

New Life
LUTHERAN CHURCH

CONSTITUTION

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A note on codification within the document

** denotes a required constitutional provision and cannot be changed.*

Bylaws may be adopted and amended by the congregation in accordance with Chapter 17 are codified with three sets of numbers, each followed by a period, for example: C4.05.01. Bylaws relate to the congregation's organization, operation, and life.

Continuing resolutions may be adopted and amended by the congregation in accordance with Chapter 18 and are codified with three sets of numbers, except that the third set is preceded by a capital letter indicating sequence and a two-digit number indicating the year of its adoption. For example: C4.05.A19. Continuing resolutions are intended to provide more detailed descriptions of operational patterns and practices within a congregation.

***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 New Life Lutheran Church.
- C1.02.** For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the congregation of New Life Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."
- C1.11.** This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois.

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 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.** This church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world.
- *C3.03.** 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.
- *C3.04.** This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in The Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God's mission in the world.

***C3.05.** 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.

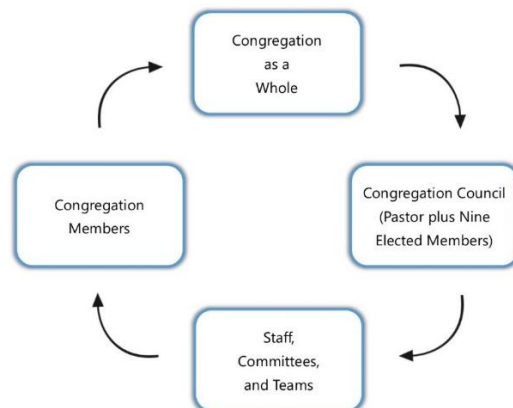
Chapter 4.
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

***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, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed 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 this congregation’s ministry and the ministry of the other expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.

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



C4.04.01.

- *C4.05. This congregation shall adopt and periodically review a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.
- C4.05.01. For specific direction, New Life refers to its Guiding Vision, found in the Policy Manual.
- *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 this congregation. This congregation is authorized to:
 - a. call a rostered minister(s) as provided in Chapter 9;
 - b. terminate the call of a rostered minister(s) as provided in Chapter 9;
 - c. call a minister of Word and Service;
 - d. terminate the call of a minister of Word and Service in conformity with the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
 - e. adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in Chapter 16, amendments to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 17, and continuing resolutions, as provided in Chapter 18;
 - f. approve the annual budget;
 - g. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
 - h. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
 - i. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
 - j. elect its officers, and Congregation Council, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws and continuing resolutions; and
 - k. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.
- *C5.04. This congregation shall elect 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 this congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the Northern Illinois 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 Northern Illinois 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 roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament 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 Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or to contracting for pastoral services with a minister of Word and Sacrament 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 ministers of Word and Service for call to other staff positions in this 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 is 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 or in accordance with provision 9.23. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- d. The Northern Illinois Synod takes charge and control of the property of this congregation to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of the synod pursuant to ¶S13.24. of the synod constitution. This congregation shall have the right to appeal the decision to the next Synod Assembly.
- e. 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 intent to terminate its relationship must be adopted at two legally called and conducted special meetings of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at each meeting. The first 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 this 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 the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are voting members of this congregation, they shall have voice but not vote at the first meeting.
- b. Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon at the first meeting, the secretary of this 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 send copies of the resolution and certification to voting members of this congregation.
- c. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the first meeting, the bishop of the synod and this congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph a. above, during a period of at least 90 days after receipt by the bishop of the attestation and certification as specified in paragraph b. above.
- d. If this congregation, after such consultation, is still considering termination of its relationship with this church, 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 second meeting shall be sent to all voting members and to the bishop at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Unless the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are voting members of this congregation, they shall have voice but not vote at the second meeting.
- e. Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the second special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall send copies of the resolution and certification to the voting members of the congregation. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the second meeting, the relationship between the congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to Synod Council approval as required by paragraphs f. and g. below.
- f. Unless this notification to the bishop also certifies that this congregation has voted to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, this congregation shall be deemed an independent or non-Lutheran church, in which case *C7.04. shall apply.
- g. This congregation shall abide by these covenants by and among the three expressions of this church:
 - 1) 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.
 - 2) 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 synod approval before terminating their membership in this church.
 - 3) 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.
- h. If this congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at this congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above or fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at this 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 the meeting at which the two-thirds vote was not achieved.

- *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 unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is taken.
- *C6.07. If this congregation considers developing an additional site to be used regularly for worship, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide 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 Northern Illinois 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 or pursuant to 9.23. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.
- *C7.03. If 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 Northern Illinois Synod.
- *C7.04. If 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 process established by the synod, 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. In neither case does title to this congregation's property transfer to the synod.
- *C7.05. Notwithstanding the provisions of *C7.02. and *C7.03. above, where this congregation has received property from the synod pursuant to a deed or other instrument containing restrictions under provision 9.71.a. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, this congregation accepts such restrictions and:
 - a. Shall not transfer, encumber, mortgage, or in any way burden or impair any right, title, or interest in the property without prior approval of the Synod Council.
 - b. Shall—upon written demand by the Synod Council, pursuant to †S13.23. of the constitution of the Northern Illinois Synod—reconvey and transfer all right, title, and interest in the property to the synod.

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 this congregation as well as the other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws. They shall not have voted as a seasonal member of another congregation of this church in the previous two calendar months.
 - 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. These individuals have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights or other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

- e. *Seasonal* members are voting members of other congregations of this church who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation, including exercising limited voting rights in this congregation. The Congregation Council may grant seasonal membership to such persons provided that this congregation is a member of a synod where the Synod Council has approved seasonal member voting on its territory. Such seasonal members shall have all the privileges and duties of voting members except that:
 - 1) they shall not be eligible for elected office in, or for membership on the Congregation Council or on a call committee of, this congregation;
 - 2) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the call or termination of call of any minister of this congregation;
 - 3) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the affiliation of this congregation with this church;
 - 4) they shall not be eligible to serve as voting members from this congregation of the Synod Assembly or the Churchwide Assembly;
 - 5) they shall not, even if otherwise permitted by this congregation, vote by proxy or by absentee ballot; and
 - 6) they shall not, within any two calendar month period, exercise voting rights in this congregation and in the congregation where they remain voting members.

- C8.02.01.** The office manager shall maintain the roster of voting members of the congregation in consultation with the rostered minister(s). The roster of voting members in good standing shall be available at all meetings of the congregation and also available in the church office at least one week prior to any meeting of the congregation. The term “good standing” shall be defined as any person who has attended in-person or virtually, communed and made a contribution of record as specified in C8.02.c
- C8.02.02.** Reinstatement of voting membership shall be accomplished by maintaining membership in good standing as defined above for a period of six consecutive months prior to a legally called congregational meeting or by a majority vote of affirmation by the congregation at said meeting.
- C8.02 .03.** Associate members may not hold elected office or be counted as confirmed members in the annual reporting of membership to the synod.
- *C8.03.** All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Congregation Council.
- C8.03.01.** Before being received as members, all applicants for confirmed membership in this congregation shall consult the rostered minister who shall determine whether such applicants are eligible for membership. All applicants are encouraged to attend a course of orientation and to make profession of their faith before either the congregation or, at the rostered minister’s discretion, witnesses who are members of the Congregation Council.
- *C8.04.** It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregation to:
 - a. make regular use of the means of grace, both Word and sacraments;
 - b. live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran church; and
 - c. support the work of this congregation, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.
- *C8.05.** Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:
 - a. death;
 - b. resignation;
 - c. transfer or release;
 - d. disciplinary action in accordance with Chapter 20 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or
 - e. removal from the roll due to inactivity in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its 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.

ROSTERED MINISTER

- *C9.01.** Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting 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 roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod 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 minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

- 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;
 - 3) conduct public worship;
 - 4) provide pastoral care;
 - 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 - 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
 - 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; and
 - 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.
- b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
- 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) relate to all schools and organizations of this congregation;
 - 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
 - 4) with the council, administer discipline;
 - 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and of the Northern Illinois Synod; and
 - 6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

***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.** The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and this congregation shall be as follows:

- a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by the pastor's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of 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, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the pastor;
 - 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- b. When allegations of disability or incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
 - 1) the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
 - 2) 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 this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by this congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.

- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, this congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds 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 majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
 - f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.
- *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 this 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 rostered minister 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.
- *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, this 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 this 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 records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from this 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 ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- *C9.14.** The records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of this congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in the secretary's hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another call or approval of a request for change in roster status.
- C9.15.** Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synod bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between this congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synod bishop and approved by this congregation.
- *C9.21.** Authority to call a deacon shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting 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.
- *C9.22.** Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop may be called as a deacon of this congregation.
- *C9.23.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:
- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
 - b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
 - c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;

- d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
- e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
- f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
- g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
- h. Share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
- i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

***C9.24.** The specific duties of the deacon, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the deacon shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.

***C9.25.** The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Service and this congregation shall be as follows:

- a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a deacon, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by the deacon's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the deacon, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the ministry of Word and Service effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) inability to conduct the office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the deacon;
 - 5) suspension of the deacon through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the deacon from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- b. When allegations of disability or incapacity of the deacon under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the office of minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
 - 1) the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
 - 2) 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 this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the deacon's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the deacon to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the deacon and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the deacon's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by this congregation and by the deacon, if appropriate. If the deacon and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the deacon's call, this congregation may dismiss the deacon only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds 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 majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

***C9.26.** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former deacon before calling a successor. A deacon 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.

- *C9.27. When a deacon is called to serve in company with another rostered minister or other rostered ministers, the privileges and responsibilities of each rostered minister shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the rostered ministers, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- *C9.28. With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from *C9.25.a. and call a deacon 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 deacon and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of *C9.25.a.
- *C9.29. The deacon shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the deacon shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- *C9.31. The deacon(s) shall submit a report of ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

Chapter 10.

CONGREGATION MEETING

- C10.01. This congregation shall have at least one regular meeting per year. Consistent with the laws of the State of Illinois, the bylaws shall designate one regular meeting per year as the annual meeting of this congregation.
- C10.01.01. The regular meeting of this congregation, designated as the annual meeting, shall be held in January of each year. Congregation Council decides the date. The purpose of this meeting is to elect officers, Congregation Council members and Audit, Mission Fund, and Nominating Committee members, in addition to conducting other congregational business.
- C10.01.02. The order of business may be varied by the president.
- C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the rostered minister, the Congregation Council, or the president¹ of this congregation. The president of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synod bishop. 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 or electronic means, as permitted by state law, to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting.
- C10.04. Ten (10) percent 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 approved by this congregation shall be by majority vote of those voting members present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution or by state law.
- C10.06.01. Any member may request a written ballot to be used at any Congregation Meeting.
- C10.06.02. Voting by written ballot is recommended but not required to:
 - Elect the officers and members of the Congregation Council (simple majority vote needed) and committees;
- C10.06.03. Voting by written ballot is required to:
 - 1. Amend the Constitution (first meeting) (simple majority vote needed);
 - 2. Ratify amendments to the Constitution (second meeting) (2/3 majority vote needed);
 - 3. Amend the Bylaws to the Constitution (2/3 majority vote needed);
 - 4. Call or dismiss rostered minister(s) (2/3 majority vote needed);
 - 5. Sever membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (2/3 majority vote needed).
- C10.07. *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.
- C10.08. This congregation may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.
- C10.09. "Ex officio" as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited.

Chapter 11.

OFFICERS

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

¹ If the rostered minister(s) is the president of the congregation, the congregation may consider giving the vice president the authority to call a special meeting.

- b. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.
- c. The treasurer shall have voice but not vote at the meetings of the Congregation Council.
- d. The duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.

C11.01.01. 1. President

- a. Chair Congregation Council meetings and legally called congregational meetings.
- b. Chair Executive Committee.
- c. Set up the agenda for Congregation Council meetings and legally called congregational meetings in consultation with rostered ministers.
- d. Will vote to break a tie at Congregation Council meetings and legally called congregational meetings.
- e. Live a lifestyle that reflects strong commitment to the mission and ministry of Christ through worship attendance, personal spiritual growth, and personal stewardship of time, talent, and money.
- f. Show leadership in the congregation and church at large through participation in Synod Assemblies, Conference meetings, and Synod Congregational events
- g. Meet with rostered ministers once a month to build communication and team efforts between Congregational Council, committees, congregation, and rostered ministers.
- h. Work with rostered ministers to plan and attend the yearly congregational leadership retreat.

C11.01.02. Vice President

- a. Chair Congregation Council meetings and legally called congregational meetings in the absence of the president.
- b. Chair the Mutual Ministry Committee.
- c. Sit on Executive Committee.
- d. Live a lifestyle that reflects strong commitment to the mission and ministry of Christ through worship attendance, personal spiritual growth, and personal stewardship of time, talent, and money.
- e. Be willing to represent the congregation as a delegate at the Synod Assembly in June.
- f. Sit with the president and rostered minister(s) as they set forth agendas for the Congregational Council meetings and legally called congregational meetings if invited.
- g. Attend all legally called congregational meetings.
- h. Attend the yearly congregational leadership retreat.

C11.01.03. Congregational Secretary

- a. Record minutes of all legally called congregational meetings and Congregation Council meetings and publish these minutes to the congregation and distribute in a timely manner (no more than one week following the meeting) these minutes to the Congregation Council.
- b. Sit on the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council and record recommendations to be made to the entire Congregation Council.
- c. Be responsible for written Congregation Council and Executive Committee correspondence.
- d. Live a lifestyle that reflects strong commitment to the mission and ministry of Christ through worship attendance, personal spiritual growth, and personal stewardship of time, talent, and money.
- e. Be willing to represent this congregation as one of the delegates to the Synod Assembly.
- f. Attend the yearly leadership retreat for this congregation.

C11.02. The congregation shall elect its officers and they shall be the officers of this congregation. The officers shall be elected in accordance with C10.06.02. and shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected. The treasurer and financial secretary shall be voting members of the congregation and shall be appointed by the Congregation Council at its first meeting after the congregational meeting at which the president, vice president, and secretary were elected.

C11.02.01. Treasurer

- a. All bookkeeping functions: prepare monthly financial statements and submit to Council at their regular meetings, write checks upon receipt of vouchers, bank reconciliations.
- b. Be responsible for drafting the Congregation Spending Plan in collaboration with the Executive Committee in the 4th quarter.
- c. Present the Congregation Spending Plan to the Congregation Council in the 4th quarter.
- d. Live a lifestyle that reflects strong commitment to the mission and ministry of Christ through worship attendance, personal spiritual growth, and personal stewardship of time, talent, and money.
- e. Be willing to represent this congregation as one of the delegates to the Synod Assembly.

- C11.02.02.** Financial Secretary
 - a. Record contributions to New Life Lutheran Church.
 - b. Prepare quarterly statements for all contributors.
 - c. Oversee and coordinate the individuals who count the weekly offering (Tellers).
- 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 rostered minister(s), president, vice-president, and secretary, and not more than 6 members of this congregation, one of whom may be a youth and/or young adult. A young adult is a voting member, age 18-39 and a youth is a voting member who has not reached the age of 18 by the time of the election. Any voting member of this 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, this 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 rostered minister(s) shall be elected to serve for 2 (two) years or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.
- C12.03.** Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next annual meeting.
- C12.04.** The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:
 - a. To lead this congregation in stating 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. Serve as liaisons/linking persons to congregation committees, task forces, and other organizational groups.
 - e. To maintain supportive relationships with the rostered minister(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.
 - f. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
 - g. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
 - h. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the rostered minister(s).
 - i. To emphasize support of 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.
 - j. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - k. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.
 - l. Fill any vacancy in the Nominating and/or Audit Committees by electing, by majority vote, a successor until the next annual meeting.
- C12.05.** The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.
 - a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of trustees of this congregation and, as such, shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and managing its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Illinois, 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 this congregation.
 - c. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to \$25,000 for items not included in the budget.

- d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations of more than \$25,000 in excess of the anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in collaboration 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 mission support monies to the synod.
 - 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 staff of this congregation. Nothing in this provision shall be deemed to affect this 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 rostered minister(s) or the president², 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 rostered minister(s) or interim rostered minister(s), except when the rostered minister(s) or interim rostered minister(s) 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 rostered minister(s) or interim rostered minister(s) 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 synod bishop.
- C12.13.** The Congregation Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Chapter 13.

CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

- C13.01.** The President, Vice-President, and Secretary of this congregation and the rostered minister(s) shall constitute the Executive Committee.
- C13.01.01.** The Executive Committee sets the agenda for the council meeting each month. The Executive Committee and the Treasurer shall assist the Congregation Council by preparing a yearly Spending Plan and by following its progress throughout the year being mindful of the fiscal responsibilities of this congregation. It shall, when necessary, make recommendations for deviation from that Spending Plan so that the mission and ministry of Christ happening in this congregation are fiscally viable.
- a. The Executive Committee and the Treasurer shall be responsible to the Congregation Council for the security and investment of all this congregation's funds, except for the Mission Fund.
 - b. The Executive Committee and Treasurer shall meet on a need-to-meet basis with a portion of the meeting time to be used for prayer and devotion.
 - c. This committee shall, in the 4th quarter, propose an itemized spending plan for committee work and submit it to the Congregation Council for possible inclusion into next year's congregational spending plan.
- C13.02.** A Nominating Committee shall consist of a rostered minister and six members of the congregation-at-large who are to be elected to a two-year term. In addition, there shall be an advisory member from the Congregation Council. The members-at-large shall be elected by the congregation so that their terms are alternating two-year terms. That is three persons elected each year. A member of the Nominating Committee may not succeed themselves. A member of the Congregation Council may not serve on the Nominating Committee for one year upon completion of the term on Council. The Congregation Council will nominate persons for election to the Nominating Committee.
- C13.02.01.** Discipline Provision Pertaining to the Nominating Committee
Any member who is absent from two consecutive meetings of their respective responsibilities without valid excuse shall be consulted by the president or pastor(s) of the congregation. If the member is absent from three consecutive

² If the rostered minister(s) is the president of the congregation, the congregation may consider giving the vice president the authority to call a special meeting.

regular meetings without valid excuse, the Congregation Council may, by a simple majority vote of the members present and voting on the question, declare the office vacant. Such vacancies shall be filled according to C12.04.I.

C13.02.A09. Nominating Committee—Procedures

The nominating committee shall issue an open invitation to the congregation for those willing to serve on any of the elected positions within the congregation. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a list of candidates drawn from the voting members of the congregation. These candidates shall be contacted and asked to accept these nominations. The Nominating Committee, at least two (2) weeks before the legally called congregational meeting shall publish in the official publications of the congregation the list of nominees to fill the following offices as their term expire:

1. President.
2. Vice President.
3. Secretary.
4. Members as necessary to complete the membership of the Congregation Council.
5. Members as necessary to complete the membership of the Mission Fund Committee and Audit Committee.

C13.03. An Audit Committee shall consist of three members of the congregation, other than the Treasurer or Financial Secretary. The members of this committee shall be elected at the annual legally called congregational meeting to serve alternating three year terms, such that one member is elected each year. A member of the Auditing Committee is not permitted to succeed themselves. The Nominating Committee will nominate persons for election to the Auditing Committee. The members of this committee must be voting members of the congregation that are qualified to perform a financial audit. It is permissible for the members of this committee to request assistance from one or all members of the Executive Committee to enable the Audit Committee to perform the audit in a timely and effective manner.

C13.03.01. Discipline Provision Pertaining to the Audit Committee

Any member who is absent from two consecutive meetings of their respective responsibilities without valid excuse shall be consulted by the president or pastor(s) of the congregation. If the member is absent from three consecutive regular meetings without valid excuse, the Congregation Council may, by a simple majority vote of the members present and voting on the question, declare the office vacant. Such vacancies shall be filled according to C12.04.I.

C13.03.B09. Audit Committee Procedure: this committee shall annually audit the financial records of the congregation. A written report shall be presented at the annual legally called congregational meeting.

C13.04. Mutual Ministry Committee shall consist of the vice president of the congregation, the rostered minister(s), and no more than four voting members of the congregation who are appointed by the Congregation Council.

C13.04.C09. Mutual Ministry Committee Procedure

- a. The Mutual Ministry Committee is responsible for the working relationship and a good positive working attitude of the staff of this congregation so that the mission and ministry of Christ can be carried out in the most effective way possible given congregational staffing situation.
- b. This committee shall work together with the rostered minister(s) to encourage, evaluate, set goals, and recommend salaries of all church staff to the Congregation Council.
- c. This committee will handle staffing problems that the rostered minister(s) has(have) been unable to address adequately for the smooth functioning of congregational life.
- d. Members of this committee shall be open to receive concerns expressed by congregational members about staff and in conversations with the rostered minister(s) address situations that need attention.
- e. Staff should have a yearly evaluation worked out between this committee and the rostered minister(s).
- f. This committee should be aware of staff employment anniversaries and, in conjunction with the Congregational Council, make sure appreciation is shown to the staff.
- g. This committee should, on a yearly basis, discuss with the rostered minister(s) their plan for continuing education and make suggestions on possible learning experiences that may be helpful to the rostered minister(s) and congregation.
- h. This committee's conversations are to be highly confidential so that the staff may feel free to express real concerns in a supporting and accepting and confidential environment.
- i. This committee shall prepare, update, and administer staff policies.
- j. This committee shall serve as the selection committee in the employment of all church staff (except the pastor) and make their recommendation to the Congregational Council. Salaries will be established by the Council.
- k. Review and approve rostered minister(s) expense reports.

C13.05. Mission Fund Committee

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The committee shall consist of five members, all of whom shall be voting members of New Life Lutheran Church. Except as herein limited, the term of each member shall be three (3) years. The congregation shall elect five (5) members to the committee. At each legally called congregational meeting at which officer are elected (hereafter: "election meeting"), the congregation shall elect the necessary number for a term of three (3) years. No member shall serve more than two (2)

consecutive three (3) year terms. After a lapse of one (1) year, former committee members may be re-elected. The Nominating Committee shall nominate for the committee and report at the congregation meeting in the same manner as for other officers and council members. In the event of a vacancy on the committee, the committee shall appoint a member to fill the vacancy until the next election meeting of the congregation, at which time the congregation shall elect a member to fulfill the term of the vacancy.

C13.05.01. Discipline Provision Pertaining to the Mission Fund Committee

Any member who is absent from two consecutive meetings of their respective responsibilities without valid excuse shall be consulted by the president or pastor(s) of the congregation. If the member is absent from three consecutive regular meetings without valid excuse, the Congregation Council may, by a simple majority vote of the members present and voting on the question, declare the office vacant. Such vacancies shall be filled according to Part 6.

C13.05.D09. Mission Fund Committee Procedure: The committee shall meet at least quarterly or more frequently as deemed by it in the best interest of the fund.

A quorum shall consist of three (3) members. When only three (3) member are present, a unanimous vote shall be required to carry any motion or resolution.

The committee shall elect from its membership a chairperson, recording secretary and financial secretary. The chairperson, or member designated by the chairperson, shall preside at all committee meetings.

The recording secretary of the committee shall maintain complete and accurate minutes of all meetings and supply a copy thereof to each member of the committee. The recording secretary shall also supply a copy of the minutes to the Congregation Council.

The financial secretary of the committee shall serve as treasurer of the fund and coordinate with the congregation treasurer to maintain accurate accounts for the fund. The financial secretary of the committee shall sign all necessary documents on behalf of the congregation in furtherance of the purposes of the fund.

The committee shall report on a quarterly basis to the Congregation Council and annually to the congregation.

The committee may request other members of the congregation to serve as advisory members. At the expense of the fund income, the committee may provide for such professional counseling on investments or legal matters as it deems to be in the best interest of the fund.

Members of the committee shall not be liable for any losses, which may be incurred upon the investments of the assets of the fund. No member shall be personally liable as long as he/she acts in good faith and with ordinary prudence. Each member shall be liable only for his/her own willful misconduct or omissions and shall not be liable for the acts or omissions of any other member. No member shall engage in any self-dealing or transactions with the FUND in which the member has direct or indirect financial interest and shall at all times refrain from any conduct in which his/her personal interests would conflict with the interest of the fund.

ASSETS

All assets are to be held in the name of New Life Mission Fund of New Life Lutheran Church.

Decisions to accept, hold, sell, exchange, transfer, convert, invest, reinvest, and in all other respects to manage and control the assets of the fund, including stocks, bonds, debentures, notes, or other securities, as in their judgment and discretion they deem wise and prudent are to be made by the committee.

DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME

The committee shall determine what is principal and income according to accepted accounting procedures. Income from the principal of the fund will be available for distribution upon committee approval.

Income from the fund shall be distributed at such times as deemed necessary and/or feasible to accomplish the purposes of outreach and ministry into the worldwide community, to fulfill the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Programs requesting fund support shall make requests to the Congregation Council and if approved, recommended to the committee for funding.

Disbursement of income from the fund need not occur annually in the event causes and programs have not been approved by the committee sufficient to utilize total income available, or if in the judgment of the committee total annual disbursements of income is not recommended.

DISTRIBUTION OF PRINCIPAL

When in the opinion of the committee circumstances are so dire and of such an emergency nature that the future of the congregation is at stake, and that the only recourse seems to be the use of the fund principal, the committee may recommend such authorizing action to the congregation.

DISPOSITION OF FUNDS

In the event New Life Lutheran Church ceases to exist either through merger or dissolution, disposition of the fund shall be in accordance with the constitution of New Life Lutheran Church.

C13.05. Call Committee: When a vacancy occurs in a position for which this congregation calls a rostered minister, a Call Committee of six voting members shall be formed. The Congregation Council shall select two (2) of their members to serve on the Call Committee. The Congregation Council shall also nominate at least four (4) members from the congregation-at-large, striving to provide a total slate from a cross section of the congregation. The names of the Congregation Council members and the nominees from the congregation-at-large shall be presented at a congregational meeting called the purpose of electing a Call Committee. The congregation may add nominees from the floor provided that:

- a. The proposed nominee is a qualified voting member in good standing; and
- b. The proposed nominee has been previously contacted and permission has been received to place the name in nomination.

The congregation shall elect a total of four (4) members who, together with the two (2) from the Congregation Council, shall constitute a Call Committee of six (6) members. The term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called rostered minister.

C13.05.E09. Call Committee Procedure

The Call Committee shall seek the counsel of the office of the Bishop of the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and proceed in the call process outlined by the Synod. The Call Committee shall keep the congregation informed as much as possible as to the progress of the call process.

An assistant, associate, or co-rostered minister shall be called in the manner set forth by the Synod. Consultation of a rostered minister(s) currently under call by this congregation is required prior to the Call Committee presenting a candidate to the congregation.

After the congregation has voted to call a rostered minister, a Letter of Call shall be issued to the rostered minister-elect, in a form approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It shall be signed by the president and secretary of the meeting at which the Call was voted, and attested to by the signature of the Bishop of the Synod.

C13.06. Committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council. Each committee in the 4th quarter shall submit an itemized spending plan for possible inclusion in the next year's congregational spending plan. The list of committees may include but are not limited to: Adult Education, Youth Education, Agape (Stewardship), CARE Team, Outreach, Creation Care, Property, Worship and Music, Internship, Long-range Planning.

C13.06.01. Liaisons or linking persons to congregational committees, task forces, or other organizational groups should report on a monthly basis to the Congregation Council as specified in C12.04.d.

C13.07. Duties of committees of this congregation shall be specified in the bylaws.

C13.08. The rostered minister(s) of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of this congregation. The president and vice president of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of this congregation, except the Nominating Committee.

Chapter 14.

ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THIS 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 with approval by the Congregation Council.

Chapter 15.

DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

***C15.01.** Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith, willful or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, continual and intentional interference with the ministry of this congregation, or willful and repeated harassment or defamation of member(s) of this congregation is sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation and repentance will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps, as

necessary: a) private counsel and admonition by the rostered minister(s), b) censure and admonition by the rostered minister(s) in the presence of two or three witnesses, c) written referral of the matter by the Congregation Council to the vice president of the synod, who will refer it to a consultation panel drawn from the Consultation Committee of the synod, and d) written referral of the matter by the consultation panel to the Committee on Discipline of the synod. If, for any reason, the rostered minister(s) is unable to administer the admonitions required by paragraphs a. and b. hereof, those steps may be performed by another rostered minister(s) chosen by the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council.

- *C15.02.** The process for discipline of a member of this 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 the counseling, censure, and admonitions pursuant to *C15.01. do not result in repentance and amendment of life, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing may be prepared by the Congregation Council, signed, and submitted to the vice president of the synod. The vice president shall select from the synod's Consultation Committee a panel of five members (three laypersons and two rostered ministers). A copy of the written charges shall be provided to the consultation panel and the accused member(s). The consultation panel, after requesting a written reply to the charges from the accused member(s), shall consider the matter and seek a resolution by means of investigation, consultation, mediation, or whatever other means may seem appropriate. The panel's efforts to reach a mutually agreeable resolution shall continue for no more than 45 days after the matter is submitted to it.
- *C15.03.** If the consultation panel fails to resolve the matter, that panel shall refer the case in writing, including the written charges and the accused member's reply, to the Committee on Discipline of the synod for a hearing. A copy of the panel's written referral shall be delivered to the vice president of the synod, the Congregation Council, and the accused member(s) at the same time it is sent to the Committee on Discipline of the synod. The Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall then select six members from the Committee on Discipline to decide the case and shall appoint a member of the Synod Council to preside as nonvoting chair. Those six members, plus the nonvoting chair, comprise the discipline hearing panel for deciding the case. The Congregation Council and the accused member(s) are the parties to the case.
- *C15.04.** The discipline hearing panel shall commence and conduct the disciplinary hearing in accordance with the provisions governing discipline of congregation members prescribed in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- *C15.05.** By the vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the discipline hearing panel who are present and voting, one of the following disciplinary sanctions can be imposed:
- suspension from the privileges of congregation membership for a designated period of time;
 - suspension from the privileges of congregation membership until the rostered minister(s) and Congregation Council receive evidence, satisfactory to them, of repentance and amendment of life;
 - termination of membership in this congregation; or
 - termination of membership in this congregation and exclusion from the church property and from all congregation activities.
- *C15.06.** The written decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be sent to the vice president of the synod, the accused member(s), and the Congregation Council as required by the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. The decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be implemented by the Congregation Council and recorded in the minutes of the next council meeting.
- *C15.07.** No member of this congregation shall be subject to discipline a second time for offenses that a discipline hearing panel has heard previously and decided pursuant to this chapter.
- *C15.10. Adjudication**
- *C15.11.** When there is disagreement between or among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president [vice president] of this congregation of their intent to do so. The synod bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the dispute. If the issue relates directly to the rostered minister(s), the bishop may begin the process in †S14.18.d. In all other matters, if the bishop's consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the Council deems necessary. The Synod Council's decision shall be final.

Chapter 16. **AMENDMENTS**

- *C16.01.** Unless provision *C16.04. 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 5 percent 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 this congregation's members of the proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

- *C16.02. An amendment to this constitution, proposed under *C16.01., shall:
 - a. be approved at any legally called meeting of this congregation by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting; and
 - b. be ratified without change at the next regular meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.
- *C16.03. Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in *C16.01. and *C16.02. shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The synod shall notify this congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed changes; the changes shall go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them.
- *C16.04. 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 Churchwide Assembly. Such amendments may be approved by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of this congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of this congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, notice to this 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 at least two (2) voting members of this congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following the congregation's vote of approval.

Chapter 17. BYLAWS

- *C17.01. This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.
- *C17.02. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.
- *C17.03. Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member, provided 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. The Congregation Council shall notify this congregation's members of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.
- *C17.04. Adopted or amended bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

Chapter 18. CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

- *C18.01. This 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 this congregation or a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Congregation Council.
- *C18.03. Adopted or amended continuing resolutions shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

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 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 the Parish Council. The Parish Agreement shall identify which congregation of the parish issues calls on behalf of the member congregations or shall establish a process for identifying which congregation issues calls on behalf of the member congregations.
- *C20.02.** One congregation of a parish shall issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Sacrament or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended by the synod bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a two-thirds vote at a congregation meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.
- *C20.03.** One congregation of a parish may issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Service or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended by the synod bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a two-thirds vote at a congregation meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.
- *C20.04.** Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with the rostered minister(s) as provided in †S14.18.d. of the synod constitution of the synod named in *C6.01. In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.
- *C20.05.** Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with a minister of Word and Service as provided in †S14.43.d. of the synod constitution of the synod named in *C6.01. In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.
- *C20.06.** Whenever a parish agreement is terminated, the call of any rostered minister serving that parish is terminated. Should any congregation that was formerly part of the parish agreement desire to issue a new call to that rostered minister, it may do so in accordance with the call process of this church.

