

**CONSTITUTION OF
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF
THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

(Constitutional Changes Ratified on January 25, 2004)

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Constitutional Changes Ratified on January 25, 2004

CONSTITUTION OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

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 The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Moorhead, Minnesota; hereinafter referred to as LCGS.

C1.02. For the purpose of this Constitution and the accompanying Bylaws, the LCGS congregation is hereinafter designated as "this congregation".

C1.03. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

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 all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the divinely inspired, and revealed Word of God, entirely trustworthy, and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.

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

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

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

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

Chapter 3.

NATURE OF THE CHURCH

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

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

Chapter 4.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

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

a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.

b. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.

c. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people, to bring them to faith in Christ, and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.

d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs.

e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.

f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

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

a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.

b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.

c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.

d. Teach the Word of God.

e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.

f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.

g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for the congregation's ministry and the ministry of other parts of the ELCA.

h. Foster and participate in independent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the ELCA.

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 Church Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, board, task force, or other organizational groups, and shall review their actions. (Such responsibilities to be filed with this Constitution and Bylaws.)

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

Chapter 5.

POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

C5.01. The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.

C5.02. The powers of this congregation are vested in the congregation meeting called and conducted as provided in this Constitution and Bylaws.

C5.03. Only such authority as is delegated to our Church Council or other organizational units in this congregation's governing documents is recognized. The congregation retains all remaining authority. The congregation is authorized to:

a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;

b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;

c. appoint or terminate the appointment of associates in ministry in conformity with the applicable policy of the ELCA;

d. approve the annual budget;

e. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;

f. hold title to and use our property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;

g. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of our property by any lawful means;

h. elect our Church Council, Congregation/Council Officers, boards, and committees, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws; and

i. terminate our relationship with the ELCA as provided in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6.

CHURCH AFFILIATION

C6.01. This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) or its successor, and of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the ELCA.

C6.02. This congregation accepts the Confession of Faith and agrees to the Purposes of the ELCA and shall act in accordance with them.

C6.03. This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the ELCA 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 ELCA.

c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the clergy roster of the ELCA in accordance with its call procedures, except in special circumstances, and with the approval of the bishop of the synod.

d. This congregation agrees to consider associates in ministry for appointment to other staff positions in the congregation according to the procedures of the ELCA.

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 ELCA and with the Constitution of the synod.

C6.04. Affiliation with the ELCA may be terminated as follows:

a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.

b. This congregation ceases to exist.

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

d. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in C6.05.

C6.05. This congregation may terminate its relationship with the ELCA by the following procedures:

a. A resolution indicating the desire of this congregation to terminate its relationship must be presented at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation. Following this meeting and within five days, ballots will be mailed to all members of this congregation containing a summary of the pros and cons, presented at the special meeting and prepared by the president of the congregation and the secretary. The ballot shall request the vote by members of this congregation be returned to the church within seven (7) days. A majority vote (51% of the membership) shall determine the status of the resolution.

b. Our Executive Committee and a special meeting of the congregation called to announce the decision would tabulate the results of the balloting.

c. Our Synod Bishop shall consult with this congregation during the course of the action undertaken.

d. If this congregation, after consultation, and vote advisory (paragraph b above), still desires to terminate its relationship, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting with two-thirds of the voting members of this congregation present, and a majority vote, at which meeting our Synod Bishop or an authorized representative shall be present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting.

e. A certified copy of the resolution to terminate its relationship shall be sent to our Synod Bishop, at which time the relationship between this congregation and the ELCA shall be terminated.

f. Our Synod Bishop shall acknowledge notice of termination in writing and a signed copy returned to the secretary of this church. The notice shall be published in the periodical of this church. (NOTE: Congregations that are established by the ELCA shall be required, in addition to the foregoing provisions (in this section-C6.05), to receive Synod approval before terminating their membership in this church.)

C6.06. If this congregation is considering relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of our Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.

Chapter 7.

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

C7.01. If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the Northwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA.

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

C7.03. If a majority of the voting members of this congregation, at a regularly called and conducted special meeting of this congregation, vote to transfer to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation. Before this congregation takes action to transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod.

C7.04. If a majority of the voting members of this congregation at a regularly called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body, title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with the consent of our Synod Council. Our Synod Council, after consultation with this congregation by the established synodical process, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of this congregation. If the Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to continue as a congregation of the ELCA.

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 Christian 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 Christian congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.

c. Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members shall have communed and made contribution of record during the current or preceding year.

d. Associate members are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Church Council of this congregation.

C8.03. ADMISSION TO BAPTIZED MEMBERSHIP

a. Children, one or both of whose parents or guardians are members of this congregation, shall, upon receiving Christian baptism, be thereby received as baptized members of this congregation.

b. Children, neither of whose parents or guardians are members of this congregation, shall, upon Christian baptism duly recorded as a ministerial act performed under the auspices of this congregation, thereby be received as baptized members of this congregation unless there is understanding that, for good reason, they will be enrolled as baptized members of another congregation, in which case notice of the baptism shall be given to the congregation in which the child is to be enrolled as a baptized member.

c. Children baptized in other congregations (and baptized adults mentally incompetent for confirmation) shall be received as baptized members of this congregation upon admission of one or both parents or guardian's membership or by consent of one or both parents or guardians, or by action of the Church Council.

d. Unbaptized adults who have received instruction and given evidence of having an adequate understanding and acceptance of the teachings of the Word of God as confessed by the Lutheran Church, shall upon confession of faith and Christian Baptism duly recorded as a ministerial act performed under the auspices of this congregation, thereby be received as baptized members of this congregation.

C8.04. ADMISSION TO CONFIRMED MEMBERSHIP

a. Baptized adults, not previously members of this congregation, who have received instruction and given evidence of having adequate understanding and acceptance of the teachings of the Word of God as confessed by the Lutheran Church, shall be admitted to confirmed membership through the rite of confirmation.

b. However, adults received as baptized members under the provisions of C8.03d (above) shall be recognized as confirmed members, whether or not, at the discretion of the pastor, they participate in the rite of confirmation.

c. Children who are baptized members of the congregation shall be admitted to confirmed membership through the rite of confirmation.

d. Applicants for membership presenting letters of transfer showing them to be confirmed members in good standing in other churches shall be admitted to confirmed membership upon acceptance of their letters of transfer by the Church Council and the report of their names to the congregation.

e. Applicants for membership who present evidence of confirmation but do not have letters of transfer shall be admitted to confirmed membership when the Church Council has determined that they meet the standards of Christian faith and life indicated in the Constitution and Bylaws and when they have reaffirmed their faith before this congregation.

C8.05 ADMISSION TO ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

A baptized and/or confirmed person holding membership in another congregation, although not desiring transfer of membership, but wishing to participate in congregational life at the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, shall be received into associate membership in the congregation. An associate member shall not be included in congregational totals for congregational or synod statistics.

C8.06. ADMISSION TO VOTING MEMBERSHIP

The Church Council shall be responsible for determining the voting membership in accordance with the qualifications specified in C8.02. of this Constitution.

C8.07. DISCONTINUANCE OF MEMBERSHIP

a. Members who move away shall be encouraged to transfer. Confirmed members in good standing desiring to change their membership to another Lutheran church shall upon request be entitled to a letter of transfer.

b. Confirmed members, who in judgment of our Church Council show no interest in attending church services, or fail to partake of communion or fail to contribute to the congregational treasury according to the congregation's records, for a period of two years, shall be presumed to no longer desire membership, shall lose the right to vote and shall not be counted in the membership statistics of the congregation. However, their names and records shall be kept in the files for a period of five (5) years thereafter. Such persons shall be encouraged to participate in the congregational life, or to transfer elsewhere, as the institution may indicate to be advisable. If they resume activity within the five-year period, they shall be restored to the active membership list; if not, they shall be dismissed from this congregation and notified accordingly, where possible.

c. Members who have been excommunicated, dismissed, or who have resigned and members who have transferred to other congregations, or who are definitely known to have become members of other congregations without transfer, shall thereby have lost membership in this congregation and all rights appertaining thereto.

C8.08. All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Church Council.

C8.09. It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregation to:

a. make regular use of the means of grace, both Word and sacraments.

b. live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran church; and

c. support the work of this congregation, synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.

C8.10. Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:

- a. death;**
- b. resignation;**
- c. transfer or release;**
- d. disciplinary action by the Church Council; or**

e. inactivity as defined in the Bylaws. Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the church has a continuing pastoral concern.

Chapter 9.

THE PASTOR

THE PASTORAL CALL

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

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

C9.03. With the approval of the Synod Bishop, the congregation may depart from C9.07. 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 Synod Bishop, or a designated representative of the Synod Bishop shall meet with the pastor and the representative of the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of C9.01.

C9.04. This congregation, after it has voted to call a senior pastor, by at least a two-thirds majority vote of a quorum present, shall issue a letter of call in a form approved by the ELCA to the pastor elect, which shall bear the signatures of the chairperson and secretary of the Call Committee, and shall be certified by the signature of the Synod Bishop.

C9.05. 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 Synod Bishop.

C9.06. Calls to members of the clergy to positions of associate pastor shall be issued in consultation with the senior pastor and under the guidelines established for the Call Committee.

C9.07. The call shall be for an indefinite time, except that calls for a limited time may be issued to pastors who are qualified for emeritus status and are otherwise eligible for call.

C9.08. Since both pastor and congregation are parties to the call, no pastor shall announce a decision on any subsequent call without first having consulted with the congregation or at least with its Church Council. Should the pastor thereupon resign to accept another call, the resignation shall be presented to the congregation and mutually satisfactory arrangement sought for terminating service normally within thirty (30) days.

C9.09. A desire for change in pastorate, either by the congregation or the pastor, shall be brought to the attention of the Synod Bishop, who shall advise in the matter according to this Constitution (C9.01) and the established procedure of the church.

C9.10. Every pastor serving this congregation shall have an undivided loyalty to the faith and purpose of this church in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd and the ELCA. Any question concerning such loyalty shall be adjudicated according to the recommended procedure of the ELCA. The called pastors shall be members of our congregation.

C9.11. Members of the clergy qualified according to this Constitution may occasionally perform pastoral functions in this congregation with the approval of the congregation and its pastor, or in case of a vacancy in the pastorate, with the approval of the congregation and the Synod Bishop.

PASTORAL RESPONSIBILITIES

C9.12 Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Our Pastor shall be one:

- 1. whose soundness in the faith, aptness to teach, and educational qualifications have been examined and approved by the church;**
- 2. who has been properly ordained;**
- 3. who accepts and adheres to the confession of faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and of this congregation;**
- 4. who strives in life and conduct to be above reproach.**

b. Our Pastor shall:

- 1. preach the Word:**
- 2. administer the sacraments;**

3. conduct public worship;
4. provide pastoral care; and
5. speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world;
6. offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
7. supervise all schools and organizations of this congregation;
8. install those members elected to serve this Congregation and Church Council;
9. along with our Council, administer discipline.
10. keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communications, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, and shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod.
11. shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the Synod Bishop at least ninety (90) days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

C9.13 ASSOCIATE PASTORS

When an associate pastor is called to serve in company with a senior pastor, the privileges and responsibilities of the associate pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and be drafted in consultation involving the senior pastor, and the Church Council. Our Synod Bishop shall be informed.

C9.14 INTERIM PASTOR

- a. At a time of a senior pastor vacancy, the Executive Committee, in consultation with the Synod Bishop, shall submit to the Church Council the name of an interim pastor to serve our congregation.
- b. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the Synod Bishop and this congregation or Church Council.

C9.15 PASTORAL TERMINATION

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

- 1. mutual agreement of the Bishop of the Synod and our congregation 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, thirty (30) days after the date on which it was submitted;**
- 3. inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor;**
- 4. the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;**
- 5. disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty;**
- 6. the dissolution of the congregation; or**
- 7. suspension of the congregation as a result of discipline proceedings.**

b. When allegations of physical or mental incapacity or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office have been brought to the attention of the Bishop of the Synod, the Bishop in his or her sole discretion may, or when such allegations have been brought to our Synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by our Church Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the Synod Bishop shall, investigate such conditions personally in company with a committee of two (2) ordained ministers and one (1) lay-person.

c. In case of alleged physical or mental incapacity, competent medical testimony shall be obtained. When such disability is evident, our Synod Bishop with the advice of the committee (C9.15b) shall declare the pastorate vacant.

d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation, all concerned persons shall be heard, after which our Synod Bishop together with the committee described in C9.15b. shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor and this congregation. If this congregation agrees to carry out such recommendations, no further action shall be taken by the Synod. If either party fails to assent, this congregation may dismiss the pastor by a majority vote of the voting members of our congregation at a regularly called meeting after consultation with our Synod Bishop.

e. The foregoing procedure shall never be invoked when questions of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty are involved; all such matters shall be treated as disciplinary matters (C9.15f).

f. If, in the course of proceedings described in C9.15d, the committee (C9.15b) concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action to our Synod Bishop, who may bring charges, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws of the ELCA and the Constitution of our Synod.

g. If, following the appointment of the committee described in C9.15b, it should become apparent that the pastoral office cannot be conducted effectively in this congregation by the ordained minister due to local conditions, our Synod Bishop may temporarily suspend our pastor from service in this congregation without prejudice, and with pay provided through a joint churchwide/synod fund, and with housing provided by this congregation.

C9.16 This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. The pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before departing.

Chapter 10.

CONGREGATION MEETING

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

C10.02. A special congregation meeting may be called by the pastor, the Church Council, the president of this congregation, or shall be called at the written request of ten (10) percent of our voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.

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

C10.04. One-hundred voting members shall constitute a quorum at all regular or special congregation meetings. Special requirements exist in the case of property sale, termination of a pastor, and terminating membership in the ELCA.

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

C10.06. All actions by the congregation shall be by majority vote except as otherwise provided in C10.04 above.

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

Chapter 11.

C11.01. OFFICERS

At the Congregation Annual Meeting the Congregation shall elect a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

The President shall preside at meetings of the congregation and the Congregation Council.

The Vice President shall preside in the event of the President's inability to serve.

The Secretary shall record and distribute accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation and the Congregation Council. These minutes shall be preserved permanently. The secretary shall be responsible for all official correspondence of the corporation. The secretary shall oversee preparation of agendas and reports for all meetings of the congregation and the Congregation Council and shall oversee preparation of the Annual Report to the Congregation.

The Treasurer shall oversee the books of account of the congregation and shall oversee the receiving of funds of the congregation and disbursing them on proper orders, making regular remittance of benevolence receipts to the treasurer of the synod. The Treasurer shall convene a Finance Committee, comprised of the Office Manager, the Financial Secretary, and two members of the congregation nominated by the Leadership Development Committee. The two members shall serve three-year terms, not to exceed two consecutive terms. A written report of financial activity shall be made to the Congregation Council monthly. An annual report and satisfactory audit shall be made to the Congregation at its Congregation Meeting held during the first quarter.

The President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer along with the Senior Pastor shall comprise the Executive Committee. Senior Pastor is an advisory member.

Executive Committee as Personnel Committee

The Executive Committee shall:

- Ensure the best possible staff for LCGS.
- Make sure that job descriptions for each employee exist.
- Ensure that an employee handbook is current, interpreting personnel policies.
- Ensure a process for evaluation of all staff members each year.
- Recommend a total staff budget each year to the Council.
- Recommend new staff positions and compensation packages to the Council.

The Senior Pastor shall be a non-voting member of the Executive Committee.

Chapter 12.

C12.01. CONGREGATION COUNCIL

There shall be ten (10) voting members of the Congregation Council, including the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Past President, plus five (5) at-large members.

Each of the at-large members shall have oversight for one of the specific ministry areas: Spiritual Growth, Outreach, Administration, with two at-large members having oversight of Family Life. The Council member functions to support designated staff, committees/task forces within their area, and be a liaison to the Council.

The Past President serves as chair of the Lay Leadership Development Committee (formerly known as Nominating Committee). This committee shall function to identify and develop leadership within LCGS and the whole ELCA. The Lay Leadership Development Committee shall be composed of five (5) members, including the Past President, one member of the Council to be appointed by the Council, and three members elected by the congregation at the annual meeting to serve three-year terms. The Senior Pastor serves as an advisory member.

Members of the Congregation Council shall be nominated by the Lay Leadership Development Committee and elected by the Congregation at the Congregation Annual Meeting, held in January of each year. Congregation Council members serve three-year terms. The positions of President, Vice President and Past President are understood to be three one-year successive terms. (Vice President shall be elected to serve three one-year terms successively as Vice President, President, and Past President). The Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected for three-year terms. In order to foster both innovation and continuity, three-year terms shall be arranged so that approximately one-third of the Council positions are selected each year. Members of the Council shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively. Terms shall begin at the close of the Congregation Annual Meeting.

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;
- b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause; or
- c) resigns from the Congregation Council.

Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor to fill the vacancy until the next Congregation Annual Meeting. A Council member filling an unexpired term shall be eligible to serve for an additional 3-year term.

The Congregation Council shall be the board of directors of this congregation. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Minnesota, except as otherwise provided herein.

The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of this congregation, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God. The Congregation Council shall lead this congregation in articulating its values, mission, and vision for ministry. The Congregation Council shall work together as a steering committee and provide a ministry structure to enable the congregation to carry out its mission and work toward fulfilling its vision.

The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the President, or at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of the place and time of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council.

The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the Congregation Annual Meeting.

Chapter 13.

MINISTRY AREAS AND CALL COMMITTEE

C13.01. MINISTRY AREAS

The Ministry of The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd shall be organized in four (4) areas: Each area will organize committees and task forces to carry out specific ministry. Each committee/task force will be coordinated by a designated staff person(s) and will organize itself, and recruit and select members for service. Non-staff members of committee/task forces can serve no more than two three-year terms up to a maximum of six years.

Spiritual Growth

We seek to reach out to all persons and invite them to hear the Good News of God's love. The Spiritual Growth area of ministry shall:

- Encourage all people to receive and affirm the gift of Baptism and express their response to the Gospel through a personal commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
- Provide opportunities and resources for music and worship in accord with the teachings of scripture. Seek to involve people in the planning, preparation and conduct of worship.
- Provide for the reception and assimilation of new members.
- Establish a caring community of believers through the caring ministry of the congregation.

- Encourage members to witness in daily life and be actively involved in the life and ministry of the congregation.
- Provide resources to share the good news and publicize the church and its activities.

Family Life

We encourage people to grow in faith and deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ and with each other. The Family Life area of ministry shall:

- Assist members in determining their spiritual gifts and how to use those gifts in ministry with others.
- Provide educational ministry including Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Confirmation Ministry and Adult Bible Study.
- Equip teachers and provide educational resources.
- Provide a comprehensive ministry with youth and young adults including fellowship, study and service opportunities.
- Support youth advisors, provide resources, and encourage the involvement of young people in the full ministry of the congregation.
- Encourage personal and spiritual growth through participation in Small Group Ministry.
- Seek to increase the understanding of biblical stewardship principles, and seek to deepen the level of commitment of all members as expressed in their giving of time, talent and financial resources.
- Foster fellowship in the congregation and support ministries for men, women, single persons and older adults.

Outreach

The Outreach area of ministry shall enhance the caring ministry of the congregation and equip members for ministry in the world. Outreach shall:

- Oversee food and clothing donation programs, and other programs to meet needs in the local community and around the world.
- Oversee the congregation's financial support of programs that meet human needs consistent with our mission.
- Oversee ministry to people who are homebound, hospitalized or have other special needs
- Support community projects and other benevolent activities.
- Educate the congregation and seek to remedy local and global justice and hunger problems.
- Function as liaison to community organizations sponsored by the congregation.

Administration

The Administration area of ministry oversees the day-to-day ministry of the congregation. This area will have oversight of:

- Congregational Finances, including budgeting, and proper accounting practices, including a yearly audit.
- Building and Grounds, maintenance and upkeep.
- Office Systems and equipment
- Parish Communications and publications
- Trust/Endowment Fund—manage and further develop financial resources to support mission and ministry of LCGS.

C13.02. CALL COMMITTEE

a. A Call Committee shall be elected when a pastoral vacancy occurs and shall be comprised of six (6) voting members of this congregation, elected by this congregation. The term of office will terminate at installation of the newly called pastor.

Chapter 14.

ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

C14.01. All organizations in this congregation shall exist to aid in ministering to the members of this congregation and to all persons who can be reached with the Gospel of Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of this congregation's life, the organizations are subject to its oversight and direction. This congregation at its annual 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 ELCA may be organized only after our Church Council has given authorization.

Chapter 15.

DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

C15.01. Denial of the Christian faith as described in this Constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps:

- a) private admonition by the pastor,
- b) admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses,
- c) citation to appear before our Church Council.

C15.02. A member charged with the offense shall appear before our Church Council following receipt of a written notice specifying the exact charges that have been made against the member. The written notice shall be in the hands of the Church Council at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting. (NOTE: Members of the Church Council who participate in the preparation of the written charges or who present evidence or testimony in the hearing before our Church Council are disqualified from voting upon the question of the guilt of the accused member.)

C15.03. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the quorum of our Church Council present and voting, and renewed admonition prove ineffectual, the Council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions.

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

(NOTE: Disciplinary actions b. and c. shall be delivered to the member in writing.)

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

C15.05. Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by our Church Council upon receipt of:

- a. evidence that an injustice has been done, or**
- b. evidence of repentance and amendment.**

C15.06. When there is disagreement among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation shall have access to the synodical bishop for consultation after informing the chair of our Church Council of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the consultation committee of the synod shall consider the matter. If the consultation committee of the synod shall fail to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to the Synod Council, whose decision shall be final.

Chapter 16.

BYLAW RULES

C16.01. This congregation may adopt Bylaws. No Bylaw may conflict with this Constitution.

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

C16.03 Changes to the Bylaws may be proposed by any voting member. However, any additions or amendments must be submitted in writing to the Church Council at least sixty (60) days before a regular or special congregational meeting called for that purpose. The Church Council will notify the members of this congregation of the proposal with its recommendations at least thirty (30) days in advance of the congregation meeting.

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

Chapter 17.

AMENDMENTS

C17.01. Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by at least ten (10) voting members or by the Church Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Church Council sixty (60) days before formal consideration by this congregation at its regular or special meeting called for that purpose. The Church Council shall notify the members of the proposals with their recommendations at least thirty (30) days in advance of the congregation meeting.

C17.02. A proposed amendment to this Constitution shall:

- a. be approved at a properly called meeting according to this Constitution;
- b. be ratified without change at the next annual meeting according to the requirements of this Constitution; and
- c. have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the Constitution.

C17.03. Any amendments to this Constitution shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The amendment shall become effective within 120 days from the date of the receipt of the notice by the synod unless the synod informs this congregation that the amendment is in conflict with the Constitution and Bylaws of the ELCA, or the Constitution of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod.

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

Chapter 18.

COUNCIL MANUAL

C18.01 The Church Council shall establish a Council Manual which will describe the function and responsibilities of the various committees, and organizations of this congregation.

C18.02 The Council Manual shall be enacted and subsequently may be amended by a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Church Council.