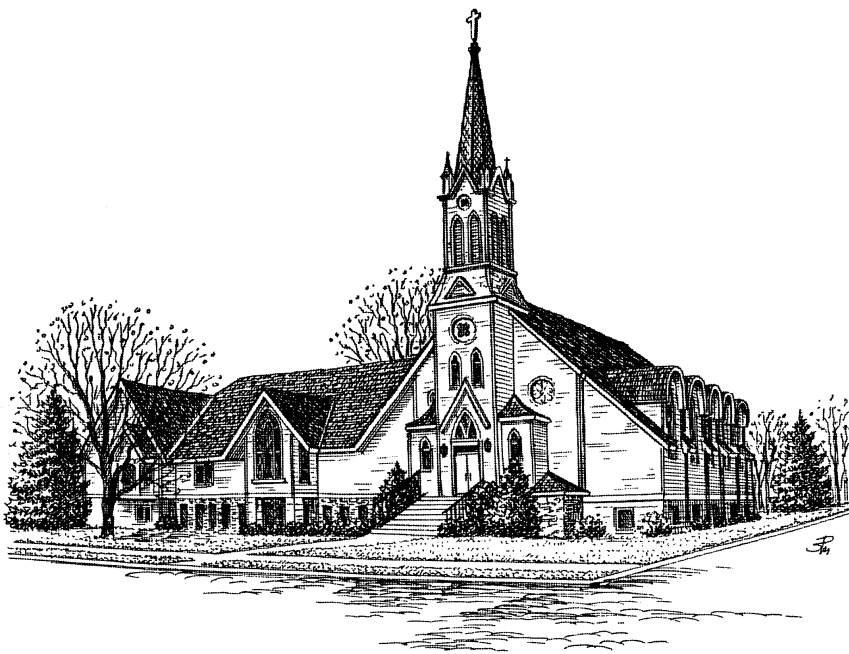


THE CONSTITUTION OF ST. JAMES EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

*As approved by the Congregation on August 25, 2013
Tenth Revision*



ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH
VERONA, WISCONSIN

CONSTITUTION

SAINT JAMES EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE SOUTH-CENTRAL SYNOD OF WISCONSIN OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICAⁱ

Verona, Wisconsin

***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 Saint James Evangelical Lutheran Church.
- C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the congregation of Saint James Evangelical Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."
- C1.11. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Wisconsin.

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 Confessions, the Smalcald Articles, and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.
- *C2.07. This congregation confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

Chapter 3.

NATURE OF THE CHURCH

- *C3.01. All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.
- *C3.02. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.
- *C3.03. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or "this church") as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.

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 aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, 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 Congregational Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, 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.
- *C4.06. References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God's mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

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 Congregational Council or other organizational units in the congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by the congregation. The congregation is authorized to:
- a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
 - b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
 - c. call or terminate the call of associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal 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, amendments to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 16, and continuing resolutions, as provided in Chapter 18.
 - 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 Congregational 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.

C5.03.01

The election of the officers of the Congregational Council shall occur as described in C12.01

*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 South-Central Synod of Wisconsin 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 South-Central Synod of Wisconsin 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. These special circumstances are limited either to calling a candidate approved for the roster of ordained ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or to contracting for pastoral services with an ordained minister of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion.
- 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 in *C6.05.

*C6.05. This congregation may terminate its relationship with this church by the following procedure:

- a. A resolution indicating the intent to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of the congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present. Such meeting may be held no sooner than 30 days after written notice of the meeting is received by the bishop of the synod, during which time the congregation shall consult with the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any. The times and manner of the consultation shall be determined by the bishop in consultation with the Congregational Council. Unless he or she is a voting member of the congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the meeting.
- b. The secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of the congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted.
- c. The bishop of the synod and the congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph a. above, during a period of at least 90 days after receipt by the synod of the notice as specified in paragraph b. above.
- d. If the congregation, after such consultation, still seeks to terminate its relationship, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members and to the bishop at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Unless he or she is a voting member of the congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the meeting.
- e. A copy of the resolution, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, shall be sent to the bishop within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted, at which time the relationship between the congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to paragraphs g., h., and i. below. Unless this notification to the bishop also certifies that the congregation has voted by a two-thirds vote to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, the congregation will be conclusively presumed to be an independent or non-Lutheran church.
- f. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the bishop to the Secretary of this church, who shall report the termination to the Churchwide Assembly.
- g. Congregations seeking to terminate their relationship with this church which fail or refuse to comply with each of the foregoing provisions in *C6.05. shall be required to receive synod council approval before terminating their membership in this church.ⁱⁱ
- h. Congregations which had been members of the Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to receive synodical approval before terminating their membership in this church.
- i. Congregations established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to satisfy all financial obligations to this church and receive synod council approval before terminating their membership in this church.
- j. If this congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members

present at the congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above, another special meeting to consider termination of relationship with this church may be called no sooner than six months after that first meeting. If this congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at the congregation's second meeting as specified in paragraph d. above, another attempt to consider termination of relationship with this church must follow all requirements of *C6.05. and may begin no sooner than six months after that second meeting.

- *C6.06. If this congregation considers relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate 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 action.

Chapter 7.

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

- *C7.01. If this congregation ceases to exist, title to un-disposed property shall pass to the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin 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 procedures 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, provided the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05. has been followed. Before this congregation takes action to transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin.
- *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 and have followed the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05., title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with this congregation by the established synodical process, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of this congregation. If the Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to continue as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Chapter 8.

MEMBERSHIP

- *C8.01. Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of this congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.
- *C8.02. Members shall be classified as follows:

- a. **Baptized** members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.
- b. **Confirmed** members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed member 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 Congregational Council of this congregation.

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

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

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

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

- a. death;
- b. resignation;
- c. transfer or release;
- d. Disciplinary action by the Congregational Councilⁱⁱⁱ; 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. Removal from the church rolls due to inactivity:

- a. Members who neither commune nor make a contribution of record within a two-year period of time shall be deemed inactive.
- b. Prior to their removal from the church rolls, such persons shall be notified of this intent by the church office with every consideration given for their continuation in the membership if they desire to assume a more active role. If pastoral counsel is desired, it shall be given.
- c. If it is deemed that such persons no longer wish to remain on the active rolls of the congregation, their membership shall be terminated and the parties duly informed.

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 this congregation 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 this 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 Congregational 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 this congregation to the work of the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin 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 this 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 at least one of 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; ^{iv}
 - 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 Congregational 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 lay person.

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 described in *C9.05.b. 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 this 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, this 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 this 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 this congregation without prejudice and with pay provided through a joint synodical and churchwide fund and with housing provided by this 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 Congregational Council.

*C9.07. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in this 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 Congregational Council. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.

*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 Congregational 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 of years. 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(s) 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 this 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.
- C9.21. 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.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

- C10.01. The meetings of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.
- C10.01.01. The meetings of this congregation shall occur twice a year.
- C10.02. A special Congregational Meeting may be called by the pastor, the Congregational Council, or the President of this congregation. A special Congregational Meeting shall be called at the written request of five (5) 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 in electronic form to those members who choose such an option, to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice in regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or

paid, sent to the last known address of such members shall be sufficient, or notification by electronic mail for those members who choose such an option.

- C10.04. A minimum of twenty-five (25) voting members shall constitute a quorum.
- C10.05. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- 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

Chapter 11 was deleted 6/23/2012 by a vote of the Congregational Council due to redundancy in other parts of the document.

Chapter 12. CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

- C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregational Council shall consist of the pastors, the elected officers of this congregation, who are also the elected officers of the Congregational Council and elected by the Congregational Council (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer) and five voting members at large. All elected positions are two-year positions. Members and officers may serve no more than three consecutive terms.
- C12.01.01. All voting members of the congregation are eligible to serve on the Congregational Council.
- C12.01.02. The following are the duties of the Congregational Council officers:
 - a. **President:** The President shall preside at all Congregational meetings and at all meetings of the Congregational Council and have such other responsibilities as set forth in the constitution and bylaws.
 - b. **Vice President:** The Vice President shall assume the duties of the President when the President is absent, and have such other responsibilities as set forth in the constitution and bylaws.
 - c. **Secretary:** The Secretary or designees shall record and keep the minutes of all congregational meetings and Congregational Council meetings and have such other responsibilities as set forth in the constitution and bylaws.
 - d. **Treasurer:** The Treasurer or designees shall keep the books of account of the congregation, shall receive all funds and disperse them and have such other responsibilities as set forth in the constitution and bylaws.
- C12.02. The members of the Congregational Council, except the pastors, shall be elected at a congregational meeting. No nominations from the floor will be accepted at such a meeting.
- C12.03. Should a member's place on the Congregational Council be declared vacant, the Congregational Council (following consultation with the Nominating Committee) shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next congregational meeting. The Congregational Council may, by majority vote, declare a member's place on the Congregational Council vacant under the following circumstances:
 - a. The member ceases to be a voting member of this congregation,
 - b. The member resigns,
 - c. The member dies,
 - d. The failure of a Congregational Council member to maintain regular attendance in

- accordance with Congregational Council policy;
- e. The Congregational Council member is ineligible for service on the Congregational Council under Section 12.14.
- f. The failure as a Congregational Council member to carry out duties assigned by the Congregational Council;
- g. An occurrence in the Congregational Council member's personal life which would tend to undermine the confidence of the congregation in the member's ability to serve as an effective governing member of this congregation.

- C12.04. The Congregational 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 Congregational 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.
 - e. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
 - f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
 - g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of a pastor.
 - h. To emphasize partnership with the synod and churchwide units of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

- C12.05. The Congregational Council shall be entrusted with the responsibilities for:
- a. Financial matters of this congregation
 - b. Oversight of maintaining and protecting its property
 - c. Management of its business and fiscal affairs.
 - d. The Congregational Council may enter into contracts for items not included in the budget.
 - e. The Congregational Council shall approve the annual budget prior to adoption by this congregation, shall oversee the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may not incur obligations more than 10% in excess of the anticipated receipts except after approval by a congregational meeting.
 - f. The Congregational Council shall ensure that all the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations.
 - g. The congregational council shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Wisconsin, except as otherwise provided herein.

- C12.06. The Congregational Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws

- and the adopted policies are carried out.
- C12.07. The Congregational Council shall annually submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at a congregational meeting.
- C12.08. The Congregational Council shall approve executive level appointments with the exception of rostered personnel.
- C12.09. The Congregational Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by a pastor of this congregation, the President, or at the request of at least one-half of the Congregational Council members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given following the same procedure used for a regularly scheduled Congregational Council meeting.
- C12.09.01. The Congregational Council meetings shall include:
- a. Call to order
 - b. Devotions
 - d. Minutes of the previous meeting
 - e. Pastors' reports
 - f. Treasurer's report
 - g. Ministry teams and committee reports
 - h. Old business
 - i. New business
 - j. Adjournment with prayer
- C12.11. Deleted per vote of Congregational Council, 7/26/2012 due to redundancy.
- C12.12. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregational Council, including the pastors or interim pastor, except when a pastor or interim pastor 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.
- C12.13. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time.
- C12.14. The following persons shall be ineligible for nomination to the Congregational Council:
- a. Any incumbent Congregational Council member who has served for six consecutive years out of the previous seven years.
 - b. Any paid church employee, except the pastors.
 - c. The spouse or immediate family member of any incumbent Congregational Council member, except an incumbent Congregational Council member whose term is expiring contemporaneously with the potential election of the spouse.
 - d. The spouse or immediate family member of any paid church employee.
- C12.15. The following five guidelines shall be used in selecting candidates for all elected positions:
- a. Commitment to regular worship attendance.
 - b. Commitment to a daily devotional and prayer life.
 - c. Commitment to growth as a Christian through various education opportunities.
 - d. Commitment to growth giving with the tithe (10% of income) as a benchmark.
 - e. Commitment to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with others.

Chapter 13.

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL / STANDING COMMITTEES / MINISTRY TEAMS

- C13.01. The officers of this congregation and the pastors shall constitute the *Executive Committee*.
- C13.02. A *Nominating Committee* shall consist of six voting members of this congregation and shall serve a term of one year.

- a. Authority and Function: The Nominating Committee shall nominate members for election to the next Nominating Committee and to the Congregational Council.
- b. Composition: The Nominating Committee shall consist of six members as follows:
 - 1) one member to be elected by the Congregational Council from its own membership.
 - 2) the Vice President of the Congregational Council.
 - 3) three members at large who shall be elected at a congregational meeting. Each of the members at large shall serve a one-year term, serving no more than two consecutive terms as an elected member at large.
 - 4) one of the pastors.
- c. Process and Timetable: A pastor shall convene the meetings of the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall solicit recommendations for the elective offices from the entire congregation. No person shall be nominated without first obtaining the consent of that person to serve. The final slate shall be prepared by the Nominating Committee for election. The Committee shall design the ballot and shall provide for casting a single vote for the entire slate. Elections shall take place at a congregational meeting.

C13.03. The committee to call a pastor shall be comprised, minimally, of the sitting Congregational Council at the time of vacancy. [Recommended change to: When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a *Call Committee* of six voting members shall be elected by this congregation. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor.]

C13.04. A ***Human Resource Advisory Committee*** shall consist of voting members of this congregation and shall serve a term of two years.

- a. Authority and Function: The Human Resource Advisory Committee shall communicate expectations and concerns between congregation and staff.
- b. Composition:
 - 1) the current President and Vice President;
 - 2) two past congregational Presidents;
 - 3) three members at large selected by the President and pastors;
 - 4) the pastors.
- c. Process and timetable: This committee will meet with the pastors at least annually and shall be chaired by the immediate past President. This committee shall conduct an annual review of the pastors; and may negotiate conflicts that may arise between staff or between congregation and staff as delineated in the *Policies and Procedures Manual*.

C13.04.01. ***Policies and Procedures Manual***. Under the direction of the Executive Committee and the Human Resource Advisory Committee, the St. James Policies and Procedures Manual shall be kept current and up-to-date. It shall be the task of these committees to review this manual along with all staff position descriptions at least once every 5 years.

C13.05. An ***Audit Committee*** of two voting members shall be appointed by the Congregational Council. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregational Council.

C13.06. Other congregational committees may be formed or disbanded as the need arises, by decision of the Congregational Council. All committees shall provide an appropriate accounting of their activities to the Congregational Council.

C13.07. Duties of ministry teams and other committees of this congregation shall be specified through the authority of the Congregational Council.

Chapter 14.

ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

- C14.01. The Congregational Council shall reserve the authority to approve:
- Creation of any organization intended to support the congregation.
 - Existence of any special interest group, including officially recognized groups created by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, to function in the church.
- C14.02. Written reports of the activities of the groups in 14.01 shall be made available to the congregation.

Chapter 15.

DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

- *C15.01. Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps:
- private admonition by the pastor,
 - admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, and
 - citation to appear before the Congregational 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 Congregational 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 Congregational 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 Congregational 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 Congregational Council may proceed with the hearing and may pass judgment in the member's absence.
- *C15.03. Members of the Congregational Council who participate in the preparation of the written charges or who present evidence or testimony in the hearing before the Congregational 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 Congregational Council who are not disqualified but who are present and voting, and renewed admonition prove ineffectual, the Congregational Council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:
- censure before the Congregational Council or congregation;
 - suspension from membership for a definite period of time; or
 - 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 Congregational 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 Congregational 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 Congregational 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 Congregational Council of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the Consultation Committee of the synod shall consider the matter. If the Consultation Committee of the synod shall fail to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to the Synod Council, whose decision shall be final.

Chapter 16.

BYLAWS

- *C16.01. This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.
- *C16.02. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting.
- *C16.03. Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregational Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregational Council shall notify the congregation’s members by mail of the proposal with the Congregational Council’s recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting.
- C16.03.01. The Congregational Council may notify the congregation by electronic communication to those members who have chosen that option.
- *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 25 voting members or by the Congregational Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregational Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregational 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.
- C17.01.01. The Congregational Council may notify the congregation by electronic communication to those members who have chosen that option.

- *C17.02. An amendment to this constitution, proposed under *C17.01., shall:
- be approved at a legally called Congregation Meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;
 - be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting; and
 - have the effective date included in the resolution¹ and noted in the constitution.
- *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 South–Central 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. Such amendments may be approved by a simple majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of this congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of this congregation, provided that the Congregational Council has submitted by mail notice to this 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 __25__ voting members of this congregation, the Congregational Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following a vote of approval.
- C17.04.01 The Congregational Council may notify the congregation by electronic communication to those members who have chosen that option.
- C17.04.02. Amendments to Correct Scriveners’ Errors. Modifications to the language of this Constitution may be made through amendment adopted by a majority vote of a quorum of the Congregational Council at any regular or special meeting thereof, for the following purposes:
- To correct spelling, typographical, punctuation, or grammatical errors;
 - To update language to eliminate obsolete terminology;
 - To eliminate redundancies or verbosity;
- Provided that no such amendment shall be permitted to be so adopted where the change would materially alter the meaning or intent of any portion of the Constitution.

Chapter 18.

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

- *C18.01. This congregation, in a legally called meeting, or the Congregational 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 by a majority vote of a meeting of this congregation or a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Congregational Council.

Chapter 19.

¹ Such an effective date must be stated in relation to the requirements of *C17.03. to allow time for synodical review of the amendment.

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 Congregational 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.

** indicates required provision by the ELCA (last update: Sept. 2011)*

ⁱ The South-Central Synod of Wisconsin provides a model constitution with specific language that is required to be used in all congregations' constitutions. The broad language reflects the interrelationship between the three entities indicated in the title of constitution. Synodically required sections are preceded by the * symbol.

Constitutional elements follow the pattern Cxx.xx; bylaws follow the pattern Cxx.xx.xx.

ⁱⁱ Prior to the creation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1988, St. James Lutheran Church was affiliated with the American Lutheran Church. Because of this prior affiliation, *C6.05.g applies to St. James. *C6.05.h. and *C6.05.i. do not apply to St James.

ⁱⁱⁱ In accordance with Chapter 15

^{iv} The Congregational Council and pastors will abide by all applicable federal and state laws and shall report any matters of criminal activity to the appropriate civil authorities.