

Note: Changes from our current Constitution are highlighted in green (content changes) or yellow (embellishments). Content changes generally (1) reflect our move from the ELCA to LCMC and/or (2) reflect our current operating practices. Highlights and this box will be removed in the “permanent version.”

Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church



Constitution and Bylaws

February 2010

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THE CONSTITUTION

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 Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church.
- C1.02.** For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church Congregation is hereinafter designated as "congregation".
- C1.03.** This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of North Carolina and operate in Union County according to the laws of that jurisdiction.

Chapter 2. CONFESSION OF FAITH

- C2.01.** We believe and teach the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- C2.02.** We believe and teach 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 in the person and work of Jesus Christ through whom God was pleased to reconcile all things to himself.
 - c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the 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.** We believe, teach, and accept the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the sole authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.
- C2.04.** We accept the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the scriptural faith we believe, teach, and confess.
- C2.05.** We believe, teach, and accept the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism as true witnesses to the Word of God, normative for our teaching and practice. We acknowledge that we are one in faith and doctrine with all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
- C2.06.** We believe, teach, and confess the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid expositions of the Holy Scriptures.
- C2.07.** We believe, teach, and confess 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 priesthood of all believers for God's mission in the world.

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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. 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.
- C3.03.** The Church is composed of a priesthood of all believers. Every Christian has gifts for ministry. Every Christian shares responsibility for interpreting the Word of God and assisting one another in interpreting the Word of God.
- C3.04.** This congregation has an obligation to God, to share his story with:
- a. the children, youth, and adults of our own congregation,
 - b. other congregations around us with which we participate in the Body of Christ, and
 - c. all non-believers in our community.

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.
 - 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 truly 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.

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- 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 the one Christian church.
- h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations of the one Christian church.

C4.04 This congregation's organizational structure is described within this Constitution. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each ministry team, task force, or other organizational groups and shall review their actions.

C4.05. This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

Chapter 5. POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

C5.01. The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.

C5.02. The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregation Meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.

C5.03. Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregation Council or other organizational units in this congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by the congregation. The congregation is authorized to:

- a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- c. appoint or terminate the appointment of associates in ministry;
- 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 and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution and bylaws; and
- i. determine church affiliation consistent with its statement of faith (see Chapters 2 & 3) and helpful in carrying out its purpose (see Chapter 4).

Chapter 6. CHURCH AFFILIATION

C6.01 This congregation recognizes that the local congregation (believers gathered around Word and Sacrament) is the primary form of the church and reserves the right to practice all congregational autonomy which does not conflict with the Word of God.

C6.02 This congregation also recognizes that local congregations are individual members of the larger body, the one, holy, catholic (universal) and apostolic church, and therefore has responsibility in working with other congregations as partners in the gospel.

C6.03 This congregation has the authority to enter into full partnership and membership in ministries, denominations, and associations of congregations that are consistent with its statement of faith (see Chapters 2 & 3) and helpful in carrying out its purpose (see Chapter 4).

- a. All such affiliations are voluntary, and this congregation reserves the right to dissolve such affiliations, as well.

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- b. Entrance into, as well as dissolution of, any such affiliations shall require a two-thirds majority vote of all voting members present and voting at a legal meeting of the congregation called for this purpose.

C6.04 This congregation is a member of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ, an association of Lutheran congregations who are free in Christ, accountable to one another, and rooted in the Scriptures, working together to fulfill Christ's Great Commission to go and make disciples of all nations.

Chapter 7. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

C7.01 Title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation regardless of church affiliation.

C7.02. If this congregation ceases to exist, property shall be disposed of as determined by a final congregational meeting.

C7.03. Should this congregation, by a two-thirds majority vote, choose to split into multiple Christian organizations, then ownership of the congregation's assets shall be determined as follows.

- a. If at least one faction is a Lutheran church body, then title to all land and other assets, both real and personal, shall remain with the largest Lutheran faction.
- b. If no faction is a Lutheran church body, then title to all land and other assets, both real and personal, shall remain with the largest non-Lutheran Christian faction.
- c. In either of these cases, the largest faction is defined as the group with the highest number of active members.

C7.04. Should this congregation, by a two-thirds majority vote, choose to become an organization which is not specifically and exclusively Christian in nature or join an organization which requires the congregation to abandon its evangelical faith as described in chapters 2 & 3 of this constitution, then title to all land and other assets, both real and personal, shall automatically remain with the largest minority faction wishing to remain an explicitly Christian organization.

C7.05. The records of the congregation shall be the property of the congregation and shall not be removed or used for commercial purposes. The records are:

- a. the roster of baptized, confirmed, associate, and voting members;
- b. the ministerial acts performed by the pastor;
- c. the minutes of the meetings of the congregation and the Congregation Council;
- d. the financial records of the congregation; all official and legal documents including this constitution and bylaws, deeds, mortgages, contracts, etc.

In the event of dissolution or cessation of ministry, the official records of the congregation shall be deposited in the archives of association(s) to which the congregation belongs.

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:

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- 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 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 congregations, or baptized adults received by affirmation of faith.
- c. Voting members are active confirmed members. **Active members are defined in the Bylaws.**
- 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 membership of any classification shall be presented to and shall require the approval of the Congregation Council. **The Council may choose to delegate this responsibility to the senior pastor.**

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

- a. **Participate fully in corporate worship and discipleship opportunities;**
- b. **Discover and utilize gifts in ministry;**
- c. Live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran church; and
- d. Support the work of this congregation, and the entire Christian church through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.

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

- a. death;
- b. resignation;
- c. transfer or release;
- d. disciplinary action by the Congregation Council; or
- e. removal from the 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(S)

C9.01. Authority to call a pastor shall reside in this congregation and be exercised by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting regularly called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by this congregation to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the association(s) to which it belongs.

C9.02. **The pastor(s) shall be ordained minister(s) and shall:**

- a. preach the Word **properly, distinguishing between Law and Gospel;**
- b. administer the sacraments;
- c. conduct public worship;

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- d. provide pastoral care;
- e. preside at confirmations, marriages, and funeral services;
- f. visit the sick and distressed;
- g. oversee all schools, if applicable, and organizations of this congregation;
- h. install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
- i. administer discipline together with the Congregation Council;
- j. seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the Gospel;
- k. strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;
- l. impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications;
- m. endeavor to increase the congregation's sense of partnership in the broader work of the Kingdom of God;
- n. and equip the priests for ministry, helping each to identify gifts for ministry both within and beyond the congregation, training and supporting every member in their ministries, and encouraging gifted and trained members to use their gifts in ministry, including each of the areas mentioned above.

C9.03 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. The letter of call shall be signed by the president and the secretary of the congregation.

C9.04 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 Congregation Council. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation. The congregation shall give final approval to the letter of call.

C9.05 The pastor(s) shall be a member of this congregation while under call.

C9.06 The pastor(s) shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, new members received, members departed or members excluded from the congregation, and First Holy Communions, and shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the congregation as requested.

C9.07 The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall normally constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment.

- a. Except in the case of death of the pastor, the call shall be terminated only following consultation with the associations to which the Congregation belongs and for the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the pastor;
 - 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, or incompetence 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.

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- b. Following acceptance of a letter of call to another ministry, resignation, or termination, the pastor's ministry in the congregation shall usually terminate within 45 days.
- c. If conflict(s) and/or performance issue(s) arise with the pastor, then the corrective process shall follow Matthew 18: 15-17, proceeding through these successive steps:
 - 1) private admonition by one or two Mutual Ministry Committee members,
 - 2) admonition by a combination of Spirit of Joy members and peers of the pastor from other churches
 - i. The Spirit of Joy participants shall be members from both the Mutual Ministry Committee and the Congregation Council and shall number three or four.
 - ii. Up to three peers of the pastor shall be from other churches, preferably local, and shall be of the pastor's choosing. Should the pastor choose none, then the Congregation Council may select them.
 - 3) special meeting of the Congregation to determine future needs and direction of Spirit of Joy's Congregation.
- d. If the conflict(s) and/or performance issue(s) are not resolved by C9.07.c, then the corrective process will escalate into a dismissal process, defined as follows. A majority vote by the Congregation Council shall determine whether this escalation is warranted or not.
 - 1) All licensed or ordained staff in pastoral ministry shall have the right to have up to a total of three (3) advocates drawn from pastoral colleagues from any congregation, preferably local, present as full, non-voting, members in the dismissal process prior to a final decision.
 - 2) No final decision to terminate shall be made sooner than 90 days from the dismissal process inception, as recorded in the Congregation Council minutes, unless agreed upon by all parties or unless there is evidence of severe moral failure.
 - 3) A two thirds vote of the Congregation shall be required to terminate the call of a pastor.

C9.08. The congregation may depart from C9.07 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 congregation shall review the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of C9.07.

C9.09. At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor may be sought by the Congregation Council.

C9.10. 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 Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor unless by prior mutual agreement between the pastor and Congregation Council.

C9.11. This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor.

C9.12. When the call of the senior pastor is terminated, for whatever reason, the congregation shall have the authority, but not the obligation, to ask for the resignation of additional member(s) of the staff.

- a. The Congregation Council shall make recommendation to the congregation.
- b. The Congregation shall have the final authority. Approval of Council's recommendation(s) require a two-thirds majority vote by the congregation.

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Chapter 10. CONGREGATION MEETING

- C10.01.** The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified by the Congregation Council and shall be within 13 months of the last Annual Meeting.
- C10.02.** A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the pastor, the majority of the Congregation Council Members, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of the congregation upon the written request of 10 percent of the voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.
- C10.03.** Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail or email or newsletter to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or paid, sent to the last known address of such members shall be sufficient.
- C10.04.** The voting members present shall constitute a quorum.
- C10.05.** Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- C10.06.** All actions by the congregation shall be by majority vote except as otherwise provided in this constitution.
- C10.07.** Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

Chapter 11. OFFICERS

- C11.01.** The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary.
- The officers shall strive to be disciples of Jesus Christ.
 - The officers shall be voting members of the congregation.
 - Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council.
- C11.02.** The Congregation Council shall select its officers and they shall be the officers of the congregation.
- The officers shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected.
 - The officers' terms shall begin as soon as they are elected and shall be no later than one month after the Annual Meeting.
 - At any point in the year, the Congregation Council may replace officer(s) by a two-thirds vote.
- C11.03.** No officer shall hold more than one office at a time.
- C11.04.** The Congregation President shall be a member of Council and elected by written ballot by the elected membership of the Congregation Council.
- The President shall not serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.
 - The President shall preside at meetings of the congregation and the Congregation Council and shall be responsible for agendas and proper reports submitted for such meetings.
 - The President is a voting member of the Congregation Council.
- C11.05.** The Congregation Vice President shall be a member of Council and elected by written ballot by the elected membership of the Congregation Council.
- The Vice President shall not serve more than two consecutive terms in the same

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office.

- b. The Vice President shall serve in the absence of the president or at his/her request.
- c. The Vice President shall be a voting member of the Congregation Council.

C11.06 The Congregation Secretary shall be a member of Council and elected by written ballot by the elected membership of the Congregation Council.

- a. The Secretary shall not serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.
- b. The Secretary shall record and distribute accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation and the Congregation Council. With the Congregation Council's approval, the Secretary may delegate this duty to an appropriate substitute.
- c. The Secretary shall send an electronic copy of all minutes to the administrative assistant at the church office for storing electronically and physically.
- d. The Secretary shall be responsible for all official correspondence of the corporation.
- e. The Secretary shall be a voting member of the Congregation Council.

C11.07 The Congregation Treasurer shall be elected by the Congregation Council. The Council may choose to elect the Treasurer from either the active congregation membership or from the Congregation Council elected membership.

- a. The Treasurer may serve up to four consecutive terms.
- b. The Treasurer shall keep the books of account of the congregation, receiving funds and disbursing them on proper orders.
- c. The Treasurer shall submit a monthly written report of financial activity to the Congregation Council.
- d. If an elected member of Council, the Treasurer shall be a voting member of Council; otherwise, the Treasurer is not a voting member of Council.

Chapter 12. CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the senior pastor, the officers, and other members voted to council by the congregation.

- a. The Nominating Committee shall nominate a slate of potential council members from the active membership of the congregation, and the congregation shall vote on said members at the Annual Meeting. Potential council members may also be nominated by the congregation from the floor of the Annual Meeting. Those elected shall be the members of the Congregation Council.
- b. Any voting member of the congregation, except a member of the paid support staff and his/her spouse, may be elected.
 - 1) Any group(s) who are to have a designated representative on Council shall be identified in the Bylaws.
- c. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member: 1) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation, or 2) is absent from three consecutive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause.

C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council, except the senior pastor, shall be elected by the Congregation, by the most votes on written ballot to serve for two years (i.e., one term), or until their successors are elected.

- a. Their terms shall begin at the close of the Annual Meeting at which they are elected.
- b. Terms of approximately half of the Council members shall expire in a given year.

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- c. The number of Congregation Council members shall be specified in the Bylaws.
- d. A Congregation Council member's maximum number of consecutive terms shall be specified in the Bylaws.

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. Individuals who have served less than one-half of a regular term shall be eligible for nomination and possible election to a full term.

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 Christian church. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:

- a. To love all people to Christ by becoming Jesus' followers and celebrating the life-changing adventure of following Jesus!
- 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.
- b. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
- c. To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling, appointment, or employment.
- d. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
- e. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill, and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
- f. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
- g. To emphasize partnership with other Christian churches.

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 be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of North Carolina, except as otherwise provided herein.
- b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.
- c. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to 2% of the Congregation's annualized budget for items not included in the budget.
- d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations of more than 15% in excess of the anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregation Meeting.
- 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 desired benefactors of this congregation.
- f. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and

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its total insurance program.

- C12.06.** The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws are carried out **in the Spirit of a disciple of Christ.**
- C12.07.** The Congregation Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.
- C12.08.** The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the appointment and supervision of the salaried lay workers **and for the supervision of the pastor(s) of this congregation. The Congregation Council may choose to delegate some or all of these responsibilities to the Mutual Ministry committee and/or to the pastor.**
- 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 **at least** once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president, and shall be called by the president at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.
- C12.12.** A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the **senior** pastor or interim pastor, except when the **senior** pastor or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting, which shall be the only business considered at that meeting.

Chapter 13. CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

- C13.01.** The officers of this congregation and the pastor shall constitute the *Executive Committee*.
- C13.02.** The *Nominating Committee* will be made up of four voting members of this congregation and two of whom, if possible, shall be outgoing Council Members at that time.
- a. **The purpose of this committee is to nominate candidates for Congregation Council, as specified in C12.01.a.**
 - b. **If an elected member of the Nominating Committee is not able to serve, the Congregation Council may appoint a replacement.**
- C13.03.** A *Finance/Treasury Committee* of three voting members shall be **nominated by the Treasurer and approved by the Congregation Council.** *Finance/Treasury Committee* members shall not be members of the Congregation Council.
- a. Term of office shall be two years, with one new member selected each year.
 - b. Members shall be eligible for reappointment.
 - c. **The purpose of this committee is to assist the Congregation Council in carrying out its duties listed in C12.05.**
- C13.04.** A *Mutual Ministry Committee* (in the absence of this committee, the duties shall be fulfilled by the Executive Committee) shall be **nominated** jointly by the president and the pastor, **and shall be approved by the Congregation Council.** The desired number of Mutual Ministry committee members is six.
- a. Term of office shall be two years, with three members to be appointed each successive year.
 - b. **A Mutual Ministry Committee member shall serve no more than two consecutive terms.**
 - ~~c. **Committee members will hold no other office in the congregation during their term.**~~
 - d. **The purposes of this committee are: to provide encouragement for pastor(s) and staff, to provide a forum for confidential discussions with the pastor(s) and staff, to assist**

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the Congregation Council with duties, and to provide regular updates to the Congregation Council, as outlined in C9.07.c and C12.08.

- C13.05.** When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a *Call Committee* of six voting members shall be elected by this congregation **by the most votes on written ballot**. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor.
- C13.06.** Other committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council. **Congregation Council shall inform Congregation members through routine communication channels of the formation and operations of "other committees."**

Chapter 14. ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

- C14.01.** All organizations within this congregation shall exist to aid it in ministering to the members of this congregation and to all persons who can be reached with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of this congregation's life, the organizations are subject to its oversight and direction. This congregation at its meeting shall determine their policies, guide their activities, and receive reports concerning their membership, work, and finances.
- C14.02.** Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council.

Chapter 15. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

- C15.01.** Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Body of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member (congregational or staff). Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps: a) private admonition by the pastor(s), b) admonition by the pastor(s) in the presence of two or three witnesses, and c) citation to appear before the Congregation Council.
- C15.02.** A member charged with an offense shall appear before the Congregation Council having received a written notice, specifying the exact charges that have been made against the member, at least 10 days prior to the meeting. **Should the member disregard the notice and make no effort to comply, the Congregation Council shall proceed with the hearing and reach its conclusion in the absence of the member.**
- C15.03.** Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Congregation Council, and renewed admonitions prove ineffectual, then the council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:
- a. censure before the council or congregation;
 - b. suspension from membership for a **defined** period of time; or
 - c. exclusion from membership in this congregation. Notice of disciplinary actions b. and c. shall be delivered to the member in writing.
- C15.04.** A member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Congregation Council shall have the right to appeal the decision to the congregation. Such right may not be abridged and the decision of the congregation shall be final.
- C15.05.** Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Congregation Council upon receipt of a) evidence that injustice has been done or b) evidence of repentance and amendment.

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Chapter 16. BYLAWS

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

Chapter 17. AMENDMENTS

- C17.01.** Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least five voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at its regular or special meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the members of the proposal with their recommendation at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.
- C17.02.** A proposed amendment to this constitution shall:
- a. be approved at a properly called meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;
 - b. be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting; and
 - c. have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.

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THE BYLAWS

- Section 1 Annual Reports
Reports shall be submitted in writing prior to the Annual Meeting by the officers, pastor and committee chairpersons.
- Section 2 Council Membership
The number of members on the Congregation Council shall be 10, plus the senior pastor.
- Section 3 Council Membership
One member of the Congregation Council shall be a Youth of Senior High School age. S/he will serve a term of one year.
- Section 4 Term of Office
Congregation Council members may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms.
- Section 5 Active Members
An Active Member shall have, within the previous year, communed at Spirit of Joy (or through one of its representatives) and made a contribution of time, talent, and treasure to Spirit of Joy.
- Section 6 Inactive Members
An Inactive Member shall not have performed the requirements of an Active Member.
- Section 7 Facility Usage
Any requests to use the Spirit of Joy facilities on an ongoing basis for non-Spirit of Joy activities must be approved by the Council. Ongoing basis is defined as activities expected to occur more than once.