

Introduction to the proposed constitution and bylaws

Following is the proposed constitution and bylaws that the council is recommending to the congregation for approval at the 2025 annual meeting (January 26, 2025).

Some notes:

- The most recent constitution from St. Peder's that the Synod has on file is from 1989. There was a draft of a new constitution completed in 2020. That draft was never filed with the Synod, but the updates for the proposed constitution are based on that draft.
- Any of the content in black font is required language based on the ELCA model constitution. These sections are marked with an asterisk.
- The **Bold** black font is new required language.
- The Plain black font is required language, but language that we had in previous constitutions.
- The **Blue** font is optional language. Whenever possible, the optional language is consistent with the language in the model constitution. Much of the optional language is carried over from the previous constitution.
- Under direction of the Synod, the bylaws are incorporated directly into the constitution.
- The bylaws are in Chapters 10 - 13. They are codified with three sets of numbers, each followed by a period: the chapter number (preceded by an "C"), the related constitutional provision number, and a two-digit bylaw number. (This is consistent with the ELCA constitution.) These bylaws are consistent with our current practice.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

**For
ST. PEDER'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Minneapolis, Minnesota**

*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 St. Peder's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Minneapolis, Minnesota ("St. Peder's").

C1.02 For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the St. Peder's congregation is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."

C1.11. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

*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 and 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 the 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 in 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, justice, **and equity** for all people working, for peace and reconciliation among the nations, **caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations**, and standing in **solidarity** with the poor and oppressed, 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 giving 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 this congregation's ministry and the ministry of the other expressions 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 church wide 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.

C4.05 This congregation may shall adopt **and periodically review** a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

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

*Chapter 5

POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

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

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

C5.03 Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregation Council or other organizational units in this congregation’s governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by this congregation. This 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 President and Congregation Council and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution and bylaws: and
- k) Terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.

C5.04. This congregation shall elect 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 this congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the Minneapolis Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

*Chapter 6.

CHURCH AFFILIATION

C6.01 This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the Minneapolis Area 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 this 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 is 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 **or in accordance with provision 9.23. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.**
- d) **The Minneapolis Area Synod takes charge and control of the property of this congregation to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of the synod pursuant to †S13.24. of the synod constitution. This congregation shall have the right to appeal the decision to the next Synod Assembly.**
- e) **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 intent to terminate its relationship must be adopted at two legally called and conducted special meetings of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at each meeting. **The first such meeting may be held no sooner than 30 days after written notice of the meeting is received by the bishop of the synod, during which time this 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 the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are voting members of this congregation, they shall have voice but not vote at the first meeting.**
- b) **Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon at the first meeting, the secretary of this 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 send copies of the resolution and certification to voting members of this congregation.**
- c) **If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the first meeting, the bishop of the synod and this congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph a. above, during a period of at least 90 days after receipt by the bishop of the attestation and certification as specified in paragraph b. above.**
- d) **If this congregation, after such consultation, is still considering termination of its relationship with this church, 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 second meeting shall be sent to all voting members and to the bishop at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Unless the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are voting members of this congregation, they shall have voice but not vote at the second meeting.**
- e) **Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the second special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall send copies of the resolution and certification to the voting members of the congregation. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the second meeting, the relationship between the congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to Synod Council approval as required by paragraphs f. and g. below.**
- f) **Unless this notification to the bishop also certifies that this congregation has voted to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, this congregation shall be deemed an independent or non-Lutheran church, in which case C7.04. shall apply.**
- 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 synod 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 vote of voting members present at this congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above or fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at this congregation's second meeting as specified in paragraph d. above, another attempt to consider termination of relationship with this church must follow all requirements of C6.05. and may begin no sooner than six months after the meeting at which the two-thirds vote was not achieved.**

C6.06 If this congregation considers relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod **in which it is territorially locate 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 taken.

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 Minneapolis Area 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 **or pursuant to 9.23. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

C7.03. If 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 Minneapolis Area Synod.

C7.04. If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or related to a non-Lutheran church body **and have followed the process for termination of relationship in C6.05.**, title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with the congregation by the process established by the synod, 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. **In neither case does title to this congregation's property transfer to the synod.**

C7.05. Notwithstanding the provisions of C7.02. and C7.03. 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 Minneapolis Area Synod—reconvey and transfer all right, title, and interest in the property to the synod.**

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 revived by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.
- c) Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record **to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of this congregation as well as the other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws. They shall not have voted as a seasonal member of another congregation of this church in the previous two calendar months.**
- 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 congregations of this church 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 this church;**
 - 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 annual 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 Chapter 15 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; 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 active roll of members shall remain persons for whom the church has a continuing pastoral concern.

*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 Council 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 this 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 available channels of effective communication;**
- 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, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.**

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 Congregation Council, administer discipline;**
- 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and of the Minneapolis Area Synod; and**
- 6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.**

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 the pastor's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:

- 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;**
- 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;**
- 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions;**
- 4) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the pastor;**
- 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;**
- 6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament 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 months.
- b) When allegations of disability or 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 this synod,
- 1) the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two 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 of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c) In case of alleged disability or 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 this 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 with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, 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 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 pastor and then to this 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 this 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, this congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds 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 this 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 the 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.**

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.

C9.10 *Reserved for future use*

C9.11 With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this the congregation may depart from C9.05a. 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 this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of C9.05.a.

C9.12. The pastor of this congregation:

- a) shall keep accurate records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from this 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 ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

C9.14. The records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of this congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in the secretary's hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another call or approval of a request for change in roster status.

C9.15. Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synod 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 this congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synod bishop and approved by this congregation.

C9.16. – C9.20. Reserved for future use

C9.21. Authority to call a deacon 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 the Congregation Council 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 synod 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, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;
- 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 this church 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 this congregation shall be as follows:

- a) The call of this congregation, when accepted by a deacon, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by the deacon's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of 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 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) inability to conduct the office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the deacon;
 - 5) suspension of the deacon through discipline for more than three 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 months.
- b) When allegations of disability or 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, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two 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 of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c) In case of alleged disability or 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 with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, 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 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. This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former deacon before calling a successor. A deacon 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.

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.

C9.30. Reserved for future use

C9.31. The deacon(s) shall submit a report of 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. This congregation shall have at least one regular meeting per year. The regular meeting(s) of the congregation shall be held at the time(s) specified in the bylaws. The bylaws shall designate one regular meeting per year as the annual meeting of this congregation.

C10.01.01. The annual meeting of the congregation shall be held on the fourth Sunday in January.

C10.01.02. The annual budget meeting of the congregation shall be held the Sunday prior to Thanksgiving (either the third Sunday or fourth Sunday in November). The congregation shall approve the annual budget for the following calendar year.

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 by the President of this congregation upon written request of ten percent (10%) of the voting members. The President of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synod 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 consecutive Sundays and by mail or electronic means, to all households with voting members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting.

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 approved by this congregation shall be by majority vote of those voting members present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution.

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

C10.08. This congregation may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. Notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

C10.09. "Ex officio" as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited.

Chapter 11

OFFICERS

C11.01. The officers of this congregation shall be 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 the congregation.
- c) Officers of the Congregation Council shall also serve as officers of the congregation.

C11.01.01. The President shall be the chair of the congregation and of the Congregation Council. In the event of the President's inability to perform the duties of the office, the Vice-president shall serve in the President's stead.

C11.01.02. The Secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation and of the Congregation Council. The minutes shall be preserved permanently in the congregation's archives.

C11.01.03. The Treasurer shall oversee the financial records of the congregation. The Treasurer shall prepare a proposed annual budget for presentation to the Congregation Council in time for them to review and amend it prior to the annual budget meeting. The Treasurer shall provide a report of all accounts and a summary of

transactions to the Congregation Council monthly and to the congregation at its annual meeting.

C11.01.04. The President and Treasurer shall have authority to sign checks on behalf of the church. The President shall determine which one of the other officers shall also have authority to sign.

C11.02. The congregation shall elect its President. The President shall serve a term of two years or until their successor is elected. The President may be elected for a second consecutive term. The term shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

The remaining officers shall be elected by the Congregation Council at the first meeting following the annual meeting and shall serve for one year or until their successor is elected.

C11.02.01. When the office of President is to be filled, the election for President of the congregation shall take place before the election for Congregation Council.

C11.02.02. If the President is running unopposed, the President may be elected by a voice vote. If more than one person is running for the position, the President shall be elected by a written ballot.

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

Chapter 12

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor, the President, and not more than twelve (12) members of the congregation. Any voting members 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) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause. This congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.

C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor and the President (see C11.02) shall be elected by the congregation. Congregation Council members shall serve for staggered three (3) years or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve not more than two full terms consecutively. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

C12.02.01. In addition to the nominees presented by the nominating committee, nominations shall be called for from the floor.

C12.02.02. If candidates for the Congregation Council are running unopposed, the congregation may elect Congregation Council members by a voice vote. If the number of people running for open positions is greater than the number of positions, the Congregation Council members shall be elected by a written ballot.

C12.03. Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council may elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next annual meeting. At the next annual meeting the congregation shall elect a successor to complete the unexpired portion of the three (3) year term of the member's place has been declared vacant.

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 and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling, appointment, 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 organizations 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.

C12.05. 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 managing 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 Minnesota, 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 contracts of up to 5% of the annual budget 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 more than 5% of the annual budget 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 mission support monies to the synod.
- 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 the constitution and its bylaws are carried out.

C12.07. *Reserved for future use*

C12.08. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the appointment of the salaried lay workers of this congregation. The Pastor shall be responsible for the supervision of the salaried lay workers.

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

C12.10 *Reserved for future use*

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 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.

C12.12. 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.

C12.13. The Congregation Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Chapter 13.

CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEES

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

C13.02. A Nominating Committee of a minimum of three voting members of this congregation, two of whom shall be outgoing members of the Congregation Council, shall be appointed by the Congregation Council in November of each year to nominate candidates for the election at the next annual meeting.

C13.03. *Reserved for future use*

C13.04. When pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of six voting members shall be appointed by the Congregation Council. Term of office will terminate at installation of the newly-called pastor.

C13.05. Other congregational committees may be formed as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council.

C13.06. Duties of congregational committees shall be specified in the bylaws.

C13.06.01. Youth and Family Ministry Committee. This committee shall nurture faith for youth, adults, and families by providing programs such as Sunday school, confirmation, book/Bible studies, library, intergenerational events, mentoring, service projects, and Mission trips. One of the primary aims of the committee shall be to follow the traditions of the ELCA with intergenerational faith formation programs.

C13.06.02. Christian Life Committee. This committee may strive to engage all members of the congregation by making and growing relationships through nurture and hospitality. It shall strive to motivate congregation members to reach out and participate in congregational and community events. The committee shall utilize the Shepherding Groups to identify activities and events that need volunteers and promote these opportunities to the congregation.

C13.06.03. Property and Energy Committee. This committee shall see to the proper maintenance and protection of all property of the congregation, including but not limited to the building and grounds of the church and parsonage. It shall take care that all church property be kept in good repair and report to the Church Council when repairs and maintenance are needed. The committee shall also promote energy efficiency and recycling.

C13.06.04. Finance and Investment Committee. This committee shall be responsible for the congregation's investments and periodically report to the Church Council on the performance of the investments. This committee shall exercise oversight of all the financial affairs of the congregation to make sure that they are conducted efficiently. It shall also provide for annual audits of the accounts of the church. The committee will also be responsible for the total insurance program of the congregation.

C13.06.05. Music and Worship Committee. This committee shall ensure that worship music is provided in accordance with the liturgies of the ELCA and ensure the regular offering of Word and Sacrament on Sundays and other occasions. It shall oversee ushers and worship volunteers and ensure hymnals and other devotional materials, and resources for shut-ins are provided and properly cared for. The committee shall supervise and strive to advance the welfare and effective service of the choirs of the congregation. It shall ensure that paraments, vestments, flowers, and worship enhancements are appropriate to the season of the Church year.

C13.06.06. Social Outreach Committee. This committee will actively extend Christian compassion and helpfulness in the form of time, talent, and financial resources outside the walls of St. Peder's. This may include the ill, the imprisoned, and in general, persons of all ages in need of aid in body and spirit.

C13.06.07. Personnel Committee. This committee will serve in an advisory capacity to the Church Council, assisting the Council in decisions related to St. Peder's staff, creating a framework for effectively managing staff, conducting performance reviews, and striving to facilitate fairness and a healthy work environment for pastors, staff, and volunteers.

Chapter 14.

ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

C14.01. *Reserved for future use*

C14.02. Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in

*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 this congregation, or willful and repeated harassment or defamation of member(s) of this 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 this 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 laypersons and two rostered ministers). 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 this congregation; or
- d) termination of membership in this 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 Congregation Council meeting.

C15.07. No member of this 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 between or among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the President or Vice-president of this congregation of their intent to do so. The synod

bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the dispute. If the issue relates directly to the pastor, the bishop may begin the process in †S14.18.d. In all other matters, if the bishop's consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the Council deems necessary. The Synod Council's 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 twenty-five 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 this congregation's members of the proposal together with the Congregation 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 any legally called meeting of this congregation by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting; and
- b) be ratified without change at the next regular meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.

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 this 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 this congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of this congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, notice to this congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the Congregation Council's recommendations, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of at least two (2) voting members of this congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following the congregation's 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 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 Congregation Council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the congregation meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

C16.04. Adopted or amended changes to the bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

***Chapter 18.**

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

C18.01. This 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 this congregation or a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Congregation Council.

C18.03. Adopted or amended continuing resolutions shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

***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.