

**Constitution, Bylaws, and
Continuing Resolutions
of
Thanksgiving Lutheran Church
of Santa Rosa, California**

November 13, 2005

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Constitution of Thanksgiving Lutheran Church

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

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

* Required provision

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. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. ~~This church~~ 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.

Chapter 4.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

sanctifying activity in the world.

- *C4.02.** To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:
- a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
 - b. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
 - c. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
 - d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs.
 - e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
 - f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

- *C4.03.** To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:
- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
 - b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
 - c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.
 - d. Teach the Word of God.
 - e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
 - f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
 - g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for the congregation's ministry and the ministry of other parts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.

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

C4.04.01 Thanksgiving Lutheran Church of Santa Rosa is a corporate organization which elects a Congregation Council to serve as the board of trustees of the congregation. The Council elects officers who, with the pastor, are responsible for the administration of the corporation and the leadership of the congregation by establishing goals, policies and overall plans to make the church carry out its mission

The Congregation Council has representation on each of the standing committees of the council. These committees shall reflect the major functions and ministries of the congregation. The committees are assigned responsibilities in support of the mission of the congregation and have authority to prepare and implement goals and plans to fulfill these responsibilities. The pastor and council president shall provide guidance to the committees.

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

C4.05.01 The congregation shall review its mission statement annually to determine whether or not it reflects the mission of the congregation in light of current needs, trends, and its understanding of ministry. The mission statement as adopted or affirmed shall be made a part of the Continuing Resolutions.

C4.05.A91 The mission of Thanksgiving Lutheran Church is to be a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; active in faith and works caring for others by witnessing to our faith, through Worship, Education, our Daily Living, Bible Study, and prayer, and in the sharing of our selves, our time and our talents with those in need.

C4.05.A94 Thanksgiving Lutheran Church is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Our mission is to: **Nourish** growth in our faith through worship, education, bible study, and prayer. **Celebrate** God's gift of unconditional love through welcoming each other into a community of openness, mutual support, and fellowship. **Witness** our faith through our daily living by caring for others and sharing of ourselves, our time, and our talents with those in need.

C4.05.A99 The mission statement for Thanksgiving Lutheran Church is simply "To know Christ...To Make Christ Known."

C4.05.A08 The following Welcome Statement was adopted by the congregation on April 30, 2006:

“In faithfulness to the Gospel, we respond to God’s compassionate love with openness of heart and spirit. Thanksgiving Lutheran Church is a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregation. We welcome and accept gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people and their families as full participating members of the congregation. We welcome and accept all people regardless of their cultural or ethnic background, physical or mental abilities, socio-economic or marital status, gender, or age. God loves us exactly as we are. This congregation welcomes you, exactly as you are.”

Chapter 5.

POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

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

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

- *C5.03.** Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregation Council or other organizational units in this congregation’s governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by the congregation. The congregation is authorized to:
 - a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
 - b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
 - c. call or terminate the call of associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers in conformity with the applicable policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
 - d. adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in Chapter 17, and amendments to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 16.
 - e. approve the annual budget;
 - f. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
 - g. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
 - h. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
 - i. elect its Congregation Council and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, and bylaws, and continuing resolutions; and
 - j. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.

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

Chapter 6.

CHURCH AFFILIATION

- *C6.01.** This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the Sierra Pacific Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- *C6.02.** This congregation accepts the Confession of Faith and agrees to the Purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and shall act in accordance with them.
- *C6.03.** This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which:
- a. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
 - b. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the bishop of the synod.
 - d. This congregation agrees to consider associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers for ~~appointment~~ call to other staff positions in the congregation according to the procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - e. This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution with the synod for review to ascertain that all of its provisions are in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and with the constitution of the synod.
- *C6.04.** Affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be terminated as follows:
- a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.
 - b. This congregation ceases to exist.
 - c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of

the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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

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

- a. A resolution indicating the desire of this congregation to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present.
- b. The secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the synodical bishop and shall mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of this congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted.
- c. The bishop of the synod shall consult with this congregation during a period of at least 90 days.
- d. If this congregation, after consultation, still desires to terminate its relationship, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present, at which meeting the bishop of the synod or an authorized representative shall be present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.
- e. A certified copy of the resolution to terminate its relationship shall be sent to the synodical bishop, at which time the relationship between this congregation and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be terminated.
- f. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the synodical bishop to the secretary of this church and published in the periodical of this church.
- g. Since this congregation was established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, it shall be required, in addition to the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to receive synodical approval before terminating its membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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

Chapter 7.

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

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

***C7.02.** If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline, title to property

shall continue to reside in this congregation.

- *C7.03. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a ~~regularly~~ legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to transfer to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation. Before this congregation takes action to transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Sierra Pacific Synod.
- *C7.04. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body, title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with this congregation by the established synodical process, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of this congregation. If the Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to continue as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Chapter 8.

MEMBERSHIP

- *C8.01. Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of this congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.
- *C8.02. Members shall be classified as follows:
 - a. **Baptized** members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.
 - b. **Confirmed** members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.
 - c. **Voting** members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of the congregation.
 - d. **Associate** members are persons holding membership in other Christian

congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation, or persons who wish to retain a relationship with this congregation while being members of other congregations. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Congregation Council of this congregation.

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

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

- a. make regular use of the means of grace, both Word and sacraments;
- b. live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran church; and
- c. support the work of this congregation, the synod, and the 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 by the Congregation Council; or
- e. removal from the roll due to inactivity as defined in the bylaws.

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

C8.05.01 Membership in the congregation once granted is maintained if the member communes or contributes in some way to the life or ministry of the congregation and the individual desires to maintain such membership.

C8.05.02 In January of each year the pastor shall identify to the council those members who have not communed or contributed in some way to the life or ministry of the congregation in the previous two calendar years. The pastor shall also recommend which, if any, of the currently classified voting members should be reclassified to confirmed members and which, if any, of the members should be contacted with respect to his/her desire and intent to retain membership.

C8.05.03 The council shall act on the membership status of these persons in one of three ways:

- a. no change;

- b. reclassification from a voting member to a confirmed member or;
- c. removal from membership rolls of the congregation according to the procedure specified in the continuing resolutions.

C8.05.A91 In the event that the council determines that a member is a candidate for removal from the membership roll due to inactivity, a personal contact is to be made with that member, if at all possible, explaining why this action is being taken and inviting the member to become active once again.

C8.05.B91 In the event a personal contact is not possible, a letter is to be sent to the person's last known address, explaining the council's action and again inviting the member to become active.

C8.05.C91 If, after three contacts or letters over a nine month period the still has not responded positively to the invitation to return to active membership or, at any time, the person requests to be dismissed, the council may remove the person from the roll of members.

C8.05.D91 If at any time in the above described process, but before removal from the roll, a person communes and contributes to the life or ministry of the congregation, the member shall automatically be returned to the status of Voting Member.

C8.05.E91 A member once removed from the rolls must apply anew should he/she wish to become a member once again.

C8.05.04 The council shall inform a member, in writing, of any action taken by the council that affects that member's membership status.

Chapter 9.

THE PASTOR

***C9.01.** Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting ~~regularly~~ 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.** Only a member of the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of ordained ministers who has been recommended for the congregation by the synodical bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.

- *C9.03.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
- a. Every ordained minister shall:
 - 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;
 - 3) conduct public worship;
 - 4) provide pastoral care; and
 - 5) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God’s love for the world.
 - b. Each ordained minister with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
 - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) supervise all schools and organizations of this congregation;
 - 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council; and
 - 4) with the council, administer discipline.
 - c. Every pastor shall:
 - 1) strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;
 - 2) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 - 3) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications; and
 - 4) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and of the Sierra Pacific Synod of the ELCA.

[Note: The above text of C9.03 is formatted according to the Model Constitution. TLC’s current constitution has identical text, with the exception of “Sierra Pacific” being added to C9.03c, but is formatted as one large block of text with no separation into a, b, c subcategories. I recommend adopting the above format for clarity and easier reading.]

- *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.

- C9.04.01** The Pastor(s):
- a. is an ex-officio member of all committees and other organizations of the congregation, except the Auditing Committee.
 - b. supervises permanent, part time and temporary staff members.
 - c. plans and administers the day to day business of the congregation within the policies and procedures established by the congregation.
 - d. watches over the work of organizations of the congregation.

- e. serves as executive director/administrative officer of the congregation.
- f. informally evaluates performance of the Congregation Council and other organizations of the congregation, making appropriate recommendations to the president, the Executive Committee or the Council.
- g. prepares jointly with the President agendas for meetings of the Council, the Congregation, and the Executive Committee.

- *C9.05.** a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which, except in the case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated only following consultation with the synodical bishop and for the following reasons:
- 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor;
 - 4) the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
 - 5) disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty;
 - 6) the dissolution of the congregation; or
 - 7) suspension of the congregation as a result of discipline proceedings.
- b. When allegations of physical or mental incapacity of the pastor or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office have come to the attention of the bishop of the synod, the bishop in his or her sole discretion may, or when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop shall, investigate such conditions personally in company with a committee of two ordained ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged physical or mental incapacity, competent medical testimony shall be obtained. When such disability is evident, the bishop of the synod with the advice of the committee shall declare the pastorate vacant. Upon the restoration of a disabled pastor to health, the bishop of the synod shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another field of labor.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation, all concerned persons shall be heard, after which the bishop of the synod together with the committee described in *C9.05.b. shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor and the congregation. If they agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action shall be taken by the synod. If either party fails to assent, the congregation may dismiss the pastor at a legally called meeting after

consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a simple majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

- e. If, in the course of proceedings described in *C9.05.d., the committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action to the synodical bishop, who may bring charges in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the constitution of this synod.
- f. If, following the appointment of the committee described in *C9.05.b. or d., it should become apparent that the pastoral office cannot be conducted effectively in the congregation being served by the ordained minister due to local conditions, the bishop of the synod may temporarily suspend the pastor from service in the congregation without prejudice and with pay provided through a joint synodical and churchwide fund and with housing provided by the congregation.

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

***C9.07.** During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.

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

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

***C9.11.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, the congregation may depart from *C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop

shall meet with the pastor and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of *C9.05.a.

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

- a. shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation;
- b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod; and
- c. shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

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

***C9.14.** The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of the congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his or her hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another field of labor or the granting by the synod of retired status to the pastor.

C9.20. Ecumenical pastoral ministry

C9.21. Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synodical bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, an ordained minister 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 the congregation and the ordained minister in a form proposed by the synodical bishop and approved by the congregation.

Chapter 10.

CONGREGATION MEETING

C10.01. The semi-annual meetings of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.

C10.01.01 A meeting of the congregation shall be held on or before January 31 of each year. The agenda presented to the congregation by the council at that meeting will include, but not be limited to:

- a. a categorized report of the income and expenses of the past year and a statement of assets and liabilities;
- b. a projection of goals and objectives for the coming year;

- c. a report of all insurance and bonds in force, along with a current inventory of all property;
- d. a pastor's report of statistical information as defined in C9.12 of this constitution, along with statements of his or her ministry of the past year and future goals;
- e. separate reports from the president of the congregation and from each of the various chairpersons of the congregation committees and organizations or special interest groups. These reports should outline briefly the significant events of the past year for an historical record and include budgetary information as appropriate.

C10.01.02 A meeting of the congregation shall be held during the month of November of each year. The agenda presented to the congregation by the council at that meeting will include but not be limited to:

- a. a categorized budget for the new fiscal year for congregational approval;
- b. a slate of nominees for election to the church council.

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

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

C10.04. 25% of the voting members shall constitute a quorum.

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

C10.06. All actions approved by the congregation shall be by majority vote of those voting members present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution.

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

Chapter 11.

OFFICERS

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

- a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
- b. The officers shall be voting members of the congregation.
- c. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.
- d. If the Congregation Council elects its officers, the president, vice president, and secretary shall be selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council. If the treasurer and financial secretary are not selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council, the treasurer and financial secretary shall have voice but not vote at the meetings of the Congregation Council.

C11.01.01 The President:

- a. Presides at all regular and special meetings of the Congregation, the Council, the Executive Committee, and Committee chairs.
- b. Prepares jointly with the pastor agendas for the meetings of the Council, the Congregation, and the Executive Committee.
- c. Ensures that decisions of the congregation and the Congregation Council are carried out.
- d. Coordinates and maintains the work of the council's committees and other council organizations.
- e. Performs general oversight of the conduct of the day to day business of the congregation jointly with council committees on matters within their responsibilities.
- f. Is an advisory member of all committees and other organizations of the congregation, except the Mutual Ministry Committee.

C11.01.02 The Vice President:

- a. Fulfills the duties of the president in the absence of that person.
- b. Maintains familiarity with conference, synod and other appropriate church leadership seminars and events, advising council and committees of the offerings, stimulating interest, support and attendance.

C11.01.03 The Secretary:

- a. Takes minutes, records attendance, and verifies quorums at congregation and council meetings.
- b. Ensures the timely preparation and distribution of minutes.
- c. Initiates and signs official correspondence as directed by the Congregation Council or Executive Committee.

- C11.01.04** The Financial Secretary:
- a. Ensures offerings are safeguarded, counted, and deposited to the congregation's account.
 - b. Records all pledges and maintains records of giving by members, providing individuals with quarterly statements of their giving.
 - c. Records receipts from all sources and provides a report of same to the treasurer monthly.
 - d. Is a member of the Stewardship and Finance Committee.

- C11.01.05** The Treasurer:
- a. Pays bills and financial obligations of the congregation in accordance with established policies.
 - b. Maintains disbursement records.
 - c. Maintains and reconciles the checking account(s) of the congregation.
 - d. Reports monthly the amounts received for each of the various funds; amounts disbursed from each of the various funds; balance on hand by fund; accounts payable by fund; and accounts budgeted vs. the amounts expended by budget line item, subtotals and totals.
 - e. Advises the pastor, Stewardship and Finance Committee chairperson, or the president of any immediate or anticipated financial problem.
 - f. Is a member of the Stewardship and Finance Committee.

C11.02. The Congregation Council shall elect its officers and they shall be the officers of the congregation. The officers shall be elected by written ballot and shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the meeting at which they are elected.

C11.03. No officer, except the Treasurer, shall hold more than one office at a time. No elected officer, except the Treasurer and Financial Secretary, shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

C11.04 The Congregation Council shall appoint a Treasurer and Financial Secretary who shall serve as officers of the Congregation, but shall serve on the Congregation Council with voice but no vote.

Chapter 12.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s) and not more than **six** members of the congregation including the officers of the congregation. Any voting member of the congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this

congregation or b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause. Consistent with the laws of the state in which this congregation is incorporated, the congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.

C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) shall be elected at a legally called meeting of the congregation during the month of November. Their term of office shall be for 2 years, with the term of office beginning on January 1 and ending on December 31. Newly elected Congregation Council members shall be installed at worship the Sunday prior to the date they assume office. No Council member shall serve more than two consecutive full terms.

C12.02.A91 Irrespective of the language of C12.02 the initial terms of the Congregation Council shall be as follows: three terms shall begin on October 1, 1991 and end on December 31, 1992 and three terms shall begin on October 1, 1991 and end on December 31, 1993. After the completion of these initial terms C12.02 shall apply and one half of the Congregation Council shall be elected annually.

C12.03. Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next annual meeting. Individuals who have served 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 mission.
- d. To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling, appointment, or employment.
- e. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
- f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill, and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.

- g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
- h. To emphasize partnership with the synod and churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- j. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

C12.04.A91 Relationships

The council is directly responsible to the congregation. It is to be responsible to the will of the congregation. The council shall communicate regularly with the congregation and involve as many members as possible in the life and ministries of the congregation.

C12.04.B91 Expectations

- a. Active participation in the total life of the congregation.
- b. Attendance at regular and any special meetings of the Congregation Council.
- c. Service on one of the council committees.
- d. Participation in an annual Congregation Council Retreat.
- e. Participation in Conference and Synodical meetings when necessary.
- f. Familiarization with this constitution, bylaws and continuing resolutions.
- g. Understanding and accepting the responsibilities of the assigned committee.
- h. Active and responsible participation on issues before the council.

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

- a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of trustees of this congregation, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the management of its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of California, 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 the congregation.
- c. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to \$1,000 for items not included in the budget.
- d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance

therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations of more than \$1,000 in excess of the anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in partnership with the synod and churchwide organization.

- e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies to the synodical treasurer.
- f. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.

C12.05.01 The fiscal year of the congregation will be the calendar year.

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

C12.07. The Congregation Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.

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

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

C12.11. The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president, and shall be called by the president at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

C12.12. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the pastor or interim pastor, except when such person requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting, which shall be the only business considered at that meeting. Chronic or repeated absence of the pastor or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Congregation Council, following consultation with the synodical bishop.

Chapter 13.

CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

C13.01. The officers of this congregation and the pastor shall constitute the **Executive**

Committee.

C13.01.A91 The Executive Committee shall:

- a. Schedule, plan, organize and arrange for an annual council retreat in keeping with the consensus of the council.
- b. Formally evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the Congregation Council in performing its constitutional duties. Evaluations are to be made semi-annually and shared with the council.

C13.02. A **Nominating Committee** of six voting members of this congregation, two of whom shall be outgoing members of the Congregation Council, shall be elected at the January annual meeting for a term of one year. Members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible for consecutive reelection.

C13.03. An **Audit Committee** of three voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council. Term of office will be two years, with one member elected each even numbered year and two members elected each odd numbered year. Members shall be eligible for reelection.

C13.03.A91 The Audit Committee shall:

- a. Audit all financial activities of the congregation each calendar/fiscal year by no later than the middle of February following the close of the preceding calendar/fiscal year.
- b. Report the results of the audit to the Stewardship and Finance Committee by their February meeting. The Stewardship and Finance Committee, in turn, will provide the audit report, along with any appropriate recommendations of the Audit Committee to the Council at the Council's March meeting.
- c. Prepare and submit any required certification to the Synod, upon acceptance of the report at the Congregation Council meeting.

C13.04. A **Mutual Ministry Committee** (in the absence of a mutual ministry committee, the duties shall be fulfilled by the executive committee) shall be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor. Term of office shall be two years, with three members to be appointed each successive year.

C13.04.01 A Mutual Ministry Committee is formed for the purpose of fostering and facilitating communication and cooperation for a partnership among the pastor and congregation.

C13.04.02 The authority of the committee is restricted to evaluating, advising on, and recommending actions and programs that it deems appropriate.

Recommendations will be referred to the Congregation Council for action.

- C13.04.03** The committee shall be composed of five members of the congregation.
- C13.04.04** The pastor and president shall concur and recommend a committee chairperson to the council. The pastor, president, committee chairperson shall, in turn, concur and recommend the remaining members of the committee. All members shall be approved by the Council.
- C13.04.05** Members shall serve on the committee for a term of two years, or until they request replacement or are removed for cause by the council upon recommendation of the pastor and president.
- C13.04.06** The committee is accountable to the council and will report to the council. Reports will be made only when deemed appropriate by the committee, or when specifically requested by the council. All such reports shall consider and respect confidential and personal information that may be in the possession of the committee.
- C13.04.A91** The Mutual Ministry Committee shall:
- a. Gather and evaluate information to determine the expectations of the congregation and pastor in fulfilling the ministry of Thanksgiving.
 - b. Review the program of Thanksgiving and recommend additions or changes necessary to meet the expectations of the congregation and pastor consistent with the approved goals of the church.
 - c. Review the personnel needs of the congregation and provide support, as requested, to the council in evaluating and selecting persons to meet these needs.
 - d. Advocate programs to train and maintain the proficiency of lay leadership and the professional staff.
 - e. Provide an annual evaluation of the ministry of the pastor and congregation and recommend appropriate actions to enhance that ministry.
 - f. Serve as a personal and confidential support group to the pastor.
- C13.05.** When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a **Call Committee** of six voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Term of office will terminate at installation of the newly-called pastor.
- C13.06.** Other congregational committees may be formed as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council.
- C13.06.A91** Committees are extensions of the Congregation Council. The council has the responsibility to lead, guide, and enable committees to carry out their

leadership tasks and challenges. The following guidelines are to be observed:

- a. The responsibilities of the committee are to be precisely and concisely defined by the council.
- b. Authority given the committee shall be commensurate with the committee's responsibility.
- c. The committee shall be given freedom to do its job within its assigned area of responsibility and approved budget.
- d. The committee shall be held accountable. Results are expected. Progress reports shall be made to the council. The council shall evaluate what the committee is doing, indicate needs or challenges, and assist only when support is requested. The committee shall make decisions and take action to accomplish its assignment.

C13.06.01 Standing committees shall be established by the Congregation Council and shall serve as an extension of the council.

C13.06.02 Standing committees shall strive to have at least three members and a maximum of seven.

C13.06.03 Each standing committee shall include at least one council member in its membership.

C13.06.04 Standing committee members are encouraged to serve for at least a two year term.

C13.06.05 Standing committees shall reorganize at their January meeting each year. Such organization shall normally be effective until the start of the next year's reorganization meeting. In the absence of the prior year's committee chairperson, a council member who is a member of that committee shall act as a convener.

C13.06.06 Incumbent committee chairpersons shall recruit candidates for actual and forecast committee membership vacancies in consultation with the pastor and the council president.

C13.06.07 Each committee shall elect from its membership a chairperson and a secretary at its January meeting.

C13.06.08 The members and organization of committees shall be presented by the committee chairperson to the council for approval at the council's February meeting.

C13.06.09 Each committee chairperson shall be responsible for preparing agendas, leading meetings, participating in discussion with both voice and vote,

following up on committee actions, and consulting and coordinating with other committees and staff.

- C13.06.10** Each committee secretary shall prepare a draft of the minutes of the meeting and deliver them to the church office in a timely manner.
- C13.06.11** Items requiring council approval or action shall be stated as such at the end of the minutes.
- C13.06.12** Committees are authorized to form sub-committees to help carry out their responsibilities.
- C13.06.13** In the absence of the committee chairperson, the members shall elect a chairperson pro tem. In the absence of the secretary, the chairperson shall appoint an acting secretary.
- C13.06.14** Each committee shall support the goals and plans of the council in its function area. It shall develop its own goals and plans necessary to carry out its responsibilities in support of the mission of the congregation.
- C13.06.15** Committees are responsible for development of their budget requests and the expenditures charged to committee funds.
- C13.06.16** The council may establish other standing or ad hoc committees to facilitate the work of the council. Standing committees shall be described in the bylaws. Ad hoc committees shall be described in the continuing resolutions.
- C13.07.** Duties of congregational committees shall be specified in the bylaws.
- C13.07.01** There shall be a **Christian Education Committee**. This committee, in consultation with the pastor, shall provide opportunities for and encourage persons of all ages to participate in the study of God's Word. It shall recruit, equip, and support members for educational leadership, use appropriate educational materials in accordance with the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and make sure that appropriate study undergirds the other functions of the congregation.
- C13.07.A91** The Christian Education Committee shall:
- a. Oversee the operation of the congregation's Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and Confirmation Program.
 - b. Provide for various adult education programs, such as: Bible study classes, leadership training classes, inquiry classes, and other adult study programs of interest to the Christian community.

- c. Oversee the ordering of all curriculum materials, equipment, and supplies that will be needed in the Christian Education programs and provide for their care and upkeep.
- d. Recruit and serve as custodian of the historic archives of the congregation, maintaining a system of recording and keeping of historical records, pictures, etc., and provide encouragement for pictures to be taken at various congregational events.
- e. Assist in the recruitment of teachers and other leaders for the various Christian Education programs.

C13.07.02 There shall be a **Church Property Committee** which shall be responsible for the proper maintenance, good repair, and protection of all physical property of the congregation.

C13.07.B91 The Church Property Committee shall:

- a. See to the proper maintenance and repair of all church property and equipment.
- b. Oversee the work of cleaning and caring for the church building, furnishings, equipment, and grounds.
- c. Initiate efforts toward improvement or expansion of the church property, as approved by the congregation and the Congregation Council.
- d. Communicate with members and non-members who have been given permission to use the church buildings, facilities, and equipment.
- e. Maintain a current inventory of the church's property. This list is to be included in the report to the congregation. Report all acquisitions and losses of property to the Congregation Council.
- f. Maintain an inventory of the church's property and equipment and awareness of insurance protection.

C13.07.03 There shall be an **Evangelism Committee** which shall stimulate and lead all members of the congregation to proclaim the Gospel by example and by invitation to all people to share in Christ's kingdom. It shall try to restore those who have lapsed from active membership, bring new members into the fellowship of the church, and recruit, support, and equip members of the congregation to bear witness to their faith as they live out their daily lives. The committee shall devote itself to deepening the spiritual life of the congregation. It shall provide for the communication of the Gospel through fellowship in the wider Christian community.

C13.07.C91 The Evangelism Committee shall:

- a. Contact by phone and by letter visitors to Thanksgiving worship services and other prospective members. Request a visit with these individuals after initial contact.

- b. Arrange an on-going or periodical visitation of inactive members.
- c. Introduce means and methods to involve or assimilate “new members” into the life, programs, and activities of the congregation.
- d. Provide greeter(s) at the end of the worship service to assure that visitors’ names and addresses are noted and to invite visitors to fellowship time or any other post service activities.
- e. Handle whatever publicity is needed to inform both the members of the congregation, and when deemed appropriate, the general public about special events and activities of the congregation.

C13.07.04 There shall be a **Social Ministry Committee**. This committee shall equip, motivate, and support the members of the congregation in extending expressions of Christian compassion to the poor and oppressed and to persons in need. It shall, in consultation with the Christian Education Committee, provide opportunities for the study of social justice issues and other concerns in the community and the world. It shall promote the cooperation and support for Conference, Synod, Churchwide agencies, and ecumenical efforts in furthering social justice and advocacy.

C13.07.D91 The Social Ministry Committee shall:

- a. Initiate programs of church and community involvement or advocacy in social needs and concerns.
- b. Introduce or sponsor means of education and information so that members have the latest information on church and social concerns.
- c. Provide direction and leadership toward three basic dimensions of Social Ministry: **STUDY**, **SERVICE** and **ACTION**. This would involve providing the means to **STUDY** the Biblical basis for social ministry; to provide immediate, direct **SERVICE** to support people in need; and to lead the congregation to take some **ACTION** to change a situation from worse to better.

C13.07.05 There shall be a **Committee on Stewardship and Finance**, of which the treasurer and financial secretary shall be members ex-officio. This committee shall promote, through educational opportunities and other events, growth in stewardship in all of daily life: time, talent and financial resources, as an expression of thankfulness to God. It shall have the responsibility of maintaining the financial records of the congregation, preparing appropriate fiscal reports for the Congregational Council and congregation, and forwarding to all members their individual statements of giving.

C13.07.E91 The Stewardship and Finance Committee shall:

- a. Be responsible for the annual Stewardship Response program.
- b. Be responsible for the on-going education and encouragement of members to keep their pledges and giving up to date.
- c. Provide offering envelopes and see that they are distributed to the membership.

- d. Provide a systematic record-keeping of congregational giving and member's offerings and assure that members periodically receive reports on their individual giving.
- e. Establish a method of promoting and handling any "special" funding efforts that may be authorized by the congregation or Congregation Council.
- f. Oversee the payment of the congregation's obligations in a prompt and efficient manner and ensure that the financial records of funds received and expended are in order. Keep a watchful eye on how spending affects the operating budget and current treasury balances.
- g. Prepare and present to the Congregation Council a Preliminary Program Proposal [underlined in the constitution—this is not a proposed addition] for the coming year prior to the annual Stewardship Response campaign. Following that effort, prepare and present a Proposed Budget [underlined in the constitution—this is not a proposed addition] to the Congregation Council. After approval by the Congregation Council, the committee will present the final Proposed Budget [underlined in the constitution—this is not a proposed addition] at a congregational meeting.
- h. Receive and review at its March meeting each year the report of the Audit Committee for forwarding, with any appropriate recommendations, to the Congregation Council.
- i. Be responsible for identifying, utilizing, and affirming the talents, experiences, and abilities of congregation members in the service to God.
- j. Be responsible for review of insurance policies, annually or as necessary, to assure adequate insurance coverage.
- k. Determine the amount of suggested donations for the use of church facilities. These suggested amounts shall be reviewed annually as part of the budget process.

C13.07.06 There shall be a **Worship and Music Committee**. It shall assist the Congregation Council and the pastor to assure that the worship services are conducted regularly and in accordance with the liturgy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, that ushers and worship leaders are recruited, supported, and trained, and that hymnals and other devotional materials are provided and cared for. This committee shall support and strive to advance the welfare and effective serve of the organist. It shall arrange for the care of paraments, vestments, and musical instruments, and, in consultation with the pastor furnish music supplies appropriate for use in the worship life of the congregation.

C13.07.F91 The Worship and Music Committee shall:

- a. Assist the pastor in providing proper worship at all regular and special services.

- b. See that ushering and all facility needs are arranged for worship services.
- c. Provide all necessary items in the church chancel for worship services and the sacraments. Be responsible for the care, cleaning and storage of all vessels and equipment.
- d. See that acolytes and worship assistants are provided for each worship service.
- e. Oversee the purchasing of music, hymnals, music equipment, worship supplies, etc., needed for the worship program of the congregation. Arrange for the repair and maintenance of all church-owned musical instruments and equipment.

C13.07.07 There shall be a **Congregational Life Committee**. This committee shall create opportunities for the members and friends of Thanksgiving Lutheran Church to gather in fellowship and fun.

C13.07.A94 The Congregational Life Committee shall:

- a. Plan, organize and supervise all the congregation fellowship events, following the policy statements of Thanksgiving Lutheran.
- b. Present to the Congregational Council a calendar of events for the year at the Council's February meeting.
- c. Recruit members of the congregation to serve as hosts of the functions.
- d. Oversee the Sunday Morning Coffee Fellowship time, making sure that coffee, juice and if necessary snacks are provided every Sunday.

Chapter 14.

ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

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

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

Chapter 15.

DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

***C15.01.** Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to

disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps: a) private admonition by the pastor, b) admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, and c) citation to appear before the Congregation Council. If, for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by a. and b. hereof, the president (if not the pastor) or vice president shall administer such admonitions.

***C15.02.** The process for discipline of a member of the congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. If discipline against a member proceeds beyond counseling and admonition by the pastor, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing shall be prepared by member(s) of the congregation who shall sign the charges as the accuser(s). The written charges shall be filed with the pastor, who shall advise the Congregation Council of the need to issue a written citation to the accused and the accusers that specifies the time and place of the hearing before the Congregation Council. The written charges shall accompany the written citation to the accused. A member charged with the offense shall appear before the Congregation Council after having received a written ~~notice~~ citation at least ten days prior to the meeting, ~~specifying the exact charges that have been made against the member.~~ If the member charged with the offense fails to appear at the scheduled hearing, the Congregation Council may proceed with the hearing and may pass judgment in the member's absence.

***C15.03.** Members of the Congregation Council who participate in the preparation of the written charges or who present evidence or testimony in the hearing before the Congregation Council are disqualified from voting upon the question of the guilt of the accused member. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Congregation Council who are not disqualified but who are present and voting, and renewed admonition prove ineffectual, the council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:

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

Disciplinary actions b. and c. shall be delivered to the member in writing.

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

***C15.05.** Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Congregation Council upon receipt of a) evidence that injustice has been done or b) evidence of repentance and amendment.

***C15.06.** For disciplinary actions in this congregation, “due process” shall be observed as specified in ~~20.42.03~~ 20.41.04, in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

***C15.07.** No member of a congregation shall be subject to discipline for offenses that the Congregation Council has previously heard and decided, unless so ordered by the Synod Council after an appeal.

***C15.10. Adjudication**

***C15.11.** When there is disagreement among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation shall have access to the synodical bishop for consultation after informing the chair of the Congregation Council of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the Consultation Committee of the synod shall consider the matter. If the Consultation Committee of the synod shall fail to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to the Synod Council, whose decision shall be final.

Chapter 16.

BYLAWS

***C16.01.** This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.

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

***C16.03.** Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose and that the Congregation Council notify the congregation's members by mail of the proposal with ~~its~~ the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting.

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

Chapter 17.

AMENDMENTS

***C17.01.** Unless provision *C17.04. is applicable, those sections of this constitution that are not required, in accord with the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be amended in the following manner. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least **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 the congregation's members by mail of the proposal ~~with their~~ together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.

***C17.02.** ~~A proposed amendment to this constitution~~ An amendment to this constitution, proposed under *C17.01., shall:

- a. be approved at a legally called Congregation meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;
- b. be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting; and
- c. have the effective date included in the resolution¹ and noted in the constitution.

***C17.03.** Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in *C17.01. and *C17.02. shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The amendment shall become effective within 120 days from the date of the receipt of the notice by the synod unless the synod informs this congregation that the amendment is in conflict with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or the constitution of the Sierra Pacific Synod of the ELCA.

C17.04. ~~Whenever the Model Constitution for Congregations is amended by the Churchwide Assembly, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a simple majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the congregation~~ 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—by a simple majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of the congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail notice to the congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council's recommendations, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of five voting members of the congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the Synod, consistent with C17.03. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following a vote of approval.

¹ Such an effective date must be stated in relation to the requirements of *C17.03. to allow time for synodical review of the amendment.

Chapter 18.

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

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

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

Chapter 19.

INDEMNIFICATION

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