

**CONSTITUTION  
FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
PAXTON, ILLINOIS**

**PREAMBLE**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We, members of the church of Christ, desiring to be blessed together with Word and Sacrament and to unite as a congregation in the common confession, defense and propagation of our faith in Jesus Christ our Savior, do hereby adopt this constitution and solemnly pledge ourselves to be governed by its provisions.

**ARTICLE I**

**NAME AND CORPORATION**

- Section 1. The name of this congregation shall be The First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Paxton, Illinois.
- Section 2. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois.
- Section 3. The seal of this congregation represents the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America seal encircled by First Lutheran Church, Paxton, IL.

**ARTICLE II**

**CONFESSION OF FAITH**

- Section 1. This congregation confesses faith alone in the triune God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Section 2. This congregation holds that the Gospel is the revelation of God's sovereign will and saving grace in Jesus Christ. In Him, the Word Incarnate, God imparts Himself to all humankind.
- a. Jesus Christ is Lord of the Church. The Holy Spirit creates and sustains the Church through the Gospel and thereby unites believers with their Lord and with one another in the fellowship of faith.
  - b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgement 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.
  - d. It is only by the Grace of God through the redemptive act of Jesus Christ that God effects the salvation of a sinful and fallen humanity.
- Section 3. This congregation acknowledges the Holy Scriptures as the authoritative source and norm for the proclamation, faith and life of the Church. The Holy Scriptures are a divinely

inspired record of God's redemptive act in Christ, for which the Old Testament prepared the way and which the New Testament proclaims. In the continuation of this proclamation in the Church, God still speaks through the Holy Scriptures and realizes His redemptive purpose generation after generation.

- Section 4. This congregation accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of the Church.
- Section 5. This congregation accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism as true and valid witnesses to the Gospel, and acknowledges itself as one in faith and doctrine with all churches that likewise accept the teachings of these symbols.
- Section 6. This congregation accepts the other symbolic books of the evangelical Lutheran church, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, Luther's Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the confession of the church.
- Section 7. This congregation affirms that the Gospel transmitted by the Holy Scriptures to which the creeds and confessions bear witness, is the true treasure of the Church, the substance of its proclamation, and the basis of its unity and continuity. The Holy Spirit uses the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship. As this occurs, the Church fulfills its divine mission and purpose.

### **ARTICLE III STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

- Section 1. In Matthew 16, Jesus said, "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."
- Section 2. As part of our God-given mission, this congregation shall:
- a. Worship God through the proclamation of God's Word, the administration of the sacraments, and dedicate our lives to the prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service to Jesus Christ, who is the Messiah and the Son of the Living God.
  - b. Proclaim the Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scriptures, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
  - c. Carry out Christ's Great Commission as given in Matthew 28, "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of

the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.””

- d. To fulfill that mission and in response to God’s love to meet human needs, the ministry of this congregation will include caring for the sick and the aged, nurturing its members in the Word of God, seeing the primary setting for the exercise of our calling in the words and actions of our daily lives, and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.
- e. This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws.

#### **ARTICLE IV**

#### **RELATION TO THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

Section 1. This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Section 2. This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which:

- a. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
- b. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the bishop of the synod.
- d. This congregation agrees to consider associates in ministry or diaconal ministers for appointment to other staff positions in the congregation according to the procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- e. This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution with the synod for review to ascertain that all of its provisions are in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and with the constitution of the synod.

Section 3. Affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be terminated as follows:

- a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.
- b. This congregation ceases to exist.

c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

d. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in Section 4.

Section 4. This congregation may terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the following procedure:

a. A resolution indicating the desire of this congregation to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present.

b. The secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the synodical bishop and shall mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of this congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted.

c. The bishop of the synod shall consult with this congregation during a period of at least 90 days.

d. If this congregation, after consultation with the Bishop, still desires to terminate its relationship, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present, at which meeting the bishop of the synod or an authorized representative shall be invited to be present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members and the synodical Bishop at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.

e. A certified copy of the resolution to terminate its relationship shall be sent to the synodical bishop, at which time the relationship between this congregation and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be terminated.

f. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the synodical bishop to the secretary of this church and published in the periodical of this church.

Section 5. If this congregation is considering relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.

Section 6. If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the Central Southern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Section 7. If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

Section 8. If two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation has voted to transfer to another Lutheran

church body, become independent, or relate to a non-Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

## **ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP**

- Section 1. This congregation shall consist of its pastor or pastors and other baptized persons within its fellowship. Baptized members are defined as those who have been baptized and are a part of the family of the congregation but who have not yet been confirmed. A communing member is defined as a member who has received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at least once within the year. Confirmed members are those who have been duly received into communicant membership of the congregation by adult Baptism, confirmation, certificate of transfer from another Lutheran congregation, or reaffirmation of faith. Each applicant for confirmed membership shall have been properly instructed in the Word of God and the faith of the Lutheran church prior to his or her reception. All applications for such membership shall be submitted to, and shall require the approval of, the church council, based upon the pastor's recommendation and endorsement.
- Section 2. It shall be the duty of confirmed members to avail themselves faithfully of the Means of Grace, joining regularly in the services of worship of this congregation, hearing the Word of God preached, and partaking of the Lord's Supper. They shall earnestly study the Holy Scriptures and observe private and family devotions. As is fitting for those whom the Holy Spirit has called to faith and discipleship, the members of this congregation shall lead a Christian life in love, humility, and peace, endeavoring through admonition, consolation and encouragement to edify one another. They shall support the work of this congregation, synod, and the church-wide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.
- Section 3. Parents shall present their children for Holy Baptism in early infancy and shall diligently nurture them in the Christian faith in the home and in the schools provided by the congregation.
- Section 4. Acknowledging that all they are and all they have, come as good gifts from God, members shall, as one expression of their gratitude and obedience, contribute to the financial support of the congregation and for the general work of missions, mercy and education carried on by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- Section 5. Any confirmed member who, despite pastoral care and counseling, has failed for a period of one year to receive Holy Communion and to make any contribution of record to the congregation shall be classified by the church council as not in good standing and shall be removed from the roll of confirmed members. Such persons shall be restored by the church council to the roll of confirmed members in good standing when they have again received the Lord's Supper and enters once more upon the other rights and obligations of a member of this congregation. Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the church has a continuing pastoral concern.
- Section 6. At the request of a confirmed member a certificate of standing or of transfer of membership

to another Lutheran or other evangelical congregation shall be issued to him or her.

Section 7 Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:

1. Death
2. Resignation
3. Transfer or release
4. Disciplinary action by the church council as defined in Article XIII
5. Removal from the roll due to inactivity as defined in Article IV, section 5

## **ARTICLE VI THE PASTOR**

- Section 1. A pastor of this congregation shall be an adult whose soundness in the faith, aptness to teach, and educational qualifications have been examined and approved by the church, and who has been properly ordained, who accepts and adheres to the Confession of Faith of the evangelical Lutheran church and Article II of this constitution, and whose life and conduct are above reproach.
- Section 2. They shall be a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or shall promptly apply to become a member thereof upon acceptance of the call of this congregation. Should the synod refuse to receive them, or should they be deposed from the office of the ministry, they shall automatically cease to be a pastor of this congregation.
- Section 3. In the selection of a pastor, the congregation shall seek the counsel and guidance of the bishop of the synod.
- Section 4. As soon as practical, a pastor of this congregation shall be duly installed by the bishop of the synod or their appointee.
- Section 5. A pastor shall preach the Word, administer the Sacraments and conduct public worship in consistency with the faith and practices of the evangelical Lutheran church. They shall care for the people individually and as a congregation, give catechetical instruction, confirm, marry in accordance with the Laws of God and the state, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead. They shall inculcate piety in individual and family life and supervise all schools and auxiliary organizations of the congregation. They shall install regularly elected members of the church council, and, with the council, administer discipline. They shall seek out and encourage qualified young men and women to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel and strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the homeland and abroad. They shall impart knowledge of the church and its wider ministry and shall endeavor to increase the support of this congregation, of the synod, and of the evangelical Lutheran church.
- Section 6. In order that pastors of this congregation may devote themselves fully to the duties of their office, they shall receive an adequate salary, paid in semi-monthly or monthly installments. Their expenses incident to attendance at assemblies of the synod and conference, mileage, and attendance at other required meetings shall be defrayed by the congregation.

- Section 7. The pastor, shall keep the membership rolls of the congregation, reporting thereon periodically to the church council. The church secretary or the pastor shall record acts in the official parish register, which shall be and remain the property of the congregation.
- Section 8. When a pastor of this congregation desires to terminate their period of service they shall submit their resignation to the church council for report to the congregation. The resignation shall normally become effective 30 days after the date on which it was submitted, unless otherwise specified or agreed upon.
- Section 9. The regular call of this congregation when accepted by a pastor shall constitute a permanent relationship which shall be terminated only for the following causes:
- (1) the death of the pastor or the dissolution of the congregation.
  - (2) the resignation of the pastor.
  - (3) disqualification of the pastor through discipline.
  - (4) the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor.
  - (5) continued neglect of duty as defined in this constitution.
  - (6) inability to conduct the pastoral office efficiently in this congregation in view of local condition, without reflection on the moral and spiritual character of the pastor.
- A. In the last three contingencies listed above, it shall be the duty of the bishop of the synod, when such difficulties are personally known to the Bishop or have been brought to their attention by the dean of the conference, by an official recital of allegations by the church council, or by a petition signed by at least one third of the communing members, to investigate such conditions personally in company with a committee of two ordained ministers and one lay person.
- B. In case of alleged physical or mental incapacity, competent medical testimony shall be secured. When such incapacity is evident, the bishop of the synod with the advice of the committee, shall declare the pastorate vacant. Upon the restoration of a disabled pastor to health, the bishop of the synod shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another field of labor.
- C. In case of alleged neglect of duty or of local difficulties which imperil the efficient conduct of the congregation, all those concerned shall be heard, after which the bishop of the synod together with the committee outlined in Section 9A, shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor and the congregation. If both agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action shall be taken by the synod. If either party fails to assent, the congregation may dismiss the pastor by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present at a regularly called meeting after consultation with the bishop. Such action shall not be regarded as an act of discipline but as an act of expediency based on the principles of Christian love.
- D. The foregoing procedures shall never be involved when questions of doctrine or morality are involved, all such cases being treated as disciplinary matters (See Article XIII).
- Section 10. Charges against a pastor which, if sustained, would subject them to discipline shall be

presented to the synod and adjudicated by it as set forth in the by-laws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

- Section 11. At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of the church council.
- Section 12. During their period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties of a regularly called pastor. They may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and the church council. Any interim pastor shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.
- Section 13. This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to the former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation.
- Section 14. The privileges and responsibilities of an associate or assistant pastor, diaconal minister or associate in ministry shall be specified in the call, which shall be drafted in consultation with the bishop of the synod.

## **ARTICLE VII CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

- Section 1. All confirmed members in good standing shall be eligible to vote in all congregation meetings. In all matters in which legal contracts are involved, the confirmed member in good standing must have attained the age of 18 to be eligible to vote.
- Section 2. An annual meeting of the congregation shall be held on a date to be determined by the church council, which is normally the last Sunday in January.
- Section 3. Special congregational meetings may be called by the pastor or the church council, or shall be called at the written request of twenty percent of the confirmed members in good standing. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held, and no other business shall be transacted therein.
- Section 4. Notice of all congregational meetings shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays or by mail to all confirmed members in good standing at least ten days in advance of the date of the meeting.
- Section 5. When a minimum of twenty percent of all confirmed members are present and in good standing who are eligible to vote in congregational meetings, they shall constitute a quorum. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted. All actions by the congregation shall be by 2/3 majority vote except as otherwise provided in this constitution.
- Section 6. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern all parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

## **ARTICLE VIII ELECTIONS**

- Section 1. A vote to call a pastor shall be by written ballot at a properly called congregational meeting presided over by the president of the council. Balloting shall be limited at any one meeting to a single nomination presented by the church council, based on the recommendation by the call committee as outlined in Article XI, section 2. Two thirds of the votes cast shall be necessary for the call to be extended. After the congregation has determined the salary and other emoluments to be offered to the pastor-elect, the church council shall execute a call accordingly and forward the same to the pastor-elect. Unless otherwise agreed, the call shall normally become invalid unless a definite answer is received within thirty days after its receipt. If a nominee fails to be called or declines the call, the church council shall make another nomination at a subsequent meeting.
- Section 2. If this congregation unites with one or more other congregations in calling a pastor, the church councils of all congregations in the parish shall meet jointly and agree on a single nomination for call, the balloting to be done separately in each congregation. Two thirds of all the votes cast in each congregation, shall be required for the call to be extended. The joint church council shall issue the call.
- Section 3. If this congregation receives salary aid for its pastor from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, prior approval of the synod must be secured to the nomination of a pastor and the amount of compensation to be offered to them.
- Section 4. Elders shall be elected by ballot for terms of three years by a majority vote at the annual congregational meetings. Their tenure shall be so arranged that one third of the terms expire annually. An Elder shall be eligible to serve no more than two terms consecutively. Vacancies occurring ad interim shall be filled by the church council, the appointee to serve until the next annual meeting.

## **ARTICLE IX CHURCH COUNCIL**

- Section 1. The Church council shall consist of the pastor or pastors and 9 elders. Any confirmed member in good standing who is of legal age may be elected an elder, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. Should an elder cease to be a confirmed member in good standing of this congregation, or should they have four un-excused absences at meetings of the church council in a congregational year, consideration shall be made at that time to declare their place vacant.
- Section 2. All lay members of the church council shall be installed by the pastor according to the prescribed order of the church at the next public service following their election or as soon thereafter as convenient.
- Section 3. The duties of the church council shall include the following:

- A. To have general oversight of the spiritual life and activities of the congregation, and in particular of its public worship, to the end that everything is done in accordance with the Word of God and this Church's confession of faith outlined in Article II.
- B. To provide schools and facilities for Christian education for children, youth and adults.
- C. To inculcate the motives and practice of stewardship in all members of the congregation, and to encourage generous giving to the work of the church in all aspects at home and everywhere.
- D. To support the pastor in fulfilling his calling, and in so doing to visit the sick, infirm and the spiritually indifferent, to minister to the poor and distressed and to seek to bring the unchurched into the fold of Christ.
- E. To promote a spirit of peace and good will within the congregation and if differences arise, to endeavor to restore harmony and mutual understanding.
- F. To arrange for pastoral supply during the sickness or absence of the pastor.

- Section 4. The church council shall be the board of trustees of the congregation, and as such shall be responsible for 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 Illinois. The church council shall not, however, have the authority to buy, sell or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation. It shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by the congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations more than \$ 5,000.00 only after approval by a congregational meeting except in acute emergencies, when the church council shall be authorized to act without the approval by a congregational meeting.
- Section 5. The church council shall see that the provisions of this constitution and its by-laws are carried out.
- Section 6. The church council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the salaried lay workers of the congregation.
- Section 7. The church council shall elect confirmed members in good standing in the congregation who are of legal age as delegates in the permitted numbers to the conventions of the synod and the meetings of the conference to which this congregation belongs. The expenses incurred by such delegates in connection with their attendance shall be paid by the congregation.
- Section 8. The church council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings of the council may be called by the pastor or the president of the congregation, or 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. No other business shall be conducted other than the purpose for which it was called.

- Section 9. The church council shall submit a comprehensive report to the congregation at the annual meetings.
- Section 10. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the church council including the pastor or interim pastor, except in cases in which the pastor has given prior approval to the consideration of specific questions of a routine nature, in which event the business of the meeting shall be confined to such matters. Chronic or repeated unexcused absence of the pastor or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the church council, following consultation with the synodical bishop.

## **ARTICLE X OFFICERS**

- Section 1. At its first meeting in each congregational year, the church council shall elect a president, a vice-president, a secretary, a treasurer, and a financial secretary, who will serve both the council and the congregation in their several capacities.
- Section 2. The president shall be chair person of the congregation and the church council. In the event of the president's inability to perform their duties, the vice-president shall serve in the president's stead.
- Section 3. The president, vice-president, and secretary shall be chosen from the membership of the church council. The other officers, if not members of the council, shall be accorded the privilege of voice without vote in its meetings.
- Section 4. All officers shall be confirmed members of the congregation in good standing. If any of them ceases to be such, the office shall at once be declared vacant by the council, which shall fill the vacancy until the next annual meeting of the congregation.
- Section 5. The secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation and of the council in a volume provided by the congregation, which shall be preserved permanently in its archives.
- Section 6. The financial secretary shall receive and keep record of all income from contributing members and other sources.
- Section 7. The treasurer shall keep the books of account of the congregation. They shall receive from the financial secretary all funds and disburse them on proper orders, making a monthly remittance of benevolence receipts to the treasurer of the synod.
- Section 8. The treasurer and the financial secretary shall make written report of all transactions to the church council monthly and to the congregation together with a satisfactory audit, at its annual meetings. All financial officers shall give corporate surety, in amounts determined by the church council, for which the premiums shall be paid by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or the congregation.

## **ARTICLE XI STANDING COMMITTEES**

- Section 1. At its first meeting in each congregational year, the church council shall appoint as many standing committees as the local and wider concerns of the congregation shall require. Each such committee shall be composed of at least one member of the council acting as council liaison and, in addition, other confirmed members of the congregation in good standing. Although appointed by and responsible to the church council, these committees shall be recognized as representatives of the interests of, and performing essential services for, the congregation as a whole. The pastor shall have voice and vote in all committees.
- Section 2. Except as stipulated in the following paragraphs, the duties of all committees shall be assigned by the church council, along with such instructions as in its judgment are in the best interests of the congregation. All actions of committees shall be subject to review by the council.
- A. A Nominating Committee of three voting members of this congregation, two of whom, if possible, shall be outgoing members of the church council, shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year. Members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible for consecutive reelection.
- B. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of at least eight voting members of the congregation shall be elected by the church council. Guidelines for duties and obligations of this committee are in accordance with the call process of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor.
- Section 3. There shall be a Committee on Christian Education. This committee, in association with the pastor, shall oversee the conduct and promotion of all educational activities within the congregation. It shall encourage the use of teaching and worship materials published or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran church, and seek to introduce this church's periodicals and books of family devotion into the homes of the congregation. One of the primary aims of the Committee on Christian Education shall be to bring the call to the ministry of the Gospel and to other full-time church vocations to the attention of qualified youth of the congregation.
- Section 4. There shall be a Committee on Church Property. This committee shall see to the proper maintenance and protection of all church property of the congregation, and shall take care that the same is kept in good repair and is adequately insured.
- Section 5. There shall be a Committee on Evangelism and Fellowship. This committee shall stimulate and lead all members of the congregation in continuous and, from time to time, concerted endeavors to reawaken the spiritually indifferent and to reach others who are as yet unwon, with the Gospel and attach them to Christ's Church. To this end, the committee shall devote itself to deepening spiritual life and shall periodically study the congregation in the context of its surrounding community.

- Section 6. There shall be a Finance Committee, of which the treasurer shall be a member ex officio. It shall prepare a draft budget for the succeeding year, including this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in its behalf by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the synod, and shall submit such draft budget to the church council for its action and later presentation to a congregational meeting. The committee shall exercise oversight of all the financial affairs of the congregation to make sure that they are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies to the synodical treasurer. It shall, subject to the approval of the church council, be responsible for the congregation's investments, and shall also provide for annual audits of the accounts of the treasurer and the financial secretary, as well as of the accounts of the organizations within the congregation.
- Section 7. There shall be a Committee on Social Ministry. The purpose of this committee shall be to extend Christian compassion and helpfulness to the ill, the aged and the orphaned, the underprivileged, the imprisoned and , in general to persons of all ages in need of aid in body or soul in this community and the nation and world in general. It shall strive to enlist in efforts as many as possible of the individual members of the congregation.
- Section 8. There shall be a Committee on Stewardship, of which the treasurer shall be a member ex officio. It shall be the function of this committee to evoke and promote the expression of Christian faith in daily living; to teach the Christian use of money; to diffuse knowledge of the congregation's local, national and worldwide ministries; and to lead all its members to higher levels of proportionate giving for the Lord's work.
- Section 9. There shall be a Committee on Worship and Music. It shall assist the pastor in seeing that the services of God's house are conducted regularly and in accordance with the liturgy of the evangelical Lutheran church, that competent ushers are recruited and trained, and that hymnals and other devotional materials are provided and properly cared for. This committee shall supervise, and strive to advance the welfare and effective service of, the choirs of the congregation. It shall furnish music supplies appropriate for use in the worship of a congregation of the evangelical Lutheran church. It shall be responsible for the care of musical instruments, in consultation with the pastor, the organist and the choir director(s). The Altar Guild, which is a subcommittee of Worship and Music, shall arrange for the care of paraments, vestments, and worship fixtures.
- Section 10. There shall be a Committee on Mission. This committee shall assist the congregation in education of both global and local missions of the church. Its function shall be to promote the emphasis of missions, to study the role of missions, to encourage the familiarity of missions, and those working in the area of missions, and to strive to advance the work of missions in this congregation.

## **ARTICLE XII ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION**

- Section 1. All organizations within the congregation shall exist to aid it in ministering to its members and to all whom it can reach with the Gospel of Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of

the congregation's life, the organizations are subject to its oversight and direction. The congregation at its meetings, or the church council, shall determine their policies, guide their activities and receive reports concerning their membership, work and finances.

- Section 2. Special interest groups, other than the congregational units of the official auxiliaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the church council.

### **ARTICLE XIII DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS**

- Section 1. The offenses for which a confirmed member of this congregation shall be subject to discipline are: denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution; immoral or scandalous conduct; persistent trouble-making, especially within the congregation; and, in general, behavior that is grossly unbecoming a member of the church of Christ.
- Section 2. Discipline shall be administered by the church council on behalf of the congregation, with the right of appeal to the synod in accordance with the provisions of the synodical constitution. The procedure which Christ instructed His disciples to follow (Matthew 18:15-17) shall be adhered to in every case, proceeding through these successive steps: 1) private admonition by the pastor, 2) admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, and 3) citation to appear before the church council.
- Section 3. Persons cited to appear before the church council shall be served with a written summons at least ten days before the hearing. In addition to notifying the accused of the time and place to appear, the summons shall specify the exact charges that have been made against them. If the accused fails to appear at the appointed hour without valid excuse, the council may proceed with the hearing and may pass judgment in their absence.
- Section 4. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the church council, and renewed admonition prove ineffectual, the council shall impose one of the following penalties: 1) censure before the council or the congregation; 2) suspension from membership until proof is given of sufficient repentance and amendment; 3) excommunication. A resolution of the council suspending or excommunicating a member of this congregation shall be delivered to them in writing.
- Section 5. Acts of discipline may be reconsidered and revoked by the church council upon receipt of evidence that injustice has been done or evidence of repentance and amendment.

### **ARTICLE XIV BY-LAWS, AMENDMENTS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

- Section 1. By-laws may be adopted which are not in conflict with this constitution. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting. Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the congregation council at least 60 days before a regular or

special congregational meeting called for that purpose and that the congregation council notify members of the proposal with its recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the congregational meeting. Approved changes to the bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod office.

- Section 2. Amendments to this constitution may be made at any congregational meeting by a two-thirds vote of the eligible members in good standing who are present and voting, provided that such amendments have been proposed in writing by at least five voting members in good standing at a meeting of the congregation held at least ninety days earlier, or provided that they have been approved by the church council and by it submitted by mail to all the confirmed members in good standing at least thirty days prior to the meeting at which final action is to be taken. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary shall forward a certified copy thereof to the bishop of the synod. This constitution should be reviewed every 10 years by a committee appointed by the church council, or as circumstances dictate.
- Section 3. The congregational council may enact continuing resolutions which describe the function of the various committees or organizations of this congregation, or which may outline a desire or action by the gathered assembly of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

## **ARTICLE XV INDEMNIFICATION**

- Section 1 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 elder, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any committee of this congregation, who was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.