BE IT RESOLVED that the congregation adopt the following changes mandated by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in 2019 and apply appropriate edits to all governing documents:

AMENDMENTS TO THE *MODEL CONSTITUTION FOR CONGREGATIONS* AS APPROVED BY THE 2019 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

Prepared by the Office of the Secretary
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
August 2019

Additions are underlined. Deletions are ~~struck through~~ in the text.

In coordination with the following amendments, the 2019 Churchwide Assembly authorized the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- strike "synodical" and replace with "synod"
- strike "the congregation" and replace with "this congregation" where appropriate
- make editorial changes so that the *Model Constitution for Congregations* follows the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and the *Constitution for Synods*.

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

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

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

CHAPTER 5: POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

***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~~ this congregation. ~~The~~ This congregation is authorized to:

***C5.04.** This congregation shall ~~choose~~ 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 ~~the~~ this congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the *(insert name of 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 *(insert name of synod)* ~~Synod~~ of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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

d. This congregation agrees to consider ministers of Word and Service for call to other staff positions in ~~the~~ this congregation according to the procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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

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 *(insert name of 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.

~~d~~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 ~~a~~ two legally called and conducted special meetings of ~~the~~ this congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at each meeting. ~~Such~~ 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 ~~the~~ 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 he or she is a voting member of ~~the~~ this congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the first meeting.

b. ~~The~~ Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon at the first meeting, the secretary of ~~the~~ 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 ~~mail a copy~~ send copies of the resolution and certification to voting members of ~~the~~ this congregation. ~~This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted.~~

c. ~~The~~ 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 ~~the~~ this congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph a. above, during a period of at least 90 days after receipt by the ~~synod of the notice~~ bishop of the attestation and certification as specified in paragraph b. above.

d. If ~~the~~ this congregation, after such consultation, ~~still seeks to terminate its relationship~~ 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 ~~mailed~~ sent to all voting members and to the bishop at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Unless he or she is a voting member of ~~the~~ this congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the second meeting.

e. ~~A copy of the resolution, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, shall be sent to the bishop within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted, at which time the relationship between the congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to paragraph g. below.~~
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 ~~the~~ this congregation has voted ~~by a two-thirds vote~~ to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, ~~the~~ this congregation ~~will be conclusively presumed to be~~ shall be deemed an independent or non-Lutheran church, in which case *C7.04. shall apply.

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

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

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~~ical~~ 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 ~~the~~ this congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above~~, another special meeting to consider termination of relationship with this church may be called no sooner than six months after that first meeting. If this congregation~~ or fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at ~~the~~ 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 ~~that second~~ 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 located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is ~~effected~~ taken.

CHAPTER 7: PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

***C7.01.** If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the *(insert name of synod)* ~~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 ~~two-thirds of~~ the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to transfer to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation, provided the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05. has been followed. Before this congregation takes action to transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the *(insert name of synod)* ~~Synod~~.

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

[The following provision becomes required.]

***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:

CHAPTER 8: MEMBERSHIP

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

c. ***Voting*** members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of ~~the~~ 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.

e. ***Seasonal*** members are voting members of other ~~ELCA~~ 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:

3) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the affiliation of this congregation with ~~the ELCA~~ this church;

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

d. disciplinary action in accordance with ~~ELCA constitutional provision 20.41. and the accompanying bylaws~~ Chapter 20 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;

CHAPTER 9: ROSTERED MINISTER

***C9.02.** Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for ~~the~~ this congregation by the synod~~ical~~ 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:
   6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through ~~distribution of its communications and publications~~ available channels of effective communication;
b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
   4) with the council, administer discipline; ~~and~~
   5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the ~~ELCA~~ churchwide organization and of the *(insert name of synod)* ~~Synod of the ELCA~~; 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*.

***C9.05.** 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~~ical~~ bishop, for the following reasons:
   3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in ~~the~~ this congregation in view of local conditions;
   7) termination of the relationship between this church and ~~the~~ this congregation;
   8) dissolution of ~~the~~ this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
   9) suspension of ~~the~~ this congregation through discipline for more than six months.
b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
   2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of ~~the~~ 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 physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of 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 ~~as disabled~~ with disability status. Upon removal of the disability and the restoration of the pastor to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
   d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of ~~the~~ 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 ~~the~~ 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 ~~the~~ 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, ~~the~~ 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.

***C9.07.** During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in ~~the~~ 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 Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any rostered minister providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.

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

***C9.11.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, ~~the~~ this congregation may depart from *C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of ~~the~~ 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 parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from ~~the~~ this congregation;

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

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

***C9.21.** Authority to call a ~~minister of Word and Service~~ 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 [this congregation][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~~ical~~ 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:

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

***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~~ical~~ bishop, for the following reasons:

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

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

~~a. installation in another field of labor, or~~

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

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.

CHAPTER 10: CONGREGATION MEETING

C10.01. ~~The [annual][semi-annual][quarterly] meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.~~

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. Consistent with the laws of the State of _____, the bylaws shall designate one regular meeting per year as the annual meeting of this congregation.

C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the [senior] pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of ~~the~~ this congregation upon the written request of _____ [number][percent] of the voting members. The president of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synod~~ical~~ 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.

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

C10.08. 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. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

CHAPTER 11: OFFICERS

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

b. The officers shall be voting members of ~~the~~ this congregation.

C11.02. The [congregation][Congregation Council] shall elect its officers and they shall be the officers of ~~the~~ this congregation. The officers shall be elected by written ballot and shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

or

The officers shall be elected by the [congregation] [Congregation Council] by written ballot and shall serve for one year. The term shall begin on _____ (month and day) and end on _____ (month and day).

or

The pastor shall be *ex officio* president of ~~the~~ this congregation and the Congregation Council. The [congregation][Congregation Council] shall elect by written ballot the other officers of ~~the~~ this congregation who shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

or

The pastor shall be *ex officio* president of ~~the~~ this congregation and the Congregation Council. The [congregation][Congregation Council] shall elect by written ballot the other officers of ~~the~~ this congregation who shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin on _____ (month and day) and end on _____ (month and day).

CHAPTER 12: CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s)[, the deacon(s),] [~~,~~ the officers of ~~the~~ this congregation,] and [_____ members] [not more than _____ nor fewer than _____ members] of ~~the~~ this congregation, at least one of whom shall be a youth and at least one of

whom shall be a young adult. Any voting member of ~~the~~ this 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. Consistent with the laws of the state in which this congregation is incorporated, ~~the~~ 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(s) [and deacon(s)] shall be elected by written ballot to serve for _____ 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.

or

The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) [and deacon(s)] shall be elected at a legally called meeting of ~~the~~ this congregation during the month of _____. Their term of office shall be for _____ years, with the term of office beginning on _____ (month and day) and ending on _____ (month and day). Newly elected Congregation Council members shall be installed at worship ~~the Sunday prior to the date they assume office~~ at a time appointed by the Congregation Council.

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:

h. To emphasize ~~partnership with~~ support of 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.

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

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~~ this congregation.

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 $ _____ 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~~ collaboration 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~~ mission support monies to the synod~~ical~~ treasurer.

C12.08. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the staff of this congregation. Nothing in this provision shall be deemed to affect ~~the~~ this congregation's responsibility for the call, terms of call, or termination of call of any employees who are on a roster of this church.

C12.12. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the [senior] pastor or interim pastor, except when the [senior] 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. Chronic or repeated absence of the [senior] pastor or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Congregation Council, following consultation with the synod~~ical~~ bishop.

CHAPTER 13: CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

C13.05. When a ~~pastoral~~ vacancy occurs in a position for which this congregation calls a rostered minister, a ***Call Committee*** of six voting members shall be elected by [this congregation] [the Congregation Council]. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called ~~pastor~~ rostered minister.

C13.08. The [senior] pastor of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of ~~the~~ this congregation. [The president of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of ~~the~~ this congregation, except the Nominating Committee.]

CHAPTER 14: ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN ~~THE~~ THIS CONGREGATION

CHAPTER 15: DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

***C15.01.** Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith, willful or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, continual and intentional interference with the ministry of ~~the~~ this congregation, or willful and repeated harassment or defamation of member(s) of ~~the~~ 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 ~~the~~ 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 ministers of Word and Sacrament). A copy of the written charges shall be provided to the consultation panel and the accused member(s). The consultation panel, after requesting a written reply to the charges from the accused member(s), shall consider the matter and seek a resolution by means of investigation, consultation, mediation, or whatever other means may seem appropriate. The panel's efforts to reach a mutually agreeable resolution shall continue for no more than 45 days after the matter is submitted to it.

***C15.05.** 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:

c. termination of membership in ~~the~~ this congregation; or

d. termination of membership in ~~the~~ this congregation and exclusion from the church property and from all congregation activities.

***C15.07.** No member of ~~the~~ 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 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.~~

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 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 _____ voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify ~~the~~ this congregation's members of the proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

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

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

b. be ratified without change at the next ~~annual meeting~~ regular meeting of this congregation held pursuant to C10.01. by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting;

c. have the effective date included in the resolution[1] and noted in the constitution.

***C16.03.** Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in *C16.01. and *C16.02. shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The synod shall notify ~~the~~ 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 ~~the~~ this congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of ~~the~~ this congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, notice to ~~the~~ this congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council's recommendations, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of at least two (2) voting members of ~~the~~ this congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of ~~the~~ this congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following a vote of approval.

CHAPTER 17: BYLAWS

***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 ~~the~~ this congregation's members of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

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

CHAPTER 18: CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

***C18.01.** ~~The~~ 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 ~~the~~ 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 20: PARISH AUTHORIZATION

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

***C20.01.** This congregation may unite ~~in partnership~~ with one or more other congregations recognized by the synod named in *C6.01. to form a parish. Except as provided in *C20.02. and *C20.03., a written agreement, developed in consultation with the synod and approved by the voting members of each

congregation participating in the parish, shall specify the powers and responsibilities that have been delegated to the Parish Council. The Parish Agreement shall identify which congregation of the parish issues calls on behalf of the member congregations or shall establish a process for identifying which congregation issues calls on behalf of the member congregations.

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

***C20.03.** One congregation of a parish may issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Service or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended by the synod~~ical~~ bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a two-thirds vote at a congregational meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

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

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