

**CONSTITUTION
AND
BYLAWS**

of

**CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
Bethesda, MD**

February 16, 1999

CONSTITUTION OF CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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CONSTITUTION OF CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

** Indicates provisions required by the ELCA*

***PREAMBLE**

We, baptized members of the Church of Christ, responding in faith to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, desiring to unite together to preach the Word, administer the sacraments, and carry out God's mission, do hereby adopt this constitution and solemnly pledge ourselves to be governed by its provisions. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 1.

ORGANIZATION AND DEFINITIONS

C1.01. The name of this congregation shall be Christ Lutheran Church of Bethesda.

C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the congregation of Christ Lutheran Church of Bethesda is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."

C1.03. Unless the context otherwise requires, the pastor in this constitution and bylaws shall be understood to refer to the senior pastor of this congregation.

C1.04. This congregation shall be an unincorporated religious and charitable organization under the laws of the State of Maryland.

Chapter 2.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

***C2.01.** This congregation confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

***C2.02.** This congregation confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.

a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.

b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of

Jesus Christ.

c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

***C2.03.** This congregation accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.

***C2.04.** This congregation accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this congregation.

***C2.05.** This congregation accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

***C2.06.** This congregation accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.

***C2.07.** This congregation confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

Chapter 3.

NATURE OF THE CHURCH

***C3.01.** All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.

***C3.02.** The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

Chapter 4.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

***C4.01.** The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.

***C4.02.** To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:

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

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

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

***C4.04.** This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational 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, from time to time, 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 bylaws.

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

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

***C5.04.** This congregation shall choose from among its voting members laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by the congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by this synod.

Chapter 6.

CHURCH AFFILIATION

***C6.01.** This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

***C6.02.** This congregation accepts the Confession of Faith and agrees to the Purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and shall act in accordance with them.

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

- a. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
- b. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the bishop of the synod.
- d. This congregation agrees to consider associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers for call 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.

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

- a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.
- b. This congregation ceases to exist.
- c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- d. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in *C6.05.

***C6.05.** This congregation may terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the following procedure:

- a. A resolution indicating the desire of this congregation to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present.
- b. The secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the synodical bishop and shall mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of 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, still desires to terminate its relationship, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present, at which meeting the bishop of the synod or an authorized representative shall be present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.
- e. A certified copy of the resolution to terminate its relationship shall be sent to the synodical bishop, at which time the relationship between this congregation and 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.
- g. If this congregation was a member of the Lutheran Church in America, it shall be required, in addition to the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to receive synodical approval before terminating its membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- h. If this congregation was established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, it shall be required, in addition to the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to receive synodical approval before terminating its membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

***C6.06.** If this congregation is considering relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod 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.

Chapter 7.

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

***C7.01.** If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

***C7.02.** If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

***C7.03.** If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a 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. Before this congregation takes action to transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

***C7.04.** If a two-thirds majority 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, 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, 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.

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 bylaws.

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

- a. Baptized members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.
- b. Confirmed members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.
- c. Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members shall have communed and made a contribution of record during the current or preceding year.
- d. Associate members are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Congregation Council of this congregation.

***C8.03.** All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Congregation Council.

***C8.04.** It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregation to:

- a. make regular use of the means of grace, both Word and sacraments;
- b. live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran church; and
- c. support the work of this congregation, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.

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

- a. death;
 - b. resignation;
 - c. transfer or release;
 - d. disciplinary action by the Congregation Council; or
 - e. removal from the roll due to inactivity as defined in the bylaws.
- Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the church has a continuing pastoral concern.

Chapter 9.

THE PASTOR

***C9.01.** Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by the Congregation Council to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.

***C9.02.** Only a member of the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of ordained ministers who has been recommended for the congregation by the synodical bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.

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

- a. Every ordained minister shall:
 - 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;
 - 3) conduct public worship;
 - 4) provide pastoral care; and
 - 5) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
- b. Each ordained minister with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
 - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) supervise all schools and organizations of this congregation;
 - 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council; and
 - 4) with the council, administer discipline.
- c. Every pastor shall:
 - 1) strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;
 - 2) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 - 3) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications; and
 - 4) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and of the Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod of the ELCA.

***C9.04.** The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.

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

- 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
- 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;
- 6) the dissolution of the congregation; or
- 7) suspension of the congregation as a result of discipline proceedings.

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 bishop of the synod, the bishop in his or her sole discretion may, or 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 congregation, the bishop shall, investigate such conditions personally in company with a committee of two ordained ministers and one layperson.

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

d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation, all concerned persons shall be heard, after which the bishop of the synod together with the committee described in *C9.05.b. shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor and the congregation. If they agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action shall be taken by the synod. If either party fails to assent, the congregation may dismiss the pastor by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present at a regularly called meeting after consultation with the bishop.

e. If, in the course of proceedings described in *C9.05.d., the committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action to the synodical bishop who may bring charges, in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the constitution of this synod.

f. If, following the appointment of the committee described in *C9.05.b. or d., it should become

apparent that the pastoral office cannot be conducted effectively in the congregation(s) being served by the ordained minister due to local conditions, the bishop of the synod may temporarily suspend the pastor from service in the congregation(s) without prejudice and with pay provided through a joint synodical and churchwide fund and with housing provided by the congregation(s).

***C9.06.** At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.

***C9.07.** During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the 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 ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.

***C9.08.** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation.

***C9.09.** When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

***C9.11.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, the congregation may depart from *C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such 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 congregation;
 - b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod; and
 - c. shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call.
- In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

***C9.13.** The pastor(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

Chapter 10.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

C10.01. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time as specified in the bylaws.

C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the pastor, the Congregation Council by a 2/3 majority, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of the congregation upon the written request of 20 percent 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 conducted.

C10.03. Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be publicly announced at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or paid, sent to the last known address of such members shall be sufficient.

C10.04. Thirty (30) voting members shall constitute a quorum.

C10.05. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.

C10.06. All actions by the congregation shall be by majority vote except as otherwise provided in this constitution.

Chapter 11.

OFFICERS

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

a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.

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

c. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.

C11.02. The Congregation Council shall elect its officers from the membership of the Council and they shall be the officers of the congregation. The officers shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the Council meeting at which they are elected.

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

Chapter 12.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s) and 12 members elected by 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 three regular meetings of the Congregation Council in any 12 month period without cause.

C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) shall be elected by written ballot to serve for three (3) 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 Council meeting, following the annual meeting, at which new officers 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 until the next annual 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 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:

- a. To lead this congregation in stating and realizing its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
- b. To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
- c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
- d. To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.
- e. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
- f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill, and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
- g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
- h. To emphasize partnership with the synod and churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

j. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

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

a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of trustees 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 Maryland, except as otherwise provided herein.

b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.

c. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to 5% of the total budget for items not included in the budget.

d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations of more than 5% in excess of the approved budget only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in partnership with the synod and churchwide organization.

e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies to the synodical treasurer.

f. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.

C12.06. The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution, its bylaws, and the continuing resolutions are carried out.

C12.07. The Congregation Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.

C12.08. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the employment and oversight of the salaried lay workers of this congregation; however, the pastor shall be responsible for the supervision of all staff.

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

C12.11. The Congregation Council shall normally meet six times in a year. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president, and shall be called by the president at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

C12.12. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the pastor(s) 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. Chronic or repeated 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 Congregation Council, following consultation with the synodical bishop.

Chapter 13.

CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

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

C13.02. A **Nominating Committee** of four voting members of this congregation, two of whom shall be members of the Congregation Council, shall be selected annually by the Congregation Council, to recommend candidates to fill positions that require election by the congregation.

C13.04. A **Mutual Ministry Committee** (in the absence of a mutual ministry committee, the duties shall be fulfilled by the executive committee) shall be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor.

C13.05. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a **Call Committee** of six voting members shall be elected by this congregation. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor.

C13.06. The Congregation Council may establish other committees, teams, or working groups of this congregation as the need arises, and shall determine the duties of these bodies.

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 through the Congregation Council shall approve their policies, guide their activities, and receive reports concerning their membership, work, and finances.

C14.02. Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council 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. If for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by a. and b. hereof, the president (if not the pastor) or vice president shall administer such admonitions.

***C15.02.** The process for discipline of a member of the congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. A member charged with the offense shall appear before the Congregation Council after having received a written notice, at least 10 days prior to the meeting, specifying the exact charges that have been made against the member.

***C15.03.** Members of the Congregation Council who participate in the preparation of the written charges or who present evidence or testimony in the hearing before the Congregation Council are disqualified from voting upon the question of the guilt of the accused member. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Congregation Council who are not disqualified but who are present and voting, and renewed admonition prove ineffectual, the council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:

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

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

***C15.04.** The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Congregation Council shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Synod Council. Such right may not be abridged and the decision of the Synod Council shall be final.

***C15.05.** Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Congregation Council upon receipt of a) evidence that injustice has been done or b) evidence of repentance and amendment.

***C15.10. 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.

Chapter 16.

BYLAWS

***C16.01.** This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.

***C16.02.** Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting.

***C16.03.** Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular, or special, Congregation Meeting called for that purpose, and that the Congregation Council notify the members of the proposal with its recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting.

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

Chapter 17.

AMENDMENTS

***C17.01.** Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least 40 voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals from members not members of the congregation council must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at its regular or special meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the members of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.

***C17.02.** A proposed amendment to this constitution shall:

- a. be approved at a legally called meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;
- b. be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting; and
- c. have the effective date included in the resolution. Such an effective date must be stated in relation to the requirements of *C17.03. to allow time for synodical review of the amendment. and noted in the constitution.

***C17.03.** Any amendments to this constitution shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The amendment shall become effective within 120 days from the date of the receipt of the notice by the synod unless the synod informs this congregation that the amendment is in conflict with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or the constitution of the Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod of the ELCA.

***C17.04.** Whenever the Model Constitution for Congregations is amended by the Churchwide Assembly, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a simple majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail notice to the congregation of such an amendment or amendments at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod, consistent with *C17.03.

Chapter 18.

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

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

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

Chapter 19.

INDEMNIFICATION

***C19.01.** Consistent with the provisions of the laws under which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt provisions providing indemnification for each person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a Congregation Council member, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any committee of this congregation, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.

THE BYLAWS

1.00.00 ORGANIZATION AND DEFINITIONS

1.02.01 The word *including* when used herein is not intended to be exclusive and means *including*, without limitation. References herein to a chapter, article, section, subsection or clause shall refer to the appropriate article, section, subsection or clause in the constitution or these Bylaws. All capitalized terms used but not defined herein shall have the meanings set forth in the constitution. In the event of a conflict between the terms of these Bylaws and those of the constitution, the terms of the constitution shall prevail.

10.00.00 CONGREGATION MEETINGS

10.01.01 The annual meeting of the congregation shall be held in the first quarter of the calendar year. The purposes of this meeting shall include adoption of budgets, electing new members of the Council, and addressing such other business as may be brought before it by the Congregation Council.

10.06.01 Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, if invoked shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

11.00.00 OFFICERS

11.01.01 President. The president shall preside at all meetings of the congregation and of the Council. He shall, with the concurrence of the Council, appoint all committees. In the case of a tie vote, except in the election of officers, he shall have a deciding vote.

11.01.02 Vice President. The vice president shall assume the duties of president at any time when the president is absent or unavailable to perform those duties, and shall fill the remainder of the term of the president should the president resign or otherwise be unable to fill the remainder of the term.

11.01.03 Secretary. The secretary shall make and keep an accurate and permanent record of all proceedings at every congregational and Council meeting. The secretary shall hold in safe keeping or otherwise provide for the safe keeping of all records and papers of the congregation of value.

11.01.04 Treasurer. The treasurer as chief financial officer of the congregation and the Congregation Council, shall hold in the name of the congregation and in banks and/or other financial institutions designated by the Council all of the congregation's money, securities and

other negotiable documents of value. The treasurer shall maintain, or have maintained, or direct the keeping of accurate financial records in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. The Treasurer shall make disbursements of church funds upon proper authorization. Regularly budgeted fixed expense items may be paid without specific authorization. Other items require approval of the Council or an authorized representative of the appropriate committee. The treasurer shall present monthly financial reports to the Council and an annual financial report to the Council and the congregation. The Council may appoint an Assistant Treasurer to perform such portions of the treasurer's duties as may be assigned by the Council.

11.02.01 Candidates for president shall have served one year on Council to be eligible for election. Incoming, but not outgoing, Council members are eligible to vote for incoming officers.

12.00.00 CONGREGATION COUNCIL

12.00.01 The Congregation Council shall review and ratify a Church Operations Manual. This Manual shall contain job descriptions for all employees of the congregation, including the pastor, musician, office staff, and custodial-maintenance staff, and such others as may be employed. The Manual shall contain descriptions of operation for each of the standing committees, provisions for dealing with parish records, such fee schedules as may be established by the Council, instructions for volunteers such as ushers, money counters, and acolytes, and such other information as the Council may determine should be included.

12.02.01 No member of the Congregation Council may be elected to succeed him or herself more than once.

12.05.01 The financial records of this church shall be reviewed annually by a certified public accountant or other appropriate person, selected by the Congregation Council. The Congregation Council shall prepare, or cause to be prepared, a complete account of the funds of this church on an annual basis, in such form as may be generally accepted at the time.

12.11.01 Voting by proxy shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of the Congregation Council or of any standing or special committee. The Congregation Council may conduct meetings by telephone, conference call, or over the Internet in unusual circumstances when it would be difficult to use a regular or special meeting of the council, provided the results of said electronic meeting are affirmed at the next regular Council meeting.

13.00.00 CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

13.00.01 The president shall be an ex-officio member of all committees. The pastor is an advisory member of all committees except the Call Committee.

13.02.01 The Nominating Committee shall present to the Council a list of four nominees for election to the Council. The nominees, approved by the Church Council, shall be published to the congregation at least two (2) weeks preceding the annual meeting of the congregation. Additional nominations may be made from the floor immediately preceding the election.

13.06.01 Standing committees may include the following: Stewardship, Finance, Fellowship, Music, Parish Education, Property, Publicity, Spiritual Life, Worship, and Youth Service. Committees may be headed by any voting members of the congregation provided that each committee has as a member at least one member of the Council who shall serve to keep the Council informed of committee activities. The duties of each committee shall be determined by the Council after consultation with the Pastor. Each committee shall designate one of its members as secretary whose responsibility shall be to take minutes of each meeting and make them available to each member of the committee. The Council may establish special committees which shall be constituted and subject to the same restrictions as standing committees. The Council may also establish teams and working groups to address areas traditionally the purview of standing committees when the Council determines that a body less formal than a committee will suffice. The structure and composition of working groups and teams so established, and the mechanism for keeping Council informed of their activities, may be similar to that for committees and shall be determined by Council.

13.06.02 The Council shall through continuing resolutions establish committees, teams, and working groups, as described in 13.06.01, and determine their duties.

19.00.00 INDEMNIFICATION

19.00.01 The Church Council shall assure itself that the treasurer and others who have access to the funds of the congregation are adequately bonded. Bonding shall be at the expense of the congregation.

20.00.00 THE MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND

A Mission Endowment Fund (hereinafter called the "Fund") is established, and the Mission Endowment Fund MEF Committee (hereafter called the "MEF Committee") is the custodian of the Fund.

a. **MEF COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND GOVERNING PROVISIONS**

1. The MEF Committee shall consist of five (5) members, all of whom shall be voting members of this congregation, one of whom shall be the Treasurer of the Congregation Council of Christ Lutheran Church (the "Council"), and another member of the Council who shall be appointed annually to the MEF Committee by majority vote of the Church Council. Except as herein limited the term of each member shall be three (3) years. The nominating committee of the congregation shall nominate candidates for the MEF Committee vacancies and report at the annual congregational meetings in the same manner as for other offices and committees. The congregation shall elect the necessary candidate(s) by majority vote for a term of three (3) years. Candidate(s) receiving the most votes will fill the vacant seat(s). No member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive three (3) year terms. After a lapse of one (1) year, former MEF Committee members may be re-elected. The senior pastor and the president of the Church Council shall be ex officio members of the MEF Committee. In the event of a vacancy on the MEF Committee, the Council shall appoint a member to fill the vacancy to complete the term of the vacancy.
2. The MEF Committee shall meet at least quarterly, or more frequently as deemed by it in the best interest of the Fund. At the MEF Committee meeting to be held during the first (1st) quarter of each year, the MEF Committee shall establish an investment plan for the assets in the Fund, which plan shall be presented to the Council for ratification as set forth herein. At the MEF Committee meeting to be held during the second (2nd) quarter of each year, the MEF Committee shall accept applications, plans of action, presentations or other information from any and all groups, MEF Committees or individuals, outlining the specific uses for the income from the Fund during the following year. At the MEF Committee meeting to be held during the third (3rd) quarter of each year, the MEF Committee shall determine which applications or plans of action will be recommended to receive income from the Fund and the portion of income from the Fund such groups shall receive. These recommendations shall be presented to the Council for approval prior to distribution as set forth herein. At the MEF Committee meeting to be held during the fourth (4th) quarter of each year, the MEF Committee shall prepare for its report to the congregation to be given at the annual meeting.
3. A quorum shall consist of three (3) members. When only three (3) members are

present a unanimous vote shall be required to carry any motion or resolution.

4. The MEF Committee shall elect from its membership a chairperson and a recording secretary and may elect a financial secretary. The chairperson, or member designated by the chairperson, shall preside at all MEF Committee meetings.
5. The recording secretary of the MEF Committee shall maintain complete and accurate minutes of all meetings and supply a copy thereof to each member of the MEF Committee. Each member shall keep a complete copy of minutes to be delivered to his or her successors. The recording secretary shall also supply a copy of the minutes to the Council.
6. The financial secretary or financial advisor of the MEF Committee shall maintain and coordinate complete and accurate accounts for the Fund and together with the congregation's treasurer shall sign checks and all other necessary documents on behalf of the congregation in furtherance of the purposes of the Fund. If the financial secretary of the MEF Committee is the congregation's treasurer, then a second member of the MEF Committee may be designated as co-signer.
7. The MEF Committee shall report on a quarterly basis to the Council and shall render annually a full and complete audited account of the administration of the Fund during the preceding year. The books shall be reviewed annually by a certified public accountant or other appropriate person, selected by the Council, who is not a member of the MEF Committee.
8. The MEF Committee may request other members of the congregation to serve as volunteer advisory members and, at the expense of Fund income, may provide for such professional counseling on investments, accounting, or legal matters as it deems to be in the best interest of the Fund.
9. Members of the MEF Committee shall not be liable for any losses which may be incurred upon the investments of the assets of the Fund except to the extent such losses shall have been caused by bad faith or gross negligence. No member shall be personally liable as long as he or she acts in good faith and with ordinary prudence. Each member shall be liable only for his or her own willful misconduct or omissions, and shall not be liable for the acts or omissions of any other member. No member shall engage in any self dealing or transactions with the Fund in which the member has direct financial interest, and each member shall at all times refrain from any conduct in which his or her personal interests would conflict with the interest of the Fund.
10. All assets are to be held in the name of the Christ Lutheran Church Mission Endowment Fund. Separate account(s) will be established for the Fund.

11. Recommendations to hold, sell, exchange, rent, lease, transfer, convert, invest, reinvest, and in all other respects to manage and control the assets of the Fund, including stocks, bonds, debentures, mortgages, notes, or other securities, as in their judgment and discretion they deem wise and prudent, are to be made by the MEF Committee to the Council and approved by the Council according to the guidelines established by the congregation in the Constitution, with subsequent execution by the delegated member(s) of the MEF Committee.
- b. DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME
 1. The MEF Committee shall determine what is principal and income according to generally accepted accounting principles.
 2. Income from the Fund shall be distributed annually or at such other times as deemed necessary and/or feasible to accomplish the following purposes:
 - aa. Forty percent (40%) for local outreach into the community and synod, including, but not limited to, grants to social service agencies, institutions and agencies to which this congregation relates, and to special programs designed for those persons in our parish area who are in spiritual and/or economic need.
 - bb. Twenty percent (20%) for missions of the congregation in this continent and worldwide, including, but not limited to, grants to the ELCA for new congregational development in North America, professional leadership, educational ministries, global mission, ecumenism, evangelism, social ministries, capital financing, and ELCA seminaries, colleges, or students attending such schools.
 - cc. Thirty percent (30%) for capital reserve and/or improvements or a building program of this church, including, but not limited to, the church building, fixtures, and any other property owned by this church.
 - dd. Ten percent (10%) for the operating budget to be reflected as a separate line item under the income category, which line item shall be described as AMission Endowment Fund.@
 3. Programs for support shall be recommended by the MEF Committee to the Council and approved by the Council for funding according to the guidelines established by paragraph a.2 of these Bylaws.
 4. Disbursement of income from the Fund need not occur annually in the event causes and programs have not been approved by the MEF Committee sufficient to utilize income available, or if in the judgment of the MEF Committee annual

disbursement of income is not recommended.

c. DISTRIBUTION OF PRINCIPAL

1. When the principal of the Fund, as determined by the MEF Committee, reaches an amount equal to two hundred percent (200%) of the principal balance of the Fund as of December 31, 1997, then twenty five percent (25%) of the aggregate principal amount shall be distributed by the MEF Committee, with the approval of the Council and the congregation as provided herein. Thereafter, each time the principal of the Fund, as determined by the MEF Committee, reaches an amount equal to two hundred percent (200%) of the principal balance as of the date of the last distribution of principal other than as provided by paragraph c.2, then twenty five percent (25%) of the aggregate principal amount shall be distributed by the MEF Committee, with the approval of the Council and the congregation as provided herein. The MEF Committee shall give special consideration to making each such distribution of principal to entities or organizations assisting or serving the community.
2. Notwithstanding paragraph c.1, when in the opinion of the MEF Committee circumstances are so dire and of such an emergency nature that the future of the congregation is at stake, and when the only recourse seems to be the use of the Fund principal, the MEF Committee may, upon a majority vote, recommend to the president of the Council to convene an emergency meeting of the Council and recommend such authorizing action to the Council; and the Council, upon a two-thirds majority vote, shall call a special congregational meeting and recommend such authorizing action to the congregation, which action shall be approved by the congregation by a majority vote.

d. DISPOSITION OR TRANSFER OF FUND

In the event Christ Lutheran Church ceases to exist either through merger or dissolution, disposition or transfer of the Fund shall be at the discretion of the Council in conformity with the approved congregational constitution and in consultation with the bishop of the synod to which this congregation belongs at such time. Consultation with the ELCA may be desirable for continuation of Mission Endowment Fund obligations.

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