

# **Congregation Constitution**

## **Our Saviour's Evangelical Lutheran Church**

### **Tyler, Texas**

**January 30, 2011**

#### **\*PREAMBLE**

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

#### **Chapter 1.**

#### **NAME AND INCORPORATION**

**C1.01.** The name of this congregation shall be Our Saviour's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

**C1.02.** For the purposes of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the congregation of Our Saviour's Evangelical Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."

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

#### **Chapter 2.**

#### **CONFESSION OF FAITH**

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

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

- a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.
- b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God'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 North American Lutheran Church, 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 the 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 North American Lutheran Church.
- h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the North American Lutheran Church.
- i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with the 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 the continuing resolutions in the section on the Congregation Council.

## **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 North American Lutheran Church;
- 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 them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution and bylaws and continuing resolutions; and
- i. terminate its relationship with the North American Lutheran Church as provided in Chapter 6.

**\*C5.04.** This congregation shall choose from among its voting members laypersons to serve as delegate to the national meeting of the NALC 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 the North American Lutheran Church.

## **Chapter 6.**

### **CHURCH AFFILIATION**

**\*C6.01.** This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the North American Lutheran Church or its successor. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the North American Lutheran Church.

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

**\*C6.03.** This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the North American Lutheran Church 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 North American Lutheran Church.
- c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the clergy roster of the North American Lutheran Church in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the bishop.
- 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 North American Lutheran Church.

**\*C6.04.** Affiliation with the North American Lutheran Church 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 North American Lutheran Church according to the procedures for discipline of the North American Lutheran Church.
- d. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in \*C6.05.

**\*C6.05.** This congregation may terminate its relationship with the North American Lutheran Church by the following procedure:

- a. The congregation shall consult with the bishop of the North American Lutheran Church

- b. 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.
- c.. A certified copy of the resolution to terminate its relationship shall be sent to the bishop, at which time the relationship between this congregation and the North American Lutheran Church shall be terminated.

**\*C6.06.** If this congregation considers relocation, it shall confer with the bishop.

## **Chapter 7.**

### **PROPERTY OWNERSHIP**

**\*C7.01.** If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall be dispensed to another religious/charitable organization as decided by the congregation.

**\*C7.02.** If this congregation is removed from the membership in the North American Lutheran Church 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, or non-Lutheran body, or become independent, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

## **Chapter 8.**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

**\*C8.01.** Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of this congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its 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, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation.
  - d. Associate members are persons holding membership in other Lutheran congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation, or persons who wish to retain a relationship with this congregation while being members of other congregations. 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, synod, and the churchwide organization of the North American Lutheran Church 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 Congregational 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 North American Lutheran Church 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 North American Lutheran Church,

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 North American Lutheran Church.

**\*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.

**\*C9.05.**

a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which, except in case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated only following consultation with the 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, the bishop in his or her sole discretion may, or when such allegations have been brought 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 with the advice of the committee shall declare the pastorate vacant. Upon the restoration of a disabled pastor to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another 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 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 national church. If either party fails to assent, the congregation may dismiss the pastor at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a simple majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

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 North American Lutheran Church.

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 by the congregation(s).

**\*C9.06.** At the time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the bishop 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 and the Congregation Council. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

**\*C9.11.** With the approval of the bishop, 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 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 the 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 at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the National Convocation, or as requested by the NALC.

## **Chapter 10.**

### **CONGREGATION MEETING**

**C10.01.** The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held in January each year at a time and date determined by the Congregation Council. The annual budget shall be approved and discussion of other business as needed.

**C10.02.** A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of the congregation upon the written request of 25% of the voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.

**C10.03.** Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and 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.** 15% of the 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.

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

## **Chapter 11. OFFICERS**

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

- 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.
- d. If the Congregation Council elects its officers, the president, vice president, and secretary shall be selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council.

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

**C11.03.** No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. No elected officer shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

## **Chapter 12. CONGREGATION COUNCIL**

**C12.01.** The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s), the officers of the congregation, and no fewer than seven (7) members of the congregation. Any voting member of the congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause.

**C12.02.** The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) shall be elected by written ballot at the annual meeting of the congregation. Their term of office shall be for no more than three years with the term of office beginning February 1 following their election. Newly elected Congregation Council members shall be installed during a Sunday Worship service following election and prior to their first council meeting.

**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 election. At the next election a person shall be elected to fill the remainder of the term.

**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 North American Lutheran Church. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:

- a. To lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
- b. To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
- c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
- d. To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling, appointment, or employment.
- e. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
- f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
- g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
- h. To emphasize partnership with the North American Lutheran Church as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran.
- 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 Congregational Council shall be the board of directors of this congregation, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the management of its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Texas, except as otherwise provided herein.
- b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.

- c. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to \$2,500 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 not incur obligations of more than 3% of anticipated receipts without 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 supervision of the salaried lay workers of this congregation.

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

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

**C12.12.** A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the pastor or interim pastor, except when the pastor or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to an agenda or routine matters which shall be the only business of the 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.**

### **CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEES**

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

**C13.02.** A Nominating Committee of six voting members of this congregation, two of whom, if possible, shall be outgoing members of the Congregation 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.

**C13.03.** An Audit Committee of three voting members shall be elected by the Congregational Council. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregational Council. Term of office shall be for three years with one member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for re-election.

**C13.04.** A Mutual Ministry Committee shall be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor. Term of office shall be two years, with three members to be appointed each successive year.

**C13.05.** When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of six voting members shall be appointed by the Congregation Council. Term of office will terminate at installation of the newly-called pastor.

**C13.06.** Other congregational committees may be formed as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council.

**C13.07.** Duties of congregational committees shall be specified in the continuing resolutions.

#### **Chapter 14.**

#### **ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION**

**C14.01.** All organizations within this congregation shall exist to aid in ministering to the members of this congregation and to all persons who can be reached with the Gospel of Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of this congregation's life, the organizations are subject to its oversight and direction. This congregation at its meeting shall determine their policies, guide their activities, and receive reports concerning their membership, work, and finances.

**C14.02.** Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the North American Lutheran Church, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council.

#### **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 follows. A member charged with the offense shall appear before the Congregation Council after having received a written notice, at least ten days prior to the meeting, specifying the exact charges that have been made against the member. If the member charged with the offense fails to appear at the scheduled hearing, the Congregation Council may proceed with the hearing and may pass judgment in the member's absence.

**\*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.

**\*C15.05.** 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.** The dean, bishop, and the Executive Committee of the NALC shall be available to give counsel when disputes arise within this congregation.

**\*C15.11.** Where there is a disagreement among the factions within this congregation on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation shall have access to both the regional dean and the bishop for consultation after informing the chair of the Congregation Council of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to the Court of Adjudication of the NALC, 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 60 voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at its regular or special meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the members of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.

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

- a. be approved at a 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 and noted in the constitution.

## **Chapter 18.**

### **CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

**\*C18.01.** The Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this congregation.

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

## **Chapter 19.**

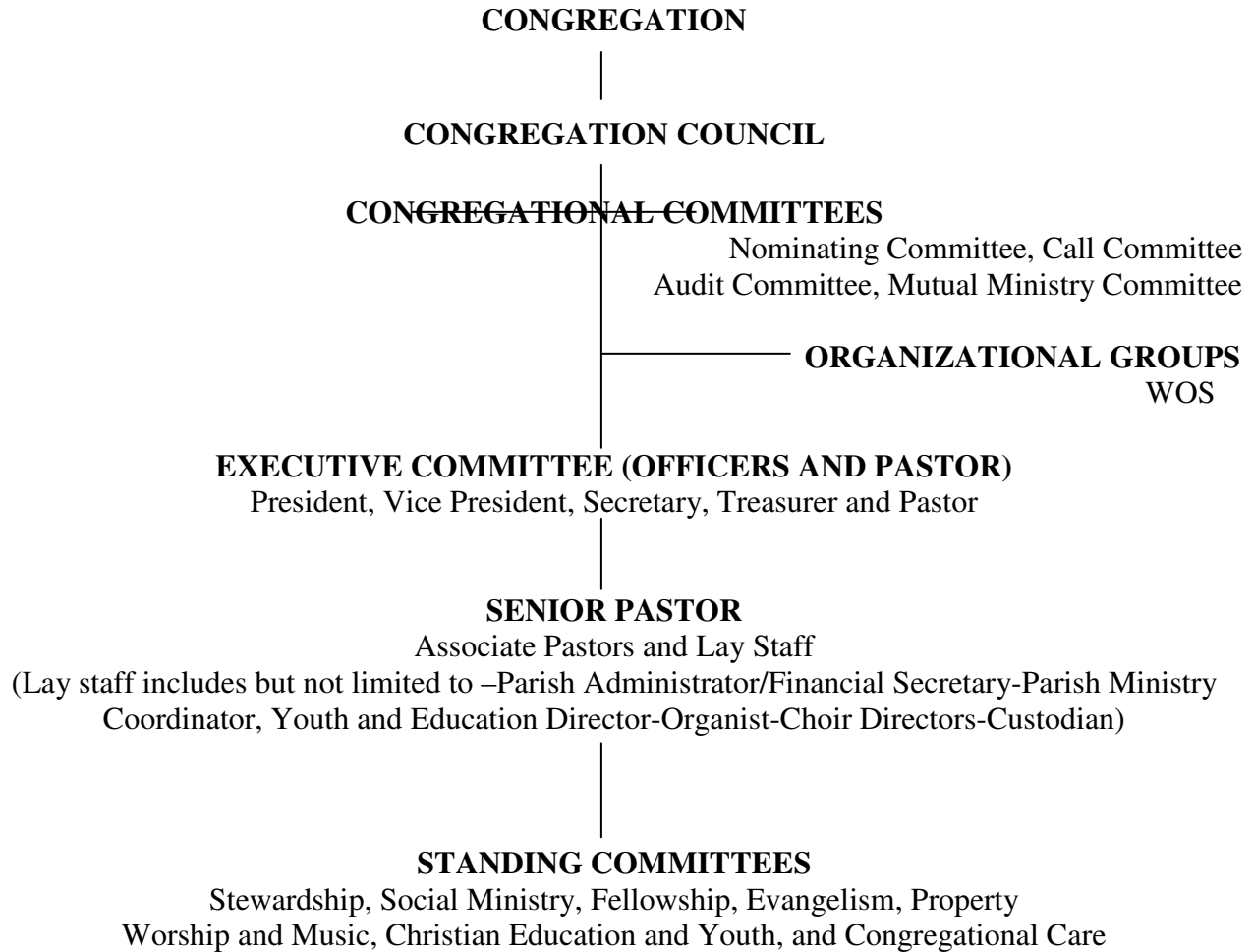
### **INDEMNIFICATION**

**\*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 OF OUR SAVIOUR'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF TYLER, TEXAS**

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE** (Constitution Chapter 4)

### **C4.04.01. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**



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

### **C4.05.01 MISSION STATEMENT**

“Bringing Christ to the people...  
...the people to Christ”

## **MEMBERSHIP** (Constitution Chapter 8)

**C8.02.01.** Applicants presenting Letters of Transfer showing them to be members in good standing in other Lutheran congregations shall become members of this congregation as soon as their Letters have been accepted by the pastor and the Congregation Council acting together. These names shall be reported to the congregation at the annual Congregation Meeting.

**C8.02.02.** Other applicants shall make their requests to the pastor, who, together with the Congregation Council, shall ascertain whether or not the applicants meet the requirements of the Constitution. If found to have met these requirements, such applicants shall be admitted into membership and their names reported at the annual Congregation Meeting.

**C8.02.03.** The senior pastor and/or the Congregation Council shall grant Letters of Transfer.

**C8.05.01.** A member who has not communed, attended worship, or given a gift of record for a period of two consecutive years shall be removed from membership in this congregation due to inactivity. Within two years of being removed from membership due to inactivity those who have not joined another congregation and who desire to rejoin this congregation may do so by communing, attending worship or giving a gift of record and action by congregation council. After two years from removal of membership due to inactivity such persons may rejoin the congregation as described in C8.03

**C8.05.02** In special circumstances persons who would otherwise be removed from membership due to inactivity may request to retain their membership. Special circumstances include but are not limited to, active military duty, students, or persons transferred out of the country by their employer.

## **THE PASTOR** (Constitution Chapter 9)

**C9.01.01.** The terms "pastor" and "pastorate" as used herein shall be both singular and plural, and masculine and feminine, as the case may be.

**C9.04.01** The Congregation Council shall refer to the current synod documentation for call process for congregation councils for procedures on the call process. The president and the council shall agree on the completed letter of call prior to presenting the call to the congregation for final approval and calling of the candidate. Any change in the letter of call after congregational approval shall be returned to the council for proper handling as set forth in the aforementioned synod document. Council minutes shall reflect such approvals for record purposes.

**C9.12.01.** The pastor shall report ministerial acts specified in C9.12 to the congregation annually.

## **CONGREGATIONAL MEETING** (Constitution Chapter 10)

**C10.01.01.** All Congregation Meetings shall open with prayer and shall close with prayer.

**C10.01.02.** The parish administrator shall receive reports from all the organizations and committees of the congregation. Such reports including a financial statement and yearly budget shall be included in the annual report and shall be available to the congregation not less than ten days prior to the meeting.

**C10.01.03.** The order of business at the annual Congregation Meeting shall be:

- a. Prayer
- b. The minutes
- c. The reports of the pastor(s), Congregation Council (including presentation of the budget), treasurer, Audit Committee (Report of previous year's audit and statement that the Audit Committee for this year has met and will complete current year's audit in time for the March council meeting), other reports.
- d. Unfinished business
- e. New business
- f. Election of Nominating Committee and any other elections as deemed necessary at the time
- g. Closing prayer.

**C10.04.01.** The secretary of the congregation shall at each meeting provide the president of the congregation with a correct alphabetical list of the voting members.

**OFFICERS** (Constitution Chapter 11)

**CII.01.01.** Duties of the officers shall be as follows:

- a. The president shall preside at meetings of the congregation, the Executive Committee, and the Congregation Council. The president may represent the congregation in external affairs; may appoint temporary committees; and shall perform such other duties as the congregation shall prescribe, and as are otherwise herein prescribed. In the event of the president's inability to serve, the vice-president shall preside.
- b. The vice-president shall preside at meetings listed above when the president is not available. Whenever the office of president is declared vacant, the vice-president shall serve as acting president until a new president can be elected, at which time the acting president resumes duties as vice-president.
- c. The secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation and the Congregation Council in a volume provided by the congregation which shall be preserved permanently in its archives.
- d. The treasurer shall keep the books of account of the congregation. The treasurer shall receive all funds from the financial secretary and disburse them on proper order, making monthly remittance of benevolence receipts to the treasurer of the synod. The treasurer shall make a written report of all transactions to the

- Congregation Council monthly and to the congregation, together with a satisfactory audit, at its annual meeting.
- e. There may be a financial secretary to aid the treasurer. The financial secretary shall receive and keep records of all income. The financial secretary shall make a written report to the Congregation Council monthly showing all receipts and to the congregation at its annual meeting.
  - f. All financial officers and persons handling or disbursing congregational funds shall be bonded.

**THE CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL** (Constitution Chapter 12)

**C12.04.01.** Each council member shall be the council liaison and the chair or co-chair of one or more of the standing committees. The standing committees are described in the continuing resolutions and designated as follows:

**Worship and Music**  
**Christian Education and Youth**  
**Fellowship**  
**Evangelism**  
**Property**  
**Stewardship**  
**Social Ministry and Christian Service**  
**Congregational Care**

**C12.04.02.** Each council member, as chair or co-chairperson of a standing committee, shall have the power to create such subcommittees as necessary to carry out the duties and responsibilities of their office.

**C12.04.03.** It shall be the duty of the Congregation Council to see to it that the mission of the congregation is not diverted to any uses contrary to its character.

**C12.04.04.** It shall be the duty of the Congregation Council to assist the pastor in the spiritual care of the congregation.

**C12.04.05.** It shall be the duty of the Congregation Council to promote a Christian sense of stewardship among all the members of the congregation, and to that end, the Congregation Council has the authority to accept or reject any gift which, in its opinion, does not further the mission of the congregation.

**C12.04.06.** In the case of a vacancy in the pastor office, the Congregation Council shall make temporary arrangements in consultation with the office of the Bishop for the usual functions of this office in conformity with C9.06.

**C12.05.01.** The Congregation Council shall prepare a proposed budget in October and November for the ensuing year. The proposed budget shall be presented to the congregation at the annual congregational meeting. (RE: C10.01.02)

**C12.08.01.** The pastor shall be responsible for the day-to-day supervision of the salaried lay staff under authority of the Executive Committee.

**C12.09.01** The pastor(s), president, secretary, treasurer, and financial secretary shall submit written reports to this congregation at the annual meeting.

**CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEES** (Constitution Chapter 13)

**C13.02.01.** The **Nominating Committee** shall meet in October prior to the Congregation Meeting per C12.02, and at such other times as needed, to fill vacancies on the Congregation Council. The duties of the Nominating Committee shall be detailed in the continuing resolutions.

**C13.03.01.** The **Audit Committee** shall meet prior to the annual Congregation Meeting for the purpose of beginning the audit of the books of the congregation, and shall present its report to the Council no later than the March council meeting. The duties of the Audit Committee shall be detailed in the continuing resolutions.

**C13.04.01** The congregation will have a **Mutual Ministry Committee**.

**C13.05.01** The **Call Committee** shall meet whenever the congregation by a two-thirds majority ballot votes to call a pastor and forms a Call Committee. The duties of the Call Committee shall be detailed in the continuing resolutions.

**ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION** (Constitution Chapter 14)

**C14.01.01** The chief officer of each of the congregation's schools and organizations shall see that a written report is presented to this congregation at the annual meeting.

**CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS** (Constitution Chapter 18)

**C18.01.01** The Congregation Council may also include in the continuing resolutions the job descriptions of the staff, personnel policies and operational policies.

# **THE CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS OF OUR SAVIOUR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH TYLER, TEXAS**

**For the purposes of these continuing resolutions, the Congregation Council of Our Saviour's Evangelical Lutheran Church is hereafter designated as "the Council."**

**The Council may modify the specific expectations detailed below by modifying these continuing resolutions as future conditions and circumstances dictate. Per C18.02 of the constitution, continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Council.**

## **COUNCIL (Chapter 12)**

### **Resolution 12.04.A2001**

The various committees shall be composed of members of the congregation recruited and enlisted to serve for specific terms of service, although committee members may succeed themselves. The Council shall be responsible for ensuring that each Standing Committee is staffed.

### **Resolution 12.04.B2001**

Each committee shall meet regularly in order to carry out its assigned business. The chair of each Standing Committee shall publish the regular meeting time and location in the congregation newsletter and announcements. Each Standing Committee shall submit a report of its activities at each regular meeting of the Council and at the Annual Meeting of the congregation. Such reports shall include specific recommendations (if any) for council or congregational action and/or approval.

### **Resolution 12.04.C2001**

Each Standing Committee shall be empowered to administer all funds set aside for its work by budget appropriation or by special resolution of the congregation at its annual meeting. The Council, at its discretion, to conform to the actual financial condition at any given time may restrict these funds.

### **Resolution 12.04.D2001**

The **Worship and Music Committee** shall be responsible for planning and conducting of the worship services of the congregation.

The Worship and Music Committee shall consist of lay members including one council member as chair or co-chair of the committee. The senior pastor and associate pastor for Hispanic Ministry shall be ex-officio members of this committee.

The basic purpose of this committee is the oversight and planning for worship activities in the congregation, guidance of the musicians and directors and care for worship appointments and



furnishings. The committee may carry out the duties of this committee either corporately or through specifically designated individuals. Committee guidelines, suggestions and general operation of previous committees may be obtained from the procedure manual located in the church office.

The committee shall submit a yearly budget and prepare an annual report to the congregation to be given to the parish administrator the first week of December each year.

#### **Resolution 12.04.E2001**

The **Christian Education and Youth Committee** shall be responsible for supervising the youth and adult programs and the educational work in the congregation including Sunday school, Vacation Bible school and such other programs and agencies as the congregation may have established for the purpose of Christian education and youth activities. It shall also elect the superintendent of the Sunday school and appoint the teachers and officers of the Sunday school and Vacation Bible school.

The Christian Education and Youth Committee shall consist of lay members, including one council member as chair or co-chair of the committee. The pastors shall be ex-officio members of the committee.

The basic purposes for this committee are to plan and administer the total educational program of the congregation and to involve the young people of the congregation in the work of Christ and to provide for their spiritual growth and nurture through fellowship, service and activity. To determine policies, to recruit and select superintendents, teachers, music leaders and helpers for the Sunday school, Vacation Bible school, confirmation classes, bible study groups and all other congregation sponsored educational activities and groups. To provide the necessary means and facilities for the various agencies, and to direct and supervise the entire education and youth program of the congregation.

The Christian Education and Youth Committee shall work with the pastors of the congregation to promote and foster spiritual growth and congregational encouragement to the young people of our congregation. The committee may carry out the duties of this committee either corporately or through specifically designated individuals or sub-committees. Committee guidelines, suggestions and general operation of previous committees may be obtained from the procedure manual located in the church office.

The committee shall submit a yearly budget and prepare an annual report to the congregation to be given to the parish administrator the first week of December each year.

#### **Resolution 12.04.F2001**

The **Fellowship Committee** shall be responsible for coordinating the church-related activities of the congregation, as well as representing the congregation in community affairs.

The Fellowship Committee shall consist of lay members including one council member as chair or co-chair of the committee. The senior pastor and the associate pastors shall serve as ex-officio members of this committee.

The basic purposes of this committee are the strengthening of the fellowship between congregation members spiritually and socially. Also to promote integration of new members into the life of the congregation, and build mutual cooperation, trust and enjoyment among the members of the congregation.

The committee may carry out the duties of this committee either corporately or through specifically designated individuals. Committee guidelines, suggestions and general operation of previous committees may be obtained from the procedure manual located in the church office.

The committee shall submit a yearly budget and prepare an annual report to the congregation to be given to the parish administrator the first week of December each year.

#### **Resolution 12.04.G2001**

The **Evangelism Committee** shall be responsible for assisting the pastorate in ministering to the spiritual growth of this congregation, through prospective member calls, visitation with congregation members, and other forms of one-on-one contact.

The Evangelism Committee shall consist of lay members, including one council member as chair or co-chair of the committee. The senior pastor and associate pastor for Hispanic Ministry shall be ex-officio members of this committee.

The basic purposes of this committee are the bringing of the Gospel to the unchurched, the enlistment of all of God's people in the work of the spreading of the Gospel, the deepening of the faith and activity of the members of this congregation.

The Evangelism Committee shall work with the pastors of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church to foster a climate of evangelism in the congregation. To encourage all members to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ and with each other and to invite non-members and those who are unchurched to participate in the life of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church.

The Committee may carry out the duties of this committee either corporately or through specifically designated individuals. Committee guidelines, suggestions and general operation of previous committees may be obtained from the procedure manual located in the church office.

The committee shall submit a yearly budget and prepare an annual report to the congregation to be given to the parish administrator the first week of December each year.

#### **Resolution 12.04.H2001**

The **Property Committee** shall be responsible for managing the property affairs of the congregation, looking after the maintenance and upkeep of the church property, including buildings, grounds, and equipment in accordance with the orders and directives of the Council.

The Property Committee shall consist of lay members, including one council member as chair or co-chair.

The basic purpose of this committee is the proper maintenance and repair of church property. To work with the Council on legal matters pertaining to the real property of the congregation and the general protection of the congregation against loss or damage of whatever nature.

The committee may carry out the duties of this committee either corporately or through specifically designated individuals. Committee guidelines, suggestions and general operation of previous committees may be obtained from the procedure manual located in the church office.

The committee shall submit a yearly budget and prepare an annual report to the congregation to be given to the parish administrator the first week of December each year.

#### **Resolution 12.04.I2001**

The **Stewardship Committee** shall be responsible for conducting the yearlong financial stewardship program of the church, including coordination of the Annual Stewardship Drive.

The Stewardship Committee shall consist of lay members including one council member as chair or co-chair of the committee. The chairperson shall also serve as a member of the Budget Committee.

11/13/2011 The senior pastor and treasurer shall be ex-officio members of this committee.

The basic purposes of this committee are the initiation of programs for the development of good stewardship attitudes in the members of the congregation in regard to time, talents and economic resources. To provide for the training and utilization of members of the congregation for the work of Christ's kingdom; and to ensure the financial stability of the congregation through annual programs that encourage intentional, proportionate, first fruits giving, and tithing.

The Stewardship Committee shall work with the pastors of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church to promote stewardship of time, talent and economic resources of the members of the church.

The committee may carry out the duties of this committee either corporately or through specifically designated individuals. Committee guidelines, suggestions and general operation of previous committees may be obtained from the procedure manual located in the church office.

The committee shall submit a yearly budget and prepare an annual report to the congregation to be given to the parish administrator the first week of December each year.

#### **Resolution 12.04.J2001**

The **Social Ministry Committee** shall be responsible for assisting the pastorate in its ministry to those outside this congregation, for the sake of the Gospel, through the various missions and outreach projects and programs of the church.

The Social Ministry Committee shall consist of lay members including one council member as chair or co-chair of the committee. The senior pastor and the associate pastors shall be ex-officio members of this committee.

The basic purpose of this committee is to keep the mission and outreach projects in the hearts and minds of the congregation. The committee is funded annually the same amount as the benevolence given to the synod as authorized and budgeted by the Council.

The committee may carry out the duties of this committee either corporately or through specifically designated individuals. Committee guidelines, suggestions and general operation of previous committees may be obtained from the procedure manual located in the church office.

The committee shall submit a yearly budget and prepare an annual report to the congregation to be given to the parish administrator the first week of December each year.

#### **Resolution 12.04.K2001**

The **Congregational Care Committee** shall be responsible for assisting the pastorate in ministering to the care of this congregation, through visitation with congregation members, and other forms of one-on-one contact.

The Congregation Care Committee shall consist of lay members, including one council member as chair or co-chair of the committee. The senior pastor, the associate pastor for Hispanic Ministry and the parish ministry coordinator shall be ex-officio members of this committee.

The basic purpose of this committee is to provide Christian care for our congregation.

The Committee may carry out the duties of this committee either corporately or through specifically designated individuals. Committee guidelines, suggestions and general operation of previous committees may be obtained from the procedure manual located in the church office.

The committee shall submit a yearly budget and prepare an annual report to the congregation to be given to the parish administrator the first week of December each year.

**12.05.A2001** Two signatures of the four non-clergy members of the Church Council or designees of the Church Council are necessary to withdraw any money from Our Saviour's Evangelical Lutheran Church bank accounts.

**12.08.A2001** The Senior Pastor shall be responsible for the supervision of the parish administrator/financial secretary and the parish ministry coordinator. If concerns arise that the pastor needs a consensus of opinion on or guidance interpreting policy he/she shall take these concerns to the Executive Committee. It is intended that the pastor and the Executive Committee work in harmony to run a smooth well informed office.

**12.11.A2001**

Minutes of the Council meetings may be put in the congregation member mail box and a copy of the minutes shall be posted in a public place following a council meeting.

**13.01.A2001** The Executive Committee may act for the Council in the interim between regular council meetings where emergencies or time limitations prevent action by the full council and when action is not inconsistent with established policy. All action taken by the Executive Committee shall be specifically reported at the next regular council meeting.

**13.02.A2001** The members of the Nominating Committee and the nominees shall be regular worshippers and contributors to Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. In this case regular worship is said to be 20 or more times a year.

The pastor shall serve as advisor to the Nominating Committee but he shall not be a member of the committee, and nominations by the committee shall never be subject to his approval.

The Nominating Committee shall nominate one or more candidates to serve as council members as needed. A list of all nominees shall be posted in the narthex of the church at least fifteen days prior to the date of the election. At the election, additional nominations may be offered from the floor.

**13.03.A2001** It is preferable that the individuals selected for the Audit Committee have had training in accounting procedures.

The task of the committee is to ensure that the finances of the congregation are in good order and to protect the members of the congregation.

In general the Audit Committee will examine and review all accounts and records. They will examine all insurance policies and prepare a schedule of the insurance coverage. They will inspect and examine securities and investments and prepare a schedule of the securities and investments.

The chairman of the Audit Committee will report their findings in writing to the Council with supporting schedules and recommendations for change and improvement. Recommendations by the auditors shall be reviewed and if accepted by the Council passed on to the appropriate person for implementation.

The Council will review the audit and the pastor and the chief lay officer (president) of the congregation will certify by signing the Certification of Audit of Financial Records of Congregation.

**13.04.A2001** The Mutual Ministry Committee shall meet with the ministerial staff of the church yearly, and at such other times as needed, to discuss topics of mutual concern. A written report of these meetings will be given to the Council for review. The primary purpose of the committee is to affirm and strengthen the mission of the congregation and the ministry of the ordained staff.

**13.05.A2001** The Call Committee should be formed after the interim pastor is in place and has had an opportunity to evaluate any special needs the church may need to consider in the calling of a new pastor. The Call Committee shall seek the advice and help of the bishop. The bishop assistant and the dean of the conference are counselors and resources for the Call Committee as it goes about its work.

**13.06.A2001** The various committees shall be composed of members of the congregation recruited and enlisted to serve for specific terms of service, although in some committees members may succeed themselves. The Council shall be responsible for ensuring that each Congregation Committee is staffed with the required number of members.

**13.06.B2001** Each Congregational Committee shall meet as necessary in order to carry out its assigned business. Each Congregational Committee shall submit a report to the Council and at the Annual Meeting of the congregation. Such reports shall include specific recommendations (if any) for council or congregational action and/or approval.