

ST. MICHAEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

CONSTITUTION

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

Chapter 1. NAME

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

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

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 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. This church, 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 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 continuing resolutions.

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

Chapter 5. POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

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

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

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

- a. call a pastor;
- b. terminate the call of a pastor;
- c. **call** or terminate the **call** of associates in ministry, **deaconesses, and diaconal ministers** in, conformity with the applicable policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
- d. approve the annual budget;
- e. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
- f. authorize the trustees to hold title to the property;

- g. use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose.
- h. authorize by congregational meeting, trustees to sell, mortgage, lease, transfer or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means.
- i. elect its Congregation Council, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws and continuing resolutions; and terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.
- j. adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in Chapter 17, and amendments to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 16.

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 Virginia Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

C5.05. This Congregation shall have a mission endowment fund which will operate under guidelines as specified in this congregation's constitution. The purpose of the Mission Endowment Fund will be to provide for mission work beyond the operating budget of the congregation in the following areas of ministry: Youth and Family Ministry, Caring and Sharing Outreach Ministry, Music Ministry, Major Maintenance and Improvement, and Scholarship Funds to include the St. Michael Education Scholarship.

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 Virginia 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 ministry 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 or 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 the congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted.
- c. The bishop of the synod shall consult with this congregation during a period of at least 90 days.
- d. If this congregation, after consultation, still desires to terminate its relationship, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present, at which meeting the bishop of the synod or an authorized representative shall be present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.
- e. A certified copy of the resolution to terminate its relationship shall be sent to the synodical bishop, at which time the relationship between this congregation and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be terminated.
- f. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the synodical bishop to the secretary of this church and published in the periodical of this church.
- g. Since this congregation was a member of the Lutheran Church in America it shall be required, in addition to the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to receive synodical approval before terminating its membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

C6.06. If this congregation considers relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.

Chapter 7. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

- C7.01. If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the Virginia Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with the request that the St. Michael Mission Endowment Fund be used within the Synod to support ministries similar to those designated by the congregation.
- 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 regularly 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 Virginia 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 the 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 the 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.
- C7.05. Notwithstanding the provisions of *C7.02. and *C7.03. above, where this congregation has received property from the synod pursuant to a deed or other instrument containing restrictions under provision 9.71.a. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, this congregation accepts such restrictions and:
- a. Shall not transfer, encumber, mortgage, or in any way burden or impair any right, title, or interest in the property without prior approval of the Synod Council.
 - b. Shall – upon written demand by the Synod Council, pursuant to S13.23. of the constitution of the Virginia Synod – reconvey and transfer all right, title, and interest in the property to the Synod.

Chapter 8. MEMBERSHIP

- C8.01. Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of the congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.
- C8.02. Members shall be classified as follows:
- a. Baptized members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith
 - b. Confirmed members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.

- c. Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, 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 and 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.

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 regularly 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 who has been recommended for it 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~~ marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) supervise all schools and organizations of the congregation;
 - 3) install regularly elected members of the 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 ~~adofstry~~ 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 and of the Virginia 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.

- 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 of years;
 - 2) resignation of the pastor; which shall become ~~elective~~ 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
 - 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, 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 ~~to~~ 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 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 without prejudice and with pay provided through a joint synodical and churchwide fund and with housing provided by the congregation.

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

C9.07. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties 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 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 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. Ecumenical pastoral ministry

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. 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.

Chapter 10. CONGREGATION MEETING

C10.01. The meetings of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the continuing resolutions.

C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of the congregation upon the written request of one-fifth 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.

C10.04. One-fifth of the voting members shall constitute a quorum.

C10.05. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.

C10.06. All actions 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, and financial officer.

- a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the continuing resolutions.
- b. The officers shall be voting members of the congregation
- c. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.
- d. If the Congregation Council elects its officers, the president, vice president, and secretary shall be selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council. If the financial officer is not selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council, the treasurer shall have voice but not vote at the meetings of the Congregation Council.

C11.02. The Congregation Council shall elect its officers and they shall be the officers of the congregation. Officers shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the meeting at which they are elected.

C11.03. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time.

Chapter 12. CONGREGATION COUNCIL AND TRUSTEES

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor (s), the officers of the Congregation, and not more than nine members of the congregation. Any voting member of the congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the 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. Not more than nine members of the Congregation Council except the pastor (s) shall be elected by written ballot to serve for three years or until their successors are elected. Those members receiving the plurality vote will be elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively. Having spent two full terms, an individual cannot be reelected again until two years have passed. Their terms shall begin at the close of the congregational meeting at which they are elected.

C12.03. Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next annual meeting. Individuals who have served less than one-half of a regular term shall be eligible for nomination and possible election to a full term.

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

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

- a. The Congregation Council shall be the administrative board 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 Virginia, except as otherwise provided herein.
- b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to authorize the trustees to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.
- c. The Congregational Council may enter into individual contracts of up to five (5)% of the total approved current budget for items not included in the budget provided the expenditure does not require borrowing additional funds. The Congregational Council, with the approval of the congregation, may enter into contracts of more than five (5) % of the total approved current budget.
- d. The Congregational Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur total obligations in excess of ten (10) % of the approved current budget only after approval by a Congregational Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in partnership with the synod and churchwide organization.

- e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies to the synodical treasurer.
- f. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for overseeing the work of the Mission Endowment Fund, this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.

C12.06. The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution and its 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 or the president, and shall be called by the president at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

C12.12. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the pastor or interim pastor, except when the pastor or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting which shall be the only business considered at that meeting. Chronic or repeated absence of the pastor or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Congregation Council, following consultation with the synodical bishop.

C12.13. The property of the congregation shall be held in trust by at least three trustees elected by the congregation and appointed by the court according to the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

C12.14. Trustees shall serve for a term of five years, without limit as to number of terms. However, the office shall be declared vacant upon the death, resignation, or failure to continue as a voting member of the congregation.

C12.15. When there is a vacancy in the office of trustee, the congregation shall elect a person who is a voting member and who is of legal age and the officers shall recommend to the court that the person so elected be appointed trustee.

Chapter 13. CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEES

C13.01. The officers of this congregation and the pastor shall constitute the Executive Committee.

C13.02. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a *Call Committee* of six voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called

pastor.

- C13.03. The establishment of committees provided for in paragraphs 13.02, 03, and 04 is left to the discretion of the congregational council. Other congregational committees may be formed as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council.
- C13.04. Congregational Committees and their duties shall be specified in the continuing resolutions.
- C13.08. The pastor of this congregation shall be *ex officio* member of all committees and boards of the congregation. {The president of this congregation shall be *ex officio* member of 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 its oversight and direction. This congregation at its meeting shall determine their policies, guide their activities, and receive reports concerning their membership, work, and finances.
- C14.02. Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council (and specified in a continuing resolution).

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 troublemaking in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15- 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 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 Congregational Council. The written charges shall accompany the written citation to the accused. A member charged with the offense shall appear before the Congregation Council after having received a written notice citation, at least 10 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. 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. For disciplinary actions in this congregation, “due process” shall be observed as specified in (20.41.03) 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.

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 ~~its~~ the council’s recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting.
- C16.04. Approved changes to the bylaws shall be sent to the synod.

C 16.05 In order to preserve the historic nature of the cemetery on the grounds of St. Michael Lutheran Church, no further burials will be allowed on church property.

Chapter 17. AMENDMENTS

C17.01. Amendments may be proposed by at least one-fifth 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 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.

C17.03. Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in *C17.01. and 17.02. 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 Virginia 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. 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.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION TO THE CONGREGATIONAL CONSTITUTION

SECTION I- STATEMENT OF MISSION

As a community of believers guided by the Holy Spirit, the mission of St. Michael Lutheran church is to:

- Care for all God's people in need,
- Hear of God's love through Word and Sacrament
- Respond to God's grace with thankful hearts,
- Invite others into Christ's community,
- Serve God in our daily lives, and
- Tell the story of God's love for all.

SECTION II- THE PASTOR

Item 1. Maintains the church roll. Provisions of C9.12 apply.

SECTION III- CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

Item 1. The provisions of Chapter 10 apply.

Item 2. At least two congregational meetings will be held each year. The first will be held in the last quarter (Oct-Dec) of each year with the other held in the following quarter. The specific dates will be determined by the Congregational Council. Business to be conducted at the meeting held in the last quarter will include as a minimum the adoption of a budget and the election of council members and trustees. The meeting in the first quarter will include as a minimum obtaining approval of the annual report.

Item 3. One week prior to the congregational meeting held in the first quarter, copies of the Annual Report will be made available to members of the congregation.

Item 4. The annual report will consist of reports from the pastor, the Congregational Council President, each committee chair, and others as requested by the Congregational Council.

Item 5. Within 30 days of the annual meeting, providing a council meeting has been held, the minutes of the annual meeting will be posted.

SECTION IV- Officers

- Item 1. As stated in Chapter 11 of the Constitution, the officers of the congregation are the president, vice president, secretary and financial officer. As such they constitute the Executive Committee. They will be elected at the first meeting of the Congregational Council after the election of council members, excluding special elections. The pastor cannot be elected president of the council.
- Item 2. Duties of the President. Serves as the lay leader of the congregation. Chairs the meetings of the Congregational Council. Responsible to the congregation for the overall operation of the church and its programs.
- Item 3. Duties of the Vice President. In the absence of the President, serves as such. Initiates those actions required to implement the various requirements established in the constitution.
- Item 4. Duties of the Secretary. Serves as both corresponding and recording secretary. Responsible for preparing the minutes of all church meetings requiring such. Maintains a listing of current committee chairs and a record of when their terms expire. As corresponding secretary provides those capabilities as required.
- Item 5. Duties of the Financial Officer. Serves as the chairperson of the finance committee and as such is responsible to the Congregational Council for the overall financial administration and planning of the church.

SECTION V - Congregational Council

- Item 1. Nominations for Council membership, from voting membership, shall be made by the council with advice from the nomination committee. One nominee shall be presented for each vacancy to be filled. Two additional nominees beyond the number of vacancies will also be presented. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- Item 2. The council will meet at least once each month. Summer meeting schedules will be determined by the Council President and the Pastor.
- Item 3. The order of business for council meetings will be as determined by the president. The following are minimum requirements: reading and approving minutes, receiving reports from the pastor, financial officer, and committees, and the conduct of new and unfinished business.
- Item 4. A council member will be identified to serve as a committee proponent for each of the committees established in Section VI. As such he will provide the committee report to the council if the committee chair does not do so in person. He will further represent the interests of the committee to the council in the absence of the committee chair.
- Item 5. The council will select and appoint committee chairs with the advice of the nominating committee if established. The council will provide the opportunity for congregational members to volunteer for committee membership. This will be a responsibility of the council member designated to represent the Stewardship committee.
- Item 6. A member of the Congregational Council will serve on each of the operating committees.

SECTION VI - Congregational Committees

- Item 1. Committees referred to in Chapter 13 are considered special committees whereas those established in the continuing resolutions are considered operating committees. When the term committees is used it refers only to operating committees unless otherwise stated. All committee actions are subject to review by the council.
- Item 2. Nominating Committee. May be established by the Congregational Council if required. The purpose of this special committee is to assist the church council in filling vacancies which exist within the organization of the church, less those functions performed by the Call Committee. The committee will consist of four members, two of which will be council members.
- Item 3. Audit Committee. May be established by the Congregational Committee if required. This special committee serves at the disposal of the President of the Council to conduct audits as deemed appropriate.
- Item 4. Mutual Ministry Committee. The membership for this special committee is determined by the Council. The committee provides support and encouragement for the staff and provides an opportunity for staff to share concerns and ideas.
- Item 5. Finance Committee. This operating committee is to be chaired by the Financial Officer and is responsible to the church council for the overall financial administration and planning of the church. The committee will consist of not less than three members. This committee will supervise the current fund treasurer, building fund treasurer, and the memorial fund treasurer. The finance committee will identify a person to record all contributions made by congregational members. A composite annual report of giving will be provided each member not later than 30 January of each year. Church envelopes will be ordered by this committee. This committee will approve routine expenditures prior to bills being paid or expenses being incurred. Non-routine expenditures will be referred to the council for advance approval. Each month a consolidated financial statement will be prepared and presented to the Congregational Council.
- Item 6. Worship Committee. This operating committee works in close coordination with the pastor. The pastor is charged with structuring the worship services, subject to receiving input from this committee. The committee is charged with planning, organizing, and executing the worship program of the church. The following functions are the responsibility of this committee: confirmation and first communion (all aspects less training), altar flowers, ushers, greeters, providing communion elements and lay assistants, acolytes, nursery care, and the church music program. The committee chair will organize the committee. The committee chair will be available to members of the congregation who wish to provide input on any aspect of the worship program. This in turn will be discussed with the pastor.
- Item 7. Education Committee. This operating committee is responsible for planning, organizing, and executing the Christian education and youth programs of the church.
- Item 8. Property Committee. The operating committee is responsible for the establishment and execution of a maintenance program for the church property both interior and exterior. Responsible for key control, and the management/control of church property.
- Item 9. Caring and Sharing Committee. This operating committee is responsible for the establishment and execution of programs in support of the elderly and handicapped, community service projects, and witnessing to prospective, inactive, and new members, and in general providing an environment of love and caring within and outside the congregation.

Item 10. Stewards Committee. This operating committee is charged with promoting understanding of congregational stewardship and increasing the level of giving, both in terms of time and money.

Item 11. Call Committee. Will be constituted as required.

Item 12 Mission Endowment Fund Committee

The Mission Endowment Fund Committee shall consist of seven voting members. Five voting members of this congregation shall be elected by the Congregational Council. The term of office will be three years with the first slate of members serving staggered terms. Each year following the initial election, two members will be elected with one elected every third year. If an elected member is unable to complete his or her term, the council may appoint a person to serve for the remainder of that term. Members are eligible for only two consecutive terms. In addition to the elected members, a pastor of the congregation shall be an ex-officio member of the committee with voice and vote. The Treasurer of the congregation shall maintain the account of the Mission Endowment Fund and shall be an ex-officio member of the committee with voice and vote. The purpose of the committee shall be to implement the guidelines of the mission endowment fund. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Mission Endowment Fund Committee.

The duties of the Mission Endowment Fund Committee shall include the following:

- a. To fulfill the purpose of the Mission Endowment Fund, that is to provide annual distributions beyond the operating budget of this congregation in the following areas of ministry in direct proportion to the amount given to each of the following: Youth and Family Ministry, Caring and Sharing Outreach Ministry, Music Ministry, Major Maintenance and Improvement, and Scholarship Funds to include the Gallimore Scholarship.
- b. To determine how the Fund assets will be invested, including the asset allocation when gifts are given to the Fund. The investment objective will be to provide long-term growth to support annual distributions. All investments shall be invested by outside investors such as in the ELCA Endowment Pooled Trust. No committee member shall invest the assets in a way that would bring private inurnment to that individual. The committee shall report at least semi-annually to the Congregational Council on any and all activity with the fund. Annual accounting and a report of ministries supported through the Fund shall be included in the Annual Report to the congregation.
- c. To make annual distributions. Annual distributions will be a percentage of the annual value of the Mission Endowment Fund balance, and may include interest and dividends received, realized gains, and/or unrealized gains.
- d. To encourage gifts to the Mission Endowment Fund through education and promotion of the Fund.
- e. To receive and celebrate gifts given for ministry through the Mission Endowment Fund. The committee has the discretion to decline acceptance of a gift if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the congregation.

f. To accept gifts to the Mission Endowment Fund received by this Congregation.

Item 13. Committees, Task Forces and Ministry Teams are asked to share information with the Council about their area of ministry on a regular basis.

Item 14. The scheduling of committee meetings is to be done at the call of the committee chair, unless otherwise directed by the council president. Meetings should be called as required.

Item 15. Each committee will serve as a channel from our church to the synod as required.

SECTION VII - Termination of Membership.

Item 1. This item implements C8.05. Members will be considered for disenrollment based on their inactivity. Inactivity is defined as not partaking of Holy Communion of record for a period of two years and not making a financial contribution of record for the same two consecutive years. The council will identify such members, counsel them if possible, and make a determination as to whether they should be removed from the rolls.

SECTION VIII – Retirement for Long-term, Part-time Employees

Item 1. To assist with retirement needs, St. Michael has decided to partner with our long-term, part-time employees to match funds contributed to an Individual Retirement Account. To qualify for the matching funds, the long-term, part-time employee must have worked for St. Michael for a minimum of two years. A long-term, part-time employee may choose to open an IRA in cooperation with St. Michael at any point after they have been employed by the congregation for more than two years. St. Michael will match employee contributions up to 3% of the employee's salary.

Item 2. Long-term, part-time retirement program begins on January 1, 2007.

*Updates Adopted: February 22, 2009
Continuing Resolutions Revised Nov. 8, 2009*