

CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS
OF
BETHESDA LUTHERAN CHURCH
ALEXANDRIA, MINNESOTA

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Notes:

Effective upon ratification at annual meeting, 01/29/2006
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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 Bethesda Lutheran Church of Alexandria, Minnesota.
- C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the congregation of Bethesda Lutheran Church of Alexandria, Minnesota is hereinafter designated as "this congregation".
- C1.11. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

Chapter 2.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

- C2.01. This congregation confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- C2.02. This congregation confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe:
 - a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.
 - b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.
- C2.03. This congregation accepts 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 Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

Chapter 3.

NATURE OF THE CHURCH

- C3.01. All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.
- C3.02. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

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.
 - B4.03.a01 This congregation invites all of its members who have been prepared to receive the sacrament to participate regularly in holy communion.
 - B4.03.a02 Preparation for holy communion will normally be provided for persons as young as an age as determined by the Congregation Council.
 - B4.03.a03 Participation in holy communion shall be open to members of other congregations who believe that Christ is present in the sacrament forgiving our sins.
 - 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.
- C4.05. This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

Chapter 5.

POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

- C5.01. The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.
- C5.02. The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregation Meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.
- C5.03. Only such authority as is delegated to 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;
 - C5.03.f01 Real property shall not be acquired except by resolution adopted by not less than two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at a legally called meeting of the

- 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;
C5.03.h01 Real property shall not be sold, mortgaged, leased, transferred or otherwise disposed except by resolution adopted by not less than two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at a legally called meeting of the congregation.
 - i. elect its officers and Congregation Council, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, 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 lay persons 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 Northwestern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- C5.04.01 If delegates are not chosen by the congregation, the Congregation Council may appoint delegates to represent the congregation.

Chapter 6.

CHURCH AFFILIATION

- C6.01. This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the Northwestern Minnesota 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 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.
- 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 affected.

Chapter 7.

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

- C7.01. If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the Northwestern Minnesota Synod of the 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 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 Northwestern Minnesota 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 of 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 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.
 - B8.02.a01 This congregation shall, through the rite of holy baptism, receive into its baptized membership children whose parents or guardians are members of this congregation.
 - B8.02.a02 When this congregation baptizes children whose parents or guardians are not members of this congregation, this congregation shall add the newly baptized to its roster of baptized members. If the parents or guardians intend to maintain their membership in another congregation, this congregation shall encourage the parents to transfer the membership of the newly baptized to that congregation
 - B8.02.a03 This congregation shall receive children baptized in another congregation into its baptized membership by letter of transfer.
 - B8.02.a04 This congregation shall receive into its baptized membership unbaptized adults through baptism and confession of faith. Before baptizing the adults, this congregation shall provide instruction in the Christian faith and the adult shall give evidence of understanding and accepting the teachings of the Word of God as confessed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - B8.02.a05 When this congregation receives parents into its membership, it shall also, with the consent of the parents, receive their baptized children into membership.
 - B8.02.a06 When the parents or guardians of a baptized child are not themselves members of this congregation but desire their child to participate in the life and fellowship of this congregation, this congregation may receive the child as a baptized member.
 - 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.
 - B8.02.b01 This congregation shall receive into its confirmed membership baptized adults who have not previously been confirmed members of a Lutheran congregation when they have received instruction, given evidence of understanding of the teachings of the Word of God

as confessed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and publicly affirmed their faith.

B8.02.b02 This congregation shall receive baptized members of this congregation into confirmed membership through the rite of confirmation. An adult who becomes a member of this congregation according to C8.02.a04 shall be considered to be a confirmed member of this congregation.

B8.02.b03 This congregation shall receive confirmed members of other Lutheran congregations who present a Letter of Transfer from that congregation into confirmed membership upon approval by the Congregation Council.

B8.02.b04 This congregation shall receive into confirmed membership people who give evidence of having been confirmed in a Lutheran congregation but are unable to obtain a Letter of Transfer from that congregation when the Congregation Council has determined that the applicant meets the standards of Christian faith and life set forth in these constitution and bylaws.

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.

C8.02.c01 When this congregation has no record of a member having communed in the current or preceding year but the member claims to have communed, this congregation shall accept the word of the member as meeting the communion requirements of this provision.

C8.02.c02 This congregation shall consider members who have contributed to the congregational treasury according the records of this congregation or participated in the life and worship of the congregation during the current or preceding year as members who have made a contribution of record.

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;

B8.05.c01 This congregation shall encourage members who move to other communities to transfer to a Lutheran congregation in the community in which they live.

B8.05.c02 When a member of this congregation requests a Letter of Transfer to another Christian congregation, this congregation shall grant to the new congregation a Letter of Transfer and give to the new congregation this congregation's record of the member's baptism, first communion, confirmation, and marriage.

B8.05.c03 When a former member of this congregation requests a Letter of Transfer to another Christian congregation, this congregation shall grant to the new congregation a certificate indicating the member was at one time a member of this congregation and, from the standpoint of this congregation, is free to join another congregation. This congregation shall give to the new congregation this congregation's record of that member's baptism, first communion, confirmation, and marriage.

B8.05.c04 This congregation shall remove from its roster members who have joined another congregation. When requested, this congregation shall give to the new congregation this congregation's record of that member's baptism, first communion, confirmation, and marriage.

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 has a continuing pastoral concern.
- B8.05.e01 Confirmed members who in the past year have not participated in the Lord's Supper, supported the congregation according to the financial records of the congregation, or given evidence of a desire to participate in the life and worship of the congregation shall be contacted to encourage them to active membership. If the member does not desire to participate in the life of the congregation, their name shall be removed from the membership roster of the congregation but be retained on a responsibility list as a person who is in special need of this congregation's prayer and concern.
- B8.05.e02 This congregation may remove from its roster of baptized members, children whose parents or guardians are not members of this congregation if those children do not participate in the life of the congregation.

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 legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by this congregation to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- C9.02. 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 Northwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA.
- 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.
- B9.04.01 The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor may be reviewed and modified annually.
- 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 the 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(s) 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(s) without prejudice and with pay provided through a joint synodical and churchwide fund and with housing provided by the congregation(s).
- 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.
- C9.09.01 The privileges and responsibilities of each pastor may be reviewed annually.
- 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 provision 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 synods; 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.

Chapter 10.

CONGREGATION MEETING

- C10.01. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a date and time specified in the bylaws.
B10.01.01 The annual meeting shall be held in January at a date and time designated by the Congregation 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 by the president of the congregation upon the written request of seventy-five (75) 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 weekends and by mail to all 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.
B10.03.01 The current rosters of voting, confirmed and baptized members shall be available at each meeting of the congregation.
- C10.04. Ten percent of voting members shall constitute a quorum.
- C10.05. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted.
- C10.06. All actions by the congregation shall be by majority vote of those present except as otherwise provided in this constitution.
B10.06.01 The minutes from each meeting shall be printed and available within twenty (20) days after the meeting.
- C10.07. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.
- C10.08. Voting by absentee ballot shall be permitted as specified in the bylaws.

Chapter 11.

OFFICERS

- C11.01. The officers of this congregation shall be a president, and president-elect.
a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
B11.01.a01 The president shall preside at meetings of the Congregation Council and the congregation.
B11.01.a02 The president-elect shall preside at meetings of the Congregation Council and the congregation in the absence of the president and assume the presidency the following year.
- b. The officers shall be voting members of the congregation.
- c. The president and president-elect of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.
- C11.02. The congregation shall elect its officers—president and president-elect. The officers shall be elected by written ballot and shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected. When there is only one person nominated for a position, a motion to instruct the secretary to cast a unanimous ballot shall be in order.
B11.02.01 Officers shall be elected at the "Elections" meeting the second Sunday of October.
B11.02.02 Their terms shall begin January 1 each year.
B11.02.03 The president and president-elect shall not be eligible to serve more than two consecutive sequences of terms in office.
- C11.03. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time.
- C11.04. Should an officer's position be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor for the term.

Chapter 12.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

- C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the two officers of the congregation and the elected Chair of each committee. 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. The pastor(s) are non-voting members of the Congregation Council. Elections for the Congregation Council's president-elect, its committees and committee chairs shall be in accordance

with the Bylaws (see B11.02.01).

- B12.01.01 Bethesda Lutheran Church staff serving on Congregation Council shall abstain from voting when there may be a conflict of interest as related to salary or personnel issues.
- B12.01.02 The Congregational Council shall appoint a secretary, who shall be the secretary of the congregation, from its membership or may appoint a member from the congregation who will serve in a non-voting capacity.
- B12.01.03 The "Elections" meeting shall be the second Sunday of October.
- C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council, except the pastor(s), shall be the elected president, president-elect and the elected committee chairs serving for a term as specified in the bylaws or until their successors are elected. When there is only one person nominated for a position, a motion to instruct the secretary to cast a unanimous ballot shall be in order.
- B12.02.01 Two members for each council committee will be elected by the congregation with one of the two members being elected in alternating years.
- B12.02.02 The term for council committee members elected by the congregation shall be two (2) years. Council committee members may be elected to only two consecutive two-year terms. The term shall begin January 1 each year.
- B12.02.03 From the two elected committee members one will serve on the Congregation Council with the other serving as Chair of that committee. Roles to be determined by the two elected members. The Chair, having been elected by the congregation, may represent that committee with full voting rights on the Council when the Council rep is unable to attend Council meetings.
- B12.02.04 The elected committee chair may serve only two consecutive two-year terms.
- C12.03. Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor for that term.
- C12.04. The Congregation Council shall have the responsibility for strategic management of this congregation to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Specific duties shall be delineated in the bylaws.

B12.04.01 The primary duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:

- a. Mission/Vision: To lead this congregation in stating and promoting its mission and vision.
- b. Strategic Planning: To develop and periodically update a strategic plan aligned with the mission and vision, setting objectives and priorities to evaluate its own activities and the activities of its committees. The Congregational Council will also require an annual "operating plan" from each of its committees be submitted for approval and alignment with the strategic plan.
- c. Forecasting: To do environmental scanning and forecasting--observing societal changes that are important to include in our strategic planning.
- d. Budgeting: Coordinate and consolidate proposed budgets from each of its committees into a comprehensive budget for congregational approval. Extend responsibility and authority to its committees for expending their operating budgets as approved by the congregation.
- e. Organizational Protocol: To establish policies and procedures for the congregation and its committees to interact with the Congregational Council.

B12.04.02 A secondary emphasis of the Congregation Council, through its committees, shall include the following:

- a. To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
- b. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
- c. To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.
- d. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
- e. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill, and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
- f. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
- g. To emphasize partnership with the synod and churchwide units of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

- h. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - i. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.
- C12.05. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the strategic financial and property matters of this congregation.
- a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of directors of this congregation, and as such shall be responsible for strategically 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 Minnesota, except as otherwise provided herein.
 - B12.05.a01 The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the strategic management of buildings and premises of the congregation.
 - 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 the amount specified in the bylaws for items not included in the budget.
 - B12.05.c01 The Congregation Council may enter into contracts not exceeding \$20,000 for items not included in the budget if funds are available.
 - d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget, incorporating proposals from its committees, for adoption by this congregation. Upon congregational approval, the Congregational Council extends operating responsibility and authority over their respective budgets to its committees. The budget shall include this congregation's 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, through its committees, the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently.
 - B12.05.e01 The Congregation Council shall give particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence moneys to the synodical treasurer.
 - B12.05.e02 A Financial Secretary for the congregation will be appointed by the Congregation Council. The Financial Secretary shall maintain records of all contributions and make regular reports to the Congregation Council and to members as required by the Council.
 - B.12.05.e03 The Congregational Council will appoint a treasurer of the congregation, who need not be a member of the Council or the congregation.
 - f. The Congregation Council, through its committee(s), shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.
- 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, through its committee(s), be responsible to fill and manage all non-ordained staff positions consistent with the budget approved by the congregation.
 - B12.08.01 A Pastor designated by the Congregation Council, or its committee, is given the authority to supervise and direct all staff persons in the day to day operations of the 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.
- C12.13. In order to carry out its duties and responsibilities and effectively lead the congregation in its ministry, the Congregation Council shall establish council committees as specified in bylaws and continuing resolutions.
 - B12.13.01 The council committees are under the supervision of the Congregation Council and have such authority as is delegated to them by the Congregation Council.
 - B12.13.02 Each council committee shall:
 - a. organized by the elected chair at its first meeting following the annual meeting of the congregation, electing from its membership a vice-chairperson and a secretary. Each committee may establish subcommittees as needed;
 - b. meet once a month or as needed to attend to the ministries of the committee. The secretary for each committee shall record and maintain minutes from each committee meeting;
 - c. operate according to policies established and authority granted by the Congregation Council;
 - d. initiate, research, develop, and submit to the Congregation Council an annual "operating plan,"

- that aligns with the congregation's strategic plan; report significant actions to the Congregation Council;
 - f. implement actions and programs of the committee's "operating plan;" as previously approved by the Congregation Council;
 - g. on a continual basis, monitor and evaluate the ministries of the committee;
 - h. prepare a report each month for the council and submit it to the church office for distribution to the Council;
 - I. coordinate and communicate with other committees and with staff as appropriate;
 - j. promote, educate the congregation about the committee's ministries;
 - k. be supportive of the total ministry of the congregation and the ministries of the other committees; and
 - l. prepare and submit to the Congregation Council an annual budget proposal for the committee's ministries. Upon congregational approval of the budget to function within the budget.
- B12.13.03 The number of members on each committee shall be determined by the two members elected to the committee but shall not exceed a total of eight members. Members who are added shall have the same authority as elected members.
- B12.13.04 The Congregation Council shall function with the following seven council committees:
- a. The COMMUNITY LIFE committee shall provide fellowship opportunities for all age groups which allow for the nurturing of one another in one's walk with Christ. More specifically, this committee will plan and implement fellowship activities and programs. This committee will also work closely with the Youth Coordinator, supporting youth programs within the congregation.
 - b. The MISSION MINISTRIES committee shall provide programs and activities which allow members to care and provide for the needs of those outside of this church, in our community, and the world. More specifically, this committee will identify mission programs and determine the level of support. In implementation, this committee will raise awareness of mission needs and encourage the congregation to be actively involved.
 - c. The OPERATIONS committee shall support the ministries of this congregation by managing the property matters of the congregation, by facilitating the budgeting process and working closely with the treasurer. More specifically, this committee will maintain and manage real property-and regularly review insurance needs. This committee will also select and implement the annual stewardship program, and work with other committees to identify on-going stewardship emphases.
 - d. The PARISH EDUCATION committee shall provide educational opportunities for all ages to grow in relationship with Christ and join in the ministry of the Gospel. More specifically, this committee will plan and implement educational opportunities for all ages in the following areas: Sunday School; Adult Education; Confirmation; Sunday School Christmas Program; and Vacation Bible School. This committee will also communicate with the Congregation Council, other committees, staff and congregation members to ensure coordination of programs and classes.
 - e. The PERSONNEL COMMITTEE shall support the ministries of this congregation by managing the personnel matters of the congregation per established guidelines. More specifically, this committee will review, and attempt to find a resolution to, employees concerns and will conduct an annual performance review with each employee. In addition, it shall review and update job descriptions and the Employee Handbook on an annual basis.
 - f. The SPIRITUAL LIFE committee shall encourage and motivate each Bethesda member to minister to the unchurched in the community and to testify that Jesus is Lord of their lives. More specifically, this committee will care for the visitors and members of the congregation through visitation and welcoming programs, periodic membership directory updates, and oversight of the Time & Talent and attendance register programs.
 - g. The WORSHIP committee shall provide meaningful and enriching worship experiences for the congregation and its visitors. More specifically, this committee will plan and schedule worship services, arrange for supply pastors when necessary, recruit and train worship volunteers, oversee the Altar Guild, and assist in coordinating musicians for worship.

Chapter 13.

CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

- C13.01. A Nominating Committee of six voting members shall be elected each year by the congregation.
- B13.01.01 The Nominating Committee shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year. Members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible for consecutive reelection.
 - B13.01.02 When possible, at least two of the six elected shall be outgoing members of the

- Congregation Council.
- B13.01.03 The president or president-elect of the Congregation Council may serve as convener.
- B13.01.04 The pastor(s) may be an advisory member of the Nominating Committee.
- B13.01.05 The Nominating Committee shall seek recommendations from the Congregation Council in regard to skills and qualifications needed to form a well-balanced Congregation Council, nominate one or more candidates for each position to be filled by the congregation, assure themselves that the nominees are qualified for and understand the responsibilities of the position for which they are nominated, secure the consent of each candidate, and provide printed ballots for the elections.
- B13.01.06 When possible, the Nominating Committee shall see that the list of nominees is announced to the congregation prior to the date of the election.
- B13.01.07 In addition to the candidates submitted by the nominating committee, additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- B13.01.08 The Congregation Council shall fill vacancies on the nominating committee.
- C13.02. A Financial Review Committee of three voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. These committee members shall not be the primary financial officers within any organization in this congregation which accepts, holds and disperses funds.
- B13.02.01 Term of office shall be three years, with one member elected each year.
- B13.02.02 Members shall be eligible for reelection.
- B13.02.03 The Financial Review Committee shall inspect the financial records of the congregation treasurer, the financial secretary, and any other organization within the congregation which accepts, holds and disburses funds and report its findings in writing to the annual meeting of the congregation.
- B13.02.04 The Financial Review Committee shall conduct an inspection at least once a year to assure the congregation that the financial reports reflect an accurate picture of the congregation's financial condition. It shall advise the Congregation Council when financial records require a qualified opinion, and make recommendations for improving the management of congregational funds.
- C13.03. A Mutual Ministry Committee shall be jointly appointed by the pastor(s) and the Congregation Council in accordance with the bylaws.
- B13.03.01 Term of office shall be two years, with two members being appointed each successive year. The term of all members shall terminate, and a new committee shall be selected, no later than one year following the installation of a newly called pastor. The date for selection of the new committee shall be at the discretion of the new pastor. To adhere with successive year appointments, a newly selected committee of four shall determine which two members are to initially terminate in one year and which two are to terminate in two years.
- B13.03.02 Vacancies of two or more committee positions shall be filled by the pastor's(s') nomination of two members of the congregation for each vacancy to be filled. The council shall rank all nominees in numerical order and the nominees shall be contacted in accordance with the Continuing Resolutions. Members are eligible for re-appointment.
- B13.03.03 Mid-term single vacancies shall be filled by mutual selection made by the pastor(s) and the Council President. The term of office for a member filling a vacated position at mid-term shall continue to be that of the vacated position.
- B13.03.04 In the absence of Mutual Ministry Committee, the duties shall be fulfilled by the Council.
- B13.03.05 The Mutual Ministry Committee shall report directly to the Council. Reports shall be made on an as-need basis, but no less frequently than semi-annually, at regularly scheduled meetings of the Council.
- CR13.04.A11 Council members shall utilize secret ballot to rank all MMC nominees in numerical order. The ballots shall be tallied by the pastor(s) and the Council President. The pastor(s) shall use the order of ranking to invite nominees to serve as committee members. If any nominee is unable to serve; other nominees shall be contacted in order of ranking until all committee positions have been filled.
- C13.04. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of six voting members shall be elected by this congregation. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor.
- C13.05. Other committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation.
- C13.06. Duties of committees of the congregation shall be specified in bylaws or resolutions.

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 president-elect 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 members(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 citation at least ten days prior to the meeting. 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 20.41.04 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.
- C15.08 Adjudication: 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

- 16.01. 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 of the proposal with 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. Those sections of this constitution that are not required, in accord with the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be amended in the following manner. Amendments may be proposed by at least thirty 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 together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.
- C17.02. An amendment to this constitution, proposed under C17.01., shall:
- be approved at a legally called Congregation Meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;
 - be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting; and
 - have the effective date included in the resolution 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 Northwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA.
- C17.04. Whenever the Model Constitution for Congregations is amended by the Churchwide Assembly, this constitution may be amended to incorporate any such amendment by a simple majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any subsequent 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. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following a vote of approval.

Chapter 18.

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

- *C18.01. The Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not be in conflict with the constitution and bylaws of this congregation.
- *C18.02. Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Congregation Council.
- CR18.01.01- October 10, 2004
Resolution made that from now on the Thanksgiving Offering be sent to the ELCA World Hunger Fund.
 - CR18.01.02 – *Discontinued 12/20/15*
 - CR18.01.03 – *Discontinued 3/18/12*
 - CR18.01.04 – *Discontinued 3/18/12*
 - CR18.01.05 – *Discontinued 12/20/15*
 - CR18.01.06 – *Discontinued 3/18/12*
 - CR18.01.07 – April 2010
Resolution made that any member that would like to organize a church event or function needs to go through the appropriate committee to do so.
 - CR18.01.08 – *Discontinued 12/20/15*

- CR18.01.09 – April 13, 2010, *Amended December 20, 2015*
Resolution made that money collected from the recycle charitable boxes in the parking lot go to the Spiritual Life Committee.
- CR18.01.10 – *Discontinued 3/18/12*
- CR18.01.11 – January 11, 2011
Resolution made that if a member should come onto the church council to fulfill the position of someone who has left midterm, they may complete the mid-year commitment and also may be considered for a full two-year term on council.
- CR18.01.12 – *Discontinued 9/15/13*
- CR18.01.13 – April 12, 2011
Resolution made that Facilities Use/Wedding Deposits go into the General Fund.
- CR18.01.14 – *Discontinued January 21, 2018*
- CR18.01.15 – *Discontinued February 17, 2013*
- CR18.01.16 – *Discontinued 12/20/15*
- CR18.01.17 – February 14, 2012
By mutual consent of the respective church council bodies, Bethesda Lutheran Church and Shalom Lutheran Church will annually hold a joint Thanksgiving Eve service to be held alternately at each location: 1) with the visiting minister preaching, 2) with the host music director leading the joint choir, and 3) with the offering envelopes separated by congregation.
- CR18.01.18 December 16, 2012
Bethesda employees in any job classification, including pastors, may be asked to participate in background screening. Refusal to participate in or failure to pass the background screening may result in termination of employment, at the discretion of the Council.
- If requested, job applicants must participate in background screening. Refusal to participate in or failure to pass the background screening may disqualify an applicant from employment, at the discretion of the job interview committee.
- Chaperones and volunteers having direct contact with children may be asked to participate in background screening. Refusal to participate in or failure to pass the background screening may disqualify a person from working in any position having direct contact with children, at the discretion of the Council.
- CR18.01.19 March 17, 2013
All unencumbered regular budget committee funds remaining at the end of the fiscal year shall be returned to the General Fund for the following fiscal year. Special exceptions may be granted with the approval of the Council. Requests for exceptions must be submitted to Council by October 1.
- All unencumbered special budget committee funds remaining at the end of the fiscal year shall be carried over to the same special budget in the following fiscal year. If the respective committee determines that all or a portion of the remaining special budget funds are no longer needed, the unneeded funds will be returned to the General Fund for the following fiscal year. Special exceptions may be granted with the approved of the Council. Requests for exceptions must be submitted to Council by October 1.
- CR18.01.20 May 15, 2013
Youth accounts are created to help the youth of Bethesda raise money for field trips, Bible camps, mission trips, etc. Youth accounts will not be created for adult volunteers or families.
- Unused Youth accounts will revert to the general Youth accounts fund when:
- a. Youth church membership changes
 - b. Youth becomes inactive in Bethesda youth activities. (Inactivity will be

determined by the Bethesda Community Life Committee.)

- c. There is a balance remaining in a youth's account in September following HS graduation, with no younger siblings to pass the money down to.

If a youth wishes to use the money in their account for an activity that is not sponsored by Bethesda Church, they will need to submit a request to the Community Life Committee for approval, providing any of the conditions a thru c above do not exist.

CR.18.01.21 November 15, 2015

With 2013 MN law providing for same-sex marriages and significant supporting feedback from the congregation, the Council has determined that the existing marriage policies of the congregation (see Wedding Handbook revised by Council on November 15, 2015) should pertain to both heterosexual and same-sex couples. This is consistent with our constitution which states that "the Church exists as an *inclusive* fellowship" (Chapter 3. NATURE OF THE CHURCH C3.02)

CR.18.01.22 December 20, 2015

Resolution made that the Annual Meeting shall be the fourth Sunday in January each year.

CR.18.01.23 April 15, 2018

Funeral and Memorial Services held at Bethesda Lutheran Church (BLC) require collaboration between a licensed funeral home and our pastor and personnel. BLC stands ready to provide the traditional services of spiritual care and support, a funeral or memorial service, use of our facilities, a graveside service, and lunch if requested. Failure to work with a licensed funeral home in conjunction with BLC staff and personnel will result in the unavailability of BLC facilities for Funeral and Memorial Services.

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.

