

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
of Greensburg, Pennsylvania
Charter and Bylaws

CHARTER

As amended by the Congregation January 20, 1954. Approved by the Court February 26, 1954, Recorded March 1, 1954 in the Recorder's Office of Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania in Corporation Docket No. 29, Page 487.

1. That the name of the corporation is "FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF GREENSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA".

2. That the location and post office address of its registered office in this Commonwealth is 246 South Main Street, City of Greensburg, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania.

3. The purpose or purposes of the corporation are: To support public worship in accordance with the doctrines, faith, discipline, and usages of the United Lutheran Church in America, its successor or successors. All instructions shall be imparted and all questions of doctrine shall be decided in accordance with the only infallible rule of faith and practice, to wit: The Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament Scriptures constituting the Word of God as the same is set forth, exhibited and defended in the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, namely, the three Ecumenical Creeds; the unaltered Augsburg Confession, and its Apology; the Articles of Smalcald; the smaller and larger Catechisms of Luther; and the formula of Concord.

4. The term of its existence is perpetual.

5. The Council of the corporation shall consist of the Pastor or Pastors and Deacons who shall hold their respective offices until their successors are regularly elected or appointed, and installed; except, that in case of resignation, retirement, or removal of any Pastor or Deacon at any time, his membership on the Council shall immediately cease and determine.

6. The corporation and its Pastor or Pastors shall always belong to the Synod connected with The United Lutheran Church in America, its successor or successors.

7. The corporation shall have power to purchase, take, receive, lease as lessee, take by gift, devise or bequest, or otherwise acquire, and to own, hold, use, and otherwise deal with any real or personal property, or any interest therein, situated in or out of this Commonwealth, which may be appropriate to enable it to accomplish fully and properly its corporate purposes; to sell and convey, lease as lessor, and otherwise dispose of all or any part of its property and assets; to borrow money for any or all of the purposes for which it is organized, to issue its promissory notes, bonds, or other forms of certificates of indebtedness, for the repayment thereof, with interest, and to secure any of its obligations by mortgage, pledge, or deed of trust of or on any of, its property and income: Provided, however, that the corporation shall not borrow money, or purchase, sell, lease away, or otherwise dispose of any real estate, or erect any building or buildings, unless and until a resolution authorizing the same shall be approved by two-thirds of the qualified voters of the corporation present at a regular or special meeting of the corporation, duly convened upon proper notice of this purpose.

8. The Council shall have power to enact and enforce such By-Laws and Ordinances as it may deem proper for the regulation and transaction of the business of the corporation.

9. No application for a change in the Articles of Incorporation shall be made unless and until a resolution authorizing the same shall have been approved by two-thirds of the qualified voters of the corporation present at a regular or special meeting of the corporation, duly convened upon proper notice of this purpose: Provided, however, that no change shall ever be made in the Doctrinal basis as set forth in Paragraph 3 herein.

CONSTITUTION

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH of Greensburg, Pennsylvania Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, 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.

NAME AND INCORPORATION

- C1.01.** The name of this congregation shall be First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Greensburg, Pennsylvania.
- C1.02.** For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the congregation of First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Greensburg, Pennsylvania is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."
- C1.11.** This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Pennsylvania.

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,

* Required provision

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 Scripture 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.
- *C3.03. The name **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or "this church")** as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three expressions—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America** is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.

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 church-wide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with church-wide 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.

***C4.06.** References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God's mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

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. adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in Chapter 17, amendments to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 16, and continuing resolutions as provided in Chapter 18.
- e. approve the annual budget;
- f. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;

- g. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
- h. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
- i. elect its Congregation Council, and require the members of council to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions; and
- j. 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 the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Chapter 6.

CHURCH AFFILIATION

***C6.01.** This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the Southwestern Pennsylvania 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. **These special circumstances are limited either to calling a candidate approved for the roster of ordained ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or to contracting for pastoral services with an ordained minister of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion.**
- 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.¹ Since 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.

***C6.05** A congregation may terminate its relationship with this church by the following procedure:

- a. A resolution indicating the intent to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of the congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present. Such meeting may be held no sooner than 30 days after written notice of the meeting is received by the bishop of the synod, during which time the congregation shall consult with the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any. The times and manner of the consultation shall be determined by the bishop in consultation with the congregation council. Unless he or she is a voting member of the congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the meeting.
- b. The secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of the congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted.
- c. The bishop of the synod and the congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph a. above, during a period of at least 90 days after receipt by the synod of the notice as specified in paragraph b. above.
- d. If the congregation, after such consultation, still seeks to terminate its relationship, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members and to the bishop at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Unless he or she is voting member of the congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the meeting.
- e. A copy of the resolution, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and

¹ This provision is to be used in the constitutions of all congregations that formerly were a part of the Lutheran Church in America, in accord with provision 9.62.g. in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

certifying the outcome of the vote, shall be sent to the bishop within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted, at which time the relationship between the congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to paragraphs g., h., and i. below. Unless this notification to the bishop also certifies that the congregation has voted by a two-thirds vote to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, the congregation will be conclusively presumed to be an independent or non-Lutheran church.

- f. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the bishop to the secretary of this church, who shall report the termination to the Churchwide Assembly.
- g. Congregations seeking to terminate their relationship with this church which fail or refuse to comply with each of the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., shall be required to receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.
- h. Congregations which had been members of the Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to receive synodical approval before terminating their membership in this church.
- i. Congregations established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05, to satisfy all financial obligations to this church and receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.
- j. If a congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at the congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above, another special meeting to consider termination of relationship with this church may be called no sooner than six months after that first meeting. If a congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at the congregation's second meeting as specified in paragraph d. above, another attempt to consider termination of relationship with this church must follow all requirements of *C6.05. and may begin no sooner than six months after that second meeting.

***C6.06.** If this congregation considers relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate program unit of the church wide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is affected.

***C6.07.** If this congregation considers developing an additional site to be used for worship, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate program units of the church-wide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action.

Chapter 7.

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

***C7.01.** If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the Southwestern Pennsylvania 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, **provided the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05 has been followed.** Before this congregation takes action to transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod.

***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 **and have followed the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05.**, title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with this congregation by the established synodical process, 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, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of the congregation.
- 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, 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, the synod, and the church wide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.

***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 this congregation 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 Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the EL CA.
- *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) t h e p h y s i c a l o r m e n t a l i n c a p a c i t y o f t h e p a s t o r ;

- 5) disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty;
 - 6) the dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; 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 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 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. **Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.**
- *C9.08.** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting related to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- *C9.09.** 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.
- *C9.14.** The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of the congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his or her hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another field of labor or the granting by the synod of retired status to the pastor.

Chapter 10.

CONGREGATION MEETING

- C10.01.** The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.
- C10.02.** A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of the congregation upon the written request of 50 of the voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.
- C10.03.** Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and 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. **Electronic notice of meetings may be provided in addition to notice by regular mail.**
- C10.04.** Fifty (50) voting members shall constitute a quorum.
- C10.05.** Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- C10.06.** All actions approved by the congregation shall be by majority vote of those voting members present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution or by state law.
- C10.07.** *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. If the treasurer is not selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council, the treasurer shall have voice but not vote at the meetings of the Congregation Council.

C11.02. The officers shall be elected by the Congregation Council and they shall serve for one year and they shall be the officers of the congregation. The election shall be held at the regular December Congregation Council meeting. Those council members newly elected the preceding November shall be permitted to cast a vote for the election of officers for the upcoming year, but shall have no other voting privileges prior to their installation. Newly elected officers shall assume their offices on January 1 and end on December 31.

C11.03. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. The president, vice-president, and secretary shall not 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) and not more than 12 members of the congregation. Any voting member of the congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause. Consistent with the laws of the state in which this congregation is incorporated, the congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.

C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) shall be elected at a legally called meeting of the congregation during the month of November. Their term of office shall be for 3 years, with the term of office beginning on January 1st and ending on December 31st. Newly elected Congregation Council members shall be installed at worship the Sunday prior to the date they assume office. **No Congregation Council member shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive three-year terms.**

C 12.03. 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 regularly scheduled election by the congregation.

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 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 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 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 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, except as otherwise provided herein.
- b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, encumber, or receive 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 an amount equaling 1/4 of current expenses during the preceding year for items not included in the budget.
- d. The Congregation Council shall prepare and adopt an annual budget for approval by this congregation, and shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its approval. The Congregation Council has the authority to transfer budgeted funds and may expend up to 5% in excess of the budgeted expenditures. 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 church-wide 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.
- g. The Congregation Council shall nominate trustees for approval by the congregation pursuant to the provisions of the Trust Agreement.

C12.06. The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution and 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 staff** of this congregation. **Nothing in this provision shall be deemed to affect the congregation's responsibility for the call, terms of call, or termination of call of any employees who are on a roster of this church.**
- C12.09.** 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 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, **the immediate past president and the pastor(s)** shall constitute the *Executive Committee*.
- C13.02.** **A Nominating Committee** shall consist of five voting members of this congregation, two of whom shall be members of, and appointed by, the Congregation Council. The remaining three shall be elected at the annual meeting. The term shall be for one year. Members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible for consecutive reelection. The nominating committee shall present one nominee for each Congregation Council vacancy to be filled. The committee shall also present three nominees for membership on the Nominating Committee at the Annual Meeting.
- C13.03.** An *Audit Committee* of three **or more** voting members shall be elected **annually** by the Congregation Council. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council. Members shall be eligible for reelection.
- 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.** Other committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council.
- C13.07.** Except as stipulated in the following paragraphs, the duties of all committees shall be assigned by the Congregation Council, along with such instructions as in its judgment are in the best interests of the congregation. All actions of the committees shall be subject to review by the council.
- C13.08.** The pastor(s) of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of the congregation. The president of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of the congregation, except the Nominating Committee.
- C13.09.** There shall be a board of three Trustees to manage the *Trust Funds*, whose terms and responsibilities are specified by the Amended and Restated Trust Agreement of 2004.

Chapter 14.

ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

- C14.01.** All organizations within this congregation shall exist to aid it in ministering to the members of this

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

- C14.02.** Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 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 prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. If discipline against a member proceeds beyond counseling and admonition by the pastor, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing shall be prepared by member(s) of the congregation who shall sign the charges as the accuser(s). The written charges shall be filed with the pastor, who shall advise the Congregation Council of the need to issue a written citation to the accused and the accusers that specifies the time and place of the hearing before the Congregation Council. The written charges shall accompany the written citation to the accused. The written citation that specifies the time and place of the hearing before the Congregation Council and requests the presence of a member charged with the offense shall be sent at least ten days prior to the meeting. 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.
- *C15.04.** 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.
- *C15.06.** For disciplinary actions in this congregation, "due process" shall be observed as specified in 20.41.04. in the

Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

- *C15.07. No member of a congregation shall be subject to discipline for offenses that the Congregation Council has previously heard and decided, unless so ordered by the Synod Council after an appeal.
- *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 **shall** notify the congregation's members by mail of the proposal with the council's 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. Unless provision *C17.04. is applicable, those sections of this constitution that are not required, in accord with the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be amended in the following manner. Amendments may be proposed by at least 50 of the voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the congregation's members by mail of the proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.
- *C17.02. An amendment to this constitution, proposed under *C17.01., shall:
 - a. be approved at a legally called Congregation 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 resolution² and noted in the constitution.
- *C17.03. Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in *C17.01. and *C17.02.

² Such an effective date must be stated in relation to the requirements of *C1 7.03. to allow time for synodical review of the amendment.

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 Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA.

- *C17.04. This constitution may be amended to bring any section into conformity with a section or sections, either required or not required, of the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*—as most recently amended by the Church-wide Assembly. **Such amendments may be approved** by a simple majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called 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, together with the council's recommendations, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of fifty (50) voting members of the congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following a vote of approval.

Chapter 18.

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

- *C18.01. The congregation in a legally called meeting or the Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this congregation.
- *C18.02. Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a majority vote of a meeting of the congregation or 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.

Chapter 20.

PARISH AUTHORIZATION

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

- *C20.01. This congregation may unite in partnership with one or more other congregations recognized by the synod named in *C6.01. to form a parish. Except as provided in *C20.02. and *C20.03., a written agreement, developed in consultation with the synod and approved by the voting members of each congregation participating in the parish, shall specify the powers and responsibilities that have been delegated to a Parish Council.
- *C20.02. Whenever a letter of call is being recommended for extension to an ordained minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of ordained ministers who has been recommended to the congregation by the synodical bishop to serve the congregations of a parish, such letter of call shall be first approved by a two-thirds vote at congregational meetings of each of the congregations forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve extending

this call, the other congregation(s) in the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish arrangement.

- ***C20.03.** Any one of the congregations of a parish may terminate the call of a pastor as provided in †S14.13.d. of the synodical constitution of the synod named in *C6.01. In such case, the other congregation(s) in the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish arrangement.
- ***C20.04.** Whenever a parish arrangement is terminated, the call of any rostered person serving that parish is terminated. Should any congregation that formerly was part of the parish arrangement desire to issue a new call to that rostered person, it may do so in accordance with the call process of this church.

BY-LAWS

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH of Greensburg, Pennsylvania Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

Chapter 1.

NAME AND INCORPORATION

C1.01.01 The seal of this congregation shall be circular in form presenting a cross; above this central motif is to be the legend "Organized 1784"; below the central motif is to be "Incorporated 1871"; the name "First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Greensburg, PA" shall encircle the central motif and comprise the outer edge of the seal.

Chapter 5.

POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

C5.03.01 The congregation is authorized to elect its trustees and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the trust agreement.

Chapter 11.

OFFICERS

C11.02.01 The election shall be held at the regular December Congregation Council meeting. Those council members newly elected the preceding November shall be permitted to cast a vote for the election of officers for the upcoming year, but shall have no other voting privileges prior to their installation. Newly-elected officers shall assume their offices on January 1 and end on December 31.

C11.03.01 The president and secretary shall not be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

Chapter 12.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.02.01 Non-voting members of the congregation council may be appointed at the discretion of the council, and will be identified in continuing resolutions.

Chapter 13.

CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

C13.02.01 The *Nominating Committee* shall present one nominee for each Congregation Council vacancy to be filled. The committee shall also present three nominees for membership on the *Nominating Committee* at the Annual Meeting. (To be deleted.)

C13.06.01 At its first meeting in each calendar year, the Congregation Council shall appoint as many standing committees as the local and wider concerns of the congregation shall require. Each such committee shall be composed of one or more members of the council and, in addition, other confirmed members of the congregation.

- C13.06.02** Although appointed by and responsible to the Congregation Council, these committees shall be recognized as representative of the interests of, and performing essential services for, the congregation as a whole. The pastor shall have voice and vote in all committees.
- C13.07.01** There shall be a committee on *Christian Education*. This committee, in association with the pastor, shall oversee the conduct of all educational activities of the congregation. It shall encourage the use of teaching and worship materials published or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and seek to introduce the church's periodicals and books of family devotion into the homes of the congregation. One of the primary aims of this committee shall be to bring the call to the ministry of the Gospel and other fulltime church vocations to the attention of qualified youth of the congregation.
- C13.07.02** There shall be a Committee on *Church Property*. This committee shall see to the proper maintenance and protection of all property of the congregation and shall take care that the same is kept in good repair.
- C13.07.03** There shall be a Committee on *Evangelism*. This committee shall stimulate and lead all members of the congregation in witness and outreach. To this end, the committee shall devote itself to deepening spiritual life and shall periodically study the congregation in the context of its surrounding community.
- C13.07.04** There shall be a *Finance* Committee, of which the treasurer shall be a member *ex officio*. It shall prepare a draft budget for the succeeding year, and shall submit the draft budget to the Congregation Council for its action. The committee shall exercise oversight of all the financial affairs of the congregation to make sure that they are being conducted efficiently. It shall, subject to the approval of the Congregation Council, be responsible for the congregation's total insurance program and investments, exclusive of the Trust Fund. It shall also provide nominees for the annual audit committee to the Congregation Council.
- C13.07.05** There shall be a Committee on *Social Ministry*. The purpose of this committee shall be to extend Christian compassion and helpfulness to those in need. It shall strive to enlist all members of the congregation in these efforts. This committee shall further have the duty to study social conditions, primarily in the local community, to seek justice and provide service and ministry in Christ's name.
- C13.07.06** There shall be a Committee on *Stewardship*. It shall be the function of this committee to promote the expression of Christian faith in daily living, to teach the Christian use of all of God's gifts, to educate the congregation on local, national and worldwide ministries, and to lead all its members to higher levels of proportionate giving for the Lord's work. This committee shall also be responsible for the every member response.
- C13.07.07** There shall be a Committee on *Worship and Music*. It shall insure that worship services are conducted regularly and in accordance with the liturgy of the church.
- C13.07.08** There shall be a Committee on *Personnel*. It shall foster parish/personnel relations, and make appropriate recommendations to the Congregation Council regarding employment of personnel.
- C13.07.09** There shall be a committee on *Fellowship* to help foster and create true community as we worship together, plan service to our neighbors together, study Christian teachings together and share our lives together.
- C13.07.10** There shall be a committee on *Youth Ministry* dedicated to helping youth integrate with the total life of the congregation.
- C13.07.11** There shall be a committee on *Information Technology* to review, update, and recommend new technology for use by the Church staff and committees and provide and recommend training as needed for the Church staff. This committee also manages the church's website.
- C13.07.12** There shall be a *Preschool Committee* to oversee the management of the preschool and make recommendations to the Congregational Council concerning its management. The Preschool Committee shall consist of five members: the preschool director, one pastor, a member of the Congregational Council, and two members elected at large from the Congregation. The members

elected at large shall serve a two-year term and be eligible to serve up to three consecutive terms. The at large members will be nominated by the Congregational Council, and one will be elected each year at the annual Congregation meeting.

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH of Greensburg, Pennsylvania Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

Chapter 10.

CONGREGATION MEETING

C10.01.A. The annual Congregational meeting shall be held on the last Sunday in January.

Chapter 11.

OFFICERS

C11.01.A93. Duties of Officers

- a. The president shall preside at meetings of the congregation and the church council. In the event of the president's inability to serve, the vice-president shall preside.
- b. The secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation and of the council in a volume provided by the congregation, which shall be preserved permanently in its archives.
- c. The assistant secretary, if any, shall, in the absence or disability of the secretary perform the duties and exercise the powers of the secretary.
- d. The financial secretary, if such an office is activated, shall receive and keep record of all income from contributing members and other sources.
- e. The treasurer shall keep the books of account of the congregation; and shall receive all funds and disburse them on proper orders, making monthly remittance of benevolence receipts to the treasurer of the synod. The treasurer shall make written report of all financial transactions to the church council monthly and to the congregation, together with a satisfactory audit, at its annual meetings.

Chapter 12.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.02.A. The Parish Visitor shall be a non-voting member of the Congregational Council. (To be deleted.)

C12.05.A. The individual responsible for a budget line item (key person) must obtain council approval before that line item can exceed its budget for a given year. If an increase is needed in a budget line, council should attempt to offset it with a decrease in another budget line, if possible. (Congregation Council Action 3/7/89)

C12.05.B. Purchase orders for all anticipated expenditures in excess of \$750 are to receive approval by, council prior to placing the order. (Congregation Council Action 3/7/89). (Amended 2012).

C12.05.C. Rental income shall be used to underwrite the program budget. (Congregation Council Action 3/7/89)

C12.05.D. Maintain a minimum contribution for general benevolence in an amount equal to 20% of the congregation's annual budget, and to annually identify designated special benevolence ministries that would receive an additional expenditure in an amount equal to 5% of the annual budget. (Congregation Council Action 1/23/98) The percentage amounts for benevolence and special benevolence are calculated on the budget without these benevolence amounts included in the budget total. (Congregation Council Action 11/03/09).

C12.05.E. The Congregation Council shall create and maintain an approved listing of "Memorial Gift" items for selection by individuals or families desiring to identify a memorial purchase. As needed, the Executive Committee may assist the Pastors in matters relating to memorials and provide guidance to council. In keeping with the congregation's Trust Fund Agreement, it is understood that memorial gifts are normally placed in the Trust Fund as a memorial in perpetuity, with the exception of those families or individuals who indicate their desire for the congregation to make a specific purchase from offerings received in memory of their loved one. (Congregation Council Action 3/6/01)

C12.05.F. It shall be the policy of the congregation that multiple quotes (two or more) shall be obtained for all contractual work that would exceed 15% of the congregation's operating expenses. The operating expenses shall be that total amount incurred by the church during the year prior to the one in which the contract is proposed. It shall also be the policy of the congregation that a single source quote in excess of 15% of the said operating expenses may be accepted so long as the church council is informed of any and all reasons for a single source quote and approves it. When multiple quotes are considered for any contract, it shall be the policy of the church that neither the council nor the congregation will be bound to accept the lowest quote. (Congregation Council Action 5/6/08)

Chapter 13.

CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

C13.07.A. The yearly goals and objectives of each committee shall be contained in the council committee handbook.

C13.07.B. The flag of the United States of America, together with the Christian flag, shall be properly displayed at all times in the nave of the church as a token of gratitude to the memory of those members who have served, bled and died to protect the right of the members of this congregation to worship God with the freedom that we hold dear. The flags shall not be removed for any reason other than cleaning or replacement. (Congregation Council Action 2/3/98)

C13.09.A. Reserves from the Building & Repair Funds shall be budgeted only for capital improvements, custodial salaries, utilities, and building needs as deemed necessary by council recommendation and congregational action with the exception of an annual distribution to the program budget in an amount not to exceed \$4,000 over the cost of providing housing allowance to the Pastoral Staff. (Congregation Council Action 3/7/89, amended 3/7/95, amended 3/4/03)

C13.09.B. Trust Fund Income transfers to the program budget shall not exceed the annual anticipated income, except for special benevolence ministries identified by church council action. (Congregation Council Action 3/7/89) To be deleted.

C13.09B Each committee shall hold an election for the selection of a committee chairman annually and the Council Liaison to each committee shall be responsible for reporting this action and the result to the Congregation Council no later than the February Congregation Council meeting of each year.

C13.09.C. The following shall be used as the working definition of "capital expenditure" and "revenue expenditure": A capital expenditure is an expenditure which in a normal accrual accounting system would be classified as an insurable, depreciable asset and such expenditure would benefit future accounting periods. A revenue expenditure is a normal maintenance and repair expense which is generally considered to benefit only the current accounting period.

C13.09.D. Promote support of the Trust Fund through wills and bequests by an annual newsletter article to be provided by the Trust Officers. (Congregation Council Action 1/23/98)

C13.10.A The Outreach Committee shall be formed and called together in the fall of each year after the Trustees establish the amount of the Trust Fund allocation that is available for distribution. The committee shall be

charged with determining how the given funds will be distributed for that year and to which organizations. The Outreach Committee will consist of the following members: the current officers of the Congregation Council, the Trustees, either the Chairman or a chosen representative from each Congregation Committee, and the Pastor(s). The President shall be responsible for calling the meeting(s) and presiding over them.

These two pages were provided with the Model Constitution as an explanation and aid for revising and preparing a new constitution.

INTRODUCTION

The *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* originally was adopted by the Constituting Convention of this church in Columbus, Ohio, on April 30, 1987. This was done as required by the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

This current edition of the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* contains changes adopted by the 1989, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, and 2009 Church-wide Assemblies.

The model is consistent with the requirements of the constitutional governing documents of the ELCA's church-wide organization and synods.

➤ **Required provisions:** Sections of this constitution marked by an asterisk [*] are required when a congregation amends its governing documents. These sections must be used without alteration or amendment of the text in any manner (neither additions nor deletions). This is in keeping with provision 9.52. in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. This provision stipulates that when a congregation of this church "wishes to amend any provision of its governing documents, the governing documents of that congregation shall be so amended to conform to 9.25.b." in the church-wide constitution. The provisions herein marked by an asterisk are those that are indicated as required in ELCA constitutional provision 9.25.b.

➤ **Review by synod:** In keeping with provisions that apply to all congregations of this church, each congregation is to provide a copy of its governing documents to the synod. As specified by ELCA bylaw 9.53.03. (numbering as listed in the 1991 and subsequent editions):

All proposed changes in the constitution or incorporation documents of a congregation shall be referred to the synod with which the congregation is affiliated. The synod shall approve or disapprove the proposed changes within 120 days of receipt thereof, and shall notify the congregation of its decision; in the absence of a decision, the changes shall go into effect.

➤ **Codification explanation:** A numerical codification indicates (a) general subject, (b) constitutional provisions, (c) bylaws, and (d) continuing resolutions.

- a. Major sectors are designated as chapters. The chapter designation becomes the first number in the codification sequence and is followed by a period. Thus, provisions in "Chapter 8. Membership" are preceded by "8."
- b. Constitutional provisions are codified with two sets of numbers: the chapter number and a two-digit number preceding the second period in the codification. Thus, one constitutional provision related to "Membership" is codified *C8.02.
- c. Bylaw provisions are codified with three sets of numbers: the chapter number, the related constitutional provision number, and a two-digit number. Thus, one bylaw provision related to "Membership" would be codified C8.02.01. Because bylaws and continuing resolutions normally are so specifically related to details of each congregation's organization, operation, and life, no model set of bylaws or continuing resolutions is provided. Each congregation may develop its own bylaws and continuing resolutions, but no such bylaws or continuing resolutions may conflict with this constitution, the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the constitution of the synod, as indicated in *C6.03.e.
- d. The Congregation Council may adopt "continuing resolutions," which may provide descriptions of operational patterns or of the ongoing responsibilities of committees or other units within the organizational structure of the congregation. Within the governing documents of a congregation, continuing resolutions are the provisions most easily amended. Unlike constitutional provisions and bylaws, continuing resolutions may be updated regularly by the Congregation Council without the necessity of calling a regular or special Congregation Meeting. Continuing resolutions also are codified with three sets of numbers except that the third set is preceded by a capital letter. Thus, a continuing resolution might be numbered C13. to designate the chapter; C13.07. to designate the subject matter within the chapter and the third set might be numbered A07. in the codification C13.07.A07. to indicate by the "A" that it is the first continuing resolution regarding that subject and to indicate by the "07" that it was adopted in 2007.

➤ **Ease of use:** The provisions of your congregation's constitution, the bylaws, and the continuing resolutions that pertain to the same matter should be placed together for clarity and ease in use.

If chapter numbers are considered the major sequence number, constitution numbers as a fraction of the chapter number, and bylaw numbers as a fraction of the constitution number, then the codification can be said to provide a progressive sequence. Thus, *C5.01. will precede C5.03.10., and C9.11.16. will precede *C9.13.

All provisions in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* are prefaced with “C” to distinguish these provisions from comparable ones in the synodical and church-wide constitutions.

➤ **Missing numbers:** As you work with the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, you may notice that certain numbers seem to be missing from the numbering sequence in some chapters. That is intentional. In the style followed here, the number “.10.” and multiples thereof have been reserved for possible use as section headings in future editions. Therefore, in the sequence, for example, of Chapters 1, 9, and 12, these “.10.” numbers do not appear.

➤ **Selection of options:** Alternatives are provided in certain places within the model. Those are noted by square brackets. For example, *C9.01. offers the alternative of election of a call committee by the congregation or by the Congregation Council. One alternative should be chosen in each instance where square brackets appear in the text.

Optional texts are provided in separate paragraphs in Chapters 11 and 12 regarding the Congregation Council and its membership. Each congregation will need to select one of those options for council membership or a variation thereof, subject to approval through the synod’s constitutional review process.

➤ **References to church:** In the governing documents, “Church” with a capital letter is used in references to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. In references to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the words “church” and “this church” in lower case letters are employed, although, for clarity in this constitution, the full name or “ELCA” normally is used.

The specific congregation may be identified, as provided in C1.02., as “this congregation.”

➤ **Guidelines:** A list of guidelines for a congregation engaging in review and amendment of its constitution is available through each synod office and on the ELCA Web site. The task of amending a constitution is not easy. It is, however, an important endeavor that merits thoughtful work. In your constitutional responsibilities, God grant you wisdom, mutual love, clear understanding of good order, and commitment to the unity of this church in faithful witness to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

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