

**CONSTITUTION OF  
ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
MAYFAIR, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA**

Adopted by the Congregation 01/24/2010  
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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 St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Philadelphia, 1867.
- C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the congregation of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as "this congregation".
- C1.11 This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

**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 the 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 of all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and the powerless, and commit 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 the other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.
- C4.03. To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:
- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
  - b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.

- c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.
  - d. Teach the Word of God.
  - e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
  - f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
  - g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for the congregation's ministry and the ministry of other parts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.
- C4.04. This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions. Such descriptions shall be contained in Chapter 13 and the Bylaws. All other organization groups shall be subject to the review and control of the Congregation Council.
- 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 the 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 ministries in conformity with the applicable policy

- d. of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
  - d. approve the annual budget;
  - e. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
  - f. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
  - g. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
  - h. elect its Congregation Council, boards, and committees, and require the members of the Congregation Council to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and the continuing resolutions;
  - i. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.
- C5.04 This congregation shall choose from among its voting members laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by the congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CHURCH AFFILIATION**

- C6.01. This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the Southeastern Pennsylvania 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 ten 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 vote of the voting members present, at which meeting the bishop of the synod or an authorized representative shall be present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.
- e. A certified copy of the resolution to terminate its relationship shall be sent to the synodical bishop, at which time the

relationship between this congregation and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be terminated.

- f. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the synodical bishop to the secretary of this church and published in the periodical of this church.
- g. Since this congregation was a member of the Lutheran Church in America, it shall be required, in addition to the foregoing provisions in C6.05, to receive synodical approval before terminating its membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **PROPERTY OWNERSHIP**

- C7.01. If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- C7.02. If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.
- C7.03. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a regularly 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 Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.
- C7.04. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a regularly called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body, title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with this congregation by the established synodical process, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of this congregation. If the Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to

continue as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

## CHAPTER 8

### MEMBERSHIP

- C8.01. Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of this congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.
- C8.02. Members shall be classified as follows:
- a. Baptized members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations, or by affirmation of faith.
  - b. Confirmed members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.
  - c. Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members during the current or preceding calendar year shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation.
  - 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. 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.
- C8.04. It shall be the privilege and duty of the members of this congregation to:
- a. make regular use of the means of grace, both Word and sacraments;
  - b. live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran church; and
  - c. support the work of this congregation, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in

- America through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.
- C8.05. Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:
- a. death;
  - b. resignation;
  - c. transfer or release;
  - d. disciplinary action by the; Congregation Council; or
  - e. removal from the rolls 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.

## CHAPTER 9

### THE PASTOR

- C9.01. Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting regularly called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers or a committee elected by the Congregation Council to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- C9.02. Only a small number 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



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 (q) 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 committees recommended termination of the call.
  - e. If, in the course of proceedings described in C9.05.d, the committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action to the synodical bishop who may bring charges, in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the constitution of this synod.
  - f. If following the appointment of the committee described in C9.05b or d, it should become apparent that the pastoral office cannot be conducted effectively in the congregation being served by the ordained minister due to local conditions, the bishop of the synod may temporarily suspend the pastor from service in the congregation without prejudice and with pay provided through a joint synodical and churchwide fund and with housing provided by the congregation.
- C9.06. At the 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.
- C9.09. When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- C9.11 With the approval of the bishop of the synod, the congregation may depart from C9.05.a and call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of C9.05.a.
- C9.12 The pastor of this congregation:
- a. shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation;
  - b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod.
  - c. shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- C9.13 The pastor(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- C9.14 Ecumenical pastoral ministry
- a) Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synodical bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, an ordained minister of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily under contract as pastor of this congregation.

## CHAPTER 10

## CONGREGATION MEETING

- C10.01. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.
- 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 25 of the voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.
- C10.03. Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays or by mail to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or paid, sent to the last known address of such members shall be sufficient.
- C10.04. 15% of the voting members shall constitute a quorum.
- C10.05. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- C10.06. All actions by the congregation shall be by majority vote except as otherwise provided in this constitution.
- C10.07. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

## CHAPTER 11

### OFFICERS

- C11.01. The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and assistant treasurer.
  - a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
  - b. The officers shall be voting members of the congregation.
  - c. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.
  - d. If the Congregation Council elects its officers, the president, vice president, and secretary shall be selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council.
  - e. The Congregation Council elects the treasurer and assistant treasurer for a 1 year term not to exceed 6 consecutive years. These officers would not have to be members of Council.
- C11.02. The Congregation Council shall elect its officers and they shall be the officers of the congregation. The officers shall be elected by written ballot and shall serve for one year or until their successors

are elected. The officers shall be elected at the first Council meeting after the annual Congregational meeting and their terms shall begin at that meeting.

- C11.03. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. The President, Vice President and Secretary shall not be eligible to serve more than three consecutive terms in the same office.

## **CHAPTER 12 CONGREGATION COUNCIL**

- C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s), the officers of the congregation, and not less than 12 members of the congregation. Any voting member of the congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member (a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or (b) is absent from two successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause, or four regular meetings of the Congregation Council over a term year. Consistent with the laws of the state in which this congregation is incorporated, the congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.
- C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) shall be elected by written ballot to serve for a maximum three year term or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two terms consecutively. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.
- C12.03. Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next annual meeting.
- C12.04. The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:
- a. To lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
  - b. To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
  - c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this

congregation to enable it to fulfill its function and perform its mission.

- d. To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling, appointment, or employment.
- e. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
- f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
- g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of a pastor.
- h. 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.
- i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- j. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

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

- a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of directors of this congregation, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and 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 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, except as otherwise provided herein.
- b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.
- c. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to \$15,000 not included in the budget, except for situations involving imminent danger to persons or property wherein the Executive Committee (Congregation Council officers) has the authority to act.
- d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations more than 2 1/2 % of the current income

- of the preceding year only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in partnership with the synod and churchwide organization.
- e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence to the synodical treasurer.
  - f. The Congregation Council 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 be responsible for the appointment and supervision of the salaried lay workers of this congregation.
- C12.09. The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.
- C12.11. The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor(s) or the president and shall be called at the request of a least five 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 a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the pastor(s) or interim pastor, except when the pastor(s) or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting, which shall be the only business considered at that meeting. Chronic or repeated absence of the pastor(s) or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Congregation Council, following consultation with the synodical bishop.

## CHAPTER 13

### COMMITTEES

- C13.01. The officers of this congregation and the pastor(s) shall constitute the Executive Committee.
- C13.02. A Nominating Committee consisting of no less than three voting

- members of this congregation, one of whom may be an outgoing member of the Congregation Council, shall be appointed by the President for a term of one year and not more than three years.
- C13.03. Congregation Council shall ensure that an Audit or Financial Review is conducted annually.
- C13.04. A Mutual Ministry Committee shall be appointed jointly by the president and the pastors. Terms of office shall be three years, with two members to be appointed each successive year. Committee members will hold no other office in the congregation and serve only one term.
- C13.05. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of six voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Terms of office will terminate upon the installation of the newly called pastor.
- C13.06. Other committees of this congregation may be formed as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council.
- C13.07. Duties of the congregational committees shall be specified in the bylaws and continuing 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 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 annual 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.

## CHAPTER 15

### DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

- 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 he pastor) or vice president shall administer such admonitions.

- C15.02. The process for discipline of a member of the congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. A member charged with the offense shall appear before the Congregation 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.
- 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 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 Congregation Council or congregation;
  - b. suspension from membership for a definite period of time; or
  - c. exclusion from membership in this congregation.
- Discipline 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 **Adjudication**
- a) When there is disagreement among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation shall have access to the synodical bishop for consultation after informing the chair of the Congregation Council of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the Consultation Committee of the synod shall

consider the matter. If the Consultation Committee of the synod shall fail to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to the Synod Council, whose decision shall be final.

## CHAPTER 16

### BYLAWS

- C16.01. This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.
- C16.02. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting.
- C16.03. Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose and that the Congregation Council notify the members of the proposal with its recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregational Meeting.
- C16.04. Approved changes to the bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of the congregation to the synod.

## CHAPTER 17

### AMENDMENTS

- C17.01. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least five voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at its regular or special meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the members of the proposal with their recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.
- C17.02. A proposed amendment to this constitution shall;
- a. be approved at a properly called meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;
  - b. be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting; and
  - c. have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.
- C17.03. Any amendments to this constitution shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The amendment shall become effective within 120 days from the date of 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 Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.
- C17.04. Whenever the Model Constitution for Congregations is amended by the Churchwide Assembly, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by simple majority vote 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 at least thirty (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, consistent with \*C17.03.

## CHAPTER 18

### CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

- C18.01. The Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions which describe the function of the various committees or organizations 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.

## 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.

## **BY-LAWS**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

1. Members who have received the sacraments and who have made a financial contribution of record within the preceding twelve months shall comprise the active roll.
2. Members who no longer qualify for the active (Membership as per 8.02 or 8.05) roll will be placed on the inactive roll after they have been notified of their status.

### **CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

1. The annual meeting of the congregation shall be held on the fourth (4th) weekend in January, subject to postponement due to weather conditions.

### **CONGREGATION COUNCIL**

1. No two persons from the same household may serve as voting members of the Congregation Council at the same time.
2. All persons of the Congregation Council and Standing Committees are expected to attend worship weekly.
3. No person shall serve on more than three Standing Committees except by virtue of the "ex officio" allowance. "Ex officio" means "by virtue of office or position, not a class of membership, and these have the same rights

(e.g. voting, ability to present motions, etc.) as other committee members.

### **OFFICERS**

1. The president shall be the chairperson of the congregation and the Congregation Council. In the event of the president's inability to perform the duties of the office, the vice-president shall preside.
2. The secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation and of the council in a volume provided by the congregation, which shall be preserved permanently in its archives.
3. The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer shall be responsible for all of the financial transactions of the congregation, shall report monthly to the church council as to the financial condition of the congregation and, at the annual meeting of the congregation, shall render an accurate account, of all monies received and disbursed.
4. The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer shall keep the books of account of the congregation and shall receive all funds and disburse them on proper orders.
5. All financial officers shall be bonded, for which the premiums shall be paid by the congregation.

### **CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEES**

1. The Congregation Council shall appoint from its own or from the voting membership of the congregation as many standing committees (hereafter called Teams) as the local and general interests of the church may require.
2. The duties of all standing Teams, not otherwise defined, shall be fixed by the Congregation Council from whom they shall receive needed instructions and by whom their acts shall be subject to review. They shall serve for one year.
  - a. The pastor present at Team meetings will have a voice and vote. When more than one pastor is present, only one vote will be recorded.
3. There shall be a Team on Christian Education. The mission of this team is to educate, guide, and nurture children and adults about the Gospel, which enhances our faith journey so that we promote love and fellowship with everyone.

4. The Property Team's mission is to care for this property and its' grounds in the same manner that God cares for us, with love and devotion.
5. There shall be an Evangelism Team, whose mission is "To lead the congregation in planting seeds of God's love in Witness through: faith sharing, story telling, and testimony training. The Evangelism team shall implement programs and systems to visit guests of the congregation and draw them into a relationship with Christ through St. John's."
6. The mission of the Finance Team shall be to act as good stewards of the Church's assets and carry out our mission in an efficient and trustworthy manner.
  - The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer shall be members ex officio.
  - The Finance Team shall prepare an annual budget for submission to and approval of the Congregational Council and the congregation, including the congregation's share of the synod apportionment.
  - The Finance Team shall provide oversight of all of the financial affairs and investments of the congregation, schools and organizations which operate within the Church.
  - The Finance Team shall provide for annual audits or reviews of all financial records of the Church and affiliated organizations.
7. There shall be a Social Ministry Team (Faith In **Action**). The mission of the Faith in Action Team is to encourage all members of St. John's to heed the call to love God and love our neighbors by organizing and advocating awareness of social programs and practices that put faith into action.
8. There shall be a Stewardship Team. The mission of the Stewardship Team shall be to teach tithing and first fruits; to promote the expression of Christian faith in daily living thru higher levels of proportional giving of time, talent, and treasure.
9. There shall be a Team on Worship and Music. It is the responsibility of this team to provide a meaningful Worship experience for all, using a variety of Music & worship styles to meet the needs of all God's people, and to be open to changes in Worship to meet the changing needs of the Congregation.
10. The Preschool's mission statement: St. John's Preschool is a Christian outreach ministry of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Pre-school seeks to provide a safe, nurturing environment where children are

nurtured through education and God's love. Students will learn to take appropriate steps in their development, while also learning about God's great love for them and the whole world. St. John's Pre-School is an equal opportunity employer, and neither staff nor students will be discriminated against based on ethnicity, creed, religion, or gender.

11. The Green Team's mission is to preserve and restore God's creation through action, word, and education.
12. Leadership Development Team's mission is to provide training designed to help others recognize and draw out their spiritual gifts, skills and strengths to fulfill God's purpose in their lives; to empower others with the tools to be good leaders for St. John's; and to recommend successors to serve on council.
13. Global Companionship Team mission statement: to walk prayerfully with our ELCT companions in our ministries; to advocate for ELCT projects that foster the spread of Christianity and social justice in Eastern Africa, and specifically Tanzania; to develop closer and more personal relationships with our Kana companions to learn from each other; and to embrace future global companions.
14. Congregational Care Team mission statement: As we continue to grow in size as a church family, the Congregational Care team strengthens the way that God's love grows between us.
15. Youth and Family Team's mission is to: Support Youth & Family related Programs, and to organize Family friendly events that fulfill the mission of the Church.

### **Mission Statement**

St. John's Congregation adopted in August 2003 the following Mission Statement:

Our Mission is to plant the seeds of God's Love through Christ in **W**itness, **O**utreach and the **W**ord. **WOW!**

### **Guiding Principles**

St. John's Congregation adopted on January 29, 2009 the following Guiding Principles:

1. Jesus is Lord; therefore, **we worship and serve.**
2. God speaks to us; therefore **we listen and respond.**
3. God created us to share; therefore **we are generous with His gifts.**
4. God chose all for His team; therefore **we all play a part.**
5. God listens to us; therefore **we pray.**
6. God's story continues through us; therefore **we are the storytellers.**

These principles steer our vision and guide our mission.