

**CONSTITUTION
Bethlehem Lutheran Church**

**Adopted March 10, 1991
Effective June 1, 1991**

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.

ARTICLE I -- NAME AND INCORPORATION

- 1.01. The name of this congregation shall be Bethlehem Lutheran Church.
- 1.02. For the purpose of this constitution, Bethlehem Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."
- 1.03. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

ARTICLE II -- CONFESSION OF FAITH

- 2.01. This congregation confesses the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- 2.02. 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 word.
- 2.03. 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.
- 2.04. This congregation accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this congregation.
- 2.05. 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 teaching of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
- 2.06. 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.
- 2.07. 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.

ARTICLE III -- NATURE OF THE CHURCH

- 3.01. 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.

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

ARTICLE IV -- STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- 4.01. 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.
- 4.02. 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 a11.
 - 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, 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.
- 4.03. 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 this 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 other parts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - H. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - I. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.
- 4.04. This congregation shall annually adopt a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

ARTICLE V -- POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

- 5.01. The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.
- 5.02. The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregational Meeting called and conducted as provided in this

constitution.

- 5.03. Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregation Council or other organizational units in this congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by the congregation. The congregation is authorized to:
- A. Call a pastor;
 - B. Terminate the call of a pastor;
 - C. Appoint or terminate the appointment of associates in ministry in conformity with the applicable policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
 - D. Approve the annual budget;
 - E. Acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
 - F. Hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
 - G. Sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
 - H. Elect its officers, Congregation Council, boards, standing committees, and delegates and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution and continuing resolutions; and
 - I. Terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Article VI.

ARTICLE VI -- CHURCH AFFILIATION

- 6.01. This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- 6.02. 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.
- 6.03. This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which:
- A. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
 - B. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - C. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the bishop of the synod.
 - D. This congregation agrees to consider associates in ministry for appointment to other staff positions in the congregation according to the procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - E. This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution with the synod for review to ascertain that all of its provisions are in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or with the constitution of the synod.
- 6.04. Affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be terminated as follows:
- A. This congregation takes action to dissolve.
 - B. This congregation ceases to exist.

- C. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - D. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in Article 6.05.
- 6.05. This congregation may terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the following procedure:
- A. A resolution indicating the desire of this congregation to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present.
 - B. The secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the synodical bishop and shall mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of the congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted.
 - C. The bishop of the synod shall consult with this congregation during a period of at least 90 days.
 - D. If this congregation, after consultation, still desires to terminate its relationship, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present, at which meeting the bishop or an authorized representative shall be present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.
 - E. A certified copy of the resolution to terminate its relationship shall be sent to the synodical bishop, at which time the relationship between this congregation and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be terminated.
 - F. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the synodical bishop to the secretary of this congregation and published in the periodical of this congregation.
- 6.06. If this congregation is considering relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.

ARTICLE VII -- PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

- 7.01. Title to all real or personal property acquired by this congregation, its organizations, or individuals for use by this congregation and its organizations, shall be held by this congregation.
- 7.02. Real property shall not be purchased, encumbered or disposed of, or the proceeds thereof used in any manner except by resolution adopted by not less than a two-thirds majority of the voting members present and voting at a legally called meeting of this congregation.
- 7.03. If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the Southwestern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- 7.04. If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.
- 7.05. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of the congregation present 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 Southwestern Minnesota Synod.
- 7.06. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present 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 the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with this congregation by the established synodical process, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of

this congregation. If the Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to continue as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

ARTICLE VIII -- MEMBERSHIP

- 8.01. 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.
- 8.02. Members shall be classified as follows:
- A. Baptized members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the Name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.
 - B. Confirmed members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.
 - C. Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members shall have communed and made a contribution of record during the current or preceding year.
- 8.03. The names of all candidates for confirmed membership and all new members by transfer or affirmation shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Congregation Council.
- 8.04. Participation in Holy Communion shall normally be for baptized members of this and other Lutheran congregations who have gone through a period of preparation to enhance the readiness of the participant to benefit spiritually from the presence of Christ in the Sacrament and the forgiveness and life He brings. In the case of children, such preparation shall be coordinated by the clergy in consultation with the parents and/or adult sponsors who have primary responsibility for assessing the readiness of their baptized children to receive the Sacrament.
- 8.05. 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 and of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.
- 8.06. Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:
- A. Death;
 - B. Resignation;
 - C. Transfer or release;
 - D. Disciplinary action by the Congregation Council; or
 - E. Removal from the membership roll due to inactivity.
 - 1. A confirmed member who in the judgment of the Congregation Council shows no interest in attending worship services and does not partake of Holy Communion; and who does not contribute financially, for a period of two years, shall be presumed no longer to desire membership, shall lose the right to vote, and shall not be counted in the membership statistics of this congregation.
 - 2. The name and record of such persons shall be kept in the files for a period of five years thereafter. Such a person shall be encouraged to take part in the congregational life, or to transfer elsewhere, as the situation may indicate to be advisable. If he/she resumes activity within the five-year period, he/she shall be restored to the active membership list; if not, he/she shall be dismissed from this congregation and, if possible, shall be notified of this action.

3. Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the church has a continuing pastoral concern.
- 8.07. Members who have been dismissed or excommunicated, or who have resigned; and members who have transferred to other Lutheran congregations; or who are definitely known to have become members of other congregations without transfer, have thereby terminated their membership in this congregation and have surrendered all membership rights.
 - 8.08. Members who move away shall be encouraged to transfer their membership. A confirmed member in good standing desiring to change his/her membership to another Lutheran congregation shall, upon request, receive a Letter of Transfer.

ARTICLE IX -- THE PASTOR

- 9.01. Authority to call a pastor shall rest in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot of members present and voting at a meeting regularly called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the Call Committee shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- 9.02. Only a member of the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or who has been recommended for it by the synodical bishop, may be called as a pastor of this congregation.
- 9.03. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, each ordained pastor called to this congregation shall:
 - A. Preach and teach the Word of God.
 - B. Preside at worship and administer the sacraments.
 - C. Provide pastoral care to all members of this congregation according to need.
 - D. Confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead.
 - E. Lead and equip this congregation's members to fulfill their call to give faithful witness in their daily discipleship.
 - F. Receive this congregation's members as the people of God with love, cooperation, and respect.
 - G. Strive in word and action to be a worthy example in Christian living, avoiding conflict which might endanger the faith of others.
 - H. Advise boards, committees, and organizations of this congregation, as determined by individual portfolio.
 - I. Install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council and boards and, with the Congregation Council, administer discipline.
 - J. Encourage support for the total ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - K. Speak publicly in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
- 9.04. 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.
- 9.05. If, in the judgment of this congregation, a pastor is no longer able to serve satisfactorily, he/she may be requested to resign.
 - A. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and which, except in the case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated only following consultation with the synodical bishop and for the following reasons:
 1. Mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term of years;

2. Resignation of the pastor;
 3. Inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in this 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; or
 6. The dissolution of this congregation.
- B. In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity of the pastor or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office, it shall be the responsibility of the bishop of the synod, when such difficulties are personally known or 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, to investigate such conditions personally in company with a committee of two ordained ministers and one layperson.
- C. In case of alleged physical or mental incapacity, competent testimony shall be obtained. When such disability is evident, the bishop of the synod, with the advise of the committee, may declare the pastorate vacant. Upon the restoration of a disabled pastor to health, the bishop of the synod shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in this congregation or in another field of labor.
- D. In the case of alleged local difficulties which imperil the effective functioning of this congregation, all concerned persons shall be heard, after which the bishop of the synod, together with the committee described in Article 9.05.B shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor and to this congregation. If they agree 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 two-thirds majority ballot vote of the voting members present at a regularly called special meeting after consultation with the bishop.
- E. The foregoing procedure shall never be invoked when questions of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty are involved, all such cases being treated as disciplinary matters by the bishop of this synod.
- F. If, in the course of the proceedings, it should become apparent that the pastoral office cannot be conducted effectively in this congregation by the ordained pastor due to local conditions, the bishop of the synod may temporarily suspend the 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.
- 9.06. At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor may be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.
- 9.07. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing interim assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.
- 9.08. 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 accepting a call to another congregation.
- 9.09. 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 pastor, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- 9.10. With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from Article 9.05.A and call a pastor for a specific term of years. Details of such call 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 ca11. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of Article 9.05.A.
- 9.11. The pastor shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants,

members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from this congregation, and shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod.

- 9.12. The pastor(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- 9.13. If a pastor receives a call to another congregation, he or she shall inform the Congregation Council before coming to a decision. He/She should attempt to reach a decision as quickly as possible, normally within three weeks. Upon making a decision, the pastor shall notify the Congregation Council, this congregation, and the synod office. When a release has been granted and the call accepted, the pastor shall terminate his/her ministry and transfer to his/her new field of service as quickly as possible, normally within four weeks.
- 9.14. The pastors, as spiritual leaders of this congregation, shall be non-voting members of the Congregation Council and appropriate boards, and advisory members of all other committees and organizations of this congregation, unless otherwise specified. The pastors shall be welcome at any and all meetings of any board, committee, group, auxiliary, etc.

ARTICLE X -- CONGREGATION MEETINGS

- 10.01. The semi-annual meetings of this congregation shall be held in the months of May or June and November or December at a time and date determined by the Congregation Council.
 - A. The May or June congregation meeting shall include election of officers, boards, and standing committees, except as otherwise provided in this constitution; adoption of a mission statement; and other approved business.
 1. No one shall be declared elected unless he/she has received a majority of the votes cast.
 2. If more than one ballot is required in an election, a motion shall be in order to limit the balloting after the first ballot to the three candidates receiving the highest number of votes on the first ballot; and after the second ballot to limit the balloting to the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes.
 - B. The November or December meeting shall include the adoption of the budget for the next fiscal period (January 1 - December 31), election of synod delegates, and other approved business.
- 10.02. A special congregation meeting may be called by the pastors, the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called at the written request of 25 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.
- 10.03. Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and in such publications as the congregation or the pastors may periodically issue; or by written notice to the voting members at least ten days prior to the meeting date.
- 10.04. A meeting of this congregation may by majority vote recess to reconvene at a specified time and place. A meeting may also recess upon call; provided, however, that the time and place of such a meeting must be announced at a public service of this congregation, or written notice be mailed to the voting members not less than three days in advance of the reconvened meeting.
- 10.05. Five percent (5%) of the voting members of this congregation shall constitute a quorum.
- 10.06. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- 10.07. All actions of this congregation shall be by majority vote, except as otherwise provided in this constitution.
- 10.08. In the following cases, voting shall be by written ballot:
 - A. To adopt or to amend the articles of incorporation or the constitution of this congregation;
 - B. To call a pastor or to request his/her resignation;
 - C. To excommunicate a member from this congregation or to remove a member from office in this congregation;
 - D. To sever membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America;

- E. To dispose of, encumber, or purchase real property;
 - F. When requested by twenty-five or more voting members present.
- 10.09. The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern parliamentary procedures of all meetings of this congregation.

**ARTICLE XI-- QUALIFICATIONS OF OFFICERS, CONGREGATION COUNCIL,
BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS, AND DELEGATES**

- 11.01. Officers, the Congregation Council, members of boards and committees, and delegates shall call upon the Holy Spirit to lead them to:
- A. Make diligent 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 and of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- 11.02. Any person is eligible to serve as an officer or Congregation Council member, after he/she has been a voting member of this congregation for at least one year prior to the election date. Amended 5/8/94
- 11.03. All officers, Congregation Council members, members of boards and committees, and delegates must be voting members of this congregation.
- 11.04. If an officer, member of the Congregation Council, or member of a board or committee is absent from three consecutive regular meetings without an acceptable excuse, he/she has forfeited his/her office or board/committee membership.
- 11.05. The president of this congregation shall have served previously as an officer of this congregation or on a board or standing committee prior to his/her election as president.
- 11.06. Paid lay staff of this congregation shall not serve as an officer or on the Congregation Council; nor may they serve on any board or committee which oversees or establishes policy in their area of ministry.

ARTICLE XII -- OFFICERS

- 12.01. The officers of this congregation shall be a president, a vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer.
- A. Duties of the officers of this congregation shall be as follows:
 - 1. The president of this congregation shall:
 - a. Pray for this congregation and its on-going mission.
 - b. Preside at all congregational meetings.
 - c. Preside at all meetings of the Congregation Council.
 - d. Preside at all meetings of the Executive Committee.
 - e. Carry out the expressed will of this congregation as expressed in motions or resolutions of the voting membership.
 - f. Be welcome at any and all meetings of any board, committee, group, auxiliary, etc., either in person or as represented by such person(s) as he/she may appoint.
 - g. Meet regularly with the pastoral staff as to the state of this congregation.
 - h. Sign all official documents of this congregation with the secretary.

- i. Perform other duties as assigned by this congregation or the Congregation Council.
- 2. The vice president of this congregation shall:
 - a. Pray for this congregation and its on-going mission.
 - b. Preside at all meetings of this congregation, Congregation Council, or the Executive Committee in the absence of the president.
 - c. Attend meetings of any board, committee, group, auxiliary, etc., as assigned by the president.
 - d. Perform other duties as assigned by the president, congregation, Congregation Council, or Executive Committee.
- 3. The secretary of this congregation shall:
 - a. Pray for this congregation and its on-going mission.
 - b. Keep minutes of all meetings of this congregation and Congregation Council.
 - c. Sign all official documents of this congregation, with the president.
 - d. Preside at all meetings of this congregation, Congregation Council, or the Executive Committee in the absence of the president and vice president.
 - e. Perform other duties as assigned by the president, congregation, Congregation Council, or Executive Committee.
- 4. The treasurer of this congregation shall:
 - a. Pray for this congregation and its on-going mission.
 - b. Complete a detailed analysis of all financial statements on a quarterly basis and submit to the Congregation Council.
 - c. Be authorized to sign all financial documents of this congregation.
 - d. Serve as a voting member of the Finance Committee.
 - e. Perform other duties as assigned by the president, congregation, Congregation Council, or Executive Committee.

- B. The officers shall be voting members of this congregation.
- C. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.
- D. Officers shall be elected at the May semi-annual meeting.

12.02. The congregation shall elect its officers, and they shall be the officers of this congregation. The officers shall serve for two years. Their term of office shall begin on June 1 and end on May 31 of the second year.

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

ARTICLE XIII -- CONGREGATION COUNCIL

13.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the officers of this congregation and the elected chairperson of each board.

- 13.02. The members of the Congregation Council shall be elected directly by the congregation at a legally called meeting of this congregation during the month of May. The term of office shall be for two years with the term beginning on June 1 and ending on May 31 of the second year. The only exceptions to the election of the members of the Congregation Council and the term of office shall be those stated elsewhere in this constitution. Newly elected Congregation Council members shall be installed at a worship service prior to the date they assume office.
- 13.03. 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 semi-annual meeting. Candidates shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee.
- 13.04. The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, 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 pray for this congregation and its on-going mission.
 - B. To lead this congregation annually in stating its mission, to long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
 - C. To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
 - D. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to perform its functions and fulfill its mission.
 - E. To maintain supportive relationships with the pastors and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling, appointment, 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 adjudicate differences between boards.
 - I. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of a pastor.
 - J. To emphasize partnership with the synod and churchwide units 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.
 - K. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - L. To set the date, time, and agenda for the semi-annual meetings.
 - M. To approve all candidates for confirmed membership and all new members by transfer or affirmation in this congregation.
 - N. To interpret and communicate this congregation's partnership in ministry with other churches and organizations in this community, the Great River Conference, the Southwestern Minnesota Synod, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- 13.05. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation:
- A. 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.
 - B. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to one-half of one percent (.005%) of the annual budget for items not included in the adopted budget.
 - C. The Congregation Council shall prepare and present an annual budget for adoption by this congregation at its November semi-annual meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in partnership with the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

- D. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies to the synodical treasurer.
- 13.06. The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution are carried out.
- 13.07. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the appointment of all salaried lay workers of this congregation, both full time and part time.
- 13.08. The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at its November and May semi-annual meetings.
- 13.09. The Congregation Council shall serve as liaison between the pastors and officers of this congregation, and lead the various boards and committees in planning the total work of this congregation.
- 13.10. The Congregation Council shall designate which board is responsible for duties not assigned in this constitution.
- 13.11. The Congregation Council shall appoint directors or task forces and special committees for one-time projects not related to a specific board and supervise, review, and support their work.
- 13.12. The Congregation Council shall oversee any necessary standing committees not described in this constitution.
- 13.13. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational groups and shall review their actions.
- 13.14. The Congregation Council shall exercise only such authority as may be delegated by this congregation; and this authority shall be exercised in accordance with the constitution and resolutions of this congregation.
- 13.15. The Congregation Council shall oversee the nominating and election process to make certain that the process facilitates inclusiveness.
- 13.16. The Congregation Council shall nominate five members of this congregation to serve on the Nominating Committee.
- 13.17. The Congregation Council shall conduct regular meetings, not less than once a month. Special meetings may be called by pastors, the president, the Executive Committee, or at the written request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all those who are entitled to be present.
- 13.18. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council.

ARTICLE XIV -- CONGREGATIONAL BOARDS

- 14.01. Each board shall consist of a chairperson and six members. The chairperson shall be elected directly by this congregation to serve as chair for a period of two years. The members shall also be elected by this congregation to serve a term of two years. The election of the chairperson, number of members, and term of office are the same for each board, except as otherwise noted in this constitution.
 - A. Only the elected chairperson of each board shall serve as a voting member of the Congregation Council.
 - B. Each board shall select a vice chairperson to serve in the absence of the chairperson and a secretary to take official minutes of each board meeting. The minutes of each board meeting shall be in the church office within one week of that meeting.
 - C. No member of a board shall be eligible for election to more than three consecutive terms.
 - D. Each board shall have responsibility for a designated work area.
 - E. Each board shall conduct regular meetings of not less than once each month.

F. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of each board.

14.02 Board of Youth and Family Ministries

Ratified at the May 23, 1999 Congregational Meeting.

Mission statement for the Board of Youth and Family Ministries:

The goal of this group is to encourage faith, witness, and service through formal and informal education programs and group activities.

- A. The Board of Youth and Family Ministries (BYFM) consists of seven members, including the elected chair of the Board.
- B. The pastor whose portfolio includes the Board of Youth and Family Ministries serves as advisor.
- C. The basic objectives of this board are to:
 - 1. Plan, promote, and supervise the total education, youth and family programs of this congregation.
 - 2. Determine, approve, evaluate and revise program policies.
 - 3. Recommend personnel for the various programs.
 - 4. Provide necessary facilities for the programs.
 - 5. Give direction in hiring; offer support, and meet the ongoing needs of the BYFM staff.
- D. Specific duties include:
 - 1. Annually evaluate the position descriptions of the BYFM staff.
 - 2. As stated in the Personnel Policy Handbook, evaluate the performance of the BYFM staff and present the evaluation to the Personnel Committee.
 - 3. Annually review and make recommendations to the Personnel Committee concerning adequate compensation for the BYFM staff.
 - 4. Provide for the professional growth of the BYFM staff members through conferences, conventions, continuing education, and the like, and request the necessary funds for these professional opportunities in the annual budget.
 - 5. Annually examine the facilities and equipment and make recommendations to the replacements needed, as well as for the need for new equipment.
 - 6. Annually evaluate the effectiveness of this Board's ministry.
 - 7. Appoint special committees as necessary to carry out the work of this board such as: Nursery, Children's Ministries, Elementary, Junior High and Senior High Youth Ministries, Confirmation, Adult Education and Family Ministries.
 - 8. Prepare and monitor an annual budget.
- E. In preparation for all of the above tasks and duties, we encourage all members to *pray for the work of the board and its responsibility for the Christian nurture of children, youth and adults in this congregation and, through them, the community and beyond.*

14.03. Board of Church in Society

- A. The Board of Church in Society shall consist of seven members, including the elected chair of the board.
- B. The basic objectives of the Board of Church in Society are to discover social needs and identify issues with which this congregation should be responsible; provide opportunities for learning about issues and needs here and in the world; coordinate congregational response to needs in this congregation and the world we live in and serve as a liaison between this congregation and other social related institutions and agencies; and implement specific programs and opportunities for congregational involvement, cooperating with other congregations and community organizations when possible.
- C. The pastor whose portfolio includes the Board of Church in Society shall serve in an advisory capacity.
- D. To better serve this congregation, this board, either corporately or through specifically designated individuals, shall:
 - 1. Pray for the on-going mission of this board.
 - 2. In cooperation with the Board of Christian Education, help the members of this congregation understand the issues that concern the community, nation, and world and the bearing of Christian faith

- upon them.
3. Assess annually the needs of this congregation and community, to see which social problems call for action.
 4. Take appropriate action upon issues and help other members of this congregation become involved in acting upon them both as individuals and as the corporate community of faith.
 5. Cooperate with other church and community agencies in their study, education, service, and action.
 6. Stimulate and coordinate volunteer activity in the area of social services, both within this congregation and the community.
 7. Serve as this congregation's link to synod and churchwide committees on Church in Society, social service, research and social action, special ministries, etc.
 8. Emphasize the need for effective and informed political participation so that members realize that the political process is part of God's intention for community service and citizenship by Christians.
 9. Support and participate in the work of Lutheran social service organizations such as nursing homes, hospitals, and institutions of other specialized services, and encourage the participation of members in such organizations.
 10. Sponsor or participate in community-wide forums at which issues causing tension or confusion in the community can be discussed openly, without rancor or partisanship.
 11. Keep informed on current issues under debate in the national or state legislature, prompting informed comment to representatives by congregation members, by the social concerns committee, or by the Congregation Council.
 12. Register congregational facilities for use in community emergencies and enlist the skills of men and women of this congregation for service in disaster or emergency situations.
 13. Stimulate and coordinate volunteer services to community social service agencies and institutions.
 14. Support and encourage the use of community social services which assist individuals and families in crisis situations.
 15. Supervise the "emergency fund," communicating its needs and functions to this congregation.
 16. Administer and supervise the local refugee resettlement program.
 17. Communicate the need to share our resources with the hungry of our community, nation, and world.
 18. Be responsible for this congregation's participation in the local food shelf.
 19. Educate the congregation of the major forms of abuse in the community (alcohol, drug, sexual, physical, emotional, etc.) and seek ways to alleviate this abuse.
 20. Annually evaluate the effectiveness of this board's ministry.
 21. Appoint special committees as necessary to carry out the work of this board.
 22. Prepare and monitor an annual budget.
 23. Carry out such other responsibilities and tasks as may be assigned by this congregation and Congregation Council.

14.04. Board of Church Property

- A. The Board of Church Property shall consist of seven members, including the elected chair of the board.
- B. The basic objectives of the Board of Church Property are to be responsible for the proper maintenance and repair of church property and the general protection of the congregation against loss or damage.
- C. The pastor whose portfolio includes the Board of Church Property and the Business Administrator shall serve in advisory capacities.
- D. To better serve this congregation, this board, either corporately or through specifically designated individuals, shall:
 1. Pray for the on-going mission of this board.
 2. Conduct routine inspection of church properties to insure that adequate maintenance and timely repairs and/or replacement are provided.
 3. Conduct an annual inventory of all church properties, equipment, and supplies, including acquisition date and approximate value of each item.
 4. Carry out all requests for major purchases or repairs as approved by this congregation and Congregation Council.
 5. Meet with custodians and/or the business administrator to discuss maintenance needs and equipment and to discuss any related concerns they may have.
 6. Determine, with this congregation or Congregation Council, regulations regarding the use of church properties and equipment. Set all policies and fees for rental, use, and lending of church

- properties.
7. Review and act on all requests for use of church property by persons and groups outside this congregation and prepare policy statements for the observed regarding the use of church property:
 - (a) The property shall be for the use of this congregation in its normal functions as an ELCA congregation and shall not be used in any way not in harmony with the purpose(s) of this congregation.
 - (b) Buildings which are the property of this congregation shall not be lent or rented to any group or individual not affiliated with this congregation or with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America unless approved by the Congregation Council by a two-thirds majority vote.
 - (c) Ceremonies of lodges or other such organizations shall not be permitted in the church or on its premises.
 8. Provide adequate storage space for all church properties, equipment, and supplies.
 9. Make an annual evaluation of insurance coverage for all church property and, with the business administrator, negotiate insurance contracts for adequate protection.
 10. Routinely inspect the building(s) for any possible fire hazards, safety hazards, and for handicapped accessibility.
 11. Enlist the service of congregational members for special repairs, cleaning, painting, or any projects requiring group effort.
 12. Provide for any emergency repair or replacement of equipment.
 13. Provide for normal repair and alterations for which budget funds have been allocated.
 14. Provide for service contracts for office machines and other equipment as appropriate.
 15. Annually evaluate the job description of the Business Administrator and of the janitor(s).
 16. Annually evaluate the performance of the Business Administrator and the janitor(s) and present the evaluations to the Personnel Committee.
 17. Annually review and make recommendations to the Personnel Committee concerning adequate compensation for the Business Administrator and the janitor(s).
 18. Annually evaluate the effectiveness of this board's ministry.
 19. Appoint special committees as necessary to carry out the work of this board.
 20. Prepare and monitor an annual budget. The budget is to include all recurring expenses known: utilities, insurance, supplies, fuel, repairs and replacement, etc. An amount should also be designated to cover unexpected repairs and services.
 21. Carry out such other responsibilities and tasks as may be assigned by this congregation or Congregation Council.

14.05. Board of Congregational Life

- A. The Board of Congregational Life shall consist of seven members, including the elected chair of the board.
- B. The basic objectives of the Board of Congregational Life are to strengthen the fellowship of members spiritually and socially, to integrate new members into the life of this congregation, and to build mutual cooperation, trust, and community among our members.
- C. The pastor whose portfolio includes the Board of Congregational Life shall serve in an advisory capacity.
- D. To better serve this congregation, this board, either corporately or through specifically designed individuals, shall:
 1. Pray for the on-going mission of this board.
 2. Plan, supervise, and implement congregational gatherings throughout the year, in conjunction with other appropriate boards, which will further the mission of this congregation.
 3. Promote the integration of all congregational members into the life of this church through the use of the time and abilities files.
 4. Coordinate and support all group activities, especially those centered around special interests, projects, or age groups.
 5. Maintain an adequate group of willing workers who will help plan, coordinate, and execute the work necessary to the successful accomplishment of fellowship goals.
 6. Provide a general atmosphere of friendliness and hospitality among the members on a small scale by suggesting to groups, societies, Bible classes, etc., ways of helping their members become better acquainted.
 7. Review and adopt materials and ideas from various sources which will bring congregation members into personal contact in groups such as family nights, plays, Fun Fairs, talent shows, etc.
 8. Plan, supervise, and implement recurring yearly events which will focus attention on the major aspects

- of this congregation's work.
- 9. Periodically sponsor dinners and fellowship, in conjunction with the Board of Evangelism, which will further the orientation and integration of new families and individuals into the life of this congregation.
- 10. Oversee the visitation of all sick, hospitalized, aged, and shut-ins in this congregation.
- 11. Annually contact those members who have shown no interest in participating in worship services, who have not partaken of holy communion, and who have not made a financial contribution to encourage their participation.
- 12. Annually evaluate the effectiveness of this board's ministry.
- 13. Appoint special committees as necessary to carry out the work of this board.
- 14. Prepare and monitor an annual budget.
- 15. Carry out such other responsibilities and tasks as may be assigned by this congregation and Congregation Council.

14.06. Board of Evangelism

- A. The Board of Evangelism shall consist of seven members, including the elected chair of the board.
- B. The basic objectives of the Board of Evangelism are the bringing of the Gospel to the unchurched, the enlistment of all of God's people in the work of spreading the Gospel, the deepening of the faith and activity of the members of this congregation, and the concern for the spiritual well-being of all people.
- C. The pastor whose portfolio includes the Board of Evangelism shall serve in an advisory capacity.
- D. To better serve this congregation, this board, either corporately or through specifically designated individuals, shall:
 - 1. Pray for the on-going mission of this board.
 - 2. Share with the pastors in the entire program of proclaiming the Gospel.
 - 3. Encourage prayer in worship and homes for evangelistic concern toward all people inside and outside the church.
 - 4. Encourage members to recognize Christ's activity in their lives and the lives of others and to share that good news.
 - 5. Promote and direct congregation-wide programs concerned with evangelism.
 - 6. Emphasize evangelism through an intensive every-member awareness program at least annually.
 - 7. Maintain an on-going visitation program, offering people not only membership in a church but also a saving relationship with Christ.
 - 8. Be responsible, together with the Board of Public Relations, for a program of community relations that identifies this congregation with the Gospel of Christ.
 - 9. Utilize the evangelism potential of media such as radio, television, newspapers, and community brochures, together with the Board of Public Relations.
 - 10. Emphasize and encourage evangelism programs in and through the various organizations of this congregation.
 - 11. Emphasize, together with the Board of Christian Education, child and youth evangelism, both in participation and outreach.
 - 12. Assess this congregation's effectiveness in outreach and record, study, and utilize the results.
 - 13. Be responsible for gathering visitor registrations, follow-up records, and potential membership visits.
 - 14. Before new-member classes, conduct special visitations to witness for Christ, and to invite prospective members to attend.
 - 15. Be concerned for those moving into the community and for members moving into other areas, and be innovative in maintaining such contacts.
 - 16. Be concerned for the reception, orientation, and integration of new members into this congregation and review their progress after six and twelve months.
 - 17. Periodically sponsor dinners and fellowship events, in conjunction with the Board of Congregational Life, which will further the orientation and integration of new families and individuals into the life of this congregation.
 - 18. Assess the atmosphere of hospitality in this congregation toward members and visitors, and suggest ways and means of improvement.
 - 19. Study and act upon suggestions of synod and churchwide evangelism boards.
 - 20. Be responsible for all work with outreach as it applies to the Board of Evangelism.
 - 21. Annually evaluate the effectiveness of this board's ministry.
 - 22. Appoint special committees as necessary to carry out the work of this board.

23. Prepare and monitor an annual budget.
24. Carry out such other responsibilities and tasks as may be assigned by this congregation and Congregation Council.

14.07. Board of Preschool

- A. The Board of Preschool shall consist of seven members, including the elected chair of the board.
- B. The basic objective of the Board of Preschool is to operate the Bethlehem Lutheran Church Preschool in a manner that reflects this congregation's mission and Lutheran theology.
- C. The pastor whose portfolio includes the Board of Preschool and the Preschool Director shall serve in advisory capacities.
- D. To better serve this congregation, this board, either corporately or through specifically designated individuals, shall:
 1. Pray for the on-going mission of this board.
 2. Help children to grow spiritually, physically, emotionally, mentally, and socially in a Christian atmosphere.
 3. Provide and approve an educational program that fulfills the school's purpose and meets requirements of the State of Minnesota and is in line with current trends and research in early childhood education.
 4. Develop school policies that will guide and direct the Preschool Director in the daily management and operation of the Preschool.
 5. Annually evaluate job descriptions of all paid preschool personnel.
 6. Annually evaluate the performance of all paid preschool personnel and present the evaluations to the Personnel Committee.
 7. Annually review and make recommendations to the Personnel Committee concerning adequate compensation for the Preschool Director and other paid preschool staff.
 8. Work with, support, and supervise the Preschool Director who is responsible for the daily management of all aspects of the preschool's operation.
 9. In consultation with the Personnel Committee, be responsible for recruiting, interviewing, and nominating new members of the pre-school staff, and recommending these staff members to the Congregation Council for approval.
 10. Be concerned about the spiritual, emotional, and physical health and welfare of the educational staff and their families.
 11. With the assistance of the business administrator, be responsible for the funding and financial management of the school.
 12. Prepare and present regular reports and plans for the preschool's future to this congregation and its leaders, along with appropriate recommendations.
 13. Provide for the promotion of the preschool and help keep its focus related to its purpose and this congregation's mission.
 14. Provide hosts for public functions of the school.
 15. Ensure that the preschool is available to students without regard to racial/ethnic background, gender, socio-economic background, disability, or creed.
 16. Encourage teachers and staff to participate in continuing education opportunities.
 17. Annually evaluate the effectiveness of this board's ministry.
 18. Appoint special committees as necessary to carry out the work of this board.
 19. Prepare and monitor an annual budget.
 20. Carry out such other responsibilities and tasks as may be assigned by this congregation and Congregation Council.

14.08. Board of Public Relations

- A. The Board of Public Relations shall consist of seven members, including the elected chair of the board.
- B. The basic objectives of the Board of Public Relations are the presentation to the public of a Christian image which favorably reflects the work of Christ and of this congregation as His instrument, the publicizing of the work of this congregation, and the integration of this congregation's work into the life of the community.

- C. The pastor whose portfolio includes the Board of Public Relations shall serve in an advisory capacity.
- D. To better serve this congregation, this board, either corporately or through specifically designated individuals, shall:
 - 1. Pray for the on-going mission of this board.
 - 2. Represent this congregation in community activities and keep the congregation informed of social, political, and economic developments, together with other appropriate boards.
 - 3. Be concerned, together with other appropriate boards, with this congregation's role in the community and develop useful means of becoming a better servant in the community.
 - 4. Work with other churches to project a unified Christian image to the community and to implement the church's mission.
 - 5. Establish and maintain a continuing program to publicize this congregation's life and its commitment to the Gospel of Christ.
 - 6. Establish and maintain friendly relationships between this congregation and professional, community service, governmental, and educational agencies within the community.
 - 7. Work for the overall enhancement of this congregation's visibility in the community through various news media and publications.
 - 8. Maintain and supervise church bulletin boards, indoors and outdoors, and work with other boards to coordinate appropriate messages and themes for publication.
 - 9. Work through the church office to maintain and publish a weekly and monthly schedule of activities involving this congregation and/or its facilities.
 - 10. Be responsible for overseeing the preparation and distribution of the BETHLEHEM STAR.
 - 11. Determine policy for types of news articles and information which can be included in publications of this congregation.
 - 12. Be responsible for this congregation's television ministry, including the preparation and transportation of broadcast tapes.
 - 13. Insure the high quality of printed materials produced by this congregation for use in its ministry.
 - 14. Provide, together with other appropriate boards, physical facilities and programming which make visitors feel welcome.
 - 15. Annually evaluate the effectiveness of this board's ministry.
 - 16. Appoint special committees as necessary to carry out the work of this board.
 - 17. Prepare and monitor an annual budget.
 - 18. Carry out such other responsibilities and tasks as may be assigned by this congregation and Congregation Council.

14.09. Board of Stewardship

- A. The Board of Stewardship shall consist of seven members, including the elected chair of the board.
- B. The basic objectives of the Board of Stewardship are to help members grow in the belief that all things belong to God and that we are caretakers, called to be good stewards of all we have, to set a good example for others, and to share our gifts of time, energies, abilities, and finances.
- C. The pastor whose portfolio includes the Board of Stewardship shall serve in an advisory capacity.
- D. To better serve this congregation, this board, either corporately or through specifically designated individuals, shall:
 - 1. Pray for the on-going mission of this board.
 - 2. Study the Scriptural principles regarding the total stewardship calling of the Christian--as a member of his or her family, as a neighbor and citizen, and as a member of this congregation--and share these insights with congregation members.
 - 3. Encourage the Gospel-motivated practice of joyous, worshipful, liberal, proportionate, first-fruits giving in response to received blessings and recognized needs.
 - 4. Promote a year-round program of stewardship awareness.
 - 5. Annually conduct an intensive program that challenges every member with basic Biblical stewardship principles and practices.
 - 6. Annually give every member an opportunity to make a commitment of his/her treasure for Christ's work through this congregation.

7. Maintain a program to discover and enlist for Christ's service the talents God has given all members.
8. Be responsible for maintaining a congregational talent file at all times, and provide for the immediate recording of the talents and abilities of incoming members.
9. Recruit, train, and direct members of this congregation to carry out stewardship programs.
10. Assist and encourage new members in service to this congregation, and endeavor to stir up the talents of present members for use in Christ's work.
11. Foster support for missions, both global and within the United States, through an on-going program of mission information and education.
12. Recommend action on special appeals from outside the congregation.
13. Regularly evaluate the offerings of this congregation and share those evaluations with members of this congregation.
14. Provide for a finance committee which shall:
 - a. Include a member of the Stewardship Board, the congregational treasurer, and at least three other members appointed by the Stewardship Board and approved by the Congregational Council. A pastor and the business administrator shall serve in advisory capacities.
 - b. Supervise the annual budgetary process and present a proposed budget to the Stewardship Board.
 - c. Provide and be responsible for money counting, classification of receipts, and making deposits.
 - d. Be responsible for the process by which all disbursements are made.
 - e. Provide and be responsible for a monthly financial statement to all boards and to the Congregation Council.
 - f. Provide and be responsible for quarterly offering statements to congregational members.
 - g. Provide for an independent audit of this congregation's financial books prior to the November semi-annual meeting. The audit shall not be conducted by members of the Congregation Council, Board of Stewardship, or the Finance Committee. A formal audit conducted by a Certified Public Accountant shall be conducted at least once every five years.
 - h. Present an audited financial statement at the November semi-annual meeting.
15. Review and present an annual proposed budget for this congregation to the Congregation Council.
16. Annually evaluate the effectiveness of this board's ministry.
17. Appoint special committees as necessary to carry out the work of this board.
18. Prepare and monitor an annual budget.
19. Carry out such other responsibilities and tasks as may be assigned by this congregation and Congregation Council.

14.10 Board of the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

- A. The Board of this congregation's unit of "Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," hereinafter called "WELCA," shall consist of officers elected by the women and circle representatives, as stipulated in the WELCA constitution, including a chair who is also elected by this congregation.
- B. The basic objective of the WELCA Board is to provide to all women of this congregation avenues for spiritual growth and ministry which are in fulfillment of the mission of this congregation and the purpose of WELCA and its mission areas and aims: Growth, Community, and Action.
- C. The pastor whose portfolio includes the WELCA Board shall serve in an advisory capacity.
- D. To better serve this congregation, this Board, either corporately or through specifically designated individuals, shall:
 1. Pray for the on-going mission of this board.
 2. Provide opportunities for women to come together for Bible study, support and action by establishing, coordinating, and supervising circles and small groups, using resources provided by WELCA churchwide. These circles shall partake in various service projects which are consistent with the ministry of this congregation.
 3. Be responsible for the total program planning of WELCA in this congregation.
 4. Hold membership in the Southwestern Minnesota Synodical Women's Organization, hereinafter called SWO, and the Churchwide Women's Organization, hereinafter called CWO.
 - a. Maintain communication with SWO and CWO through LUTHERAN WOMEN TODAY, and newsletters.
 - b. Encourage attendance at conference gatherings and workshops and SWO conventions. Elect

- and send a delegate to SWO conventions.
- c. Participate in the election process of SWO officers and board members and in the nomination process for CWO convention delegates.
- d. Support financially and interpret the total program of WELCA, transmitting offerings regularly to SWO, CWO (Thank offering and designated gifts) and convention and gathering offerings.
- 5. Annually evaluate the effectiveness of this board's ministry.
- 6. Appoint special committees as necessary to carry out the work of this board.
- 7. Develop and administer its own budget which reflects support for the total program of WELCA, coordinating local and global mission support with the Board of Stewardship or Congregation Council.
- 8. Carry out such other responsibilities and tasks as may be assigned by this congregation and Congregation Council.

14.11. Board of Worship

- A. The Board of Worship shall consist of seven members, including the elected chair of the board.
- B. The basic objectives of the Board of Worship are to provide for, direct, and supervise all aspects of worship in this congregation and to promote, direct, and supervise the music, drama, and arts that directly and indirectly enhance the worship of this congregation.
- C. The pastor whose portfolio includes the Board of Worship shall serve in an advisory capacity.
- D. To better serve this congregation, this board, either corporately or through specifically designated individuals, shall:
 - 1. Pray for the on-going mission of this board.
 - 2. Establish the worship schedule, the number of services, and the dates for Holy Communion and Baptism, in consultation with the pastors.
 - 3. Be responsible for the yearly worship planning process and for involving the appropriate persons in that process.
 - 4. Be responsible for the education of this congregation in matters of worship and Lutheran liturgy.
 - 5. In consultation with the Personnel Committee, be responsible for recruiting, interviewing and nominating candidates for music coordinator, organist, choir directors, and other music personnel, and recommending these music personnel to the Congregation Council for approval.
 - 6. Supervise, review, and support the work of the music coordinator, organist, choir directors, and other musicians of this congregation.
 - 7. Annually evaluate the job descriptions of all paid music staff of this congregation.
 - 8. Annually evaluate the performance of all paid music staff of this congregation and present the evaluations to the Personnel Committee.
 - 9. Annually review and make recommendations to the Personnel Committee concerning adequate compensation for all paid music staff.
 - 10. Staff, train, and supervise the ushering staff.
 - 11. Staff, train, and supervise Communion assistants, Scripture readers, and other persons who assist in the worship service.
 - 12. Supervise and plan musical events, festivals, anniversaries, and other special services or events.
 - 13. Be responsible for art, drama, and related forms of expressing the Christian faith.
 - 14. Establish, supervise, and support a Chancel Care Committee in the care, use, and maintenance of the altar, Communion vessels, paraments, and other furnishings.
 - 15. Maintain an adequate supply of expendable supplies for worship, in conjunction with the Chancel Care Committee.
 - 16. Coordinate all seasonal chancel decorations and banners with the Chancel Care Committee. Supervise storage, maintenance, and use of all such decorations and banners.
 - 17. Recruit, train, and supervise acolytes, in conjunction with the Board of Christian Education.
 - 18. Work with the Board of Public Relations to publicize services.
 - 19. Provide for service contracts for organ and piano maintenance.
 - 20. Annually evaluate the effectiveness of this board's ministry.
 - 21. Appoint special committees as necessary to carry out the work of this board.
 - 22. Prepare and monitor an annual budget.
 - 23. Carry out such other responsibilities and tasks as may be assigned by this congregation and Congregation Council.

ARTICLE XV -- CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEES

15.01. The officers of this congregation and the pastors shall constitute the Executive Committee.

- A. The Executive Committee shall serve for a period of two years.
- B. The duties of the Executive Committee are as follows:
 - 1. Determine the agenda for meetings of the Congregation Council.
 - 2. Together with the Congregation Council, plan semi-annual and special meetings of this congregation.
 - 3. Carry out motions and other responsibilities and tasks as may be assigned by this congregation and Congregation Council.

15.02. The Nominating Committee shall consist of seven members.

- A. Five of the members shall be elected from the congregation at the November semi-annual meeting; the other two members shall be elected by the Congregation Council from its own membership. The clergy team coordinator shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Nominating Committee.
 - 1. The five members from the congregation shall be nominated by the Congregation Council.
 - 2. The Congregation Council shall secure the consent of each of the candidates.
- B. The members of the Nominating Committee shall serve for a period of two years following their election. Members shall be eligible for three two-year terms.
- C. The Nominating Committee shall submit the name of one qualified candidate for each open position, including officers, board chairs, boards, standing committees, synod convention delegates, delegates to other organizations/activities, and other groups as determined by this congregation and/or Congregation Council.
- D. The Nominating Committee shall share the job description for that position and secure the consent of each candidate prior to publication.
- E. The list of candidates shall be made public to the congregation at least 15 days prior to the congregational meeting at which the candidates will be elected. Following publication of the list of qualified candidates, any voting member of this congregation may submit additional names for election. Such name(s) shall be placed in nomination by the Nominating Committee, along with the candidates previously nominated, provided that:
 - 1. Such names are submitted at least 10 days prior to the congregation meeting; and
 - 2. The Nominating Committee shall have reviewed the status of each proposed candidate and found that person to be spiritually eligible and willing to serve.
- F. The names of the candidates shall be listed alphabetically should more than one person be nominated for a position.
- G. Should a position become vacant between semi-annual meetings of this congregation, the Nominating Committee shall submit to the Congregation Council the name of one qualified candidate. The Congregation Council may then appoint a person to fill any unexpired term until the next semi-annual meeting. Unexpired terms must be filled at the next regular meeting of this congregation.
- H. The Nominating Committee shall make every effort to present an inclusive slate of candidates.

15.03. The Personnel Committee shall consist of five members.

- A. Three of the members shall be elected from this congregation at the May semi-annual meeting; the other two members shall be elected by the Congregation Council from its own membership.
 - B. The members of the Personnel Committee shall serve for a period of two years following their election. Members shall be eligible for reelection.
 - C. Responsibilities of the Personnel Committee shall include the following:
 - 1. Establish and assure the continuation of a regular, standardized review process for clergy and program/support staff.
 - 2. Consult in the process for calling clergy and the recruitment and selection of program/support staff.
 - 3. Review terms and conditions of employment for clergy and program/support staff in accordance with this constitution and Letter of Call or Appointment.
 - 4. Facilitate the development and periodic review of personnel policies and procedures.
 - a. Assist in the interpretation of personnel policies and procedures.
 - b. Serve as mediator in personnel issues.
 - 5. Review present job descriptions and assist in the development of new job descriptions.
 - 6. Review compensation package for clergy and paid program/support staff on an annual basis and make a recommendation on compensation to the Congregation Council.
 - D. This committee shall be accountable to this congregation.
- 15.04. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee shall be appointed by the Congregation Council to investigate possible candidates and to make recommendations to the Congregation Council and this congregation.
- A. The Call Committee shall consist of the Personnel Committee, at least four members at large, and the pastoral team.
 - B. Before the call process begins, the Call Committee shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
 - C. The term of this committee will terminate at installation of the newly-called pastor.
- 15.05. A Pastor Parish Relations Committee shall consist of six members.
- A. Three of the members shall be elected from this congregation at the May semi-annual meeting; the other three members shall be appointed jointly by the President of this congregation and the pastors. Members should represent a good cross-section of this congregation and reflect a strong faith and a clear understanding and deep commitment to the ministry of the church. Members should be selected carefully from among those who can maintain a high level of confidentiality. Members should also be able to relate easily to others and should be sensitive to others' needs and feelings. They also should have a high level of respect and trust among their fellow members.
 - B. The members of the Parish Relations Committee shall serve for a period of two years following their election. Members shall be eligible for reelection.
 - C. No congregational officers or members of the Congregation Council shall serve on the Parish Relations Committee.
 - D. The committee has no authority to initiate policy or introduce programs. Its sole purpose is to remain free to offer consultation to the pastors and to help interpret ministry, especially pastoral ministry, to this congregation.
 - E. This committee should not be involved in evaluation of the ministry of the pastors or in setting salary.
 - F. Responsibilities of the Pastor Parish Relations Committee shall include the following:
 - 1. Support the pastors and their families for the strengthening of their ministry to this congregation.
 - 2. Provide a channel for giving pastors feedback about ministry in this congregation so that he/she is always in touch with how ministry is being perceived.
 - 3. Help prevent crises, conflicts, and misunderstandings between pastors and this congregation and enhance an atmosphere of mutual understanding, trust, and cooperation.
 - 4. Serve as a "sounding board" for the pastors when a pastor is faced with difficult situations and decisions.
 - 5. Dream and brainstorm with the pastors to surface new and creative ways of carrying out ministry in this

congregation.

6. Provide members of this congregation an avenue through which they can communicate specific needs and concerns, as well as satisfaction, where those persons feel reluctant to do so directly.
7. Help interpret pastoral ministry to this congregation.

15.06. (Amended 12-20-1998) The Congregational Fund shall be under the direction of a five (5) person Board of Directors. Members of the board shall be elected at the May semi-annual meeting.

A. The responsibilities of the board are:

1. The primary responsibility of the board shall be fund raising. It is the board's responsibility to encourage and promote gifts to the trust fund.
2. To establish a Trust Fund and receive and administer gifts of money, land, stock, insurance, and all other types of real and personal property on behalf of the Trust Fund. Only the income from the Trust Fund shall be spent.
3. To establish a Memorial Gifts Fund and receive and administer gifts of money, land, stock, insurance, and all other types of real and personal property on behalf of the Memorial Gifts Fund. All gifts and income to the Memorial Gifts Fund are to be spent as designated, or as determined by the Congregational Fund Committee if the gift is undesignated.
4. To encourage special gifts such as endowments and memorials, both designated and undesignated.
5. The board shall maintain a current list of all assets held by it on a list, which list shall include the current market value of the asset, the location or by whom the asset is held, the maturity date of the asset, if appropriate, and a brief description of the asset. This list shall be updated by the board at least quarterly. In addition, the Board shall make the information required for this list available, on request, to the treasurer of the congregation, including any background or supporting documentation relating to the assets.

B. The Board of Directors shall be accountable to this congregation

C. The board shall establish written rules and regulations as may be necessary for the conduct of its business. The board shall adopt standards and goals to guide in the expenditure of the income from the Trust Fund and in the gifts and income to the Memorial Gifts Fund.

D. The board shall maintain accounts with banks and/or brokerage firms as it deems necessary. All checks and other documents transferring or expending any funds or assets shall be executed by the treasurer and either the chairperson, vice-chairperson, or secretary of this committee.

E. At its discretion, the board may employ at the expense of the Trust Fund such professional counseling on investments and legal matters as it deems to be in the best interest of the Trust Fund. It is also empowered to employ a corporate trustee to invest assets of the Trust Fund under customary agency relationships and to delegate to it in the name of Bethlehem Lutheran Church any powers with reference to investments held by the board.

F. No member of this board shall engage in any self dealing or transactions with the Trust Fund which the member of the board has direct or indirect financial interest and shall refrain from any conduct in which his/her personal interests would conflict with interests of the Trust Fund.

G. The board shall report in writing to the Congregation Council each quarter and to the November semi-annual meeting of this congregation. The report to this congregation shall include a list of all receipts and disbursements for the period and a list of all assets in the Trust Fund and the Memorial Gifts Fund.

H. The members of the Congregational Fund board shall serve for a period of two years following their election. Members shall be eligible for reelection. The initial board shall consist of five (5) members elected to staggered terms. Two (2) members shall be elected for an initial term of three (3) years, two (2) members for a term of two (2) years and one member for a term of one (1) year. Candidates shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee.

I. The Board shall elect a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer and Recording Secretary.

J. The Board shall appoint a three (3) person Congregational Fund Committee to administer the disbursement of the income of the trust fund as requests are received from the Congregational Council. The committee shall be chaired by a member of the Board of Directors. The committee shall maintain appropriate records and ensure timely flow of funds to the requestor. The committee shall elect a treasurer and recording secretary.

- 15.07. (continuing resolution 11-23-04) The Bethlehem Columbarium will be under the direction of a six (6) person Committee. Members of the Committee shall be elected at the May semi-annual meeting. The Property Board will provide one additional at large member who serves on the Committee. The Director of Operations and a Pastor will serve as advisory members as needed.
- A. The Committee shall organize itself with a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, a recording Secretary, and a Treasurer.
 - B. The responsibilities of the Committee are:
 - 1. To maintain and develop the Bethlehem Columbarium ministry. It shall encourage and receive subscribers to the project.
 - 2. To enter into contract with the providers and supervise the initial construction, maintenance and future developments of the columbarium.
 - 3. To maintain a current list of subscribers with record of payment, requested and assigned niches and current data for final name plates
 - 4. To maintain liaison with the Property Board.
 - C. The Committee will meet monthly or as needed and send minutes of its meetings to the Church Council.
 - D. The Committee in consultation with the Director of Operations shall establish a Columbarium Fund separate from the Congregation's operating funds.
 - 1. The Columbarium Fund will have three separate accounts. Each account shall be expended for the purposes of the fund as suggested by the title of each fund.
 - a. A Columbarium operating account for day to day expenditures. The Operating Account may also maintain some restricted operating funds such as the reserve for the time of death costs.
 - b. A Capital Reserve Account for future expansion. It will be an interest bearing account. Designated gifts for special projects will be kept in this account.
 - c. A Perpetual Care Account for current and future care and maintenance of the columbarium and future Memorial Garden. All funds received by the congregation designated for perpetual care shall be kept in this account. Any funds allocated to perpetual care by the Columbarium Committee shall be kept in this account. All such funds so received into the Perpetual Care Account shall be designated as principal and shall not be expended thereafter without specific action of the Committee.
 - 2. The Committee shall operate within its income. The Church Council must approve any short-term exceptions.
 - 3. The Committee may transfer surplus operating funds to the congregational treasury. Undesignated Columbarium Capital Reserve and Perpetual Care Funds may be transferred if the accounts develop a surplus beyond the purpose of the account.
 - E. The Committee shall develop, modify as needed, monitor and enforce policies and regulations for the governance of the project.
 - F. The Committee shall be accountable to the congregation through the Council.
- 15.08. Other congregational committees may be formed as the need arises by decision of the Congregation Council.

ARTICLE XVI -- ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

- 16.01. All organizations within this congregation shall exist to aid in ministering to the members of this congregation and to all persons who can be reached with the Gospel of Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of this congregation's life, the organizations are subject to its oversight and direction. This congregation at its semi-annual meetings shall determine their policies, guide their activities, and receive reports concerning their membership, work, and finances.
- 16.02. Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council.

ARTICLE XVII -- DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

- 17.01 Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps: (a) private admonition by the pastor, (b) admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, and (c) citation to appear before the Congregation Council.
- 17.02. A member charged with the offense shall appear before the Congregation Council having received a written notice, specifying the exact charges that have been made against the member, at least 10 days prior to the meeting.
- 17.03. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the Congregation Council, the council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:
- A. Censure before the council or congregation;
 - B. Suspension from membership for a definite period of time; or
 - C. Exclusion from membership in this congregation.
- Disciplinary actions "B" and "C" shall be delivered to the member in writing.
- 17.04. The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Congregation Council shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Synod Council. Such right may not be abridged and the decision of the Synod Council shall be final.
- 17.05. Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Congregation Council upon receipt of (a) evidence that injustice has been done or (b) evidence of repentance and amendment.

ARTICLE XVIII -- AMENDMENTS

- 18.01. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least 25 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 meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify congregation members of the proposal, with their recommendations, at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.
- 18.02. A proposed amendment to this constitution shall:
- A. Be approved at a properly called meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;
 - B. Be ratified without change at the next semi-annual meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting; and
 - C. Have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.
- 18.03. 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 receipt of the notice by the synod unless the synod informs this congregation that the amendment is in conflict with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or the constitution of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod.

ARTICLE XIX -- CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

- 19.01. This congregation and/or the Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions which describe the function of the various committees or organizations of this congregation.
- 19.02. Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a two-thirds vote of all members present and voting at a regularly called or special meeting of this congregation and/or Congregation Council.

Constitution Committee Members:

Larry Pagel, Chair
Pastor Dee Pederson
John Pederson
Gladys Smedstad

