

CONSTITUTION – PRINCE OF PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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*INTRODUCTION – This has been added.....

This Constitution is based off of....the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* originally which was adopted by the Constituting Convention of this church in Columbus, Ohio, on April 30, 1987. This was done as required by the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

The model is consistent with the requirements of the constitutional governing documents of the ELCA's churchwide organization and synods.

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

➤ **Review by synod:** In keeping with provisions that apply to all congregations of this church, each congregation is to provide a copy of its governing documents to the synod. As specified by ELCA bylaw 9.53.03. (numbering as listed in the 1991 and subsequent editions):

All proposed changes in the constitution or incorporation documents of a congregation shall be referred to the synod with which the congregation is affiliated. The synod shall approve or disapprove the proposed changes within 120 days of receipt thereof, and shall notify the congregation of its decision; in the absence of a decision, the changes shall go into effect.

➤ **Codification explanation:** A numerical codification indicates (a) general subject, (b) constitutional provisions, (c) bylaws, and (d) continuing resolutions.

a. Major sectors are designated as chapters. The chapter designation becomes the first number in the codification sequence and is followed by a period. Thus, provisions in "Chapter 8. Membership" are preceded by "8."

b. Constitutional provisions are codified with two sets of numbers: the chapter number and a two-digit number preceding the second period in the codification. Thus, one constitutional provision related to "Membership" is codified *C8.02.

c. Bylaw provisions are codified with three sets of numbers: the chapter number, the related constitutional provision number, and a two-digit number. Thus, one bylaw provision related to "Membership" would be codified C8.02.01. Because bylaws and continuing resolutions normally are so specifically related to details of each congregation's organization, operation, and life, no model set of bylaws or continuing resolutions is provided. Each congregation may develop its own bylaws and continuing resolutions, but no such bylaws or continuing resolutions may conflict with this constitution, the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the constitution of the synod, as indicated in *C6.03.e.

d. The Congregation Council may adopt "continuing resolutions," which may provide descriptions of operational patterns or of the ongoing responsibilities of committees

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or other units within the organizational structure of the congregation. Within the governing documents of a congregation, continuing resolutions are the provisions most easily amended. Unlike constitutional provisions and bylaws, continuing resolutions may be updated regularly by the Congregation Council without the necessity of calling a regular or special Congregation Meeting. Continuing resolutions also are codified with three sets of numbers except that the third set is preceded by a capital letter. Thus, a continuing resolution might be numbered C13. to designate the chapter; C13.07. to designate the subject matter within the chapter; and the third set might be numbered A07. in the codification C13.07.A07. to indicate by the “A” that it is the first continuing resolution regarding that subject and to indicate by the “07” that it was adopted in 2007.

➤ **Ease of use:** The provisions of your congregation’s constitution, the bylaws, and the continuing resolutions that pertain to the same matter should be placed together for clarity and ease in use.

If chapter numbers are considered the major sequence number, constitution numbers as a fraction of the chapter number, and bylaw numbers as a fraction of the constitution number, then the codification can be said to provide a progressive sequence. Thus, *C5.01. will precede C5.03.10., and C9.11.16. will precede *C9.13.

All provisions in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* are prefaced with “C” to distinguish these provisions from comparable ones in the synodical and churchwide constitutions.

➤ **Missing numbers:** As you work with the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, you may notice that certain numbers seem to be missing from the numbering sequence in some chapters. That is intentional. In the style followed here, the number “.10.” and multiples thereof have been reserved for possible use as section headings in future editions. Therefore, in the sequence, for example, of Chapters 1, 9, and 12, these “.10.” numbers do not appear.

➤ **References to church:** In the governing documents, “Church” with a capital letter is used in references to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. In references to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the words “church” and “this church” in lower case letters are employed, although, for clarity in this constitution, the full name or “ELCA” normally is used.

The specific congregation may be identified, as provided in C1.02., as “this congregation.”

➤ **Guidelines:** A list of guidelines for a congregation engaging in review and amendment of its constitution is available through each synod office and on the ELCA Web site. The task of amending a constitution is not easy. It is, however, an important endeavor that merits thoughtful work. In your constitutional responsibilities, God grant you wisdom, mutual love, clear understanding of good order, and commitment to the unity of this church in faithful witness to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

DAVID D. SWARTLING
Secretary
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
September 4, 2009

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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 Prince of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church of Marlton, New Jersey.

C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the congregation of Prince of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church of Marlton, New Jersey is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."

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

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.

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***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.

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d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

d. Teach the Word of God.

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

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

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

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

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

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***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/ministry, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions. Such descriptions shall be contained in Continuing Resolutions in the section on the Congregational Committees.

***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. 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 their members to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions; and
- i. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in **Chapter 6**.

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***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 this synod.

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 New Jersey 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.

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c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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

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

a. A resolution indicating the desire of this congregation to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present.

b. The secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the synodical bishop and shall mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of this congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted.

c. The bishop of the synod shall consult with this congregation during a period of at least 90 days.

d. If this congregation, after consultation, still desires to terminate its relationship, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present, at which meeting the bishop of the synod or an authorized representative shall be present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.

e. A certified copy of the resolution to terminate its relationship shall be sent to the synodical bishop, at which time the relationship between this congregation and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be terminated.

f. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the synodical bishop to the secretary of this church and published in the periodical of this church.

g. Since this congregation was 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 and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.

Chapter 7. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

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

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***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 New Jersey Synod.

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

Chapter 8. MEMBERSHIP

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

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

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

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

c. Voting Members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members shall have communed and made a contribution of record during the current or preceding year. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of the congregation.

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

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

- a.** make regular use of the means of grace, both Word and sacraments;
- b.** live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran church; and
- c.** support the work of this congregation, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.

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

- a.** death;
- b.** resignation;
- c.** transfer or release;
- d.** disciplinary action in accordance with ELCA constitutional provision 20.40 and the accompanying bylaws; 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.

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 the Congregation Council to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.

***C9.02.** Only a member of the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate from 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.

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***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 New Jersey 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.

***C9.05.**

- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by death or, following consultation with the synodical bishop, 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, no later than 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;
 - 4) physical disability, or mental incapacity of the pastor;
 - 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of ordained ministers of this church;

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- 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
- 8) dissolution of the congregation; or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
- 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.

- b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of the synod,
 - 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two ordained ministers and one layperson, or
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the congregation council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two ordained ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of the synod may declare the pastorate vacant and the pastor shall be listed on the clergy roster as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and restoration of the pastor to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation, under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from, -all concerned person, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, the congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by simple majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in the bishop's committee concludes that there be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary in accordance with the provisions of bylaws.

***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

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

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

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

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

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

C9.20. Ecumenical Pastoral Ministry

C9.21. Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synodical bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, an ordained minister of a church body with

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which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve 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 of this congregation.

C10.02. A **Special Congregation Meeting** may be called by the pastor(s), the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of the congregation upon the written request of ten percent (10%) of the voting members. The president of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synodical bishop. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.

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

C10.04. Ten percent (10%) 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 either elected or appointed. The elected officers shall be the president, vice president, and secretary. The officers to be appointed by the Congregation Council shall be the treasurer, financial secretary, and other officers as the Congregation Council may deem to be necessary.

a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.

b. The officers shall be voting members of the congregation.

c. Elected officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.

d. The president, vice-president, and secretary shall be chosen from the membership of the Congregation Council. The other officers, if not members of the Council, shall be accorded the privilege of voice without vote in its meetings.

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C11.02. The Congregation Council shall elect its officers at its first meeting following the annual meeting and they shall be the officers of the congregation.

- a. The officers shall be nominated and elected by written ballot and shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin during the Congregation Council meeting at which they are elected.
- b. Appointed officers shall be named or re-appointed by the Congregation Council during its first meeting following the annual meeting.
- c. The Congregation Council shall appoint an officer whenever a resignation occurs.

C11.03. No officer, either elected or appointed, shall hold more than one office at a time. No elected officer shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office. Appointed officers may serve consecutive terms at the discretion of the Congregation Council.

Chapter 12. CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s) and not more than fifteen (15) 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 C12.02. 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 three successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause: or
- c. 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) and a Youth Representative, shall be elected by written ballot to serve for (2) two years by a majority vote or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected. Their tenure shall be so arranged that one-half of the terms expire annually.

There shall be a Youth Representative who is a high school student and a Voting Member of the congregation, who shall be elected by written ballot for a term of one year by a majority vote at the Annual Congregation Meeting. Such member shall be eligible to serve no more than one full term.

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

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

- a.** The Congregation Council shall be the board of trustees of this congregation, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the management of its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and

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be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of New Jersey, 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. Refer to C12.05.01 of the Bylaws for limits on non-budgeted contracts.

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 during the Budget year spend cumulatively no more than 3% in excess of the annual budget without approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full-indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in partnership with the synod and churchwide organization.

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

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

C12.06. 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 employment and supervision of all employees of this congregation. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the supervision of the pastor(s).

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 by the president at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

C12.12. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the pastor(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 of routine matters which shall be the only business considered at that meeting. Chronic or repeated absence of the pastor or interim pastor

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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.

C12.13. The Congregation Council and its committees may hold meeting by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, and, to the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meeting may be provided electronically.

Chapter 13. CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

C13.01. The president and vice-president, the secretary, and the pastor(s) of this congregation shall constitute the Executive Committee.

C13.02. A Nominating Committee shall be composed of the pastor(s) and six voting members of this congregation, two of whom, if possible, shall be outgoing members of the Congregation Council, and the remaining non-council members elected by the Congregation Council. The current president of the Congregation Council shall not be a member of the Nominating Committee. Members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible for consecutive reelection.

C13.03. The Congregation Council shall appoint an Audit Committee. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council.

C13.04. A Mutual Ministry Committee shall be composed of two sub-committees, Staff Support and Personnel.

- a. The Staff Support sub-committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee with the approval of the Congregation Council. It shall have six members, each appointed for a term of two years. Their tenure shall be so arranged that one-half of the terms expire annually. Members may serve two consecutive terms. The Executive Committee with the approval of the Congregation Council shall appoint the chair of the sub-committee. The chair of the Staff Support sub-committee shall have access to all meetings held by the Personnel sub-committee.
- b. The Congregation Council shall appoint the Personnel sub-committee. It shall have six members, four of which shall be appointed for a term of two years. Their tenure shall be so arranged that one-half of the terms expire annually. Members may serve two consecutive terms. The president and one other member of the Congregation Council shall be members of Personnel. The president shall appoint the second member from the Council. The Congregation Council shall appoint the chair of the sub-committee.

C13.05. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, the Congregation Council shall elect a Call Committee of six voting members. Any non-vacating Pastor(s) under call by this congregation shall be an additional member of this committee. Terms of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor.

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C13.06. Other committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council.

C13.07. Duties of committees/ministries of this congregation shall be specified in the continuing resolutions. C4.04.A.02.

C13.08 The pastor(s) of this congregation shall be ex officio a member(s) of all committees and boards of this congregation.

Chapter 14. ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

C14.01. All organizations of 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 annual meeting shall determine their policies, guide their activities, and receive reports concerning their membership, programs, 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 AND ADJUDICATION

***C15.01.** Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith, willful or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, continual and intentional interference with the ministry of the congregation, or willful and repeated harassment or defamation of member(s) of the congregation is sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation and repentance will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps, as necessary: a) private counsel and admonition by the pastor, b) censure and admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, c) written referral of the matter by the Congregation Council to the vice president of the synod, who will refer it to a consultation panel drawn from the Consultation Committee of the synod, and d) written referral of the matter by the consultation panel to the Committee on Discipline of the synod. If, for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by paragraphs a. and b. hereof, those steps may be performed by another pastor chosen by the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council.

***C15.02.** The process for discipline of a member of 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 the counseling, censure, and admonitions pursuant to C15.01 do not result in repentance and amendment of life, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing may be prepared by the Congregation Council, signed, and submitted to the vice president of the synod. The vice president shall select from the synod's Consultation Committee a panel of five members (three lay persons and two clergy). A copy of the written charges

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shall be provided to the consultation panel and the accused member(s). The consultation panel, after requesting a written reply to the charges from the accused member(s), shall consider the matter and seek a resolution by means of investigation, consultation, mediation, or whatever other means may seem appropriate. The panel's efforts to reach a mutually agreeable resolution shall continue for no more than 45 days after the matter is submitted to it.

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

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

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

- a. suspension from the privileges of congregation membership for a designated period of time;
- b. suspension from the privileges of congregation membership until the pastor and Congregation Council receive evidence, satisfactory to them, of repentance and amendment of life;
- c. termination of membership in the congregation; or
- d. termination of membership in the congregation and exclusion from the church property and from all congregation activities.

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

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

***C15.10. Adjudication**

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

Chapter 16. BYLAWS

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

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

***C16.03.** Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member, provided that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the congregation's members of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

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

***C16.05.** Bylaws for a Prince of Peace Mission Endowment Fund

A. Mission Endowment Committee

The endowment committee shall consist of five voting members, one of whom shall be elected by the congregation council from its own membership, and four of whom shall be elected from the congregation on a staggered basis for three-year terms by the congregation at annual meetings. Members can serve no more than two terms on the committee. Actions of the committee must be agreed to by at least three of the voting members. The committee shall meet at least two times per year. The council shall have the authority to appoint members to the committee to fill vacancies that occur on the committee. The term of the appointment shall be until the next annual meeting of the congregation. This includes the authority to appoint the initial members of the committee.

B. Committee Duties

- To utilize the Mission Endowment Fund (to be known as "the Fund") to support the work of God in the world that is aligned with the purpose statement of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church:

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We are disciples of Jesus who are empowered by God's extravagant grace to grow in faith, serve in love and live in joy.

- To establish and implement procedures and policies for soliciting and processing donations to the Mission Endowment Fund, and distributing grants from the Fund in accordance with the requirements and limitations of the Fund.
- To educate the congregation about the Fund, promote the Fund, and solicit donations in an appropriate manner.
- To report at least annually to the congregation about new gifts received, investment returns earned by the Fund, the size of the Fund, details of specific grants given, a list of all grant requests and disposition on requests.
- To assist donors in the process of making gifts to the Fund.
- To establish policies and procedures for accepting or rejecting proposed gifts by donors.
- To act as the designated advisor to the Fund manager, which will manage, invest and report on the Fund's assets, including requests for distribution from the Fund.

C. The Purpose of the Fund

The Prince of Peace Mission Endowment Fund shall be established to strengthen and extend God's mission throughout the world by reaching out in response to human need in areas that support the purpose statement of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, specifically:

- Grow in Faith: Support intellectual and spiritual growth through grants to individuals, programs and/or organizations;
- Serve in Love: Support service to the community through grants to individuals, programs and/or organizations; and/or
- Live in Joy: Support initiatives that offer care to people so that they can live in health and wholeness through grants to individuals, programs and/or organizations.

D. Fund Management

The Fund will initially be invested with the ELCA Endowment Fund Pool Trust-Fund A through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which will act as the Fund manager and Trustee. The committee may decide to reinvest the assets of the Fund at any time with a different Fund manager or create an additional fund through the ELCA or another fund manager.

E. Distribution of the Fund's Assets

The Fund will be permanent. The Fund will make grants that equal the annual distribution rate as determined by the Fund Trustee. The distribution rate reflects the Trustee's consideration of the anticipated returns of the Fund and will equal the average of the Fund's value on December 31 of the five preceding years multiplied by the annual distribution rate. The Fund Trustee is an organization responsible for administering the Trust and in accordance with the Declaration of the Trust and governed by the Board of Trustees appointed by the Church Council of the ELCA.

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No distributions made from the Fund can be used for budgeted or discretionary operating expenses at Prince of Peace Church. Organizations and individuals interested in receiving a grant from the Fund may apply based on the procedures and policies developed by the Mission Endowment Fund Committee. If no applications are received or the applications received are not deemed appropriate for the Fund's support, the committee will determine how to distribute the grants for each calendar year.

F. Congregational Accounting Responsibilities

The congregation's treasurer's responsibilities involved in the Fund will include check-writing and keeping an accounting of the donations given to the Fund. Fund management and investment decisions will be the responsibility of the ELCA Foundation. Through the ELCA Foundation or other fund manager, the congregation will have professional investment expertise and access to investment portfolios and is relieved of investment and record keeping duties.

G. Dissolution of the Fund

In the event the incorporated body known as Prince of Peace Lutheran Church or its successor(s) cease to exist, then the Fund and all other funds which have been created over time that are held by the ELCA Foundation shall be allocated for the support of projects, programs and activities of the New Jersey ELCA Synod or its successor, promoting Christian religious and charitable organizations and supporting education for Christian life and service. If there is no successor to the New Jersey ELCA Synod then the funds held at the ELCA Foundation shall continue as a permanent fund for the unrestricted charitable purposes of the Foundation.

Chapter 17. AMENDMENTS

***C17.01.** Unless provision *C17.04. is applicable, those sections of this constitution that are not required, in accord with the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be amended in the following manner. Amendments may be proposed by at least 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 of the proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

***C17.02.** A proposed amendment to this constitution shall:

- a. be approved at a legally 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.

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***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 synod shall notify the congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed changes; the changes shall go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them.

***C17.04.** This constitution may be amended to bring any section into conformity with a section or sections, either required or not required, of the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as most recently amended by the Churchwide Assembly. Such amendments may be approved by a simple majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of the congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, notice to the congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council's recommendations, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of _____ voting members of the congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice and call such a 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 in a legally called meeting or the Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions which describe the function of the various committees or organizations of this congregation. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this congregation.

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

Chapter 19. INDEMNIFICATION

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

Chapter 20. PARISH AUTHORIZATION

***C20.01.** This congregation may unite in partnership with one or more other congregations recognized by the synod named in *C6.01. to form a parish. Except as provided in *C20.02. and *C20.03., a written agreement, developed in consultation with the synod and approved by the voting members of each congregation participating in

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the parish, shall specify the powers and responsibilities that have been delegated to a Parish Council.

***C20.02.** Whenever a letter of call is being recommended for extension to an ordained minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of ordained ministers who has been recommended to the congregation by the synodical bishop to serve the congregations of a parish, such letter of call shall be first approved by a two-thirds vote at congregation meetings of each of the congregations forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve extending this call, the other congregation(s) in the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish arrangement.

***C20.03.** Any one of the congregations of a parish may terminate the call of a pastor as provided in †**S14.13.d.** of the Synod Constitution of the synod named in ***C6.01.** In such case, the other congregation(s) in the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish arrangement.

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***C20.04.** Whenever a parish arrangement is terminated, the call of any rostered person serving that parish is terminated. Should any congregation that formerly was part of the parish arrangement desire to issue a new call to that rostered person, it may do so in accordance with the call process of this church.