

**The Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of
ST. LUKE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Albuquerque, New Mexico**

***PREAMBLE**

We, baptized members of the Church of Christ, responding in faith to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, desiring to unite together to preach the Word, administer the sacraments, and carry out God's mission, do hereby adopt this constitution and solemnly pledge ourselves to be governed by its provisions. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Chapter 1.
NAME AND INCORPORATION**

C1.01. The name of this congregation shall be St. Luke Evangelical Lutheran Church.

C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the congregation of St. Luke Evangelical Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."

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

**Chapter 2.
CONFESSION OF FAITH**

*C2.01. This congregation confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

*C2.02. This congregation confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.

- a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.
- b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

*C2.03. This congregation accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.

*C2.04. This congregation accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this congregation.

*C2.05. This congregation accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

*C2.06. This congregation accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.

*C2.07. This congregation confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scripture and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

**Chapter 3.
NATURE OF THE CHURCH**

*C3.01. All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.

*C3.02. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

Chapter 4. **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

*C4.01. The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.

*C4.02. To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:

- a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
- b. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
- c. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
- d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs.
- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
- f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

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

- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
- b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
- c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.
- d. Teach the Word of God.
- e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
- f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
- g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for the congregation's ministry and the ministry of other parts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.

*C4.04. This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions. Such descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions in the section on the Congregation Committees.

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

C4.05.A91. Mission Statement – We are a congregation 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 We participate in God’s mission by:

- + Worshipping God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments.
- + Proclaiming God’s saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ’s sake.
- + Carrying out Christ’s Great Commission.
- + Serving others in response to God’s love.
- + Nurturing our members in the Word of God.
- + Manifesting the unity given to the people of God.

Chapter 5. POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

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

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

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

- a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- c. call or terminate the call of associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers in conformity with the applicable policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
- d. adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in Chapter 17, and amendments to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 16;
- e. approve the annual budget;
- f. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
- g. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
- h. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
- i. elect its officers and Congregation Council and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions; and
- j. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.

*C5.04. This congregation shall choose from among its voting members laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by the congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the Rocky Mountain Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Chapter 6.
CHURCH AFFILIATION

*C6.01. This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the Rocky Mountain Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

*C6.02. This congregation accepts the Confession of Faith and agrees to the Purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and shall act in accordance with them.

*C6.03. This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which:

- a. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
- b. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the bishop of the synod.
- d. This congregation agrees to consider associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers for call to other staff positions in the congregation according to the procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- e. This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution with the synod for review to ascertain that all of its provisions are in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and with the constitution of the synod.

*C6.04. Affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be terminated as follows:

- a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.
- b. This congregation ceases to exist.
- c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- d. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in *C6.05.

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

- a. A resolution indicating the desire of this congregation to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present.
- b. The secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the synodical bishop and shall mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of this congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted.
- c. The bishop of the synod shall consult with this congregation during a period of at least 90 days.
- d. If this congregation, after consultation, still desires to terminate its relationship, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present, at which meeting the bishop of the synod or an authorized representative shall be present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.
- e. A certified copy of the resolution to terminate its relationship shall be sent to the synodical bishop, at which time the relationship between this congregation and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be terminated.
- f. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the synodical bishop to the secretary of this church and published in the periodical of this church.
- 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 is considering relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate program 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.

*C6.07. If this congregation considers developing an additional site to be used regularly for worship, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate program unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such actions.

Chapter 7. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

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

*C7.02. If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

*C7.03. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to transfer to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation. Before this congregation takes action to transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Rocky Mountain 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.

C8.01.01. Membership lists and membership directories of this congregation shall not be used for any commercial activity.

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

- a. **Baptized** members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.
- b. **Confirmed** members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.
- c. **Voting** members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. 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.
- d. **Associate** members are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation, or persons who wish to retain a relationship with this congregation while being members of other congregations. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Congregation Council of this congregation.

*C8.03. All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Congregation Council.

- *C8.04. It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregation to:
- a. make regular use of the means of grace, both Word and sacraments;
 - b. live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran church; and
 - c. support the work of this congregation, synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.

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

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

C8.05.01. Discontinuance of Membership:

- a. Members who move away shall be encouraged to transfer congregational membership. Any confirmed member in good standing desiring to change membership to another Lutheran Church shall, upon request, be entitled to a letter of transfer.
- b. Any confirmed member who, in the judgement of the Congregation Council, shows no interest in attending church services, or fails to partake of Holy Communion and fails to contribute to the congregational treasury, according to the congregation's records, for a period of two years, shall be presumed no longer to desire membership and shall not be counted in the membership statistics of the congregation. Such persons shall be so notified and encouraged to become active in the congregation again and that, if they choose not to become active again, their names must remain off the membership list. Their name and record shall be kept on file for a period of five years thereafter. Such persons shall be encouraged to participate in the congregational life, or to transfer elsewhere, as the situation may indicate to be advisable. If they resume activity within the five-year period, they shall be restored to the active membership list; if not they shall be dismissed from the congregation and notified accordingly, where possible.
- c. Children, neither of whose parents or guardians are active members of this congregation, after having been invited to attend class for that age group, shall be placed on the inactive baptized membership roll if they fail to participate in the Christian education of the congregation.
- d. Members who have been suspended, dismissed, resigned, or who have transferred to other congregations, or who are definitely known to have become members of other congregations without transfer, shall thereby have lost membership in this congregation and all rights pertaining thereto.
- e. No member shall be removed from the roll or have membership status diminished if a failure to meet minimum expectations of membership is the result of illness, disability, or temporary absence from the area.
- f. A person removed from the roll due to inactivity may have membership status restored by meeting the minimum expectations of membership, residing in the area, and indicating to the pastor(s) and Congregation Council a desire to have membership status restored.

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 for the roster of ordained ministers who has been recommended for the congregation by the synodical bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.

*C9.03. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

- a. Every ordained minister shall:
 - 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;
 - 3) conduct public worship;
 - 4) provide pastoral care; and

- 5) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
- b. Each ordained minister with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
 - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) supervise all schools and organizations of this congregation;
 - 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council; and
 - 4) with the council, administer discipline.
 - c. Every pastor shall:
 - 1) strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;
 - 2) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 - 3) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications; and
 - 4) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and of the Rocky Mountain 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, except in the case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated only following consultation with the synodical bishop and for the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor;
 - 4) the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
 - 5) disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty;
 - 6) the dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 7) suspension of the congregation as a result of discipline proceedings.
- b. When allegations of physical or mental incapacity of the pastor or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office have come to the attention of the bishop of the synod, the bishop in his or her sole discretion may, or when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop shall, investigate such conditions personally in company with a committee of two ordained ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged physical or mental incapacity, competent medical testimony shall be obtained. When such disability is evident, the bishop of the synod with the advice of the committee shall declare the pastorate vacant. Upon the restoration of a disabled pastor to health, the bishop of the synod shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another field of labor.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation, all concerned persons shall be heard, after which the bishop of the synod together with the committee described in *C9.05.b. shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor and the congregation. If they agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action shall be taken by the synod. If either party fails to assent, the congregation may dismiss the pastor at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a simple majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

- e. If, in the course of proceedings described in *C9.05.d., the committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action to the synodical bishop, who may bring charges in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the constitution of this synod.
- f. If, following the appointment of the committee described in *C9.05.b. or d., it should become apparent that the pastoral office cannot be conducted effectively in the congregation(s) being served by the ordained minister due to local conditions, the bishop of the synod may temporarily suspend the pastor from service in the congregation(s) without prejudice and with pay provided through a joint synodical and churchwide fund and with housing provided by the congregation(s).

*C9.06. At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.

*C9.07. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.

*C9.08. This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting related to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

*C9.09. When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

*C9.11. 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 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 a 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 which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract

between the congregation and the ordained minister in a form proposed by the synodical bishop and approved by the congregation.

Chapter 10. CONGREGATION MEETING

C10.01. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held on the third Sunday in January at St. Luke Evangelical Lutheran Church or at such other date and place as specified by the Congregation Council.

C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the pastor, the Congregation Council, the president of this congregation, or 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.

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 to all members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or paid, sent to the last known address of such members shall be sufficient.

C10.04. Ten percent (10%) of the voting members shall constitute a quorum.

C10.05. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted. Voting by absentee ballot shall be permitted only for the election of the Congregation Council.

C10.06. 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 state law.

C10.07. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

Chapter 11. OFFICERS

C11.01. The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and financial secretary.

- a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
- b. The officers shall be voting members of the congregation.
- c. The president and vice president shall be selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council.
- d. Other officers may be selected from the voting members of the congregation and shall become voting members of the Congregation Council.

C11.01.01. The duties of the officers of this congregation are:

- a. The President shall preside at meetings of the congregation and of the Congregation Council.
- b. The Vice-President shall preside in the absence of the President and shall perform such other duties as assigned by the President and the Congregation Council.
- c. The Secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings of this congregation and the Congregation Council. These minutes shall be preserved permanently in the archives of this congregation.
- d. The Treasurer shall be responsible for oversight of the financial records of this congregation and to provide direction to the bookkeeper regarding all financial matters of the congregation including disbursement of funds against approved purchase orders and to remitting monthly benevolence payments to the treasurer of the Rocky Mountain Synod and as otherwise designated by Council or other contributors. The Treasurer may also be assigned the duties of assistant financial secretary. The Treasurer shall make a monthly written report to the

Congregation Council and an annual report to the congregation as well as be subject to a satisfactory annual financial review.

- e. The Financial Secretary shall direct the bookkeeper in keeping the records of all contributions. The Financial Secretary may also be assigned the duties and responsibilities of assistant treasurer. The Financial Secretary shall make a monthly written report to the congregation Council and an annual report to the congregation as well as be subject to a satisfactory annual financial review.

C11.02. The Congregation Council shall elect its President and Vice President from amongst its currently elected members and they shall be the President and Vice President of the congregation. The officers shall be elected by written ballot and shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected.

C11.03. No officer 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.

C11.04. All persons involved in handling monies of this congregation, including all financial officers, shall give corporate surety in amounts determined by the Congregation Council for which the premium shall be paid by this congregation of the ELCA.

Chapter 12. CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s), the officers of the congregation, and seven (7) members of the congregation. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause. Consistent with the laws of the state in which the congregation is incorporated, the congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.

C12.02. Adult members of the Congregation Council to be elected at the annual meeting shall be elected by written ballot to serve for three (3) years or until their successors are elected. The tenure of such adult members shall be so arranged that one-third (1/3) of the terms expire annually. All elected members shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively. Their terms shall begin at the next Congregation Council meeting following the annual meeting at which they are elected. Newly elected Congregation Council members, along with continuing Congregation Council members, shall be installed at a worship service no more than two months after the annual meeting.

C12.03. Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor to serve until the next annual meeting.

C12.04. The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:

- a. To lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
- b. To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
- c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
- d. To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.
- e. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
- f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill, and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.

- g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of 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.
- k. To perform other duties as specified by continuing resolution.

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 New Mexico, 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 shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and shall not incur obligations of more than two percent (2%) of the approved annual budget, except after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in partnership with the Rocky Mountain Synod and churchwide organization.
- d. 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.
- e. 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 the salaried lay workers of this congregation.

C12.09. The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.

C12.11. The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor(s) or the president, and shall be called by the president at the request of a majority of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present. All regularly scheduled meetings are open to all members of this congregation; however, the Council retains the prerogative to meet in executive session in the absence of visitors when necessary.

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(s), except when such person requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to an agenda of routine matters which shall be the only business of the meeting.

Chapter 13. CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

C13.01. The officers of this congregation, the pastor (s), and one (1) other member of the Congregation Council selected by the Congregation Council shall constitute the Executive Committee.

C13.01.A91. Executive Committee – This committee shall carry out tasks as assigned by the Congregation Council. It is responsible to the Congregation Council and can make decisions on behalf of the Council when so directed.

C13.02. A Nominating Committee shall be comprised of voting members of this congregation as follows:

- a. One representative from each of the standing committees;
- b. One representative from the Women of the ELCA;
- c. Two (2) outgoing representatives of the Congregation Council, if possible; and
- d. One youth appointed by the Faith Growth Committee, in addition to the representative from the Faith Growth Committee.

Nominating Committee members may or may not be designated members of the organizations they represent, so long as the organization has obtained the consent of its chosen representative.

C13.02.A91. Nominating Committee – This committee shall prepare a slate of consenting Congregation Council nominees equaling twice the number of council positions to be filled. The complete slate of nominees with biographical information shall be obtained at least one month preceding the annual congregation meeting at which the election will be held.

C13.04. A Mutual Ministry Committee shall be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor(s). Period of service shall be two years, with three members to be appointed each successive year.

C13.05. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of six voting members shall be appointed by the Congregation Council. 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.

C13.06A10. This congregation shall have the following committees:

- a. Grace-in-Action
- b. Faith Growth
- c. Finance
- d. Personnel
- e. Property
- f. Social Ministry
- g. Stewardship
- h. Preschool and Kindergarten
- i. Worship, Music and the Arts
- j. Youth
- k. Wellness Ministry

Responsibilities of the standing committees shall include:

- a. All standing committees shall meet during the first two weeks of the month, with meeting times reported to the church office secretary. This will insure that there are no scheduling conflicts and will allow the pastor(s) to attend meetings of interest.
- b. All standing committees shall submit written minutes of their meeting to the church office no later than the second Friday of the month for the inclusion in the Council meeting packet.

- c. The number of members on a committee shall be determined by each committee. Committee members shall be selected for renewable two year terms. The terms shall be staggered so that half of them expire each year.
- d. The chairperson of the committee shall be elected annually by the committee membership, subject to confirmation by the Congregation Council.
- e. The duties of the standing committees shall include the following.
 - 1. The **Faith Growth Committee**, in association with the pastor(s), shall:
 - a) Oversee the conduct and promotion of faith growth opportunities and educational activities within this congregation; and
 - b) Evaluate and select materials for use in those educational activities that are both appropriate to the age and maturity of the learners and also consistent with the teachings of the Lutheran church. The committee will seek, whenever possible, to select materials that are published or approved by the ELCA; and
 - c) Encourage all members of this congregation to be lifelong learners. They will be instructed to pursue an exploration of the faith and the teachings of the Lutheran Church (ELCA) before, during, and after their affirmation of baptism commonly called “confirmation.” The committee will promote learning opportunities that appeal to members at all stages of faith maturity and will seek to create learning opportunities that promote intergenerational learning experiences.
 - d) During the fiscal year, at appropriate points as determined by the Congregation Council, the committee shall
 - i. Prepare a budget request for the upcoming fiscal year,
 - ii. Monitor and administer the funds approved by the congregation for use by the committee,
 - iii. Prepare a report of the committee’s activities for inclusion in the Annual Report to the Congregation, and
 - iv. Seek opportunities to integrate the activities of this committee into the activities of other committees and agencies of the congregation.
 - 2. The **Grace-in-Action Committee** (formerly Evangelism Committee), through Inreach and Outreach programs, shall:
 - a) Devote itself to increasing and deepening the spiritual life of this congregation within the context of the Lutheran confessions and faith; and
 - b) Work to lead all members of the congregation to grow in their faith relationship with God, centered in the Good News of Jesus Christ, by encouraging greater participation in the life of the church; and
 - c) Strive to encourage and empower each member of the congregation to reach out positively and to minister to others in the name and in the stead of Jesus Christ; and
 - d) Study, lead, and enable the outreach efforts of this congregation within the context of its neighborhood, community and city, by encouraging all committees and ministry groups to make outreach an element of their programming.
 - 3. The **Finance Committee**, for which the treasurer shall be a member ex officio, shall:
 - a) Prepare a draft budget for the succeeding year, including this congregation’s full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in its behalf by the ELCA and the Rocky Mountain Synod, and shall submit such draft budget to the Congregation Council for its action and later presentation to a congregational meeting;

- b) Receive and deposit all income, exercise oversight of all financial affairs of this congregation to insure they are being conducted efficiently giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to regularly forward benevolence monies to the synod treasurer or as otherwise designated by the Council, the congregation, or an individual contributor;
 - c) Be responsible, subject to the approval of the Congregation Council, for this congregation's investments;
 - d) Provide for annual financial reviews of the accounts of the treasurer and financial secretary; preschool and kindergarten, and provide an annual report to the Congregation; and
 - e) Be responsible for the total insurance program of this congregation, seeing to it that this congregation is adequately insured.
4. The **Personnel Committee** members shall be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor(s) and shall:
- a) Look after personnel matters concerning full-and part-time staff; and
 - b) Provide staff job descriptions, performance reviews of staff members, and salary/benefits recommendations for Council consideration.
5. The **Property Committee** shall:
- a) See to the proper maintenance and protection of all property of this congregation; and
 - b) Shall take care that the same is kept in good repair;
 - c) Support the Office Staff in the day to day usage and operation of the Church facilities and property; and
 - d) Provide the Council with an annual report on the state of the facilities and property, including a forecast of any future capital expenses for the facilities and property.
6. The **Social Ministry Committee** shall:
- a) Work toward the purpose of extending Christian compassion and helpfulness to those in need, both locally and in the broader community. Included within the scope of our outreach will be the aged, the homeless, the underprivileged, the ill, the prisoner, and the orphan, or anyone of any age in need of aid in body or soul;
 - b) Strive to enlist in these efforts as many as possible of the individual members and organizations of this congregation; and
 - c) Have the duty to study social conditions, primarily in the local community, in order to bring the cleansing and healing light of Christian truth to bear upon critical problems through thoughtful Christian discussion of facts and issues.
7. The **Stewardship Committee** shall:
- a) Function to evoke and promote the expression of Christian faith in daily living;
 - b) Teach the Christian use of money;
 - c) Diffuse knowledge of the congregation's local, national, and worldwide ministries; and
 - d) Lead all its members to higher levels of proportionate giving for the Lord's work.

8. The **Preschool and Kindergarten Committee**, in striving to provide an outreach ministry of this congregation to the young children within our community, shall:
 - a) Oversee the operation of the Preschool and Kindergarten in accordance with the approved bylaws;
 - b) Oversee the operation of the Preschool and Kindergarten as guided by the criteria of a national early childhood accrediting organization and in accordance with all applicable regulations of city, state, and federal governments;
 - c) Foster a partnership between families and the church to provide a safe and secure Christian environment that enables and encourages children to learn through developmentally appropriate play and instruction;
 - d) Provide an environment that meets the young child's developmental and individual needs; and
 - e) Provide a program infused with Christian principles, morals, and examples.
9. The **Worship, Music, and the Arts Committee**, with the Director of Music as the staff representative to this committee, shall:
 - a) Help the congregation to carry out its purpose to worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments;
 - b) Plan services of worship that are consistent with the Lutheran liturgical traditions and are supported by excellent artistic expression and traditional and contemporary music;
 - c) Regularly evaluate the congregation's worship life and shall support this worship life by arranging for the recruiting, training, and scheduling of worship assistants, acolytes, ushers, sound technicians and sacristy teams;
 - d) Encourage participation in the choirs and other musical groups; and
 - e) Arrange for print materials, supplies, and equipment needed for use in the worship services of this congregation
10. The **Youth Committee** shall:
 - a) Actively engage the youth (pre-school through high school) of the congregation in service to the Lord;
 - b) Provide a relaxing, Christian environment for socializing, learning, serving and playing;
 - c) Create activities that introduce youth to the cultures and environment of the Greater Albuquerque, New Mexico and the Southwest regions in order to deepen their understanding and sense of responsibility to the people and place where they live;
 - d) Lead the youth in age-appropriate Bible study;
 - e) Offer the opportunity (middle and high school age) to meet with other Lutheran youth at ELCA sponsored youth conferences in order to engage in discussions and to participate in regional or national initiatives for service as a Lutheran; and
 - f) Realizing that not all youth can afford certain activities, for example those activities which involve significant travel, the Youth Committee shall oversee and disburse funds, either from fund-raising activities or from their budget, as appropriate to those youth in financial need who nonetheless still wish to participate.

11. The **Wellness Ministry Committee** shall:

- a) Advocate for wellness of mind, body and spirit for our church and neighborhood;
- b) Provide non-invasive health services and health education for our church community; and
- c) Act as a referral coordinator and assist in accessing health care services.

C13.08. The pastors of this congregation shall be permitted ex officio membership on all committees and boards of the congregation. The president of this congregation shall also be permitted ex officio membership on all committees and boards of the congregation, except the Nominating Committee.

**Chapter 14.
ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION**

C14.01. All organizations within this congregation shall exist to aid it in ministering to the members of this congregation and to all persons who can be reached with the Gospel of Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of this congregation's life, the organizations are subject to oversight and direction by the Congregation Council. All organizations shall report to this congregation at its annual meeting, and to the Congregation Council upon request by the Council.

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. Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps: a) private admonition by the pastor, b) admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, and c) citation to appear before the Congregation Council. If for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by a. and b. hereof, the president (if not the pastor) or vice president shall administer such admonitions.

*C15.02. The process for discipline of a member of the congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. 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 Congregation Council of the need to issue a written citation to the accused and the accusers that specifies the time and place of the hearing before the Congregation Council. The written charges shall accompany the written citation to the accused. The written citation that specifies the time and place of the hearing before the Congregation Council and requests the presence of a member charged with the offense shall be sent at least ten days prior to the meeting. If the member charged with the offense fails to appear at the scheduled hearing, the Congregation Council may proceed with the hearing and may pass judgment in the member's absence.

*C15.03. Members of the Congregation Council who participate in the preparation of the written charges or who present evidence or testimony in the hearing before the Congregation Council are disqualified from voting upon the question of the guilt of the accused member. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Congregation Council who are not disqualified but who are present and voting, and renewed admonition prove ineffectual, the council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:

- a. censure before the council or congregation;
- b. suspension from membership for a definite period of time; or
- c. exclusion from membership in this congregation.

Disciplinary actions b. and c. shall be delivered to the member in writing.

*C15.04. The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Congregation Council shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Synod Council. Such right may not be abridged and the decision of the Synod Council shall be final.

*C15.05. Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Congregation Council upon receipt of a) evidence that injustice has been done or b) evidence of repentance and amendment.

*C15.06. For disciplinary actions in this congregation, “due process” shall be observed as specified in 20.41.04. in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

*C15.07. No member of a congregation shall be subject to discipline for offenses that the Congregation Council has previously heard and decided, unless so ordered by the Synod Council after an appeal.

*C15.10. Adjudication

*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, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose and that the Congregation Council notify the congregation’s members by mail of the proposal with the council’s recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting.

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

Chapter 17. AMENDMENTS

*C17.01. 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 ten percent (10%) of the voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the congregation’s members by mail of the proposal together with the council’s recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.

*C17.02. An amendment to this constitution, proposed under C17.01., shall:

- a. be approved at a legally called Congregation 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.

[#Note: Such an effective date must be stated in relation to the requirements of *C17.03. to allow time for synodical review of the amendment.]

*C17.03. Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in *C17.01. and *C17.02. shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The amendment shall become effective within 120 days from the date of the receipt of the notice by the synod unless the synod informs this congregation that the amendment is in conflict with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or the constitution of the Rocky Mountain Synod of the ELCA.

*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—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 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 10% of the voting members of the congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice. 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. 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.

ADOPTED THIS 1ST DAY OF FEBRUARY 2004 BY THE PEOPLE OF ST. LUKE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, FOUNDED APRIL 11, 1954, AND INCOPORATED JUNE 1, 1954.

THIS CONSTITUTION WAS REVISED:

SYNOD APPROVAL:

Dated: _____

Adopted June 1, 1954
Ratification of amendments by congregation
Approval of amendments by synod
Ratification of amendments by congregation1992
Approval of amendments by synod
Ratification of amendments by congregationFeb. 4, 2001
Approval of amendments by synodFeb. 4, 2001
Ratification of amendments by congregationFeb. 1, 2004
Approval of amendments by synod (no synod approval on file)
Ratification of amendments by congregation Dec. 13, 2009
Approval of amendments by synod Jan. 21, 2010