

# **CONSTITUTION OF ST. PAUL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF TAYLOR, TEXAS**

## **A MEMBER CONGREGATION OF THE LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS IN MISSION FOR CHRIST**

(as amended October 13, 1996, November 14, 1999 February 13, 2000, February 11, 2007, September 25, 2011, November 2016, November 2018, November 2022, **Proposed February 2025**)

### **Table of Contents:**

- Preamble
- Chapter 1 - **Name and Incorporation**
- Chapter 2 - **Confession of Faith**
- Chapter 3 - **Nature of the Church**
- Chapter 4 - **Statement of Purpose**
- Chapter 5 - **Powers of the Congregation**
- Chapter 6 - **Church Affiliation**
- Chapter 7 - **Property Ownership**
- Chapter 8 - **Membership**
- Chapter 9 - **The Pastor**
- Chapter 10 - **Congregation Meeting**
- Chapter 11 - **Officers**
- Chapter 12 - **Congregation Council**
- Chapter 13 - **Congregation Committees**
- Chapter 14 - **Organizations within the Congregation**
- Chapter 15 - **Discipline of Members and Adjudication**
- Chapter 16 - **By-Laws – process of adopting**
- Chapter 17 - **Amendments**
- Chapter 18 - **Continuing Resolutions**
- Chapter 19 - **Indemnification and Insurance**

# CONSTITUTION OF ST. PAUL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF TAYLOR, TEXAS

## 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. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church of Taylor, Texas.
- C1.02.** For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying by-laws, the congregation of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church of Taylor, Texas is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."
- C1.03.** This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas.
- C1.04.** The principal office is located in Taylor, Texas.

## 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 speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.
- C2.03.** This congregation accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.
- C2.04.** This congregation accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this congregation.
- C2.05.** This congregation accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

- C2.06.** We believe, teach and confess the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.
- C2.07.** This congregation confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

### **Chapter 3 - NATURE OF THE CHURCH**

- C3.01.** All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.
- C3.02.** The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. The Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

### **Chapter 4 - STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

- C4.01.** The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.
- C4.02.** To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:
- a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
  - b. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
  - c. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
  - d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs.
  - e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
  - f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.
- C4.03.** To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:

- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
- b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
- c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.
- d. Teach the Word of God.
- e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
- f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
- g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for the congregation's ministry and the ministry of other parts of the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.
- h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.
- i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.

**C4.04.** This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the by-laws. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions. (Such descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions in the section on the Congregation Council.)

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

## **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 by-laws.

**C5.03.** Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregation Council or other organizational units in this congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by the congregation. The congregation is authorized to:

- a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- c. call or terminate the call of associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers as provided in Chapter 9;
- d. approve the annual budget;
- e. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
- f. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
- g. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
- h. elect its officers, Congregation Council, boards, and committees, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, by-laws, and continuing resolutions; and
- i. terminate its relationship with the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ as provided in Chapter 6.

- C5.04.** This congregation may choose from among its voting members, laypersons to serve as voting members of the Texas District 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.

## **Chapter 6 - CHURCH AFFILIATION**

- C6.01.** This congregation shall be a member of the association of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ. The official abbreviation of this association shall be LCMC.
- C6.02.** This congregation accepts the Statement of Faith of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.
- C6.03.** This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ in which:
- a. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
  - b. This congregation pledges its financial support through participation in the life and mission of the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.
  - c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the clergy roster of those LCMC-certified candidates who also subscribe to the Statement of Faith and ministry standards of this constitution and the LCMC.
  - d. This congregation agrees to consider associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers for call to other staff positions in the congregation in accordance with the credential standards of this congregation and the LCMC.
  - e. This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution with LCMC.
- C6.04.** Affiliation with the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ may be terminated as follows:
- a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.
  - b. This congregation ceases to exist.
  - c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ .
  - d. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in C6.05.
- C6.05.** This congregation may terminate its relationship with the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ by the following procedure:
- a. The secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the proposed resolution to the LCMC and shall mail a copy of the proposed resolution to voting members of this congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days prior to the initial vote on the proposed resolution.
  - b. A resolution indicating the desire of this congregation to terminate its relationship must be adopted at two legally called and conducted special meetings of this congregation by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting at each meeting.
  - c. A period of 90 days shall separate the first and second votes on the proposed resolution. This time will be used for discussion and prayer.
  - d. After 90 days, a second vote will be conducted at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.

- e. A postage-certified copy of the resolution to terminate its relationship shall be sent to the LCMC at which time the relationship between this congregation and the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ shall be terminated.

## **Chapter 7 - PROPERTY OWNERSHIP**

- C7.01.** If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.
- C7.02.** If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a regularly called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to transfer to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

## **Chapter 8 - MEMBERSHIP**

- C8.01.** Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of this congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its by-laws.
- C8.02.** Members shall be classified as follows:
  - a. Baptized members are those persons who:
    - 1) have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or,
    - 2) have been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God or
    - 3) have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations
  - b. Confirmed members are baptized persons who:
    - 1) have been confirmed in this congregation or
    - 2) have been received by adult baptism and receive adult instruction or 3) have been received by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or
    - 4) are baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.
  - c. Voting members are active confirmed members. An active confirmed member shall have communed and made a contribution of record during the current or preceding year.
  - d. Associate members are persons holding membership in other Lutheran Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Congregation Council of this congregation.
- C8.03.** All applications for confirmed membership shall be presented to the Congregation Council.
- C8.04.** It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregation to:
  - a. make regular use of the means of grace, both Word and sacraments;
  - b. live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran church; and
  - c. support the work of this congregation and the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.

- C8.05.** Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:
- a. death;
  - b. resignation;
  - c. transfer or release;
  - d. disciplinary action by the Congregation Council; or
  - e. removal from the roll due to inactivity as defined in the by-laws.

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

## **Chapter 9 - THE PASTOR**

- C9.01.** The Congregational Council shall select a Call Committee comprised of voting members of the Church congregation. The Call Committee will investigate and conduct interviews with the most qualified candidates. The Call Committee will make recommendation of candidate(s) to the Congregational Council. Upon Congregational Council approval, the Council will bring the candidate before the congregation. Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting regularly called for that purpose.
- C9.02.** The candidate called as pastor of this congregation must be certified by the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ within six months following installation as pastor.
- C9.03.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ,
- a. Every ordained minister shall:
    - 1) preach the Word;
    - 2) administer the sacraments;
    - 3) conduct public worship;
    - 4) provide pastoral care; and
    - 5) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
  - b. Each ordained minister with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
    - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
    - 2) supervise all schools and organizations of this congregation;
    - 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council, committee members and Sunday School teachers; and
    - 4) with the council, administer discipline.
  - c. Every pastor shall:
    - 1) strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;
    - 2) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
    - 3) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications; and
    - 4) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization of the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ and other organizations of the congregation's choosing.
- C9.04.** The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call.

- C9.05.** a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which, except in the case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated for the following reasons:
- 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
  - 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
  - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor;
  - 4) the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
  - 5) disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty; or
  - 6) the dissolution of the congregation.
- b. When allegations of physical or mental incapacity of the pastor or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office have come to the attention of the Congregation Council, either directly to the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the Congregation Council shall select a committee of two ordained LCMC ministers and one layperson, who will investigate and evaluate the allegations and make a recommendation to the Congregation Council.
- c. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation, all concerned persons shall be heard, after which the Congregation Council shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor and the congregation. If either party fails to assent, the congregation may dismiss the pastor by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present at a regularly called meeting.
- C9.06.** At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor may be called by the Congregation Council.
- C9.07.** During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.
- C9.08.** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation.
- C9.09.** When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, and the Congregation Council. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- C9.10.** The congregation may depart from C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of C9.05.a.
- C9.11.** The pastor shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, transferred



or members excluded from the congregation. The pastor shall be a member of the congregation that has extended the letter of call.

## Chapter 10 - CONGREGATION MEETING

- C10.01.** Regular meetings of this congregation shall be held at the times specified in the by-laws.
- 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 the congregation upon the written request of 50 of the voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.
- C10.03.** Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and notice in the church newsletter.
- C10.04.** Item Removed.
- C10.05.** Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- C10.06.** All actions by the congregation shall be by majority vote except as otherwise provided in this constitution.
- C10.07.** Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

## Chapter 11 - OFFICERS

- C11.01.** The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.
- Duties of the officers shall be specified in the by-laws.
  - The officers shall be voting members of the congregation.
  - Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.
- C11.02.** The congregation shall elect its officers and they shall be the officers of the congregation. Their terms shall begin at the close of the congregation meeting at which they are elected.
- C11.03.** No Council member shall hold more than one office at a time. Any Council member willing to maintain their position beyond their 1-year term, and has no opposition in elections, shall be allowed to continue in their position until they resign or are voted out during elections.
- C11.04.** Any officer may be removed either with or without cause at a special meeting of the congregation expressly called for that purpose. Removal shall be accomplished if the number of votes to remove the officer exceeds the number of votes not to remove the officer.

## Chapter 12 - CONGREGATION COUNCIL

- C12.01.** The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of not more than twelve (12) members of the congregation. Any voting member of the congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause.
- C12.02.** The members of the Congregation Council except the pastors shall be elected by written ballot to serve for one (1) year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the congregation meeting at which they are elected.
- C12.03.** Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor who shall serve until the next Congregation Election Meeting.
- 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 Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:
- a. To lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
  - b. To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
  - c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
  - d. To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.
  - e. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
  - f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill, and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
  - g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
  - h. To 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 trustees/directors of this congregation, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the management of its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Texas, except as otherwise provided herein.
  - b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation. Any of the Executive Council members have the authority to sign on behalf of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church.
  - c. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to \$6,000 for items not included in the budget. All such transactions shall be documented in the minutes of the Council.
  - d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation. The Council shall supervise the expenditure of funds in

accordance therewith following its adoption. The Council may not incur obligations of more than \$6,000 in excess of the adopted budget unless approval by a Congregation Meeting.

- e. The budget shall include this congregation's desired support in the benevolence ministry of this congregation.
- f. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently. Any or all of the Congregation Council Executive Committee members will be signers on all bank accounts for the church after a background check has been completed and passed. The CDC Director will be a signer for all CDC accounts. The school Principal will be a signer for all school accounts. The church secretary/bookkeeper will be a signer on all accounts for the church, school and CDC. All accounts opened in any entity shall require (2) signatures on all checks. Changes to any account will be made in writing with signatures from (2) authorized signers.
- g. The Congregation Council shall provide for the establishment of various Dedicated Accounts, and the Council shall oversee and govern the receipts and disbursements of said funds according to the designation of such funds. Funds from Dedicated Accounts can be disbursed for purposes other than designated only with the approval of the congregation at a Congregation Meeting.

- C12.06.** The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution, and its by-laws, and the continuing resolutions are carried out.
- C12.07.** The Congregation Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.
- C12.08.** The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the salaried lay workers of this congregation, with the exception of the employees of the Child Development Center and Elementary School, who are supervised by the respective directors and the Child Development Center/School Board.
- C12.09.** The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive written report to this congregation annually, including reports from the Council President, Treasurer, Pastor(s), standing committees, Child Development Center and School, organizations of the church, special task forces, and any other such ministries that reflect on the overall ministry and mission of the congregation.
- C12.10.** 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.
- C12.11.** A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the filled positions of the Congregation Council, including the pastor or interim pastor, except when the pastor or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting, which shall be the only business considered at that meeting.
- C12.12.** The congregation expects its officers, representatives, volunteers, or other agents acting on behalf of the church ("Representatives") to conduct church business to ultimately achieve the highest ethical standards of conduct, to comply with all applicable laws, and to conform to Biblical principles. The Representatives are expected to put the church's interests ahead of their own personal interests as they carry out their responsibilities on behalf of the church, and they have a duty to recognize, disclose, and avoid conflicts of interest. Representatives are prohibited from using their position with the church for any type of private gain or to obtain benefits for themselves or members of their family.

Potential conflict of interest occurs when a Representative's outside interests (i.e. financial, business, personal, or relational interests) interfere with the church's interests or the Representative's work-related duties. For example, a conflict of interest may occur when a Representative is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for the Representative or the Representative's family member as a result of the church's business dealings. Areas in which conflicts may arise between Representatives and the church, may include, but are not limited to, the following transactions with third parties:

- Transactions involving supplying goods and services to the church;
- Transactions involving real estate or property leases to or with the church;
- Transactions involving donors or others supporting the organization;
- Transactions that pay royalties or monetary awards to Representatives for products or services provided to the church; or
- Transactions involving other organizations that affect the operations of the church.

If a Representative becomes aware of any potential conflict of interest or ethical concern regarding the Representative's position with the church or another Representative's position with church, the Representative must promptly provide written notice to the council.

## Chapter 13 - CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

- C13.01.** The officers of this congregation and the pastor(s) shall constitute the Executive Committee.
- C13.02.** The Child Development Center/School Board members shall be elected by the congregation at the Annual Congregational Election. The Pastor(s) shall be ex-officio members without vote of the Child Development Center /School board and shall be advised of the dates, times, and agendas of all Board meetings.
- C13.03.** A Nominating Committee of at least (2) voting members of this congregation shall be elected at the annual election meeting.
- C13.04.** An Audit Committee of three voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council. Term of office shall be three years, with one member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for reelection.
- C13.05.** A Staff Support Committee shall be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor. Term of office shall be two years, with three members to be appointed each successive year. Committee members will hold no other office in the congregation during their term and in the absence of a staff support committee, their duties shall be fulfilled by the executive committee.

- C13.06.** When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee a minimum of six voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor.
- C13.07.** Other committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council.
- C13.08.** Duties of committees of this congregation shall be specified in the by-laws.

## **Chapter 14 - ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION**

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

## **Chapter 15 - DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION**

- C15.01.** Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps: a) private admonition by the pastor, b) admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, and c) citation to appear before the Congregation Council.
- C15.02.** The process for discipline of a member of the congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the Constitution, By-Laws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ. A member charged with the offense shall appear before the Congregation Council after having received a written notice, specifying the exact charges that have been made against the member, at least 10 days prior to the meeting.
- C15.03.** Members of the Congregation Council who participate in the preparation of the written charges or who present evidence or testimony in the hearing before the Congregation Council are disqualified from voting upon the question of the guilt of the accused member. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Congregation Council, who are not disqualified but who are present and voting, and renewed admonition prove ineffectual, the council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:
- a. censure before the council or congregation;
  - b. suspension from membership for a definite period of time; or
  - c. exclusion from membership in this congregation.
- Disciplinary actions b. and c. shall be delivered to the member in writing.

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

## **Chapter 16 - BY-LAWS**

- C16.01.** This congregation may adopt by-laws. No by-law may conflict with this constitution.
- C16.02.** By-Laws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting.
- C16.03.** Changes to the by-laws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose and that the Congregation Council notify the members of the proposal with its recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting.
- C16.04.** The congregation shall be informed of approved changes to the by-laws. All approved by-laws will be maintained with the official constitution in a safe and secure location in the church office.

## **Chapter 17 - AMENDMENTS**

- C17.01.** Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least 2/3 of voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at its regular or special meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the members of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.
- C17.02.** A proposed amendment to this constitution shall:
- a. be approved at a properly called meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;
  - b. be ratified without change at the next annual Congregation Meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting; and
  - c. have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.

## **Chapter 18 - CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

- C18.01.** The Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions which describe the function of the various committees or organizations of this congregation.

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

## **Chapter 19 - Indemnification and Insurance**

- C19.01.** Insurance - The church will purchase and maintain liability insurance on behalf of any and all persons who are or were a director, officer, leader, employee, committee member or volunteer of the church (while serving in their capacity as such). Such insurance will be purchased for the purpose of protecting such persons from covered loss resulting in liability asserted against the above individuals in connection with their activities on behalf of the church.
- C19.02.** Indemnification Requests - Should any officer, employee, committee member or volunteer of the church incur any liability as a result of their affiliation with or service to the church that is not covered by the church insurance policy, and should such liability result in any out-of-pocket cost to such individual, then such individual may request indemnification from the church if the individual was acting on behalf of the church in good faith and within the scope of authority designated to the individual by the church. The granting of full or partial indemnification shall be at the discretion of the governing council as set forth in Section 3 of this article.
- C19.03.** Indemnification Decisions - In relation to any indemnification request that is made pursuant to Section 2 herein, if such request is made by an individual who is not currently serving on the governing board of the church, then the indemnification decision (whether to indemnify the requesting individual, and the dollar amount of such indemnification), will be made by the council. Such decision of the council will be final. If the indemnification request is being made by a person who is currently serving on the council, then the indemnification decision (whether to indemnify the requesting party, and the dollar amount of such indemnification), will be made by the remaining disinterested members of the council. A decision on the indemnification request by a majority of disinterested members of the council will be final.