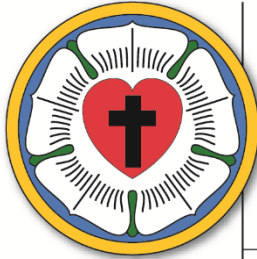


CONSTITUTION DOCUMENT FOR
SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH
PONCA, NEBRASKA



NALC

North American Lutheran Church



lcmc

Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ

Published: 01-19-2025

Amended:

CONSTITUTION
FOR
SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH
(Adopted January 19, 2025)

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 Salem Lutheran Church.
- 1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and any accompanying bylaws, the congregation of Salem Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as “this congregation.”
- 1.03. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Nebraska.

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 Spirit¹**
- 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.**

¹ 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) from this model, all shown in bold, a congregation complies with these requirements.

- 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.**

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 Church is a people, created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to be a community of faith, hope, and love, who witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in 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 God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, worshipping Him in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, obedience 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 all future generations.

- c. 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,
 - 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. 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.
 - f. 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.
- 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 rightly 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 ministry of other parts of the NALC.
 - h. Foster and participate in Christian relationships with other congregations, the mission districts, and the church organizations of the NALC.
 - i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relations consistent with NALC policy and bylaws of the congregation.
- 4.04. This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws.
- 4.05. The Church Council shall approve descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions. Such descriptions shall be contained in the Continuing Resolutions.
- 4.06. This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement which will provide specific directions 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 officers and Church Council, and require the officers, members of the Church Council, committees, and ad hoc committees to carry out their duties in accordance with this constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions;
 - i. adopt amendments to the constitution, bylaws and continuing resolutions as specified in Chapter 17, to the bylaws as specified in Chapter 16, and to the continuing resolutions as specified in Chapter 18; and
 - j. terminate its relationship with the North American Lutheran Church as specified in Chapter 6.
- 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.
- 5.05. This congregation shall have a mission endowment fund that will operate as specified in this congregation's bylaws. The purpose of the mission endowment fund is to provide for mission work beyond the operational budget of this congregation.

Chapter 6.

CHURCH AFFILIATION

- 6.01. This congregation is a member of the North American Lutheran Church or any successor and is subject to the procedures 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, following the two greatest commandments of Jesus: first to love God and second to love our neighbor.
 - 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.**
 - e. This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution with the Executive Council of the North American Lutheran Church for review to ascertain that all provisions are in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the NALC.
- 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 procedures outlined in C6.05
 - e. This congregation shall deliver a copy of the withdrawal resolution to the NALC General Secretary to the Bishop withing 10 business days.
- 6.05. This congregation may terminate its relationship with the North American Lutheran Church by the following procedure:
- a. A resolution indicating the intent to terminate its relationship must be adopted at two legally called and conducted special meetings of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at each meeting. The first such meeting may be held no sooner than 30 days after written notice of the meeting is received by the General Secretary of the NALC.
 - b. Within 10 business days after the resolution has been voted upon at the first meeting, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the General Secretary to the Bishop of the NALC, attesting that the special meeting was legal called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall mail copies of the resolution to voting members of this congregation.
 - c. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the first meeting, this congregation shall be in consultation with the NALC during a waiting period not to exceed 90 days.
 - d. If this congregation, after such consultation, is still considering termination of its relationship with the NALC, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present. Notice of the second meeting shall be sent to all voting members.
 - e. Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the General Secretary to the Bishop of the NALC that the second special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote and shall send copies of the resolution and certification to the voting members of the congregation. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the second meeting, the relationship between this congregation and the North American Lutheran Church shall be terminated.

Chapter 7.
PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

- 7.01. If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the North American Lutheran Church in accordance with Nebraska statute 21-2801.
- 7.02. If this congregation is removed from membership in the North American Lutheran Church according to its procedure for discipline, or pursuant to Article 14 of the constitution and bylaws of the North American Lutheran Church, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.
- 7.03. If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to transfer to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation, provided the process for termination of relationship in 6.05. has been followed.
- 7.04. If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body and have followed the process for termination of relationship in 6.05., title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation.

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 communed and made a 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 Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Church Council of this congregation.
 - e. **Seasonal** members are voting members of other congregations of this church who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation, including exercising limited voting rights in this congregation. The Church Council may grant seasonal membership to such persons provided that this congregation is a member of a synod where the NALC has approved seasonal member voting on its territory. Such seasonal members shall have all the privileges and duties of voting members except that:
 - 1) they shall not be eligible or elected office in, or for membership on the Church Council or on a call committee of this congregation;
 - 2) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning of affecting the call or termination of call of any minister of this congregation;
 - 3) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the affiliation of this congregation with this church;
 - 4) they shall not be eligible to serve as voting members from 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.
 - 5) they shall not, even if otherwise permitted by this congregation, vote by proxy or by absentee ballot; and
 - 6) they shall not, within any two calendar month period, exercise voting rights in this congregation and in the congregation where they remain voting members.
 - f. **Inactive** members are those who have not maintained their membership in accordance to the provisions of this congregation's constitution in the previous year and have no voice and no

- vote at meetings. Inactive members will be maintained on the roster of this congregation for the preceding year as a means of grace.
- 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 in accordance with Article 14 “Discipline” conveyed in the NALC constitution under and the accompanying by laws; or
 - f. removal from the roll due to inactivity as defined in this constitution and 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

- 9.01. Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose.
- 9.02. Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the North American Lutheran Church or a candidate for the rosters of Word and Sacrament may be called as pastor of this congregation.
- 9.03. 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.
 - 7) strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;
 - 8) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel; and
 - 9) impart knowledge of the NALC and its wider ministry through public provision of information, distribution of publications and other appropriate means,
 - 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) relate to all schools and organizations of this congregation;
 - 3) install regularly elected members of the Church Council; and

- 4) with the Church Council, administer discipline.
 - 5) Endeavor to increase the support given to the NALC.
 - 6) Encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the NALC.
- 9.04. 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.
- 9.05. 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 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;
 - 4) the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
 - 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty;
 - 7) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament;
 - 8) the dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement;
 - 9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- 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 Church Council 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 or the pastor may call a special Congregational Meeting to consider the matter. At such a meeting, the pastor and the Church Council leadership shall have a full and fair opportunity to present their positions on all matters relevant for consideration. Thereafter, the congregation by a two-thirds vote may terminate the pastor's call. In all events, the Church Council by majority vote may suspend a pastor with pay if the Church Council determines that such suspension is necessary to protect the congregation and all whom it serves. No such suspension may last more than 90 days unless the pastor agrees otherwise.
- 9.06. At a time of pastoral vacancy, the Church Council may consult with the NALC. An interim pastor may be appointed by the Church Council.
- 9.07. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the Church Council. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.
- 9.08. 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.

- 9.09. 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 and the Church Council. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through the same consultation process.
- 9.10. The congregation may depart from the requirements in section 9.05 (a) by calling a pastor for a specific term. 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 9.05 (a) and 9.05 (b).
- 9.11. 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 receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- 9.12. 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.
- 10.01.01. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held on the third Sunday of January, or as soon thereafter if hindered by weather conditions.
- 10.01.02. At the annual meeting, the pastor, the secretary, and treasurers of the congregation shall submit a written report. Each Mission Team, organization and school within the congregation shall submit a written report.
- 10.01.03. The fiscal year shall be the calendar year.
- 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 percent of the voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held, and no other business shall be transacted.
- 10.03. Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays or by mail or electronic means to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting.
- 10.04. Ten percent 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 those voting 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.
- 10.08. This congregation may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronic telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural

communication. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Chapter 11.

OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION

- 11.01. The officers of this congregation shall be a president or copresidents, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.
- 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.
 - d. The officers of the Church Council shall be president or copresidents and vice president, elected from the membership of the council. The secretary may be elected from membership of the council, or the office secretary employed by the church may serve as the council secretary. The treasurer may be elected or may be a member of the congregation not serving on the council. If the treasurer or secretary is not elected from the membership of the council, the person shall have voice but not vote at the meetings of the Church Council.
- 11.01.01. Presidents or co-presidents shall preside at meetings of the Church Council.
- 11.01.02. The vice president shall assume the duties of the president or co-presidents in the event of the president's or co-president's inability to serve.
- 11.01.03. The secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation and of the Church Council, which shall be preserved permanently in the congregation's archives.
- 11.01.04. The treasurer shall receive reports of all assets received from all sources including the report of contributions from the church office secretary and disperse them on proper orders making periodic remittance of mission support receipts. The treasurer shall make a written report on all financial transactions to the Church Council on a monthly basis and to the congregation at its annual meeting.
- 11.02. The officers identified in this Chapter 11 shall be elected by the Church Council by written ballot and 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.
- 11.03. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. No elected officer shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

Chapter 12.

CHURCH COUNCIL

- 12.01. The voting membership of the Church Council shall consist of nine members of this congregation. If possible, a tenth member of the Church Council may be a confirmed youth. The confirmed youth shall have voice, but no vote at the meetings of the Church Council. 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 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. Consistent with the laws of the state in which this congregation is incorporated, 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 shall be elected by majority vote by written ballot at the annual meeting of the congregation on the third Sunday in January. They shall serve terms of three years or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected. Newly elected Church Council members shall be installed at worship on any Sunday prior to the February council meeting. Members shall be eligible to serve no more than one full term consecutively.
- 12.02.01. Nominations for Council membership shall be made by the Council. One nominee shall be presented for each vacancy to be filled. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. A majority of the votes cast shall be necessary for election.
- 12.03. If any elected office becomes vacant, the Church Council shall elect by majority vote a replacement as soon as practicable to serve the remainder of the unexpired term until the next annual meeting. The time served under this 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(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 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 and Mission District as well as cooperation with other Christian congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to the constitutions of the NALC and Salem Lutheran Church.
 - i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Lutheran Church.
 - j. 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 directors 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 Nebraska, 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 may enter into contracts for up to five percent of the current expenses for the preceding year for items not included in the budget.
 - d. The Church Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations of more than five percent in excess of the anticipated receipts 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 out in partnership with the North American Lutheran Church and Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.
 - e. The Church Council shall notify the congregation of operational (General Fund) contributions. Adjustments to operational expenses may be made when contributions do not meet anticipated receipts.
 - f. 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.
 - g. The Church Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program, ensuring that its investments are with qualified and fully insured financial institutions.
- 12.06. The Church Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution, bylaws and continuing resolutions are carried out.
 - 12.07. The Church Council shall annually review the updates of the membership roster.
 - 12.08. The Church Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the salaried staff of this congregation.
 - 12.09. The Church Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.
 - 12.10. The Church Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president/copresidents and shall be called by the president/copresidents at the request of at least 50% of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.
- 12.10.A23** The following shall constitute the order of business at a Church Council meeting:
- a. Attendance and note reasons for absences
 - b. Call meeting to order/Devotions
 - c. Approval of the Minutes
 - d. Treasurer's Report
 - e. Correspondence
 - f. Pastor's Report
 - g. Old Business
 - h. New Business
 - i. Additions to the Agenda
 - j. Ministry Team and Special Committees Reports
 - k. Announcements
 - l. Next Meeting Date
 - m. Adjournment with prayer
- 12.11. Church Council meetings are open to any member of this congregation unless the Council votes to go into executive session.
 - 12.12. 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.

- 12.13. The church and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and telephone conference, and to the extent permitted by state law, (Nebraska statute 84-1411) notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Chapter 13.

MINISTRY TEAMS AND COMMITTEES OF THE CONGREGATION

- 13.01. The officers of this congregation and the pastor shall constitute the Executive Committee.
- 13.02. The Church Council shall serve as the Nominating Team.
- 13.03. An Audit Committee of three voting members shall be appointed by the Church Council.
- 13.04. A Mutual Ministry Team of three voting members may be appointed jointly by the president/copresidents and the pastor. Term of office shall be two years; terms may be adjusted at the discretion of the president/copresidents and pastor.
- 13.05. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of 5-7 voting members shall be approved by the Church Council. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor.
- 13.06. A Constitution Review Team of three voting members shall be appointed by the Church Council.
- 13.07. Other ministry teams and committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Church Council. A member of the Church Council may serve as a liaison on each of these teams and committees.
- 13.08. Descriptions and duties of ministry teams and committees of this congregation shall be specified in the Continuing Resolutions.
- 13.09. The pastor of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all Ministry Teams and committees of the congregation. The president/copresidents of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all Ministry Teams and committees of the 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. This congregation at its meeting shall determine their policies, guide their activities, and receive reports concerning their membership, work, and finances.
- 14.02. Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the NALC, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Church Council and specified in a continuing resolution.

Chapter 15.

DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

- 15.01. Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith, willful or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming of a member of the church of Christ, continual and intentional interference with the ministry of the congregation, or willful and repeated harassment or defamation of member(s) and or pastor(s) of the congregation is sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation and repentance will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps as necessary:
- a. Private counsel and admonition by the pastor,
 - b. Censure and admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses
 - c. Written referral of the matter by the Church Council to the NALC discipline committee.
- 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. Members of the Church Council who participate in the preparation of the written charges or who present evidence or testimony in the hearing before the Church 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 Church 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.
- 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. Bylaws in the constitution are designated with second sub-paragraph for an example as in 10.01.01.

- 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, 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 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. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law (Nebraska state statute 84-1411).
- 16.04. Adopted or amended changes to the bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the General Secretary of the NALC.

Chapter 17.

AMENDMENTS

- 17.01. Amendments may be proposed by at least five (5) voting members or by the Church Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Church Council 60 days before a regular or special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose. The Church Council shall notify the members of the proposal with the council's recommendations regarding disposition of the proposal at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law (Nebraska state statute 84-1411).
- 17.02. An amendment to this constitution, proposed under 17.01., shall:
 - a. be approved at a legally called Congregational Meeting according to this constitution by a simple majority vote of those voting members present and voting;
 - b. be ratified without change at the next annual Congregational Meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those voting members present and voting; and
 - c. have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.

Chapter 18.

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

- 18.01. This congregation in a legally called Congregational Meeting or the Church Council may enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this congregation. Continuing Resolutions in the constitution are designated with second sub-paragraph for an example as in 12.10.A23.
- 18.02. Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a majority vote of a Congregational Meeting or a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Church Council.
- 18.03. Adopted or amended continuing resolutions shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the General Secretary of the NALC.

Chapter 19.

INDEMNIFICATION

- 19.01. 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 Church 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.

Chapter 20.

ORGANIZATION AND DISSOLUTION

- 20.01. The purpose for which this congregation is formed, and the business and objectives to be carried on and promoted by it are to operate a religious organization exempt from income taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or corresponding section of any future federal tax code and as the same may be amended at any time and from time to time. This congregation is organized exclusively for charitable, religious and educational purposes, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or any corresponding section of any future federal tax code.
- 20.02. Upon the dissolution of this congregation, the assets of this congregation shall be distributed for one (1) or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code and as the same may be amended at any time and from time to time[, or in the absence of such designation, to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose.

