregation Council and shall oversee, in conjunction with the Pastor, the activities of the Congregation subject to the supervision of the Congregation Council.
    - c. Vice President. The Vice President shall assist the President in the performance of his/her duties and shall carry out the duties of the President whenever the President is unable to perform them. The Vice President shall also be the chairperson of the Mutual Ministry Committee.

- d. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall keep the fiscal accounts of the Congregation, including an account of all moneys received or paid out. At least as often as every four (4) months, the Treasurer shall prepare or have prepared a balance sheet showing the financial condition of the Congregation. The Treasurer shall also prepare monthly revenue and expense statements for the Congregation Council and the Congregation. The Treasurer may write checks and pay obligations on behalf of the congregation. The Treasurer shall have custody or oversee custody of stocks, securities or other investment instruments owned by the Congregation, and shall, at the direction and approval of the Parish Administration Committee, the Executive Committee or the Congregation Council, have the power to endorse them for transfer on behalf of the congregation.
- e. Secretary. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the Congregation and of the Congregation Council and shall give notice of these meetings when notice is required by the Constitution or these By-laws. The Secretary shall keep all books, records and papers of the Congregation except those kept by the Treasurer, Financial Secretary or another person authorized to keep them by the Congregation Council.
- f. Financial Secretary. The Financial Secretary shall keep account of the receipts of the Congregation. The Financial Secretary may appoint individuals to count the Congregation receipts on a weekly basis. Both the Financial Secretary and any counter appointed shall deposit all moneys and valuables in the name of and to the credit of the Congregation, in the banks and depositories designated by the Congregation Council. The Financial Secretary and counters may endorse checks, for deposit only, on behalf of the congregation.
- g. Check signing authority. Authority to sign checks will reside with the Treasurer, President and Vice President of the congregation by virtue of their office. Checks will normally be signed by the Treasurer. Checks may be signed by the President or Vice President in the absence of the Treasurer. When the President or Vice President sign checks, it should be with the approval and knowledge of the Treasurer. Checks may be signed without the knowledge or explicit approval of the Treasurer only in rare instances when not to sign a check would prove disruptive to the mission of St. Paul's Church, and then only with the consensus of two other officers of the congregation.

### **Committees**

- 10. As soon as possible following the elections in January, the Congregation Council shall appoint and/or reaffirm standing committees as the local and wider concerns of the congregation shall require. Each such committee shall be composed of one or more members of the Congregation Council and, in addition, other voting members of the congregation. Although appointed by and responsible to the Congregation Council, these committees shall be recognized as representative of



the interest of, and performing essential services for the congregation as a whole. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.

11. The Congregation Council President and the Pastor, in consultation with committee members, shall appoint or elect with Congregation Council approval, a chairperson or chairpersons for each standing committee. Appointments shall be for one year. Chairpersons may serve more than one term in succession. Chairpersons do not have to be Congregation Council members.
12. Except as stipulated in the following paragraphs, the duties of all committees shall be assigned by the Congregation Council, along with such instructions as in its judgment are in the best interests of the congregation. All actions of the committees shall be subject to review by the council. All committees shall provide written reports for the January congregational meeting and monthly to the council.

#### **Parish Life Committee**

13. There shall be a Parish Life Committee which shall be responsible for the areas of Worship and Music, Christian Education, Youth Ministry, Christian Fellowship, and the Nurture and Care of its members. It will also be responsible for Making Christ Known through Evangelism.. This committee will be divided into as many subcommittees as is necessary to carry out the responsibilities of this committee and the mission of this congregation.
  - a. The Worship and Music Committee shall assist the Congregation Council in seeing that the services of God's house are conducted regularly and in accordance with the liturgical tradition of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, that competent ushers, lectors, assisting ministers, communion assistants, acolytes and altar guild members are recruited and properly trained, and that hymnals and other devotional materials are provided and properly cared for. This committee shall supervise and strive to advance the welfare and effective service of the choirs and congregation. It shall arrange for the care of paraments, vestments and musical instruments and, in consultation with the pastor, the organist and the choir director, it shall furnish music supplies appropriate for use in the worship of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - b. The Education Committee shall oversee the conduct and promotion of the Sunday Church School and the Christian Education activities of all organizations within the congregation. It shall encourage the use of teaching and worship materials published or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and seek to introduce church publications and books of family devotion into the homes of the congregation. One of the primary aims shall be to bring the call to the ministry of the Gospel and to other full-time church vocations to the attention of qualified persons of the congregation.

- c. The Youth Committee shall oversee all ministries and programs that involve the youth of this congregation, in particular those in the Jr. and Sr. High.. The Youth Committee will be committed to ensuring that its youth ministry programming is faithful to the teachings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and contains an appropriate balance of programs that seek to build faith, foster Christian fellowship, promote Christian care and concern for other members of this congregation, and advocate social outreach to those most vulnerable in our society. The Youth Committee will further seek to involve the youth of this congregation in all aspects of congregational life.
- d. The Fellowship Committee will seek to develop fellowship opportunities for the members of this congregation that are consistent with the mission of this congregation.
- e. The Caring Ministries Committee will seek to develop ministries that bring Christian care and support to those members who have particular needs. It will have a special concern for those who are homebound, in nursing homes, hospitalized, or recovering from hospitalization. And special concern, too, will be extended to those experiencing loss or bereavement.
- f. The Evangelism Committee will be responsible for encouraging and equipping the members of this congregation in their calling to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to the whole world. This committee will also be responsible for programs or initiatives that attempt to make the ministry of this congregation known to its wider community.

These subcommittees may determine in consultation with the Parish Life Committee the number and frequency of meetings.

Parish Life Committee will meet as a whole committee as often as is necessary, but no less than twice a year.

#### **Parish Administration Committee**

14. There shall be a Parish Administration Committee which shall see to the proper maintenance and protection of all property, stewardship and finances. The treasurer shall be a member ex-officio. The committee shall see to the proper maintenance and protection of all property of the congregation and shall take care that the same is kept in good repair.

This committee shall prepare a draft budget for the succeeding year, including the congregation's share in the support of the wider ministry carried on its behalf by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and in the New England Synod, and shall submit such draft budget to the Congregation Council for its action and later presentation to the congregational meeting. The committee shall exercise

oversight for all financial affairs of the congregation to make sure that they are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies to the synodical treasurer. It shall, subject to approval of the Congregation Council, be responsible for the congregation's investments and its total insurance program. It shall also provide for annual audits of the accounts of the treasurer and the financial secretary as well as of the accounts of other organizations within the congregation.

The committee shall evoke and prompt expression of Christian faith in daily living; to teach the Christian use of money; to diffuse knowledge of the congregation's local, national and world-wide ministries; and to lead all its work. This committee shall also be responsible for all congregational efforts which lead to informed and grateful giving.

### **Outreach Committee**

15. There shall be an Outreach Committee which shall be responsible for social ministry and areas of interaction of Saint Paul's with the wider community.

The committee shall extend Christian compassion and hopefulness to the ill, the aged, the orphaned, the underprivileged, the imprisoned and, in general, to persons of all ages in need of aid in body and soul. It shall strive to enlist in these efforts as many as possible of the individual members and organizations of the congregation. The committee shall further have the duty to study social conditions, primarily in the local community, in order to bring the healing light of Christian faith to bear upon critical problems through thoughtful discussion of facts and issues. It shall bring before the Congregation Council proposals for action issuing from such study and discussion.

### **Mutual Ministry Committee**

16. There shall be a Mutual Ministry Committee. The committee will be made up of four members: the Pastor, the Congregation Council Vice President, plus two additional members within the congregation. The appointments must be mutually agreeable and further meet with Congregation Council approval. Appointments will be for one year and members may succeed themselves for future terms. The committee is responsible, through the council, to the congregation. It will serve as a sounding board of congregational opinion. The committee may act as advisor and counselor to the pastor. The committee does not have the power to take action on behalf or make commitments for the council.

### **Removal of Inactive Members**

17. Inactive members may be removed from the roll of members by the Congregation Council. The procedure will take place only when there is a pastor under call to

serve the congregation or with approval of the Bishop of the synod and after such members have been counseled about the matter, if possible. Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the church has a continuing pastoral concern.

**Youth and Young Adult Representation**

18 It is the goal of this congregation that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Congregation Council, committees, and organizational units of this congregation be youth and young adults. The Congregation Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this congregation, the term "youth" means a voting member of this congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term "young adult" means a voting member of this congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.

(This by-law shall remain in effect until such time as C12.13 has been ratified by action of the whole congregation.)

Updated on 1/30/11