

Constitution Document for Congregations



Amended and approved at the annual congregational meeting, November 24, 2013

CONSTITUTION

FOR EMMANUEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF STONEY CREEK, ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND Amended as of November 24 2013

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

- 1.01.** The name of the Congregation shall be EMMANUEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF STONEY CREEK, ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND.
- 1.02.** For the purpose of this constitution and any accompanying By-Laws, the congregation of EMMANUEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF STONEY CREEK, ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND (hereinafter "Congregation").
- 1.03.** The Congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Maryland.

Chapter 2. - CONFESSION OF FAITH

The Congregation incorporates Article 2 of the constitution of the North American Lutheran Church (the "NALC"), confessing:

- 2.01.** The Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- 2.02.** 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 the Holy Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them the Holy Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

- 2.03. 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, "according to which all doctrines should and must be judged." (Formula of Concord, Epitome, Part I)
- 2.04. The Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of the Church.
- 2.05. 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.
- 2.06. 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. 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

- 3.01. The Church is the universal assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the Holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel. (Augsburg Confession VII)
- 3.02. All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of the Congregation are to be carried out under His rule and authority.
- 3.03. 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.
- 3.04. The Congregation exercises ministry within the mission of the NALC. The Congregation embodies the Church in its community and, for the sake of mission, lives in cooperative partnership with other congregations and within the other structures of the NALC. The Congregation shall share responsibility for the decision-making processes of the NALC.

Chapter 4. - STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- 4.01. The hearers of the Gospel are a people, called and sent by God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to be a community of faith, hope and love, who witness to Christ and His coming Kingdom before all the world.
- 4.02. To participate in God's mission, the Congregation as a part of the Church shall:

- a. Give honor and glory to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, worshipping Him in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, obedience and service.
- b. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by proclaiming to all the world the Gospel of justification by grace through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture and in accordance with the Lutheran Confessions,
- c. Preserve and transmit the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
- d. Foster Christian fellowship and love, and extend a helping hand to humans in need.
- e. Manifest the unity of our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior, and join with other Christians in prayer and action.
- f. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, and to develop a sense of Christian vocation in daily life.

4.03. To fulfill these purposes, the Congregation shall:

- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is rightly preached and the sacraments are rightly 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 the 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. Encourage its members to provide appropriate financial support for the Congregation's ministry and the ministry of other parts of the NALC.
- h. Foster and participate in relationships with other congregations and structures of the NALC.
- i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relations consistent with NALC policy.

4.04. The Congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the By-Laws. The Church Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions.

4.05. The Congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

Chapter 5. - POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

5.01. Those necessary to fulfill its purpose.

5.02. Those vested in the Congregational Meeting called and conducted as provided in this Constitution and By-Laws.

5.03. Only such authority as is delegated to the Church 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. Appoint or terminate the service of commissioned lay leaders.
- 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 Church Council, boards, and committees, and require the members of the council, boards, and committees to carry out their duties in accordance with the Constitution, By-Laws, and continuing resolutions.
- i. Adopt amendments to this Constitution as provided in Chapter 17, and amendments to the By-Laws, as specified in Chapter 16.
- j. Establish or terminate a relationship with a church body.

5.04. The Congregation may select voting members of the Congregation to serve as lay delegates and alternates to represent it at meetings of any conferences, convocations, and other meetings where the Congregation is entitled to such representation.

Chapter 6. - CHURCH AFFILIATION

6.01. The Congregation is a member of the NALC or any successor and is subject to the procedures of the NALC.

6.02. The Congregation subscribes to the constitution of the NALC and will act in accordance with it.

6.03. The Congregation will conduct its ministry in a manner consistent with its membership in the NALC:

- a. The Congregation is responsible for its life as a Christian community.
- b. The Congregation pledges its participation in the life and mission of the NALC, including the prayerful consideration of appropriate financial support.
- c. The Congregation shall call only pastors who are members of the NALC or otherwise are authorized by the NALC to serve.
- d. The Congregation shall appoint only commissioned lay leaders who are members of the NALC or otherwise are authorized by the NALC to serve.

6.04. Affiliation with the NALC may be terminated as follows:

- a. The Congregation dissolves.
- b. The Congregation ceases to exist.
- c. The Congregation is removed from membership in the NALC according to the procedures for discipline of the NALC.
- d. The Congregation, at a legally called and conducted special meeting, approves by at least a two-thirds (2/3rds) majority of those present and voting a resolution directing that the Congregation withdraw from the NALC. If the Congregation adopts a resolution withdrawing from the NALC, all provisions of this Constitution binding the Congregation to the NALC shall be immediately ineffective. The Congregation shall promptly deliver a copy of the withdrawal resolution to the NALC General Secretary.

Chapter 7. - PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

- 7.01.** The Congregation is an independent legal entity with rights to purchase, hold, and convey real and personal property in accord with applicable law. The NALC shall have no right to or interest in the property of the Congregation unless the Congregation expressly conveys such a right or interest to the NALC. If the Congregation dissolves, its property shall be distributed in accordance with applicable law and with the Congregation's governing documents.

Chapter 8. - MEMBERSHIP

- 8.01.** Members of the Congregation shall be those baptized persons **(a)** who are on the roll of the Congregation at the time that this Constitution is adopted or who are admitted thereafter, and **(b)** who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and its By-Laws.
- 8.02.** Members shall be classified as follows:
- a. *Baptized*** members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in the 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 the 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 who have communed and made a contribution of record during the preceding twelve (12) month period. Members of the Congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of the Congregation.
 - d. *Associate*** members are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of the Congregation. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Church Council of the Congregation.
- 8.03.** All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Church Council.
- 8.04.** It shall be the privilege and duty of members of the 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 the Congregation, the NALC, and their ministries and structures [through contributions of time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards].
- 8.05.** Membership in the Congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:
- a.** Death;
 - b.** Resignation;
 - c.** Transfer or release;
 - d.** Disciplinary action by the Church Council; or

e. Removal from the roll due to inactivity as defined in the By-Laws. Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the Church has a continuing pastoral concern.

Chapter 9. - THE PASTOR

- 9.01.** Authority to call a pastor shall be in the Congregation by at least a two-thirds (2/3rds) majority vote of members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Any such vote shall be by written ballot.
- 9.02.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the NALC,
- a.** Every ordained minister shall:
 - 1) Preach the Word;
 - 2) Administer the sacraments;
 - 3) Conduct public worship;
 - 4) Provide pastoral care;
 - 5) Serve as the chief evangelist in his or her ministry, and
 - 6) Proclaim God's love to 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 the Congregation;
 - 3) Install regularly elected members of the Church Council; and
 - 4) With the Church 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; and
 - 3) Impart knowledge of the NALC and its wider ministry through public provision of information, distribution of publications and other appropriate means,
- 9.03.** 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.
- 9.04.** **a.** The call of the Congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which, except in the case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated 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, thirty (30) days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) Inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the Congregation in view of local conditions, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor;
 - 4) The physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
 - 5) Disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty; or

6) The dissolution of the Congregation.

b. If the Church Council determines that it may be appropriate to end a call for one of the reasons set out in sub-section (a), the Council shall consult with the pastor regarding the matter in accord with Biblical principles. If the Church Council and pastor do not reach agreement, the Church Council shall inform the Bishop of the NALC, who shall consult with the Church Council and the pastor and shall attempt to reach an agreed resolution. If the Bishop fails to facilitate an agreed resolution, the Church Council or the pastor may call a special Congregational Meeting to consider the matter. At such a meeting, the pastor and the Church Council leadership shall have a full and fair opportunity to present their positions on all matters relevant for consideration. Thereafter, the Congregation by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote may terminate the pastor's call. In all events, the Church Council by majority vote may suspend a pastor with pay if the Church Council determines that such suspension is necessary to protect the Congregation and all whom it serves. No such suspension may last more than ninety (90) days unless the pastor agrees otherwise.

- 9.05.** At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor may be appointed by the Church Council.
- 9.06.** 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 Church Council. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.
- 9.07.** The 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 the Congregation.
- 9.08.** 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 and the Church Council. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through the same consultation process.
- 9.09.** The Congregation may depart from the requirements in section 9.04 (a) by calling a pastor for a term of years. Details of such a call shall be in a writing that sets forth the purpose and conditions involved. Such call may be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions in section 9.04 (a) and 9.04 (b).
- 9.10.** The pastor of the 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 Church Council; and
 - c.** shall become a member of the Congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call.
- 9.11.** The parochial records of the Congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of the Congregation.

Chapter 10. - CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

- 10.01.** The annual meeting and any other regular meetings of the Congregation shall be held at times set by the Congregation in By-Laws or in other resolutions.
- 10.02.** A special Congregational Meeting may be called by the pastor, the Church Council, or the president of the Congregation, and shall be called by the president of the Congregation upon the written request of ten percent (10%) of the voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.
- 10.03.** Notice of all meetings of the Congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail or e-mail to all voting members at least ten (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, or sent to the last known e-mail address of such members, shall be sufficient.
- 10.04.** Thirty-nine (39) of the voting members shall constitute a quorum.
- 10.05.** Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- 10.06.** All actions approved by the Congregation shall be by majority vote of those voting members present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution or by applicable law.
- 10.07.** *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of the Congregation.

Chapter 11. - OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION

- 11.01.** The officers of the Congregation shall be a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.
- a.** Duties of the officers shall be specified in the By-Laws.
 - b.** The officers shall be voting members of the Congregation.
 - c.** Officers of the Congregation shall serve similar offices of the Church Council and shall be voting members of the Church Council.
 - d.** The Church Council shall elect the offices of the president, vice president, and secretary from the elected membership of the Church Council. The treasurer shall be elected by the voting members at the Congregational Meeting. The treasurer shall have voice but not vote at the meetings of the Church Council.
- 11.02.** The officers identified in this Chapter 11, to be elected by the Church Council or the treasurer by the Congregational Meeting shall be elected by majority vote and shall serve for one (1) year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the meeting at which they are elected. Any such vote may be by written ballot.

- 11.03.** No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. No elected church council officer shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.
- 11.04.** If any elected office enumerated in this Chapter 11 becomes vacant, the Church Council shall elect a replacement as soon as practicable to serve the remainder of the unexpired term. The time served under this Section 11.04 shall not count for purposes of term limits.

Chapter 12. - CHURCH COUNCIL

- 12.01.** The voting membership of the Church Council shall consist of a total of twelve (12) voting members of the Congregation including the pastor, the officers of the Congregation, and eight (8) other voting 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 Church Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of the Congregation or b) is absent from [four] successive regular meetings of the Church Council without cause. Consistent with the laws of the State of Maryland, the Congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Church Council in other circumstances.
- 12.02.** The members of the Church Council except the pastor shall be elected by majority vote of a written ballot, at the annual meeting of the Congregation as set forth in the By-Laws. They shall serve terms of three (3) years or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin on the Sunday immediately after the meeting at which they are elected. Newly elected Church Council members shall be installed at worship on any Sunday prior to the date they assume office. Members shall be eligible to serve no more than two (2) full terms consecutively.
- 12.03.** Should a member's place on the Church Council be declared vacant, the Church Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next annual meeting. Individuals who have served less than one-half (1/2) of a regular term shall be eligible for nomination and election to a full term.
- 12.04.** The Church Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of the Congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God, the Lutheran Confessions and the faith and practice of the NALC. The duties of the Church Council shall include the following:
- a.** To lead the 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 the Congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
 - c.** To oversee and provide for the administration of the Congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
 - d.** To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling 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 foster resolution of such conflicts according to Biblical principles.
- g.** To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
- h.** To emphasize partnership with the NALC as well as cooperation with other Christian congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran.
- i.** To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

- 12.05.** The Church Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of the Congregation.
- a.** The Church Council shall be the Board of Trustees of the Congregation, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the management of its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Maryland, except as otherwise provided herein.
 - b.** The Church Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the Congregation.
 - c.** The Church Council may enter into contracts of up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) for items not included in the budget.
 - d.** The Church Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by the Congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations of more than four thousand dollars (\$4,000.00) in excess of the anticipated receipts, only after approval by a Congregational Meeting.
 - e.** The Church Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of the Congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies to designated recipients.
 - f.** The Church Council shall be responsible for the Congregation's investments and its total insurance program.
- 12.06.** The Church Council shall see that the provisions of this Constitution and of the Congregation's By-Laws and continuing resolutions are carried out.
- 12.07.** The Church Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.
- 12.08.** The Church Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the salaried lay workers of the Congregation.
- 12.09.** The Church Council shall submit a comprehensive report to the Congregation at the annual meeting.
- 12.10.** The Church Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president, and shall be called by the president at the request of at least one-half (1/2) of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

- 12.11.** A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Church Council. In addition, the pastor or interim pastor must be present, except when the pastor or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting, or with the consent of the Bishop or Dean. In such a circumstance, the Church Council may not conduct any business beyond that which was included on the agenda as approved by the pastor, interim pastor, Bishop or Dean, as applicable. Chronic or repeated absence of the pastor or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Church Council.

Chapter 13. - COMMITTEES OF THE CONGREGATION

- 13.01.** The officers of the Congregation and the pastor shall constitute the Executive Committee.
- 13.02.** A Nominating Committee of six (6) voting members of the Congregation, two (2) of whom, if possible, shall be outgoing members of the Church Council, shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year. Members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible to serve consecutive terms.
- 13.03.** An Audit Committee of three (3) voting members shall be elected by the Church Council. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Church Council. Term of office shall be three (3) years, with one (1) member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for reelection.
- 13.04.** A Mutual Ministry Committee of not more than six (6) voting members may be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor. Term of office shall be two (2) years, with three (3) members to be appointed each successive year.
- 13.05.** When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of six (6) voting members shall be elected by the Congregation. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor.
- 13.06.** Other committees of the Congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Church Council.
- 13.07.** Duties of committees of the Congregation shall be specified in the By-Laws or continuing resolutions.
- 13.08.** The pastor of the Congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of the Congregation. The president of the Congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of the Congregation, except the Nominating Committee.

Chapter 14. - ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

- 14.01.** All organizations within the Congregation shall exist to aid it in ministering to the members of the Congregation and to all persons who can be reached with the Gospel of Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of the Congregation's life, the organizations are subject to its oversight and direction. The Congregation at its meeting shall determine

their policies, guide their activities, and receive reports concerning their membership, work, and finances.

Chapter 15. - DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

- 15.01.** Denial of the Christian faith as described in this Constitution or the constitution of the NALC, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in the Congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps: **a)** private admonition by the pastor, **b)** admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, and **c)** citation to appear before the Church Council. If, for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by **a)** and **b)** hereof, the president or vice president shall administer such admonitions.
- 15.02.** If discipline against a member proceeds beyond counseling and admonition by the pastor, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing shall be prepared by member(s) of the Congregation who shall sign the charges as the accuser(s). The written charges shall be filed with the pastor, who shall advise the Church Council of the need to issue a written citation to the accused and the accusers that specifies the time and place of the hearing before the Church Council. The written charges shall accompany the written citation to the accused. The written citation that specifies the time and place of the hearing before the Church Council and requests the presence of a member charged with an offense shall be sent at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting. If the member charged with the offense fails to appear at the scheduled hearing, the Church Council may proceed with the hearing and may pass judgment in the member's absence.
- 15.03.** Members of the Church Council who participate in the preparation of the written charges or who present evidence or testimony in the hearing before the Church Council are disqualified from voting upon the question of the guilt of the accused member. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds (2/3rds) majority vote of the members of the Church Council who are not disqualified but who are present and voting, and renewed admonition prove ineffectual, the council shall impose one (1) of the following disciplinary actions:
- a.** Censure before the council or Congregation;
 - b.** Suspension from membership for a definite period of time; or
 - c.** Exclusion from membership in the Congregation.
- Disciplinary actions **b.** and **c.** shall be delivered to the member in writing.
- 15.04.** The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Church Council shall have the right to appeal to a Congregational Meeting, which may revise or overturn the Church Council's decision by a majority vote. Any such vote will be by secret ballot.
- 15.05.** Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Church Council upon receipt of **(a)** evidence that injustice has been done or **(b)** evidence of repentance and amendment.

Chapter 16. - BY-LAWS

- 16.01.** The Congregation may adopt By-Laws. No By-Law may conflict with this Constitution.
- 16.02.** By-Laws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of the Congregation with a quorum present by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting.
- 16.03.** Changes to the By-Laws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however, **(a)** that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Church Council at least sixty (60) days before a regular or special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose and **(b)** that the Church Council notify the members of the proposal with any recommendations regarding the disposition of the proposal at least thirty (30) days in advance of the Congregational Meeting.

Chapter 17. – AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION

- 17.01.** Amendments may be proposed by at least five (5) voting members or by the Church Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Church Council sixty (60) days before a regular or special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose. The Church Council shall notify the members of the proposal with the council's recommendations regarding disposition of the proposal at least thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting.
- 17.02.** An amendment shall:
- a.** Be approved at a legally called Congregational Meeting according to this Constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;
 - b.** Be ratified without change at the next annual Congregational Meeting by a two-thirds (2/3rds) majority vote of those present and voting; and
 - c.** Have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the Constitution.

Chapter 18. - CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

- 18.01.** The Congregation in a legally called Congregational Meeting or the Church Council may enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the Constitution or By-Laws of the Congregation.
- 18.02.** Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a majority vote of a Congregational Meeting or a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of all voting members of the Church Council.

Chapter 19. - INDEMNIFICATION

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

Bylaws:

- C11.01.01 The members of the Congregation Council of this congregation shall serve as the legal Board of Trustees of the congregation under Maryland Law. Any two members of the Executive Committee as described in C11.01 of this constitution shall have the power to execute all legal documents on behalf of the Board of Trustees.
- C10.01.01 The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held on the Sunday immediately before Thanksgiving.
- C11.01.01 The duties of the officers of the congregation are as follows;

President (co-presidents):

- Preside at all meetings of the Congregation Council
- Preside at Congregational Meetings
- Preside at Executive Committee Meetings
- Prepare the agenda for all Congregational Meetings
- Prepare the agenda for all Congregation Council Meetings
- Appoint members of ad hoc committees

Vice President:

- Assume the responsibilities of the President in his/her absence
- Make all required notifications of Congregational Meetings
- Attend Executive Committee Meetings
- Attend Congregation Council Meetings

Recording Secretary:

- Record the minutes of all Congregation Council Meetings
- Record the minutes of all Congregational Meetings
- Submit minutes of all meetings for approval in a timely manner
- Distribute approved minutes
- Attend Congregation Council Meetings
- Attend Executive Committee Meetings

Corresponding Secretary:

- Prepare and send correspondence as requested by the Congregation Council
- Attend Executive Committee Meetings
- Attend Congregation Council Meetings

Treasurer:

- Record the monies counted by the cash committee
- Record and keep up to date cash records of the church
- Prepare monthly financial reports for submission to the Congregation Council
- Prepare the Annual Financial Report
- Issue checks upon receipt of approved expenditures and payroll
- Provide financial records for the annual audit
- Attend Congregation Council Business Meetings
- Fill in for the Financial Secretary whenever necessary for the completion of his/her duties

Financial Secretary:

- Record contributions of each member of the congregation
- Distribute semiannual statements of contributions to each member of the congregation
- Assist the treasurer whenever necessary for the completion of the treasurer's responsibilities
- Fill in for the treasurer whenever necessary for the completion of his/her duties
- Provide financial records for the annual audit

C12.05.01 The Congregation Council shall have the authority to direct the expenditure of memorial funds subject to the following restrictions:

- a. **Memorial Funds**....for the purposes of this bylaw, are defined as a gift of money that has been donated in the name of an individual and dedicated to a specific or non-specific purpose. These funds are not to be utilized for general expenses but for specific purposes and areas of ministry.
 1. Active memorial Funds... funds which have been established or added to within the last three years.
 2. Inactive Memorial Funds...all memorial funds which were established more than three years ago and have not been added to within the last 3 years will convert into the General Memorial Fund. All memorial funds will be reviewed annually and those which are inactive will be transferred by June 30 each year.
- b. **Expenditure**...an individual or group may propose an expenditure of memorial funds to the Congregation Council at any regular or special meeting where a quorum of members is present utilizing the following guidelines:
 1. Active Memorial Funds...if proposed expenditure is for a specific area of ministry or purpose designated by the individual or family, then no approval is required. The family will be notified when the proposed expenditure is approved. If the fund has no designated purpose or proposed specific area of ministry or the proposal is for a different expenditure than designated, approval will be obtained from the individual or

family in writing or by phone. The family or individual may request another fund be utilized.

2. Inactive Memorial Funds...there is no requirement for approval of any proposed expenditure from donating individual or family for funds which have been transferred to the General Memorial Fund.
- c. The proposed expenditure must be approved by a minimum of 75% of the duly elected or appointed Congregation Council members who have voted on this proposed expenditure. All correspondence will be handled by the memorial fund manager. A summary statement will be generated each year to be included in the annual report to the congregation.
- a. Future Memorial Funds...all individuals or families establishing new memorial funds will be encouraged to designate a specific area of ministry or purpose for the funds to be utilized.
 - b. Specific Areas of Ministries or Purposes for funds:
 1. Evangelism
 2. Stephens Ministry
 3. Furnishings
 4. Music and Worship
 5. General Expenses
 6. Youth Ministry
 7. Sunday School
 8. Equipment Purchases
 9. Property and Maintenance
 10. General Memorial Fund