

*2011 Proposed Constitution, Bylaws, & Continuing  
Resolutions for First Lutheran Church*

**FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**510 West South Street**

**P.O. Box 287**

**Kirkland, Illinois 60146-0287**

**CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, & CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Preamble.....	Page 1
Chapter 1 Name and Incorporation.....	Page 1
Chapter 2 Confession of Faith.....	Page 1
Chapter 3 Nature of the Church.....	Page 2
Chapter 4 Statement of Purpose.....	Page 3
Chapter 5 Powers of the Congregation.....	Page 4
Chapter 6 Church Affiliation.....	Page 5
Chapter 7 Property Ownership.....	Page 6
Chapter 8 Membership.....	Page 6
Chapter 9 The Pastor.....	Page 8
Chapter 10 Congregational Meeting.....	Page 10
Chapter 11 Officers of the Congregation.....	Page 11
Chapter 12 Church Council.....	Page 11
Chapter 13 Committees of the Congregation.....	Page 14
Chapter 14 Organizations within the Congregation.....	Page 15
Chapter 15 Discipline of Members and Adjudication.....	Page 15
Chapter 16 Bylaws.....	Page 16
Chapter 17 Amendments.....	Page 17
Chapter 18 Continuing Resolutions.....	Page 17
Chapter 19 Indemnification.....	Page 17
Appendix: The Common Confession (2005).....	Page 18
Bylaws.....	Pages 19 - 21
Continuing Resolutions.....	Pages 22 - 29

## **PREAMBLE**

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

## **Chapter 1.**

### **NAME AND INCORPORATION**

- 1.01.** The name of this congregation shall be First Evangelical Lutheran Church.
- 1.02.** For the purpose of this constitution and any accompanying bylaws, the congregation of First Evangelical Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."
- 1.03.** This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois.

## **Chapter 2.**

### **CONFESSION OF FAITH**

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

- \*2.01. The Triune God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**
- \*2.02. Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.**
  - \*a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.**
  - \*b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.**
  - \*c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by the Holy Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them the Holy Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.**

- \*2.03. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life, according to which all doctrines should and must be judged. (Formula of Concord, Epitome, Part I)**
- \*2.04. The Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of the Church.**
- \*2.05. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.**
- \*2.06. The other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.**
- \*2.07. The Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.**
- \*2.08. This congregation honors and accepts The Common Confession (2005), attached in an appendix hereto, as a summary of teachings otherwise affirmed in the Lutheran Confessions.**

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\* The NALC does not require congregations to adopt a particular constitution. However, it does require a subscription to the NALC constitution and to the NALC confession of faith. By adopting Chapter 2, Section 6.02, and Section 6.03(c)-(d), all marked with asterisks and shown in bold, a congregation complies with these requirements. Therefore, these portions of the constitution may not be amended or altered, unless the corresponding portions of the NALC constitution have been amended or altered. See also Section 6.02 and Section 6.03(c)-(d) on page 5.

### **Chapter 3.**

#### **NATURE OF THE CHURCH**

- 3.01** The Church is the universal assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the Holy Sacraments are administered according to the Gospel. (Augsburg Confession VII)
- 3.02.** All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.
- 3.03.** The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations.

- 3.04.** This congregation exercises ministry within the mission of the NALC. This congregation embodies the Church in its community and, for the sake of mission, lives in cooperative partnership with other congregations and within the other structures of the NALC. This congregation shall share responsibility for the decision-making processes of the NALC.

#### **Chapter 4.**

#### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

- 4.01.** The hearers of the Gospel are a people, called and sent by God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - to be a community of faith, hope, and love, who witness to Christ and His coming Kingdom before all the world.
- 4.02.** To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:
- a. Give honor and glory to the Triune God, worshipping Him in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments, and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, obedience, and service.
  - b. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by proclaiming to all the world the Gospel of justification by grace through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in Holy Scripture, and in accordance with the Lutheran Confessions.
  - c. Preserve and transmit the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
  - d. Foster Christian fellowship and love, and extend a helping hand to those in need.
  - e. Manifest the unity of our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior, and join with other Christians in prayer and action.
  - f. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, and to develop a sense of Christian vocation in daily life.
- 4.03.** To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:
- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is rightly 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. Encourage its members to provide appropriate financial support for the congregation's ministry and the ministries of the NALC.
- h. Foster and participate in relationships with other congregations and structures of the NALC.
- i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with NALC policy.

**4.04.** This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Church Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of all committees, ministry teams, boards, task forces, and other organizational groups, and shall review their actions. These descriptions shall be contained in the bylaws and continuing resolutions.

**4.05.** 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**

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

**5.02.** The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregational Meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.

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

- a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- c. appoint or terminate the service of commissioned lay leaders;
- d. approve the annual budget;
- e. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
- f. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
- g. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;

- h. elect its Church Council, and require the members of the council, committees, ministry teams, boards, task forces, and other organizational groups of this congregation to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions;
- i. adopt amendments to this constitution as provided in Chapter 17, and amendments to the bylaws as specified in Chapter 16;
- j. establish or terminate a relationship with a church body.

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

## **Chapter 6. CHURCH AFFILIATION**

**6.01.** This congregation is an interdependent part of the NALC or any successor and is subject to the disciplinary rules of the NALC.

**\*6.02. This congregation subscribes to the constitution of the NALC and will act in accordance with it.**

**6.03.** This congregation will conduct its ministry in a manner consistent with its membership in the NALC:

- a. This congregation is responsible for its life as a Christian community.
- b. This congregation pledges its participation in the life and mission of the NALC, including the prayerful consideration of appropriate financial support.

**\*c. This congregation shall call only pastors who are members of the NALC or otherwise are authorized by the NALC to serve.**

**\*d. This congregation shall appoint only commissioned lay leaders who are members of the NALC or otherwise are authorized by the NALC to serve.**

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\* See note on page 2.

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

- a. This congregation dissolves.
- b. This congregation ceases to exist.

- c. This congregation is removed from membership in the NALC according to the procedures for discipline of the NALC.
- d. This congregation follows the procedure outlined in 6.05.

**6.05.** This congregation may terminate its affiliation with the NALC by the following procedure:

- a. This congregation, at a legally called and conducted special meeting, approves, by at least a two-thirds majority of members present and voting, a resolution indicating the desire of this congregation to withdraw from the NALC.
- b. Before taking final action to withdraw from the NALC as described in 6.05.c, the congregation will continue to pray and converse together about this decision for a period of at least ninety days. The congregation may consult with the Bishop of the NALC and/or the Dean during this time.
- c. Following the period of prayer and conversation described in 6.05.b, this congregation, at a legally called and conducted special meeting, approves, by at least a two-thirds majority of members present and voting, a resolution directing that this congregation withdraw from the NALC. If this congregation adopts a resolution withdrawing from the NALC, all provisions of this constitution binding this congregation to the NALC shall be immediately ineffective. The congregation shall promptly deliver a copy of the withdrawal resolution to the NALC general secretary.

## **Chapter 7. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP**

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

## **Chapter 8. MEMBERSHIP**

**8.01.** Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons (a) who are on the roll of this congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted or who are admitted thereafter, and (b) who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

**8.02.** Members shall be classified as follows:

- a. **Baptized** members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in 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 who have received Holy Communion and made a monetary contribution of record during the current or preceding calendar year. 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 Lutheran congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Church Council of this congregation.

**8.03.** All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Church Council.

**8.04.** It shall be the privilege and duty of members of 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 NALC, and their ministries and structures through contributions of time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.

**8.05.** 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 Church 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 active members shall remain persons for whom the Church has a continuing pastoral concern.

## **Chapter 9. THE PASTOR**

**9.01.** Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority vote of members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose.

**9.02.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the NALC,

- a. Every ordained minister shall:
  - 1) preach the Word;
  - 2) administer the sacraments;
  - 3) conduct public worship;
  - 4) provide pastoral care;
  - 5) serve as the chief evangelist in his or her ministry; and
  - 6) proclaim God's love to the world.
  
- b. Each ordained minister with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
  - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
  - 2) supervise all schools and organizations of this congregation;
  - 3) install regularly elected members of the Church Council; and
  - 4) with the Church Council, administer discipline.
  
- c. Every pastor shall:
  - 1) strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;
  - 2) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel; and
  - 3) impart knowledge of the NALC and its wider ministry through public provision of information, distribution of publications, and other appropriate means.

**9.03.** The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call.

**9.04.** a. The call of 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 for the following reasons:

- 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call, or the completion of a call for a specific term;
- 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
- 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor;
- 4) the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
- 5) disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty; or
- 6) the dissolution of the congregation.

b. If the Church Council determines that it may be appropriate to end a call for one of the reasons set out in sub-section (a), the Council shall consult with the pastor regarding the matter in accord with Biblical principles. If the Church Council and pastor do not reach agreement, the Congregation shall inform the Bishop of the NALC, who shall consult with the Church Council and the pastor and shall attempt to reach an agreed resolution. If the Bishop fails to facilitate an agreed resolution, the Church Council may terminate the pastor's call by a vote of two-thirds of all members of the Church Council. In all events, the Church Council can suspend a pastor with pay by majority vote if the Church Council determines that such suspension is necessary to protect the congregation and all whom it serves.

- 9.05.** At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor may be appointed by the Church Council.
- 9.06.** During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the Church Council. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.
- 9.07.** 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.
- 9.08.** When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors and the Church Council. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through the same consultation process.
- 9.09.** The congregation may depart from the requirements in section 9.04(a) by calling

a pastor for a term of years. Details of such a call shall be in a writing that sets forth the purpose and conditions involved. Such call may be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions in section 9.04(a) and 9.04(b).

- 9.10.** The pastor of 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 Church Council; and
  - c. shall become a member of this congregation upon the receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- 9.11.** The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of the congregation.

## **Chapter 10.**

### **CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

- 10.01.** The annual meeting and any other regular meetings of this congregation shall be held at times set by the congregation in bylaws or in other resolutions.
- 10.02.** A special Congregational Meeting may be called by the pastor, the Church Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of the congregation upon the written request of 10% of the voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held, and no other business shall be transacted.
- 10.03.** Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail or e-mail to all voting members at least 5 days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or paid, sent to the last known address of such members, or sent to the last known e-mail address of such members, shall be sufficient.
- 10.04.** 15% of voting members shall constitute a quorum.
- 10.05.** Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- 10.06.** All actions approved by the congregation shall be by majority vote of members

present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution or by applicable law.

- 10.07.** *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

## **Chapter 11.**

### **OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

- 11.01.** The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and financial secretary.
- a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
  - b. The officers shall be voting members of the congregation.
  - c. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Church Council and shall be voting members of the Church Council.
- 11.02.** The officers identified in this Chapter 11 shall be elected by the congregation by majority vote and shall serve terms of two years or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin on July 1 and end on June 30. They shall be installed at worship on the Sunday prior to the date they assume office or as soon thereafter as practical.
- 11.03.** No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. No elected officer, other than the treasurer and the financial secretary, shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive full terms.
- 11.04.** If any elected office enumerated in this Chapter 11 becomes vacant, the Church Council shall elect a successor as soon as practical to serve the remainder of the unexpired term. The time served under this Section 11.04 shall not count for purposes of term limits.

## **Chapter 12.**

### **CHURCH COUNCIL**

- 12.01.** The voting membership of the Church Council shall consist of the pastor, the officers of the congregation, and the leaders of the ministry teams specified in the bylaws (at least seven but not more than ten such ministry team leaders). Any voting member of the congregation may be elected to the Church Council, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Church Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Church Council without cause. Consis-

tent with the laws of the State of Illinois, the congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Church Council in other circumstances.

- 12.02.** The members of the Church Council except the pastor shall be elected by the congregation by majority vote and shall serve terms of two years or until their successors are elected. No council member, other than the pastor, the treasurer, and the financial secretary, shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive full terms. Their terms shall begin on July 1 and end on June 30. They shall be installed at worship on the Sunday prior to the date they assume office or as soon thereafter as practical.
- 12.03.** Should a member's place on the Church Council be declared vacant, the Church Council shall elect a successor as soon as practical to serve the remainder of the unexpired term. The time served under this Section 12.03 shall not count for purposes of term limits.
- 12.04.** The Church 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, the Lutheran Confessions, and the faith and practice of the NALC. The duties of the Church 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 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 good will and, as differences and conflicts arise, to foster resolution of such conflicts according to Biblical principles.
  - g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
  - h. To emphasize partnership with the NALC as well as cooperation with other Christian congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran.
  - i. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.
- 12.05.** The Church Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of

this congregation.

a. The Church Council shall be the board of trustees of this congregation, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the management of its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Illinois, except as otherwise provided herein.

b. The Church Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.

c. The Church Council shall:

- 1) prepare an annual budget and submit it to the annual meeting for adoption by this congregation;
- 2) supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance with the budget adopted by the congregation;
- 3) incur obligations more than 10% in excess of budgeted receipts only after approval by a Congregational Meeting.

d. The Church Council may enter into contracts of up to \$10,000.00 for items not included in the budget (in compliance with 12.05.c.3 above). In emergencies, the Church Council may enter into contracts exceeding \$10,000.00 for items not included in the budget (regardless of 12.05.c.3). An emergency is any event that will cause further significant damage to property or put someone's safety or health at risk if not dealt with immediately.

e. The Church 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 designated recipients.

f. The Church Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.

**12.06.** The Church Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution and of the congregation's bylaws and continuing resolutions are carried out.

**12.07.** The Church Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.

**12.08.** The Church Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the salaried lay workers of this congregation.

**12.09.** The Church Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting. It shall also prepare the agenda for the annual meeting, and for all congregational meetings.

**12.10.** The Church Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president, and shall be called by the president at the

request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

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

### **Chapter 13.**

#### **COMMITTEES OF THE CONGREGATION**

**13.01.** The officers of this congregation and the pastor shall constitute the *Executive Committee*.

**13.02.** A *Budget Committee* of no less than three and no more than five voting members of the congregation, one of whom should be the treasurer of the congregation, shall be elected by the Church Council for a term of one year.

**13.03.** A *Nominating Committee* of no less than three voting members of this congregation, two of whom, if possible, shall be outgoing members of the Church Council, shall be elected by the Church Council for a term of one year.

**13.04.** An *Audit Committee* of three voting members shall be elected by the Church Council for a term of one year. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Church Council.

**13.05.** A *Pastoral Support Committee* (in the absence of a pastoral support committee, its duties shall be fulfilled by the executive committee) may be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor.

**13.06.** 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.

**13.07.** Other committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Church Council.

**13.08.** The pastor of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees, ministry teams, boards, task forces, and other organizational groups of this congregation.

## **Chapter 14.**

### **ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION**

**14.01.** 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. The congregation shall determine their policies, guide their activities, and receive reports concerning their membership, work, and finances.

## **Chapter 15.**

### **DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION**

**15.01.** Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution or the constitution of the NALC, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps: a) private admonition by the pastor, b) admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, and c) citation to appear before the Church Council. If for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by a) and b) hereof, the president or vice president shall administer such admonitions.

**15.02.** If discipline against a member proceeds beyond counseling and admonition by the pastor, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing shall be prepared by member(s) of the congregation who shall sign the charges as the accuser(s). The written charges shall be filed with the pastor, who shall advise the Church Council of the need to issue a written citation to the accused and the accusers that specifies the time and place of the hearing before the Church Council. The written charges shall accompany the written citation to the accused. The written citation that specifies the time and place of the hearing before the Church Council and requests the presence of a member charged with an offense shall be sent at least ten days prior to the meeting. If the member charged with the offense fails to appear at the scheduled hearing, the Church Council may proceed with the hearing and may pass judgment in the member's absence.

**15.03.** Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Church Council, 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.

- 15.04.** The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Church Council shall have the right to appeal to a Congregational Meeting, which may revise or overturn the Church Council's decision by a majority vote. Any such vote will be by secret ballot.
- 15.05.** Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Church Council upon receipt of a) evidence that injustice has been done or b) evidence of repentance and amendment.

## **Chapter 16.**

### **BYLAWS**

- 16.01.** This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.
- 16.02.** 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.
- 16.03.** Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however, a) that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Church Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose and b) that the Church Council notify the members of the proposal with any recommendations regarding the disposition of the proposal at least 30 days in advance of the Congregational Meeting.

## **Chapter 17.**

### **AMENDMENTS**

- 17.01.** Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least 10% of the voting

members or by the Church Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Church Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at its regular or special meeting called for that purpose. The Church Council shall notify the members of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.

- 17.02.** An amendment to this constitution shall:
- a. be approved at a legally called Congregational Meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;
  - b. be ratified without change at the next annual Congregational Meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting; and
  - c. have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.

**Chapter 18.**  
**CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

- 18.01.** The congregation or the Church Council may enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this congregation.
- 18.02.** Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a majority vote of a Congregational Meeting or a two-thirds majority vote of all voting members of the Church Council.

**Chapter 19.**  
**INDEMNIFICATION**

- 19.01.** Consistent with the provisions of the laws of the State of Illinois, this congregation may adopt provisions providing indemnification for each person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a Church Council member, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any committee, board, task force, ministry team, or other organizational group 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.

## **APPENDIX: The Common Confession (2005)**

1. **The Lord Jesus Christ**  
We are people who believe and confess our faith in the Triune God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We trust and believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.
2. **The Gospel of Salvation**  
We believe and confess that all human beings are sinners, and that sinners are redeemed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God alone justifies human beings by faith in Christ - a faith that God creates through the message of the Gospel. As ambassadors for Christ, God uses us to speak His Word and build His kingdom.
3. **The Authority of Scripture**  
We believe and confess that the Bible is God's revealed Word to us, spoken in Law and Gospel. The Bible is the final authority for us in all matters of our faith and life.
4. **A Common Confession of Faith**  
We accept and uphold that the Lutheran Confessions reliably guide us as faithful interpretations of Scripture, and that we share a unity and fellowship in faith with others among whom the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached and the Sacraments are administered in accordance with the Gospel.
5. **The Priesthood of All Believers**  
We believe and confess that the Holy Spirit makes all who believe in Jesus Christ to be priests for service to others in Jesus' name, and that God desires to make use of the spiritual gifts he has given through the priesthood of all believers.
6. **Marriage and Family**  
We believe and confess that the marriage of male and female is an institution created and blessed by God. From marriage, God forms families to serve as the building blocks of all human civilization and community. We teach and practice that sexual activity belongs exclusively within the Biblical boundaries of a faithful marriage between one man and one woman.
7. **The Mission and Ministry of the Congregation**  
We believe and confess that the Church is the assembly of believers called and gathered by God around Word and Sacrament, and that the mission and ministry of the Church is carried out within the context of individual congregations, which are able to work together locally and globally.

## **BYLAWS**

### **4.04.01. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The organizational structure of this congregation shall be as follows:

1. The Pastor
2. Congregational Officers
  - a. President
  - b. Vice-president
  - c. Secretary
  - d. Treasurer
  - e. Financial Secretary
3. Ministry Teams
  - a. Stewardship
  - b. Evangelism
  - c. Learning
  - d. Social Ministry
  - e. Worship & Music
  - f. Fellowship
  - g. Property

### **4.05.01. MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of First Evangelical Lutheran Church shall be to put Christ first in all things.

### **8.05.01. INACTIVITY**

Confirmed members who have failed to receive Holy Communion and have failed to make a monetary contribution of record during the current or preceding calendar year, and unconfirmed members who have not attended worship during the current or preceding calendar year, may be declared inactive and removed from the roll of active members by a two-thirds vote of the Church Council.

### **10.01.01. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

1. An annual meeting of the congregation shall be held on a Sunday during the month of January on a date determined by the Church Council.
2. A meeting shall be held on a Sunday during the month of June of the odd numbered years for the purpose of electing a new Church Council. Other business may be conducted during the meeting, but must be declared in the notice of the meeting. No other business may be conducted.

## **11.01.01. DUTIES OF CONGREGATION OFFICERS**

### **1. President**

- a. Administer the business affairs of this congregation. The president may seek the advice of the pastor in administering these affairs.
- b. Preside at all meetings of the Church Council.
- c. Preside at all Congregational Meetings.

### **2. Vice-president**

- a. Assist the President and Pastor in the administration of the business affairs of this congregation.
- b. Preside at all meetings in the absence of the president.

### **3. Secretary**

- a. Prepare and forward any and all correspondence pertaining to the business matters of this congregation.
- b. Record and publish the minutes of all meetings of the Church Council and all Congregational meetings.
- c. Preside at all meetings in the absence of the President and Vice President.

### **4. Treasurer**

- a. Pay all bills as authorized by the Church Council.
- b. Submit regular reports as required by the Church Council.

### **5. Financial Secretary**

- a. Collect and record all offering monies received.
- b. Deposit such monies in the appropriate accounts.
- c. Provide each contributing member with a report of their contributions. Such reports may be provided quarterly, semiannually, or annually, as determined by the Church Council.

### **13.01.01. RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEES**

1. The *Executive Committee* shall meet at the request of the pastor, the Church Council, or any of the committee's members. The Executive Committee may from time to time bring recommendations, motions, or resolutions before the entire Church Council for its consideration. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the agenda for all regular and special meetings of the Church Council.
2. The *Budget Committee* shall prepare an annual budget proposal which it shall submit to the Church Council.
3. The *Nominating Committee* shall nominate voting members of the congregation to serve as congregational officers and ministry team leaders, and shall submit its slate of nominees to any congregational meeting at which elections are to take place.
4. The *Audit Committee* shall audit the financial affairs of the congregation, and shall report to the annual meeting.
5. The *Pastoral Support Committee* will support the pastor in his or her work in several important ways, including encouragement, prayer, and advice.
6. During a time of pastoral vacancy, the *Call Committee* shall, with the assistance of the Bishop and the Dean, seek out candidates for call as pastor of this congregation.

**CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**  
**RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF MINISTRY TEAMS**

**4.04.A12**      The *Stewardship Team* shall:

1.      Provide an ongoing program for the study of the Scriptural principles regarding the total stewardship calling of the Christian and share these insights with congregation members.
2.      Contact new members for service to the congregation and encourage members to use their talents in Christ's work.
3.      Be responsible for overseeing the issuance of regular quarterly reminders to members, showing their offerings to date.
4.      Be responsible for maintenance of a congregational talent file to discover and enlist for Kingdom service the talents God has given all members.
5.      Submit an annual Stewardship Ministry Team budget request.
6.      Be concerned along with the youth committee for providing guidance and encouragement to newly confirmed youth in their walk with God.
7.      Obtain legal information on the laws governing nonprofit organizations.
8.      Evaluate the offerings of the congregation regularly, and share these evaluations with the members of the congregation.
9.      Establish and maintain, in conjunction with other Ministry Teams, a continuing program for the recruitment of full-time workers in the church at large, such as pastors, teachers, and the like.
10.     Be responsible for requisitioning and distribution of offering envelopes.
12.     Establish a program for endowing the congregation through wills, bequests, foundations and other sources.
13.     Be concerned, together with the Treasurer and Financial Secretary, for the safekeeping and recording of all funds, monthly remissions of offerings for benevolence and church agencies, and prompt payment of salaries and bills as authorized by the congregation.

14. Annually participate in the budgeting procedures of the congregation in conjunction with the Treasurer and Financial Secretary, and recommend to the congregation any necessary improvements or revisions.

**4.04.B12** The *Evangelism Team* shall:

1. Assist the pastor with difficult cases involving inactive members.
2. Share with the pastor in the entire program of proclaiming the Gospel to all people.
3. Encourage prayer in church and homes for sincere evangelistic concern toward all people inside and outside the church.
4. Foster a climate of evangelism that encourages congregation members informally and spontaneously to share Christ with one another, inactives and unchurched.
5. Establish and maintain a continuing program of publicity for the congregation and its activities which will reflect favorably on the congregation and its commitment to the Gospel of Christ.
6. Study and adopt or adapt evangelism suggestions by the NALC.
7. Conduct special visitations to witness for Christ and to invite prospective members to attend.
8. Promote and direct congregation-wide evangelism undertakings.
9. Maintain the church bulletin boards indoors and outdoors and recommend appropriate messages and themes for publication.
10. Follow up on all newborn children in the congregation, urging baptism and emphasize child and young people evangelism, both in participation and outreach.
11. Be responsible for maintenance and follow-up of a prospect file at all times.
12. Canvass the congregation's area of responsibility, and effectively record, study, and utilize the results in reaching inactive and the unchurched.
13. Engage in continual review of communion and church attendance of all members, making call on delinquents.

14. Emphasize evangelism and encourage evangelism programs in and through auxiliary organizations of the congregation, and suggest projects for such organizations.

15. Train and involve the young people of the congregation in bringing others to faith in Christ.

**4.04.C12** The *Learning Team* shall:

1. Share with the pastor in the entire program of proclaiming the Gospel to all people.
2. Establish objectives, set policies for, and supervise the total education program for each education agency in the congregation, including the personnel; i.e. for adult education programs, the Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, confirmation classes and Bible classes.
3. Provide for the continuing spiritual growth of the young people of the congregation through Bible Study, prayer and Christian services.
4. Study the Scriptural principles regarding the total stewardship calling of the Christian, and share these insights with congregation members.
5. Continually review and make annual analyses of curriculum and existing agencies to determine whether all age groups are being served, and recommend revisions and additions as deemed advisable.
6. Plan and carry out, together with other concerned committees, a year-round program for the young people of the congregation.
7. Maintain a “people accounting system” to record adult participation in the education program and to follow up on the uninvolved.
8. Establish and maintain a permanent file of all children and youth of the congregation by age and grade level, and see that such a file is kept continually up-to-date.
9. Assist the pastor as needed in the thorough instruction of youth and adults for confirmation and church membership.

10. Encourage the recruitment of pupils for the educational opportunities of the church.
11. Encourage increasing participation of every congregation member in Bible study, privately and in formal and informal groups.
12. Maintain, improve, and cultivate the use of a church library.
13. Study and adopt or adapt education suggestions by the NALC.
14. Provide for and promote the use of audiovisual aids and to this end establish and maintain an audiovisual library.
15. Secure, train, support, and nurture teachers and leaders for vacancies in the teaching staff.
16. Promote subscriptions to church periodicals.
17. Establish a system of commendation for and recognition of faithful service by all persons involved in the educational task of the congregation.
18. Maintain a cradle roll and provide educational support for children and families to age three.
19. Strengthen families as basic units of Christian Education and closely relate congregational opportunities to the homes.
20. Encourage Christian educational programs in organizations of the congregation, such as the Women of First Lutheran Church and the youth group.
21. Consider provision of special education opportunities for mentally retarded and other handicapped persons.
22. Prepare and submit an annual budget request to the Budget Committee.
23. Organize the inventory and requisitioning of all educational materials and supplies.

**4.04.D12** The *Social Ministry Team* shall:

1. Maintain contact with benevolent and charitable agencies in the community, state and on the national level and recommend to the congregation responses to opportunities for service.
2. Together with the pastor, study the possibilities and recommend implementation of offering spiritual services and care to hospitals, homes for the aged, prisons, and other institutions within the community.
3. Provide opportunities for involvement as servants in the life of the community, such as civic, school, cultural, humanitarian, recreational and social groups.
4. Train and supervise a visitation committee and engage in visitation of all sick, hospitalized, aged, and shut-ins in the congregation.
5. Plan and recommend a year-round program of support for Lutheran World Relief and other areas of outreach ministry suggested by the NALC, through the various agencies and committees of the congregation.
6. Organize a "share the food" program.
7. Bring before the congregation current social issues for study and possible responses.

**4.04.E12** The *Worship and Music Team* shall:

1. Insure that pastors, lay assistants, substitute pastors and guest speakers are available for worship as needed.
2. Coordinate and train volunteers for acolytes, ushers and nursery attendants as needed.
3. Share with the pastor in the entire program of proclaiming the Gospel to all people.
4. Oversee scheduling of organists of the congregation.
5. Be responsible for annual review of musical instrument maintenance and contracts.
6. Be responsible to annually review and recommend compensation for personnel of the music staff as required for public worship.
7. In conjunction with the pastor and the church council, approve and disapprove new forms of worship, liturgies and hymns for public worship.
8. Set the time, schedule and number of worship and communion services in conjunction with the pastor and church council.
9. Arrange for the preparation and care of the communion ware and supplies.
10. Provide for worship aids, such as baptismal supplies, altar candles, special worship service bulletins, etc.
11. Coordinate and arrange for the seasonal decoration of the church.
12. Arrange for the care, display and maintenance of banners.
13. Arrange for the care, display and maintenance of paraments, brassware, vestments and banners.
14. Prepare and submit a yearly budget to the Budget Committee.
15. Supervise the choirs, the selection and procurement of appropriate music, and other related matters.

**4.04.F12**

The *Fellowship Team* shall:

1. Coordinate Sunday coffee fellowship time.
2. Coordinate fellowship receptions on New Member Sundays.
3. Review and adopt or adapt materials and ideas from various sources which will bring congregation members into personal contact in groups, such as family nights, plays, fun fairs, talent shows, and other special event nights.
4. Be responsible for kitchen supplies.
5. Coordinate the annual Fourth of July float project.
6. Plan special fellowship events geared to attracting the participation of members of the community.
7. Be responsible for keeping the kitchen clean and neat.

**4.04.G12** The *Property Team* shall:

1. Make an annual inspection of church properties and equipment, and recommend to the church council needed repairs, improvements or replacements.
2. Conduct an annual inventory of all church properties, equipment, and supplies, including acquisition date and approximate value, and enter its completion in the official minutes of the committee.
3. Supervise, control and recommend adequate storage facilities for all church property, equipment and supplies and the orderly maintenance of the same.
4. Carry out all resolutions of the church council on purchases, repairs and replacement of church property and equipment.
5. Arrange for immediate repairs of an urgent nature and all normal repairs and alterations for which budget funds have been allocated.
6. Enlist work crews for special repair, improvement, cleaning, painting, decorating, landscaping and other projects.
7. Check all properties quarterly for safety and fire hazards, or as needed.
8. Annually review the adequacy of all existing insurance for church property and equipment.
9. Determine and establish with the approval of the church council, regulations governing the use and/or rental of church property and equipment.
10. Make and issue keys for church property, and keep and review annually a list of the keys issued.
11. Determine and engage with council approval, adequate custodial help; supervise the custodial help and provide a job description; annually review and recommend to the Budget Committee salaries for all custodial help.
12. Submit an annual budget to the Budget Committee for approval.