2026
CONSTITUTION
AND BY-LAWS
OF
PARMA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

of the

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN

CHURCH IN AMERICA®

PARMA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

5280 BROADVIEW ROAD

PARMA, OHIO 44134

ADOPTED NOVEMBER 15, 2026

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INTRODUCTION

This Constitution, effective November 15 2026, is based on the 2025 Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Reference material is available via the internet at www.ELCA.org. Look under 'Resources,' then under 'Office of the Secretary.'

Required provisions: Some constitutional provisions have wording that is required by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and cannot be changed by Parma Lutheran Church.

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

References to church: The use of the word 'church' may be clarified based on the reference.

- In the governing documents, "Church" with a capital letter is used in references to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.
- In references to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the words "church" and "this church" in lower case letters are employed, although, for clarity in this constitution, the full name or "ELCA" normally is used.
- The specific congregation may be identified, as provided in C1.02., as "this congregation."

*PREAMBLE

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

Chapter 1

NAME AND INCORPORATION

C1.01. The name of this congregation shall be Parma Evangelical Lutheran Church. This congregation shall also be known as Parma Lutheran Church ("PLC").

C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws and continuing resolutions, the congregation of Parma Evangelical Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as "this congregation".

C1.03. – C1.10. – (reserved by ELCA)

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

C1.11.01. This congregation was incorporated in the State of Ohio as Parma Evangelical Lutheran Church on March 17, 1937 as Ohio entity number 169911.

C1.11.02. The principal office is located in Parma, Cuyahoga County, Ohio.

Chapter 2

CONFESSION OF FAITH

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

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

a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.

b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

***C2.03.** This congregation accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.

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

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

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

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

Chapter 3

NATURE OF THE CHURCH

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

***C3.02.** This church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world.

***C3.03.** The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

***C3.04.** This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in The Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God's mission in the world.

***C3.05.** The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or "this church") as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.

Chapter 4

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

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

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

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

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

d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, ,justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

d. Teach the Word of God.

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

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

g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for this congregation's ministry and the ministry of the other expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.

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

***C4.05.** This congregation shall adopt and periodically review a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

***C4.06.** References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility

of these expressions in God's mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

Chapter 5

POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

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

***C5.02.** The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregation Meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.

***C5.03.** Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregation Council or other organizational units in this congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by this congregation. This congregation is authorized to:

a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;

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

c. call a minister of Word and Service;

d. terminate the call of a minister of Word and Service in conformity with the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;

e. adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in Chapter 16, amendments to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 17, and continuing resolutions, as provided in Chapter 18.

f. approve the annual budget;

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

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

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

j. elect its officers and Congregation Council and require the members of Council to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws and continuing resolutions; and

k. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.

***C5.04.** This congregation or the Congregation Council shall elect from among the voting members of the congregation laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the Northeastern Ohio Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

C5.05. This congregation shall have a mission endowment fund that will operate as specified in this congregation's bylaws and continuing resolutions. The purpose of the mission endowment fund is to provide for mission work beyond the operational budget of this congregation.

Chapter 6

CHURCH AFFILIATION

***C6.01.** This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the Northeastern Ohio Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

***C6.02.** This congregation accepts the Confession of Faith and agrees to the purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and shall act in accordance with them.

***C6.03.** This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which:

a. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.

b. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the bishop of the synod. These special circumstances are limited either to calling a candidate approved for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or to contracting for pastoral services with a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion.

d. This congregation agrees to consider ministers of Word and Service for call to other staff positions in this congregation according to the procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

e. This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution with the synod for review to ascertain that all of its provisions are in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and with the constitution of the synod.

***C6.04.** Affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is terminated as follows:

a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.

b. This congregation ceases to exist.

c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or in accordance with provision 9.23. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

d. The Northeastern Ohio Synod takes charge and control of the property of this congregation to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of the synod pursuant to †S13.24. of the synod constitution. This congregation shall have the right to appeal the decision to the next Synod Assembly.

e. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in *C6.05.

***C6.05.** This congregation may terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the following procedure:

a. A resolution indicating the intent to terminate its relationship must be adopted at two legally called and conducted special meetings of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at each meeting. The first such meeting may be held no sooner than 30 days after written notice of the meeting is received by the bishop of the synod, during which time this congregation shall consult with the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any. The times and manner of the consultation shall be determined by the bishop in consultation with the Congregation Council. Unless the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are voting members of this congregation, they shall have voice but not vote at the first meeting.

b. Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon at the first meeting, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall send copies of the resolution and certification to voting members of this congregation.

c. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the first meeting, the bishop of the synod and this congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph a. above, during a period of at least 90 days after receipt by the bishop of the attestation and certification as specified in paragraph b. above.

d. If this congregation, after such consultation, is still considering termination of its relationship with this church, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present. Notice of the second meeting shall be sent to all voting members and to the bishop at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Unless the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are voting members of this congregation, they shall have voice but not vote at the second meeting.

e. Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop attesting that the second special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall send copies of the resolution and certification to the voting members of the congregation. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the second meeting, the relationship between the congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to Synod Council approval as required by paragraphs f. and g. below.

f. Unless this notification to the bishop also certifies that this congregation has voted to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, this congregation shall be deemed an independent or non-Lutheran church, in which case *C7.04. shall apply.

g. This congregation shall abide by these covenants by and among the three expressions of this church.

   1) Congregations seeking to terminate their relationship with this church which fail or refuse to comply with each of the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., shall be required to receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.

   2) Congregations which had been members of the Lutheran Church in America, shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to receive synod approval before terminating their membership in this church.

3) Congregations established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to satisfy all financial obligations to this church and receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.

h. If this congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at this congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above, or fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at this congregation's second meeting as specified in paragraph d. above, another attempt to consider termination of relationship with this church must follow all requirements of *C6.05. and may begin no sooner than six months after the meeting at which the two-thirds vote was not achieved.

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

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

Chapter 7

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

***C7.01.** If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the Northeastern Ohio Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

***C7.02.** If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline or pursuant to 9.23. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

***C7.03.** If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to relate to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation, provided the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05. has been followed. Before this congregation takes action to relate to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Northeastern Ohio Synod.

***C7.04.** If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body and have followed the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05., title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with this congregation by the process established by the synod, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of this congregation. If the Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to continue as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In neither case does title to this congregation's property transfer to the synod.

***C7.05.** Notwithstanding the provisions of *C7.02. and *C7.03. above, where this congregation has received property from the synod pursuant to a deed or other instrument containing restrictions under provision 9.71.a. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, this congregation accepts such restrictions and:

a. Shall not transfer, encumber, mortgage, or in any way burden or impair any right, title, or interest in the property without prior approval of the Synod Council.

b. Shall—upon written demand by the Synod Council, pursuant to †S13.23. of the constitution of the Northeastern Ohio Synod—reconvey and transfer all right, title, and interest in the property to the synod.

Chapter 8

MEMBERSHIP

***C8.01.** Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of this congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

***C8.02.** Members shall be classified as follows:

a. ***Baptized*** members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.

b. ***Confirmed*** members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.

c. ***Voting*** members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of this congregation as well as the other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws. They shall not have voted as a seasonal member of another congregation of this church in the previous two calendar months.

d. ***Associate*** members are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. These individuals have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights or other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

e. ***Seasonal*** members are voting members of other congregations of this church who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation, including exercising limited voting rights in this congregation. The Congregation Council may grant seasonal membership to such persons provided that this congregation is a member of a synod where the Synod Council has approved seasonal member voting on its territory. Such seasonal members shall have all the privileges and duties of voting members except that:

1) they shall not be eligible for elected office in, or for membership on the Congregation Council or on a call committee of, this congregation;

2) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the call or termination of call of any minister of this congregation;

3) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the affiliation of this congregation with this church;

4) they shall not be eligible to serve as voting members from this congregation of the Synod Assembly or the Churchwide Assembly;

5) they shall not, even if otherwise permitted by this congregation, vote by proxy or by absentee ballot; and

6) they shall not, within any two calendar month period, exercise voting rights in this congregation and in the congregation where they remain voting members.

***C8.03.** All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Congregation Council.

***C8.04.** It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregation to:

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

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

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

***C8.05.** Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:

a. death;

b. resignation;

c. transfer or release;

d. disciplinary action in accordance with Chapter 20 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or

e. removal from the roll due to inactivity in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the Church has a continuing pastoral concern.

C8.05.01. Persons who are voting members shall be removed from the membership roll due to inactivity. Voting members shall be considered inactive who, during the current and preceding calendar year, have

a. failed to have a record of partaking of Holy Communion at least once, **or**

b. failed to have a record of contributing to the financial support of this congregation's program at least once.

Their names shall be removed from membership by a majority vote of the Congregation Council.

C8.05.02. Persons who are confirmed, non-voting members shall be removed from the membership roll due to inactivity. Such members shall be considered inactive who, during the current and preceding calendar year, have

a. failed to have a record of partaking of Holy Communion at least once, **or**

b. failed to have a record of contributing to the financial support of this congregation's program at least once.

Their names shall be removed from membership by a majority vote of the Congregation Council.

The financial requirement may be waived by a majority vote of the Congregation Council if financial support is impossible, provided the other requirement has been met at least three times during the current and preceding calendar year, or if there are other extenuating circumstances.

C8.05.03. A person removed from membership according to C8.05.01 shall be restored to the roll of confirmed members when the person asks to be restored and subsequently, in the following twelve-month period, attends services at least twice, receives Holy Communion at least twice and makes a contribution of record at least twice. The person shall be restored to the roll of voting members effective with the next meeting of this congregation.

C8.05.04. Transfer of members. Any member desiring to leave this congregation may apply to the pastor or Congregation Council for transfer or letter of recommendation.

Chapter 9

ROSTERED MINISTER

***C9.01.** Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by the Congregation Council to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.

***C9.02.** This congregation may call as a pastor only:

a. a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or

b. a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop.

***C9.03.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

1) preach the Word;

2) administer the sacraments;

3) conduct public worship;

4) provide pastoral care;

5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;

6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;

7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; and

8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.

b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:

1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;

2) relate to all schools and organizations of this congregation;

3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;

4) with the council, administer discipline;

5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and of the Northeastern Ohio Synod; and

6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*

***C9.04.** The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.

***C9.05.** The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and this congregation shall be as follows:

a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by the pastor's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:

1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;

2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;

3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions;

4) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the pastor;

5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;

6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church;

7) termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;

8) dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or

9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months.

b. When allegations of disability or incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,

1) the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or

2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.

c. In case of alleged disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by this congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.

e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, this congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

***C9.06.** At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor may be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.

***C9.07.** During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in this congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any rostered minister providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.

***C9.08.** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting.

***C9.09.** When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

***C9.10.** (reserved by ELCA)

***C9.11.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from *C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of *C9.05.a.

***C9.12.** The pastor of this congregation:

a. shall keep accurate records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from this congregation;

b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod; and

c. shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

***C9.13.** The pastor(s) shall submit a report of ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

***C9.14.** The records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of this congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in the secretary's hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another call or approval of a request for change in roster status.

***C9.15.** Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synod bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between this congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synod bishop and approved by this congregation.

C9.16. – C9.20. – (reserved by ELCA)

***C9.21.** Authority to call a deacon shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by this congregation to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.

***C9.22.** This congregation may call as a deacon only:

a. a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or

b. a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop.

***C9.23.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;

b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;

c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;

d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;

e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;

f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;

g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;

h. Share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and

i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

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

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

a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a deacon, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by the deacon's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:

1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;

2) resignation of the deacon, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;

3) inability to conduct the ministry of Word and Service effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions;

4) inability to conduct the office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the deacon;

5) suspension of the deacon through discipline for more than three months;

6) resignation or removal of the deacon from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church;

7) termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;

8) dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or

9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months.

b. When allegations of disability or incapacity of the deacon under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the office of minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,

1) the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or

2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.

c. In case of alleged disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the deacon's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the deacon to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the deacon and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the deacon's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by this congregation and by the deacon, if appropriate. If the deacon and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.

e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the deacon's call, this congregation may dismiss the deacon only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

***C9.26.** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former deacon before calling a successor. A deacon shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting.

***C9.27.** When a deacon is called to serve in company with another rostered minister or other rostered ministers, the privileges and responsibilities of each rostered minister shall be

specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the rostered ministers, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

***C9.28.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from *C9.25.a. and call a deacon for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the deacon and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of *C9.25.a.

***C9.29.** The deacon shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the deacon shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

***C9.31.** The deacon(s) shall submit a report of ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

Chapter 10

CONGREGATION MEETING

C10.01. This congregation shall have at least one regular meeting per year. The regular meeting(s) of the congregation shall be held at the time(s) specified in the bylaws. Consistent with the laws of the State of Ohio, the bylaws shall designate one regular meeting per year as the annual meeting of this congregation.

C10.01.01. The fiscal year is January 1 through December 31.

C10.01.02. Semi-annual meetings of this congregation will be held in the first and fourth quarters of the calendar year. The first quarter meeting agenda shall include the presentation of the annual report of the preceding year. The fourth quarter meeting is defined as the annual meeting. The annual meeting agenda shall include the presentation of the budget, the election of officers and Congregation Council positions, and other business. The Congregation Council may vote to adjust the date of a meeting as long as notice provisions per C10.08.01 and C10.08.02 are met.

C10.01.03. No Congregation Meeting shall be held without the knowledge of the pastor and the Executive Committee of this congregation.

C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by

a. the senior pastor,

b. the Congregation Council, or

c. the president of this congregation upon the written request of twenty-five voting members, or

d. the president of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synod bishop.

The notice for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.

C10.03. Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and mid-week services and by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting.

C10.04. Twenty-five voting members present shall constitute a quorum. This includes members present electronically. If there is a challenge to the existence of a quorum at the point of casting votes, the officer presiding over the meeting must call for a check of the fulfillment of the quorum.

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

C10.06. All actions by this congregation shall be by majority vote of those voting members present and voting except as otherwise provided in this constitution or bylaws or by state law. Examples of excluded topics are the calling or dismissal of the pastor, the amending of the constitution, or the purchase, sale or mortgaging of real property.

C10.06.01. All matters relating to the purchase, sale or mortgaging of real property must have the approval of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of voting members present at any Congregation Meeting. The president and congregation secretary shall sign all papers necessary to carry out any such action by this congregation.

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

C10.08. The voting members of this congregation shall be notified of meetings of this congregation and of official business of this congregation. Notice may be given by mail or by electronic means, as permitted by state law. Each member is responsible for reporting current USPS address and valid email address to the church office.

C10.08.01.

1. The posting of written notice in the regular mail, sent to the last known address of voting members, as submitted to the church office, shall be sufficient for the written notice. For the purpose of this notice, regular mail is defined as printed documents sent by first class mail or mailed at a bulk rate, including the bulk mailing of a newsletter that includes the information.
2. The electronic notice may be published for individual delivery (email) or may be posted for access on an internet link. Notification of the internet link may be published via email, in a newsletter, or in printed service bulletin announcements.

C10.08.02. The notice shall be provided to this congregation at the regular worship services held on the two Sundays and two mid-week service times immediately preceding the next Congregation Meeting.

1. Notice shall be provided orally as an announcement.
2. Written notice shall be included in the bulletin.

C10.09. This congregation may hold congregation meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication, or its equivalent (speaking and hearing by participants). To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

C10.10. "Ex officio" as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited.

C10.11. Voting members may vote at Congregation Meetings. Additionally, seasonal members have voting rights as listed in *C8.02.e.

Chapter 11

OFFICERS

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

1. The officers shall be voting members of this congregation.
2. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
3. Each officer shall
    a. agree to abide by and become knowledgeable with the governing documents of this congregation and the ELCA, and
    b. attend regular and special meetings of this congregation, the Congregation Council, the Executive Committee, and other special purpose meetings that may be called.

C11.01.01. The duties of the president are:

1. Serve as chair of the Congregation Council.
2. Provide leadership to this congregation, the Congregation Council, and the Executive Committee.
3. Conduct regular and special meetings of this congregation, the Congregation Council, the Executive Committee, and other special purpose meetings that may be called.
    a. President shall be aware of the responsibilities of the Congregation Council, this congregation and each of the ministries, committees and programs, and shall keep the meetings meaningful in content.
    b. President shall be respectful of volunteer time commitments and keep meetings focused and productive.
    c. President shall provide for an orderly delivery of the meetings by using the basic elements of Roberts Rules of Order. Meetings shall have an agenda. President shall maintain an awareness of prevalent issues.
4. Maintain open communication with the pastor by meeting regularly with the pastor to discuss upcoming and ongoing issues.
5. The president is an ex officio member of all standing ministries and shall meet occasionally with each standing ministry to hear of the issues they are addressing, to offer insight from an overall perspective, and to let them know that they have the president’s support and attention.
6. Demonstrate good people-skills and be willing and capable of handling conflict resolution and be able to resolve minor issues before they become larger challenges.
7. Appoint members of the Congregation Council to the committees and ministries as may be prescribed by the constitution and bylaws.
8. Create newly formed committees and ministries, with the help of the Executive Committee, to meet specific needs.

C11.01.02. The duties of the vice-president are:

1. In the absence of the president, conduct regular and special meetings of this congregation, the Congregation Council, the Executive Committee, and other special purpose meetings that may be called.
2. Have the primary responsibility to see that the duties of the Executive Committee, as provided in C13.01., C13.01.01. and C13.01.02., are exercised.
3. Lead and manage the planning and execution of special projects.
4. Ensure that a roster of voting members is available for review for each meeting of this congregation as stipulated in C12.07.01.
5. Provide leadership as follows: maintain open communication with the pastor, the Executive Committee, the Congregation Council and all ministries, provide support to all ministries, and manage conflicts.

C11.01.03. The duties of the secretary are:

1. Prepare the minutes of all meetings. Distribute minutes of meetings of the Congregation Council and the Executive Committee. Submit minutes of the meetings of this congregation for inclusion in the annual report. File electronic copies of minutes and reports.
2. Receive, assemble and distribute the reports of each ministry as prepared according to the bylaws.
3. Prepare information about scheduled meetings and due dates for reports for inclusion in this congregation's published documents.
4. For meetings of the Congregation Council, maintain a record of attendance, and receive, assemble and distribute the regular reports of each ministry as prepared according to the bylaws.
5. Participate in special projects as identified by the Executive Committee.
6. Prepare announcements (including the agenda) of meetings of this congregation for inclusion in this congregation's published documents and file electronic copies of announcements.
7. Handle communication with the synod as specified in the constitution and bylaws.
8. Maintain the ongoing library of electronic records of meetings of this Congregation and the Congregation Council.

C11.01.04. The duties of the treasurer are:

1. The treasurer is an ex officio member of the Stewardship Ministry.
2. Prepare monthly and annual financial statements for the Executive Committee and for the Congregation Council.
3. Prepare the financial reports for the Parma Hunger Center.
4. Monitor Certificates of Deposit for maturity dates and rates and make recommendations to Stewardship Ministry regarding disposition at maturity.
5. Explain reporting needs to the bookkeeper so that detail information may be prepared appropriately for use in reports.

6. Keep track of all dedicated funds, as well as all endowment interest funds, both income and expenses. Keep track of and disburse any monies contributed for a specific cause other than this congregation's general fund.
7. Maintain awareness of any financial dealings within this congregation and monitor how that may affect this congregation's financial status.
8. Monitor whether contributions and donations are being recorded and used appropriately.
9. Ensure that any staff salary changes are reported to the payroll processing company.
10. Prepare all required financial reports, such as the semi-annual workers' compensation report.

C11.02. This congregation shall elect its officers and they shall be officers of this congregation and of the Congregation Council. Election procedures shall be stated in the bylaws.

C11.03. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. No elected officer shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms (four years) in the same office. An officer who has served a partial term that was less than half of a full term (per C12.03), shall not have that partial term count in their consecutive terms.

C11.03.01. The officers of this congregation shall be elected at a legally called meeting of this congregation during the fourth quarter.

1. The officers shall be elected by voice/written ballot.
2. The officers shall serve for a term of two (02) years.
3. Newly elected officers shall
   a. assume their duties on January 1, and
   b. be installed at regular worship services in January.

Chapter 12

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor, the officers of this congregation and the elected or appointed members of the Congregation Council. Any voting member of this congregation may be elected to the Congregation Council, subject only to the limitations on the length of continuous service permitted in that position. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b) is absent from four (04) successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause. Consistent with the laws of the State of Ohio, this congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.

C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council, except the pastor, shall be elected at a legally called meeting of this congregation during the fourth quarter.

1. The council members shall be elected by voice/written ballot.
2. The council members shall serve for a term of two (02) years.
3. Newly elected Council members shall

a. assume their duties on January 1,

b. be installed at regular worship services in January.

C12.02.01. All Congregation Council members and officers shall be elected by this congregation. Elections shall be conducted at the fourth quarter Congregation Meeting.

1. Additional nominations may be offered by this congregation at Sunday and mid-week services two weeks prior to the election. After that, the nominations are closed.
2. A majority of the votes shall be required to elect a candidate. A written ballot shall be required for a contested office.
3. All elected Congregation Council members and officers shall assume the duties of their respective offices on January 1st, following their election.
4. Newly elected Congregation Council members and officers shall be installed into office in January.

C12.02.02. In order to qualify for any office on the Congregation Council, any voting member shall be a communicant and voting member for a period of one year (twelve months) immediately preceding their election to said office and shall be at least eighteen years of age.

C12.02.03. The order to be observed in the election shall be:

a. One president to serve one two-year term.

b. One vice-president to serve one two-year term.

c. One secretary to serve one two-year term.

d. One treasurer to serve one two-year term.

e. Six to eight at-large representatives, each to serve one two-year term.

f. Upon election, the pastor will appoint members to represent each ministry for a two-year term. Members may represent more than one ministry,

g. No member shall serve continuously in the same elective office for a period of time longer than four consecutive years, excluding a partial term per C12.03.

C12.02.A12. Every effort shall be made to provide for a smooth annual transition of officers and Congregation Council representatives by staggering the terms so that each year approximately half of the Congregation Council positions and half of the Executive Committee positions are at term completion and eligible for the nomination and election process.

C12.03. Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a temporary successor to fill the vacancy until the next annual election cycle at which time an election shall be held to fill the office for the unexpired term. Individuals who have served in a temporary capacity for less than one-half of a regular term shall be eligible for nomination and possible election to a full term.

C12.04. The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:

a. To lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.

b. To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning witness, service and support.

c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its missions.

d. To maintain supportive relationships with the rostered minister(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.

e. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.

f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill, and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.

g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.

h. To emphasize support of the synod and churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced for or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

j. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

C12.05. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.

a. The Congregation Council shall be the Board of Directors of this congregation, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and management of its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such Boards under the laws of the State of Ohio, except as otherwise provided herein.

b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of this congregation.

c. The Congregation Council may enter in contracts for items not included in the budget in accordance with the limitations as set by this Congregation.

d. The Congregation Council shall give preliminary approval of a proposed annual operating budget, as assembled by the Stewardship Ministry for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure for funds in accordance therewith following its adoption. The Congregation Council may incur obligations in excess of the anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation’s full-indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in collaboration with the synod and churchwide organizations.

e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of mission support monies to the synod.

f. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation’s investments and its total insurance program.

C12.05.01. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the control of expenditures of this congregation.

1. Purchase of specific goods or services may be made in accordance with the annual congregation budget at any time after the approval of the budget by this congregation.
2. Expenditures within the provisions of the budget or special funds shall be made upon the approval of the group responsible for that respective budgetary item or special funds.
3. Expenditures beyond, or not included in, the annual budget must have prior approval of this congregation except:
    a. emergency repairs to property of this congregation requiring immediate action
    b. designated gifts and proceeds from specific fund-raising activities
    c. The Congregation Council may authorize expenditures in excess of a specific ministry's or function's approved budget when budgeted funds of another category have not been expended, provided that total congregation expenditures do not exceed the total approved budget
4. Purchase vouchers shall be approved by the chairperson of the responsible group except for utilities, routine maintenance contracts, car and housing allowances, and salaries.
5. It shall be the responsibility of the treasurer, with the assistance of the office staff, to ascertain that payments of monies are made for properly authorized items only. It shall further be the duty of the treasurer to report at each meeting of the Congregation Council the amount expended in each of the budget accounts.
6. A petty cash fund of $100.00 may be provided to the office staff. If established, the fund shall be for the office staff and the Property Ministry. The expenditures of the fund will be charged to the proper ministry or fund. A voucher, with a proper receipt, must be filled out by the appropriate ministry to replenish the petty cash fund.

C12.06. The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution, its bylaws and continuing resolutions are carried out.

C12.07. The Congregation Council shall provide for regular, at least annual, review of the membership roster, ensuring its accuracy and that it is up to date.

C12.07.01. A record of all members and their membership classification shall be maintained. The Congregation Council shall determine the roster of voting members of this congregation in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and bylaws. The roster of voting members shall be available at all meetings of this congregation.

C12.08. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the salaried lay workers of this congregation.

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

C12.10. (reserved by ELCA)

C12.11. The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month, and no less than once a quarter. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or president, and shall be called by the president at the request of at least one-half of the members of the Congregation Council. Notice of a special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

C12.11.01. Congregation Council Meetings:

1. The Congregation Council shall schedule a minimum of four meetings per year. The schedule of meetings shall be published each year by the end of January.
2. Special meetings of the Congregation Council may be called as provided by C12.11. Notice of any special meetings shall be made to all council members at least seven days prior to the meeting. In cases of extreme emergency, the requirement of seven days' notice may be waived by the pastor, the president, or by at least one-half of the members of the Congregation Council.
3. A majority of the members of the Executive Committee and a majority of the members of the Congregation Council shall constitute a quorum. A majority vote of those present will pass any issue in question, except those issues where the governing documents of this congregation or the ELCA indicate a different specific majority vote is required.
4. No Congregation Council Meeting shall be held without the knowledge of the pastor and the Executive Committee of this congregation.

C12.12. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Executive Committee and a majority of the members of the Congregation Council outside of the Executive Committee. A majority vote of those present will pass any issue in question. The quorum shall include the pastor or interim pastor as a member of the Executive Committee, except when the pastor or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting, which shall be the only business considered at that meeting. Chronic or repeated absence of the pastor or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Congregation Council, following consultation with the synod bishop.

C.12.13. The Congregation Council may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication, or its equivalent (speaking and hearing by participants). To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Chapter 13

CONGREGATION STRUCTURE

C13.01. This congregation's organizational structure shall be as follows:

1. Pastor - On-site supervision of staff and volunteers.
2. Executive Committee - Oversight of programs and policies for staff and volunteers:
    a. Staff – Church Administrator, Bookkeeper, Organist, Director of Music
    b. Volunteers – all non-paid persons contributing to the operations and programs of this church
3. Congregation Council – Elected and appointed members of the Congregation Council. Each elected or appointed council member shall be assigned responsibilities of representing one or more programs or ministries of this church.
    a. Worship - Altar Guild, ushers and greeters, music program (vocal and instrumental)

b. Education - Sunday School (youth and adult education, confirmation class), nursery, Bible Study, Vacation Bible School

c. Youth - In-house programs, National Gathering

d. Membership - membership roster, member directory

e. Fellowship - PLC churchwide social activities, pre-service coffee time, sports programs (softball, golf), social groups (men's and women's breakfast and lunch programs)

f. Evangelism - Outreach through community garden program and through website development

g. Property and Facilities - volunteer cleaners, maintenance program

h. Stewardship - money counting program, electronic giving program, contribution records program, stewardship education programs

i. Community Ministry – charitable programs

j. Parma Hunger Center – an outreach program of Community Ministry

C13.02. Executive Committee. The president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer shall constitute the Executive Committee with the pastor as advisory member with the power of voice but not vote, except that the pastor may cast a tie-breaking vote in case of a tie.

C13.02.01. The Executive Committee shall act in the place of the Congregation Council when authorized by the Congregation Council, or as reasonably necessary between meetings of the Congregation Council.

C13.02.02. The Executive Committee shall develop programs and policies regarding job descriptions, salary guidelines, vacations, fringe benefits, and evaluation guidelines and procedures for all employees of this congregation, plan the regular semi-annual Congregation Meetings, recommend guidelines for the use of the building and facilities owned by this congregation, preserve the historical records of this congregation, and recommend and review long-range plans for this congregation.

C13.03. Nominating Referral Process (formerly Nominating Committee). Nominating Committee functions are replaced by a nominating referral process to the pastor in concert with the Executive Committee.

1. Any eligible member of the congregation may contact the pastor either directly or through a current member of the Executive Committee to express their interest in serving on the Congregation Council. Alternatively, an Executive Committee Member may reach out to persons and secure their permission to refer their name to the pastor as a nominee to the Congregation Council.

2. At the next appropriate meeting of the Congregation Council, the pastor shall present the names of nominees, and the Congregation Council shall vote to include those members as temporary members until the next regular election process.

3. The Nominating Referral Process may function along with the regular annual election cycle, and/or throughout the year as appropriate.

C13.04. Audit Committee. The purpose of the Audit Committee is to review compliance with the constitution and bylaws and to ensure that appropriate processes are being followed to steward the financial resources of this congregation. An Audit Committee of three voting members (per *C8.02.c.) shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Audit Committee

members shall not be members of the Congregation Council or of the Stewardship Ministry. Term of office shall be three years, with one member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for reelection.

C13.05. **Mutual Ministry Committee.** The purpose of the Mutual Ministry Committee is to be a liaison between the pastor and this congregation. A Mutual Ministry Committee shall be appointed by the rostered minister. Term of office shall be two (02) years, with three members to be appointed each successive year. In the absence of a mutual ministry committee, the duties may be fulfilled by the executive committee at the discretion of the pastor.

C13.06. **Call Committee.** The purpose of a Call Committee is to provide a vehicle for identifying candidates for a pastoral vacancy. When a vacancy occurs in a position for which this congregation calls a rostered minister, a Call Committee of seven voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called rostered minister.

C13.07. **Additional Congregation Committees**. Other committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of this congregation or the Congregation Council. The number, term and method of electing or appointing members of special committees shall be stated in the resolution or motion creating the committee.

C13.08. Duties of committees of this congregation shall be specified in the bylaws or the continuing resolutions of the congregation.

C13.09. The pastor of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of this congregation. The president of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of this congregation.

C13.10. **Standing Ministries.** Within the policy framework of the Congregation Council, the various ministries are charged with responsibilities for initiating, planning and carrying out various aspects of the work of this congregation.

C13.10.01. Each ministry shall be responsible to the Congregation Council, bringing regular reports to the Congregation Council and an annual written report due at least two weeks prior to the annual meeting of this congregation. Ministry members shall be encouraged to attend the Congregation Council meetings and be informed on congregation issues and activities.

C13.10.02. Each ministry shall have authority to appoint such subcommittees as may from time to time be necessary or advisable in carrying out its delegated responsibility.

C13.10.03. The pastor is ex officio a member, and shall serve as an advisor, for each of the ministries and shall be notified of all scheduled meetings. If the pastor cannot be in attendance, the respective ministry chairperson should review the agenda with the pastor prior to the meeting.

C13.10.04. Each ministry shall prepare a proposed budget annually to carry out its work effectively. This shall be presented in writing to the Stewardship Ministry which will then assemble a complete proposed budget for the Congregation Council review and for congregational approval. Each ministry shall keep a running account of their expenses.

C13.10.05. Where duties or programs of ministries overlap, the pastor, the president, and the respective ministry chairpersons shall endeavor to coordinate plans and work cooperatively.

C13.10.06. The guidelines for the ministries shall be described in the continuing resolutions of this congregation. As such, they may be changed as provided in *C18.01 - *C18.03.

C13.10.A26. The ministries and their basic responsibilities are:

1. **Worship Ministry**

   a. Purpose – The purpose of this ministry shall be to assist the pastor in making arrangements for the worship services of this congregation, make provisions for the music program, and study and recommend ways in which the liturgies and hymnology of the church (ELCA) can be utilized in this congregation. The ministry shall schedule lay persons to assist the pastor in the Holy Communion services from volunteers who are members, and shall assist in securing alternate pastoral services in the event of sickness or absence of the pastor.

   b. Membership - The ministry membership shall be the council member appointed to represent the ministry, a ministry chair, representatives of ushers, Altar Guild, Nursery, and Choir.

      Advisory members: organist, director of music, pastor, president.

      Additionally, interested members of this congregation shall be encouraged to serve on this ministry.

   c. Communion – The ministry shall provide communion assistants. Those persons partaking of Holy Communion shall announce or report such action in the time, place and in such manner as may be designated by the Worship Ministry within the tenets of the ELCA. The Worship Ministry shall be responsible to schedule lay persons to assist the pastor in the Holy Communion services from volunteers who are members.

2. **Education and Family Ministries**

   a. Purpose – The purpose of this ministry shall be to make arrangements for the educational program of the church, provide for the recruitment and training of teachers and workers, and establish standards and policies for any effective program of religious education for people of all ages.

   b. Membership - The ministry membership shall be the council member appointed to represent the ministry, a ministry chair, representatives of Sunday School, and Adult Education.

      Advisory members: church administrator, pastor, president.

      Additionally, interested members of this congregation shall be encouraged to serve on this ministry.

3. **Youth Ministry**

   a. Purpose – The purpose of this ministry shall be to supervise the youth program of this congregation, providing opportunities of education, recreation, worship, and fellowship, and recommending programs and projects for an effective youth ministry.

   b. Membership - The ministry membership shall be the council member appointed to represent the ministry, a ministry chair, one member appointed by the Youth Group with full voting rights, an adult sponsor of the Youth Group.

      Advisory members: church administrator, pastor, president.

      Additionally, interested members of this congregation shall be encouraged to serve on this ministry.

4. **Membership Ministry**

   a. Purpose – The purpose of this ministry shall be to develop programs and procedures which will help members of this congregation to be faithful to Christ and the Church, arranging for a program of visitation of the sick, shut-ins and other persons who need the loving attention, care and support by the members of this congregation, and of those persons who have become lax in their membership responsibilities, and recommend policies and procedures for identifying members to be considered for removal from membership in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Constitution.

   b. Membership - The ministry membership shall be the council member appointed to represent the ministry and a ministry chair.

      Advisory members: pastor, president.

      Additionally, interested members of this congregation shall be encouraged to serve on this ministry.

5. **Fellowship Ministry**

   a. Purpose – The purpose of this ministry shall be to coordinate a variety of fellowship activities for this congregation, including such things as banquets, family nights, picnics, retreats, camping, and recreation; publicizing these events, and enlisting persons to serve as sponsors, resource persons, and staff.

   b. Membership - The ministry membership shall be the council member appointed to represent the ministry and a ministry chair.

      Advisory members: pastor, president.

      Additionally, interested members of this congregation shall be encouraged to serve on this ministry.

6. **Evangelism Ministry**

   a. Purpose – The purpose of this ministry shall be to provide a zealous and sound evangelism program for this congregation, plan a program of visitation of prospective members and recruit and train workers needed for such visitation programs, with the cooperation of the pastor, to proclaim the Gospel and Jesus Christ as savior to all persons.

   b. Membership - The ministry membership shall be the council member appointed to represent the ministry a ministry chair.

      Advisory members: pastor, president.

      Additionally, interested members of this congregation shall be encouraged to serve on this ministry.

7. **Property Ministry**

   a. Purpose – The purpose of this ministry shall be to supervise the upkeep and repair of the buildings and property owned by this congregation, providing security and insurance protection, and recommending the purchase of supplies and equipment.

   b. Membership - The ministry membership shall be the council member appointed to represent the ministry a ministry chair.

      Advisory members: pastor, president.

Additionally, interested members of this congregation shall be encouraged to serve on this ministry.

8. **Stewardship Ministry**

   a. Purpose – The purpose of this ministry shall be to make arrangements for the collection, counting and distribution of all funds received in the name of the church, keeping an accurate giving record of the members of this congregation, making arrangements for proper bonding of workers, keeping this congregation informed of the financial status of this congregation, and assembling and presenting a proposed annual budget for review and approval by the Congregation Council, and for congregation action. The ministry shall also be responsible for collection, investment, accounting and administration of the Endowment and Memorial Funds The ministry shall also be responsible for ongoing stewardship education and programs.

   b. Membership - The ministry membership shall be the council member appointed to represent the ministry, a ministry chair, the treasurer, and a representative from this congregation's money counting program.

      Advisory members: pastor, president.

      Additionally, interested members of this congregation shall be encouraged to serve on this ministry.

9. **Community Ministry**

   a. Purpose – The purpose of this ministry shall be to survey the needs of this congregation and community requiring Christian concern and action, cooperate with other congregation and community agencies, in their social education, social service, and social action, help the members of this congregation understand the issues that concern the community, nation and world and the impact of Christian faith upon them, and stimulate and coordinate volunteer activity in the area of social needs and concerns of the community.

   b. Membership - The ministry membership shall be the council member appointed to represent the ministry and a ministry chair.

      Advisory members: pastor, president.

      Additionally, interested members of this congregation shall be encouraged to serve on this ministry.

10. **Hunger Center Ministry**

   a. Purpose – The purpose of this ministry shall be to provide support to the Parma Hunger Center in its mission to provide food for eligible clients.

   b. Membership - The ministry membership shall be the Director of the Parma Hunger Center and Hunger Center volunteers and/or Congregation volunteers.

      Advisory members: pastor, president.

      Additionally, interested members of this congregation shall be encouraged to serve on this ministry.

C13.11. This congregation shall have Memorial Funds and an Endowment Fund.

C13.11.01. Memorial Funds

1. This congregation shall receive memorial funds from bequests, devises, donations or contributions specifically given as a memorial. If a donation is received that is non-monetary, such as jewelry or real property or stock or other non-monetary valuables, it shall be immediately converted to cash and processed as a monetary donation. The donor may or may not designate a specific purpose for the use of the memorial funds.

2. The Stewardship Ministry shall be responsible for the investment management, disbursement and accounting of such memorial funds, as set forth herein.

    a. Designated memorials - The donor may designate a specific purpose for the use of the memorial funds. The resulting use of the funds should be at the discretion of the family with the advice of the pastor. Upon receipt, these funds shall be directed to the designated purpose as quickly as possible. If the designated expense will be incurred in the future, the funds shall be held in an established Designated Funds account with the purpose properly identified, and shall be available when needed. It shall be the particular responsibility of the ministry to expedite and carry out the specific wishes and directions by the donors of the funds designated for a specific purpose.

    b. Undesignated memorials – In those cases where the donor does not designate a specific purpose for the use of the funds, the funds shall be processed through an established Undesignated Memorial Fund account. It shall be the particular responsibility of the ministry to oversee and approve proper expenditures of memorial funds donated without a designation for a specific purpose, or specifically identified as an undesignated memorial.

3. An annual accounting of all funds received as Memorial Funds, including a summary of the income and disbursements which occurred during the calendar year, shall be made and published and presented to this congregation at the annual Congregation Meeting.

C13.11.02. Endowment Funds

1. There shall be an Endowment Fund of Parma Evangelical Lutheran Church into which shall be placed each bequest, devise, donation or contribution to this congregation which has been designated by the donor for the Endowment Fund.

2. The present funds held by this congregation, which meet the definition of endowment funds set out in C13.10.02.-1., shall be placed in the Endowment Fund.

3. The Stewardship Ministry shall be responsible for the investment management, disbursement and accounting of such endowment funds, as set forth herein, in compliance with the guidelines set forth.

4. The principal funds and accrued income may be commingled with funds in the Memorial Fund (subject to the restrictions herein above) for investment purposes, provided that an accurate accounting of the Endowment Fund is maintained so that the Endowment Funds and accrued income do not lose their identity as such.

5. The Stewardship Ministry shall obtain the prior approval by the Congregation Council, or by the Executive Committee should the situation require immediate action and the obtaining of such Congregation Council approval would be impossible or impractical, for all actions of investment of funds and for all actions of expenditure of funds from the Memorial Fund and the Endowment Fund of this congregation.

C13.11.03. Endowment Funds – Additional Provisions

1. The Stewardship Ministry and the Congregation Council shall have no authority to make an expenditure from the principal funds of the Endowment Fund, unless such action has been authorized by the affirmative vote of a majority of the voting members present at a Congregation Meeting. The voting members shall be provided with the subject matter of the proposed expenditure from the principal by written notice as provided in C.10.08.01. at least ten (10) days prior to the date of the Congregation Meeting. Also, voting members shall be notified at regular worship services as provided in C10.08. 02.

2. The treasurer of this congregation, at the direction of the Stewardship Ministry, shall hold in safe keeping all the monies entrusted to the treasurer and shall make such transfers of funds for investment or expenditure as have been properly authorized. A procedure and policy for the purpose of maintaining a minimum amount in the Endowment Fund should be established. Any need to move below this minimum needs to be approved by a majority congregation vote at a specially called, or regularly held, meeting of this congregation.

3. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the earned income in each calendar year (whether expended within the calendar year or not) shall be subject to expenditure for benevolent purposes which may benefit other persons or the members of this congregation, or for programs of this congregation, or programs of an educational, musical, social, cultural or religious nature.

4. Twenty percent (20%) of the earned income in each calendar year (whether expended within the calendar year or not) shall be subject to expenditure for benevolent purposes which benefit persons other than the membership of this congregation.

5. Five percent (5%) of the interest must be returned to the Endowment Fund.

6. The Stewardship Ministry, subject to the approval by this congregation as specified, shall exercise the following duties:

    a. To make recommendations for expenditures from the earned, or accrued income (other than minimum balance) of the Endowment Fund of this congregation, consistent with the adopted guidelines for the Endowment Fund, as set forth herein.

    b. To make recommendations for the investment and management of the principal and accrued income of the Endowment Fund of this congregation, which by its nature and restrictions require such investment and management.

    c. To make an annual accounting of all funds in the Endowment Fund of this congregation, including a summary of the income and disbursements which occurred during the calendar year, such accounting to be published and presented to this congregation at the annual Congregation Meeting.

Chapter 14

ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THIS CONGREGATION

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

C14.02. Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council and specified in a continuing resolution.

Chapter 15

DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

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

a. private counsel and admonition by the pastor,

b. censure and admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses,

c. written referral of the matter by the Congregation Council to the vice president of the synod, who will refer it to a consultation panel drawn from the Consultation Committee of the synod, and

d. written referral of the matter by the consultation panel to the Committee on Discipline of the synod.

If, for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by a. and b. hereof, those steps may be performed by another pastor chosen by the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council.

***C15.02.** The process for discipline of a member of this congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. If the counseling, censure, and admonitions pursuant to *C15.01 do not result in repentance and amendment of life, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing may be prepared by the Congregation Council, signed, and submitted to the vice president of the synod. The vice president shall select from the synod's Consultation Committee a panel of five members (three laypersons and two rostered ministers). A copy of the written charges shall be provided to the consultation panel and the accused member(s). The consultation panel, after requesting a written reply to the charges from the accused member(s), shall consider the matter and seek a resolution by means of investigation, consultation, mediation, or whatever other means may seem appropriate. The panel's efforts to reach a mutually agreeable resolution shall continue for no more than 45 days after the matter is submitted to it.

***C15.03.** If the consultation panel fails to resolve the matter, that panel shall refer the case in writing, including the written charges and the accused member's reply, to the Committee on Discipline of the synod for a hearing. A copy of the panel's written referral shall be delivered to the vice president of the synod, the Congregation Council, and the accused member(s) at the same time it is sent to the Committee on Discipline of the synod. The Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall then select six members from the Committee on Discipline to decide the case, and shall appoint a member of the Synod Council to preside as nonvoting chair. Those six members plus the nonvoting chair comprise the discipline hearing panel for deciding the case. The Congregation Council and the accused member(s) are the parties to the case.

***C15.04.** The discipline hearing panel shall commence and conduct the disciplinary hearing in accordance with the provisions governing discipline of congregation members prescribed in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*

***C15.05.** By the vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the discipline hearing panel who are present and voting, one of the following disciplinary sanctions can be imposed:

a. suspension from the privileges of congregation membership for a designated period of time;

b. suspension from the privileges of congregation membership until the pastor and Congregation Council receive evidence, satisfactory to them, of repentance and amendment of life;

c. termination of membership in this congregation; or

d. termination of membership in this congregation and exclusion from the church property and from all congregation activities.

***C15.06.** The written decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be sent to the vice president of the synod, the accused member(s), and the Congregation Council as required by the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. The decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be implemented by the Congregation Council and recorded in the minutes of the next council meeting.

***C15.07.** No member of this congregation shall be subject to discipline a second time for offenses that a discipline hearing panel has heard previously and decided pursuant to this chapter.

C15.08. – **C15.09.**(reserved by ELCA)

***C15.10. Adjudication**

***C15.11.** When there is disagreement between or among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president of this congregation of their intent to do so. The synod bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the dispute. If the issue relates directly to the pastor, the bishop may begin the process in *C9.05.d. In all other matters, if the bishop's consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the Council deems necessary. The Synod Council's decision shall be final.

Chapter 16

AMENDMENTS

***C16.01.** Unless provision *C16.04. is applicable, those sections of this constitution that are not required, in accord with the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be amended in the following manner. Amendments may be proposed by at least twenty-five voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify this congregation's members of the proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

***C16.02.** An amendment to this constitution, proposed under *C16.01., shall:

a. be approved at any legally called meeting of this congregation by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting; and

b. be ratified unchanged at the next regular meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.

***C16.03**. Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in *C16.01. and *C16.02. shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The synod shall notify this congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed changes; the changes shall go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them.

***C16.04.** This constitution may be amended to bring any section into conformity with a section or sections, either required or not required, of the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as most recently amended by the Churchwide Assembly. Such amendments may be approved by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of this congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of this congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, notice to this congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council's recommendations, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of at least two (2) voting members of this congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following the congregation's vote of approval.

Chapter 17

BYLAWS

***C17.01.** This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.

***C17.02.** Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.

***C17.03.** Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member, provided that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify this congregation's members of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

***C17.04.** Adopted or amended bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

Chapter 18

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

***C18.01.** This congregation in a legally called meeting or the Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this congregation.

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

***C18.03.** Adopted or amended continuing resolutions shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

Chapter 19

INDEMNIFICATION

***C19.01.** Consistent with the provisions of the laws under which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt provisions providing indemnification for each person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a Congregation Council member, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any committee of this congregation, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.

Adopted: November 15, 2026