

**Constitution  
And  
By-laws  
Of  
New Hope Lutheran Church  
Grantsburg, Wisconsin**

Ratified at the 6/27/10 meeting of this congregation

**Constitution Table of Contents:**

- Preamble
- C-1. Name and Incorporation
- C-2. Confession of Faith
- C-3. Nature of the Church
- C-4. Purpose of the Church
- C-5. Powers of this congregation
- C-6. Church Affiliation
- C-7. Property Ownership
- C-8. Membership
- C-9. Office of Pastor
- C-10. Congregational Meeting
- C-11. Officers
- C-12. Church Council
- C-13. Congregation Committees
- C-14. Organizations within this congregation
- C-15. Discipline of Members
- C-16. By-Laws
- C-17. Amendments
- C-18. Continuing Resolutions
- C-19. Indemnification

**By-Laws Table of Contents:**

- B-1. Annual Meeting
- B-2. Duties of Officers and Others
- B-3. Church Council
- B-4. Committees
- B-5. Participation in Holy Communion
- B-6. Fellowship
- B-7. Congregational Records
- B-8. Membership

**Constitution of New Hope Lutheran Church**

## **Preamble:**

As members of the priesthood of all believers, called by the Holy Spirit to confess the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in its purity, we give thanks for God's continuing faithfulness and by adopting this constitution, form this congregation, uniting to carry out God's mission. We respond in faith and unite together to preach God's Word, administer the sacraments and carry out God's mission and do this in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

### **C-1. NAME AND INCORPORATION:**

- A. The name of this congregation shall be New Hope Lutheran Church.
- B. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, New Hope Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."
- C. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Wisconsin.

### **C-2. CONFESSION OF FAITH:**

- A. This congregation confesses the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- B. This congregation confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.
- C. 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.
- D. 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.
- E. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament 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 to the world.
- F. This congregation believes and confesses that the Holy Scriptures, the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, are the inerrant and infallible Word of God, revealed for our salvation, and are the only source and rule of faith, doctrine, and life in this congregation.
- G. This congregation accepts without reservation and declares adherence to the Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this congregation.
- H. This congregation accepts without reservation and declares adherence to 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.
- I. This congregation accepts without reservation and declares adherence to 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. Nothing contrary to these confessions shall be taught in this congregation, either in preaching or in the instruction of the youth and adults.

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

**C-3. NATURE OF THE CHURCH:**

- A. 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.
- B. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. 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.
- C. The Church is composed of a priesthood of all believers.

**C-4. PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH:**

- A. 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.
- B. To participate in God's mission, this congregation as part of the Church shall:
  - 1. Worship God according to His Word.
  - 2. Teach and proclaim the Word of God.
  - 3. Minister to the spiritual needs of the members of New Hope Lutheran.
  - 4. Labor for the up-building and extension of the Kingdom of God.
  - 5. Administer the Sacraments.
  - 6. Carry on mission work at home and abroad.
  - 7. Provide for religious instruction of children, youth and adults.
  - 8. Hold congregational worship services and such other services of a religious character befitting a Christian congregation.
  - 9. Encourage its members to provide financial support for this congregation's ministry.
  - 10. Pray for God's blessing and mercies upon this congregation, its members, pastors and on all humanity.
  - 11. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs by caring for the sick and the aged, and by advocating dignity and justice for all people.
- C. This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the by-laws. The church council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational groups and shall review their actions. Such descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions of the church council.
- D. Our mission: To proclaim salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

**C-5. POWERS OF THIS CONGREGATION:**

- A. The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.
- B. The powers of this congregation are vested in this congregational meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and by-laws.

- C. Only such authority as is delegated to the church 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:
1. Call a pastor.
  2. Terminate the call of a pastor.
  3. Approve the annual budget.
  4. Acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase or other lawful means.
  5. Hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose.
  6. Elect its church council, and any other committees requiring election, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution and bylaws.
  7. Determine church affiliation consistent with its statement of faith and helpful in carrying out its purpose.

**C-6. CHURCH AFFILIATION:**

- A. This congregation recognizes that the local congregation (believers gathered around Word and Sacrament) is the primary form of the church and reserves the right to practice all congregational autonomy which does not conflict with the Word of God. This congregation also recognizes that local congregations are individual members of the larger body, the one, holy, catholic (universal/Christian) and apostolic church, and therefore has responsibility in working with other congregations as partners in the gospel.
- B. This congregation has the authority to enter into full partnership and membership in ministries, denominations and associations of congregations that are consistent with its statement of faith and helpful in carrying out its purpose. All such affiliations are voluntary, and this congregation reserves the right to dissolve such affiliations as well. Entrance into, as well as dissolution of any such affiliations, shall require a two-thirds majority of all voting members present and voting at a legal meeting of this congregation called for this purpose.

**C-7. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP:**

- A. Title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation regardless of church affiliation.
- B. If this congregation ceases to exist, property shall be distributed to a Christian organization or charity. Should this congregation, by legal majority vote, choose to become an organization which is not specifically and exclusively Christian in nature or join an organization which requires this congregation to abandon its evangelical faith as described in **Section C-2. CONFESSIO OF FAITH** of this constitution, then title to all land and other assets, both real and personal, shall automatically remain with the largest minority faction wishing to remain an explicitly Christian organization.

**C-8. MEMBERSHIP:**

- A. 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 by-laws.

- B. Members shall be classified as follows:
  - 1. 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 congregations or by affirmation of faith.
  - 2. 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 congregations, or baptized adults received by affirmation of faith.
  - 3. Voting members are active confirmed members who have communed and made a contribution of record during the current or preceding year.
  - 4. Associate members are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected office or membership on the church council of this congregation.
- C. All applications for membership of any classification shall be presented to and be approved by a majority of the church council.
- D. It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregation to:
  - 1. Participate fully in corporate worship and discipleship opportunities.
  - 2. Discover and utilize gifts in ministry.
  - 3. Live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran church.
  - 4. Support the work of this congregation and the entire Christian Church through contributions of their time, abilities and financial support as Biblical stewards.
  - 5. Participate in Holy Communion when offered (visitors are invited to participate in the Sacrament).
- E. Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:
  - 1. Death.
  - 2. Resignation.
  - 3. Transfer or release.
  - 4. Disciplinary action of the church council.
  - 5. Removal from the roll due to inactivity as defined in the by-laws. Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the church has a continuing pastoral concern.

#### **C-9. OFFICE OF PASTOR:**

The office of Pastor shall be bestowed upon such men who are certified ordained ministers in the Lutheran Church and confess all the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God. This shall be expressly stated in the call given him by this congregation.

- A. Authority to call a pastor shall reside in this congregation and be exercised by at least two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting regularly called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by

this congregation to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the association to which it belongs.

- B. As in independent Lutheran church, this congregation retains the power to certify and ordain a man as a pastor of this congregation until such time that the congregation chooses an affiliation.
- C. Every ordained minister shall:
  - 1. Preach the Word, properly, distinguishing between law and gospel.
  - 2. Administer the sacraments.
  - 3. Conduct public worship.
  - 4. Provide pastoral care.
  - 5. Preside at confirmations, marriages and funeral services.
  - 6. Oversee the Sunday School and organizations of this congregation.
  - 7. Install regularly elected members of the church council.
  - 8. Administer discipline together with the church council.
  - 9. Seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the Gospel.
  - 10. Strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation and around the world.
  - 11. Meet with and instruct as appropriate, prospective members and forward a recommendation for membership to the Deacons.
  - 12. Impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications.
  - 13. Endeavor to increase this congregation's sense of partnership in the broader work of the Kingdom of God.
  - 14. Equip the saints for ministry, helping each to identify gifts for ministry both within and beyond this congregation, training and supporting every member in their ministries and encouraging gifted and trained members to use their gifts in ministry, including each of the areas mentioned above.
  - 15. Lead a life worthy of the calling, striving to follow Scriptural exhortations related to overseeing this congregation. (Genesis 2:22-24, Acts 6:4, Romans 16:1-2, I Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9, and I Peter 5:2-4).
- D. 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 – the letter of call shall be signed by the president and secretary of this congregation.
- E. The call of this congregation, when accepted by the pastor, shall normally constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which, except in the death of the pastor, shall be terminated only following consultation of the association to which this congregation belongs, 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.
  - 3. Inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor.
  - 4. The physical or mental incapacity, or incompetence of the pastor.

5. Disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality or continued neglect of duty.
6. The dissolution of this congregation.
- F. Should termination be necessary, the pastor shall have the right to three advocates who are pastoral colleagues. No final decision to terminate shall be made sooner than 90 days from the inception of the dismissal process as recorded in the church council minutes unless agreed upon by all parties. Authority to terminate shall reside in this congregation and be exercised by at least two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting regularly called for that purpose.
- G. Following acceptance of a letter of call to another ministry, resignation or termination, the pastor's ministry in this congregation shall usually terminate within 45 days.
- H. At the time of a pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor may be sought by the church council with the consent of this congregation.
- I. During the vacancy, the interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in this congregation of a regularly called pastor. The interim pastor shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor unless by prior mutual agreement between the pastor and congregation.
- J. 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.
- K. When the call of a pastor is terminated, for whatever reason, this congregation shall have the authority, but not the obligation, to ask for the resignation of additional members of the staff. The church council shall make recommendation to this congregation, which shall have final authority.
- L. The pastor shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, members received, members dismissed or members excluded from this congregation, and shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to this congregation and this congregation's association as requested.
- M. The pastor shall be a member of this congregation while under call.

**C-10. CONGREGATIONAL MEETING:**

- A. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the by-laws.
- B. A special congregational meeting may be called by the pastor, the church council, the president of this congregation, or be called by the president of this congregation upon the written request of 25 voting members. The call for each special meeting shall be the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.
- C. Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given verbally and in the bulletin at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays.
- D. A minimum of 20% of the voting membership of this congregation shall constitute a quorum.
- E. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- F. All actions by this congregation shall be by majority vote except as otherwise provided in this constitution.

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

**C-11. Officers**

- A. The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice-president and secretary. The treasurer and financial secretary shall be appointed by the church council.
  - 1. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the by-laws.
  - 2. The officers shall be voting members of this congregation.
  - 3. The church council shall elect its officers. The officers shall be elected by written ballot and shall serve for one year. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected. The pastor shall be a non-voting ex-officio member. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. No elected officer shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office. Paid support staff and their spouse may not serve on the council.

**C-12. CHURCH COUNCIL:**

- A. The voting membership of the church council shall consist of 12 members of this congregation. The council shall consist of a Board of Worship and a Board of Trustees. Any voting member of this congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the church council shall be declared vacant if the member ceases to be a voting member of this congregation.
- B. The Board of Worship and Board of Trustees shall be elected by written ballot to serve for three years or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than one full term consecutively.
- C. Should a member's place on the church council be declared vacant, the church council shall elect, by a majority vote, a successor for the remainder of the unfulfilled term.
- D. The Trustees shall supervise and promote the organizational structure and stewardship program as well as assume responsibility for this congregation's property.
  - 1. The Trustee Board shall consist of six members and shall elect from its members a secretary who will maintain a record of all meetings and decisions. The Pastor shall make every attempt to attend all meetings.
  - 2. The Trustees shall hold the property of this congregation in trust for the use and benefit of this congregation and shall preserve its deeds and other relevant documentation.
  - 3. The Trustees shall advise buying, selling, renting or mortgaging the property of this congregation, but the congregational meeting shall have the final authority over such transactions.
  - 4. The Trustees shall maintain the church property in good condition for the use of this congregation. They may not expend more than \$2000 annually over the approved budget for upkeep and improvements to the church property without the consent of the congregational meeting.
  - 5. They shall investigate and recommend to the church council appropriate insurance coverage for church property.



6. The Trustees shall work with the Stewardship Committee to provide information about the principles, practices and blessings of financial discipleship; and promote the common endeavors of the affiliating body and other missions approved by this congregation.
  7. The Trustees and pastor shall be responsible for the supervision of the salaried lay workers of this congregation.
  8. The Trustees and pastor shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.
- E. The Board of Worship shall be vigilant in maintaining the teaching and preaching of the pure doctrine of God's Word in this congregation and shall supervise and promote the worship and evangelism program.
1. The Board of Worship shall consist of six members and shall elect from its members a secretary who will maintain a record of all meetings and decisions. The Pastor shall make every attempt to attend all meetings.
  2. The Board of Worship shall, in the absence of the Pastor or during a pastoral vacancy, be responsible for conducting the worship services, either personally or by other qualified persons.
  3. The Board of Worship shall be mindful of the spiritual condition of this congregation, including attendance at worship services, and the care of the sick and needy.
  4. They shall work with the Evangelism Committee of this congregation, recommending special outreach and training events to the church.
  5. The Board of Worship shall examine applications for membership following review and recommendation by the pastor, and make recommendations to the church council for membership. The church council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.
- F. The church 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.
- G. The church council shall see that the provisions of this constitution, its bylaws, and the continuing resolutions are carried out.
- H. The church council and pastor shall be responsible for the appointment of the salaried lay workers of this congregation.
- I. The Board of Worship and Board of Trustees shall normally meet once a month. Both should meet together at least quarterly to conduct the business of the church. Special meetings may be called by the pastor, president or 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.
- J. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the church council, including the pastor or interim pastor, 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.

**C-13. CONGREGATION COMMITTEES:**

- A. Congregational committees shall be those established in the by-laws, and whose responsibilities shall be identified in related continuing resolutions. Other committees may be formed at any time the need arises, by decision of the church council.

**C-14. ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THIS CONGREGATION:**

- A. 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.
- B. Special interest groups, other than those of the official organization of the affiliating body, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the church council.

**C-15. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS:**

- A. 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 church council.
- B. A member charged with the offense shall appear before the church council after having received written notice, specifying the exact charges that have been made against the member, at least 10 days prior to the meeting.
- C. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the church council, the council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:
  - 1. Censure before the council or congregation.
  - 2. Suspension from membership for a definite period of time; or
  - 3. Exclusion from membership in this congregation. (Disciplinary actions #2 and #3 shall be delivered to the member in writing.
- D. The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the church council shall have the right to appeal the decision to this congregation. The decision by this congregation shall be final.
- E. Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the church council upon receipt of:
  - 1. Evidence that injustice has been done, or
  - 2. Evidence of repentance and amendment.

**C-16. BY-LAWS:**

- A. This congregation may adopt by-laws. No by-law may conflict with this constitution.
- B. By-laws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a simple majority vote of those voting members present and voting.
- C. Changes to the by-laws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the church council at least 60 days before a regular or special congregational meeting called for that purpose and that the church council notify members of the proposal with its recommendations at least 30 days in advance of this congregational meeting.

**C-17. AMENDMENTS:**

- A. **Section C-2. The Confession of Faith, Section C-3. Nature of the Church and Section C-4, Purpose of the Church**, prescribed in the constitution, shall not be altered.
- B. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least 5 voting members or by the church council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the church council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at its regular or special meeting called for that purpose. The church council shall notify the members of the proposal with their recommendation at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.
- C. A proposed amendment to this constitution shall:
  - 1. Be approved at a properly called meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;
  - 2. Be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting; and
  - 3. Have the effective date in the resolution and noted in the constitution.

**C-18. CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS:**

- A. The church council may enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the constitution or by-laws of this congregation.
- B. Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by two-thirds vote of all voting members of the church council.

**C-19. INDEMNIFICATION:**

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 church council member, officer, employee, agent or any 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.

## **BY-LAWS OF NEW HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

### **B-1. ANNUAL MEETING:**

The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held each year the first Sunday in February.

- A. NOTICE: Notice of the annual meeting and special meetings of this congregation shall be included in the church bulletins at two public services of worship at the two preceding Sunday worship services and shall also be given orally (read) at the same two services. Notices of meetings shall be signed by the president and secretary and shall be posted two weeks in advance of meeting dates in the place of regular worship.
- B. REPORTS: Each organization of this congregation shall furnish a report to the secretary 20 days prior to the annual meeting. The report shall include a summary of the year's activities, a financial report if applicable, and goals for the coming year. Congregation members will receive a consolidated written annual report the Sunday prior to the annual congregational meeting which shall include:
  - 1. Pastor's report.
  - 2. Program staff reports.
  - 3. Treasurer's report and proposed annual budget.
  - 4. Audit committee report.
  - 5. Auxiliary reports.
  - 6. Standing committee reports.
  - 7. Nominating committee report.
- C. AGENDA: Annual meeting agenda shall be prepared by the church council. Ten members may petition the president to propose an agenda item. Agendas shall be posted 30 days prior to the meeting date and closed 10 days prior. The agenda will include:
  - 1. Opening worship.
  - 2. Secretary's report (minutes and membership statistics).
  - 3. Pastor's report.
  - 4. Treasurer's report.
  - 5. Election of the council members.
  - 6. President's report.
  - 7. Election of nominating and audit committees.
  - 8. Adoption of budget.
  - 9. Other resolutions and business.
  - 10. Benediction.

### **B-2. DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND OTHERS:**

- A. The president shall:
  - 1. Be elected from the church council at large and shall preside over his respective group (Board of Worship or Board of Trustees).
  - 2. Preside at all congregational and council meetings.
  - 3. Coordinate the work of committees.
  - 4. Carry out the will of this congregation as ordered by the constitution and by-laws.
  - 5. Deliver an annual report to this congregation.

6. Name delegates to conventions as required.
  7. Execute letters of call, with the secretary, on behalf of this congregation.
- B. The vice president shall:
1. Be elected from the other group (Board of Trustees or Board of Worship) and shall preside over that group.
  2. Perform duties of the president in the president's absence, incapacity or upon the president's request.
- C. The secretary shall:
1. Record proceedings of congregational and church council meetings; distribute copies to members.
  2. Retain and codify secretarial records for permanent filing in the church office.
  3. Keep attendance records of each council meeting.
  4. Select council members to lead devotions for each council meeting.
  5. Announce all congregational and council meetings and arrange meeting places.
  6. Maintain membership records; make roster of voting members available at each congregational meeting; prepare directory of church council and committee members.
  7. Assist president on agenda items, calling attention to any previously deferred or tabled items.
  8. Execute letters of call, with the president, to pastors on behalf of this congregation.
  9. Be responsible for safe keeping of official documents.
  10. Compile and distribute the annual report to this congregation.
  11. Notify the nominating committee of all offices to be filled 90 days prior to a meeting at which elections take place.
- Note: Certain duties of the secretary may be handled by agreed-upon other persons, including the pastor.
- D. The treasurer (appointed) shall:
1. Supervise congregation financial procedures and records.
  2. Render a monthly statement of income and expenses compared to budget to the church council.
  3. Deliver an annual fiscal report to this congregation.
  4. Be a resource person to the Trustees.
  5. Recommend financial policies and procedures on accounting and budget matters to the church council.
  6. The treasurer or president are authorized to sign checks. Any check written in excess of \$2000 shall be co-signed by both the president and treasurer.
- E. The financial secretary (appointed) shall:
1. Reconcile each deposit to contributors' records.
  2. Issue annual statements to contributors.
  3. Keep individual giving records confidential.
  4. Prepare annual report to this congregation and the audit committee.
  5. Appoint a rotating list of three persons to count the offering receipts and make deposit in the designated financial institution.

### **B-3. CHURCH COUNCIL:**

The church council shall consist of 12 members. The officers shall be elected by and from the church council. Two Board of Trustees members and two Board of Worship members will be elected at each annual meeting for a term of 3 years.

- A. COOPERATION: Church council members shall support each other, participate in open debate to the avoidance of conflict and support the decisions made.
- B. ATTENDANCE: Council members are encouraged to set a high priority for being at every meeting, so that close to 100% participation is possible by the entire council.
- C. PERSONNEL DUTIES: The church council shall secure the necessary staff (other than the pastor) such as education director, organist, office secretary, custodial staff, etc. and set their salaries.
- D. SALARIES: The council, with the recommendation of the Trustees, shall review salaries annually (including the pastor), using guidelines from the affiliating organization if available.
- E. OFFICE POLICIES: The council, with the recommendation of the Trustees, shall adopt policies for office procedures, office hours, vacations, record retention, sick leave, etc.
- F. FUND APPEALS: The council shall authorize or disapprove all extra-budgetary appeals for funds, and fund-raising events from sources both inside and outside this congregation.
- G. SPENDING LIMITS: The church council may enter into contracts of up to \$2000 for items not included in the budget.
- H. DEPOSITORIES: The council shall approve all depositories for congregation funds.
- I. BONDING: The council shall provide a fidelity bond for the treasurer, financial secretary and others who have access to congregation funds.
- J. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT: The council, acting as a body, and with the Trustees, shall:
  - 1. Be granted the authority to engage hired agents or servants.
  - 2. Maintain the building and premises, including equipment and furnishings; keep a recorded inventory, perform maintenance thereon, and project estimated replacement dates.
  - 3. Approve or reject the use of congregational facilities by outside groups who have applied to the council for such use; assess usage fees; establish restrictions. Applications for occasional use may be decided upon by this congregation.
  - 4. Insure that fire safety inspections shall be performed annually with or without the assistance of the local fire department. Fire drills, randomly called annually, are encouraged for safety of Sunday school students.
  - 5. Prescribe a policy for building and premises security; distribution of keys; fire extinguishers; burglar and smoke alarms; responsibility for locking buildings; regular maintenance inspections; code and insurance compliances.
- K. TRAINING: The council shall provide an operating manual and training opportunity for each council member. The manual shall contain at least a copy of the constitution and by-laws, church directory, previous year's meeting minutes, current annual report and roster of committees.

- L. **COMMUNICATIONS:** The council shall provide for internal and external communications of this congregation (e.g. internal newsletter, external advertising, etc.)

**B-4. COMMITTEES:**

- A. All committees shall be appointed by the council for one year (except as noted pertaining to the call and audit committees) and shall be members in good standing of this congregation. Committee members may succeed themselves with no term limits. Committees will appoint their own chairperson and other officers, and will report their findings annually to the church council thirty (30) days prior to the annual congregational meeting. Council discretion shall determine the number of people to serve on each committee except for the call and audit committees. Committees shall be:
  - 1. **WORSHIP AND MUSIC:** Assist the pastor in providing an active and meaningful worship life for every member, giving special attention to the liturgical year. This committee shall be responsible for coordinating music activities, to include assisting choir directors and providing special music for worship services. They shall assist in securing sheet music and books to enable choirs to have a variety of music programming throughout the year.
  - 2. **STEWARDSHIP:** Lead this congregation in becoming Biblical stewards through appropriate giving of time, abilities and money as they have been given.
  - 3. **EDUCATION:** Offer learning opportunities for members of all ages to nurture their faith in Christ, and supervise the Sunday School.
  - 4. **MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION:** Foster mission projects (in addition to supporting the benevolences to which we are committed by virtue of affiliation membership). Plan and lead social outreach, assess special parishioner needs and lead direct and indirect social action programs.
  - 5. **EVANGELISM:** Plan and lead the evangelical outreach, and make that outreach a high priority for this congregation.
  - 6. **PROPERTY:** Responsible for the entire physical plant, both internal and external, and shall establish sub-committees from the membership. These sub-committees shall be interior building, exterior building, grounds, housekeeping, plumbing-heating-electrical and audio. These shall consult with the church council as needs arise.
  - 7. **CONSTITUTION:** Insure that the council is apprised of its constitutional limits and responsibilities, and shall recommend modifications to the constitution and by-laws which may become appropriate. This committee shall not attempt to render legal advice nor interpret civil law. Professional legal advice shall be obtained by the council when needed.
  - 8. **CALL:** Consist of six congregational members – three from within the church council and three from this congregation – to be elected at a special congregational meeting called when a pastoral vacancy occurs. The committee shall cease to function when a newly-called pastor is installed.
  - 9. **AUDIT:** Consist of three non-council members elected for three years, with one elected each year at the annual meeting. They shall audit the financial records and

the records-keeping procedure once a year prior to the annual meeting. Their findings shall be reported by inclusion in the annual meeting report, and shall be signed and dated by committee members.

10. **NOMINATING:** Elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year, consisting of six voting members, two of whom shall be Board of Worship members and two Board of Trustees members. Nominating committee members are not eligible for consecutive re-election.
  11. **FINANCE AND BUDGET:** Shall oversee investment of funds, determine the best procedures for financial accounting and be responsible for reviewing budget activity. They shall prepare, together with the treasurer and other resources, a proposed budget for the annual meeting. They shall review information from the affiliation office on pastoral salary and benefits, and recommend appropriate action to the council prior to adoption of a budget.
  12. **YOUTH AND FAMILY:** Formulate, with youth and family ministries director, a program of devotions, discussions, recreation and other appropriate youth and family activities. The program shall aim to stimulate personal conduct which is in harmony with scriptural teachings, a strong Christian faith and Lutheran traditions, and encourage youth to establish strong and on-going ties with the church as they become young adults.
- B. The Board of Trustees shall provide oversight and direction for the following committees:
1. Stewardship
  2. Property
  3. Finance and budget
  4. Constitution
  5. Nominating
- C. The Board of Worship shall provide oversight and direction for the following committees:
1. Worship and music
  2. Education
  3. Mission and social action
  4. Evangelism
  5. Youth and family

#### **B-5. PARTICIPATION IN HOLY COMMUNION**

- A. The Sacrament of Holy Communion shall be offered at least monthly during regular worship services.
- B. Participation shall be limited to those of this congregation who have been prepared for Holy Communion through instruction regarding participation and worthiness, and to repentant members and visitors who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, who desire to amend a sinful life and accept the presence of Christ with His body and blood in the Sacrament.



**B-6. FELLOWSHIP:**

- A. This congregation shall cooperate with other organizations whose purposes are compatible with this constitution.
- B. Ceremonies of lodges or any organization which denies the triune God and Jesus Christ as Lord shall not be permitted in the buildings or on the premises of this congregation. The pastor shall not take part in such ceremonies inside or outside the buildings. Members of such organizations are not eligible to hold office as a Board of Worship member or Trustee in this congregation.

**B-7. CONGREGATIONAL RECORDS:**

- A. The records of this congregation shall be the property of this congregation and shall not be removed or used for commercial purposes. The records are:
  - 1. The roster of baptized, confirmed, associate and voting members.
  - 2. The ministerial acts performed by the pastor.
  - 3. The minutes of the meetings of this congregation and church council.
  - 4. The financial records of this congregation; all official and legal documents including this constitution and by-laws, deeds, mortgages, contracts, etc.
  - 5. In the event of dissolution or cessation of ministry, the official records of this congregation shall be deposited in the archives of the association to which this congregation belongs.

**B-8. MEMBERSHIP:**

Termination of membership because of inactivity: The council shall at least 30 days prior to each annual congregational meeting, review this congregation's membership roster and together with counsel from the pastor, determine which members have not complied with the membership requirements which are defined in section C-8 (B-3) of this congregation's constitution. The pastor, in consultation with the church council, will be given discretion as to what actions should be taken based on this annual review of the membership roster.

## **Bible references relating to C-9.C.15:**

Genesis 2:22-24 (NIV) – “Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman’, for she was taken out of man. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”

I Timothy 3:1-13 (NIV) – “Here is a trustworthy saying; if anyone sets his heart on being an overseer (*elder, shepherd, pastor*), he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap. Deacons likewise are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, their wives, (in Greek, *women*) are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing, and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.”

Romans 16:1-2 (NIV) – “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea. I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me.”

Titus 1:5-9 (NIV) – “The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God’s work, he must be blameless – not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.”

Acts 6:4 (NIV) – “We..... will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”

I Peter 5:2-4 (NIV) – “Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve, not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”

## **Biblical reference relating to C-15.A:**

Matthew 18:15-17 (NIV) – “If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”