



May 6, 2026

Dear Fellow Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church Members,

Proposed changes to the Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church Constitution were made available to the congregation for review in December 2025.

At the Annual Congregation Meeting on January 25, 2026, the proposed changes were approved by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting.

Per provision *C16.02 of this Constitution, these changes must be ratified unchanged at the next regular meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting. **The vote on whether or not to ratify these changes will occur at the Semi-Annual Congregation Meeting scheduled for June 2026.**

A copy of the Saint Andrew's Constitution that includes the changes (with explanations for each change) is on the following pages. These are the same changes that were approved at the Annual Congregation Meeting. You are encouraged to review this document before the Semi-Annual Congregation Meeting.

Changes include, but are not limited to:

- Reducing the number of elected adult Council member positions from twelve (12) to nine (9).
- Keeping the normal term length for elected adult Council members at three (3) years, but moving the language from a provision to a bylaw and clarifying the number of terms that can be served consecutively.
- Allowing for flexibility in filling the youth Council member position, and clarifying the term length and number of consecutive terms a youth Council member can serve.
- Allowing Council officers to serve three consecutive one-year terms in the same office, but only with unanimous Council approval. (Currently, officers are limited to serving two consecutive terms in the same office.)
- Providing the Council flexibility on whether or not to fill a vacancy on the Council.
- Allowing for a range of four to six members on the Nominating Committee (current requirement is six members.)
- Bringing language and provision numbering in the Saint Andrew's Constitution into closer alignment with the *ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations*.

Your presence at the Semi-Annual Congregation Meeting is important to ensure we have a quorum to vote on the ratification of these Constitution changes.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact Constitution Task Force chair Susan Hegedus, susanhegedus@outlook.com, or Council President Tom Getzinger, tomget@hotmail.com.

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

**PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE
SAINT ANDREW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH CONSTITUTION
As of October 1, 2025**

Key to proposed changes to the Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church Constitution:

- Additions are underlined; deletions are ~~struck through~~.
- Changes highlighted in yellow are changes initiated by the ELCA to provisions of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, and approved at the 2022 and 2025 Churchwide Assemblies.
 - Saint Andrew's must incorporate changes to required provisions (marked with an “*”).
 - Saint Andrew's can choose whether or not to make changes to non-required provisions (no “*” before the provision number.)
- Changes highlighted in light orange are changes recommended by the 2025 Constitution Task Force. (The text of the *Introduction* is not highlighted but is a change recommended by the 2025 Constitution Task Force.)
- Boxes containing final wording of recommended changes and rationales for the changes follow each change. The boxes are for explanatory purposes only and are not part of the Saint Andrew's Constitution.



Working Copy with Proposed Changes – as of October 1, 2025

THE
CONSTITUTION
OF
SAINT ANDREW'S
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
OF
BELLEVUE, WASHINGTON

2650 – 148TH AVENUE SE
BELLEVUE, WA 98007
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REVISED: DATE TO BE DETERMINED ~~MARCH 6, 2022~~

RATIFIED: DATE TO BE DETERMINED ~~JUNE 12, 2022~~

EFFECTIVE: ~~DECEMBER 2022~~

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS AS OF: DATE TO BE DETERMINED ~~MAY 13, 2024~~

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION AND CODIFICATION EXPLANATION	1
PREAMBLE	4
CHAPTER 1. NAME AND INCORPORATION	4
CHAPTER 2. CONFESSION OF FAITH	4
CHAPTER 3. NATURE OF THE CHURCH.....	4
CHAPTER 4. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE	5
CHAPTER 5. POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION.....	6
CHAPTER 6. CHURCH AFFILIATION.....	7
CHAPTER 7. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP	9
CHAPTER 8. MEMBERSHIP	10
CHAPTER 9. ROSTERED MINISTER	11
CHAPTER 10. CONGREGATION MEETING	17
CHAPTER 11. OFFICERS	19
CHAPTER 12. CONGREGATION COUNCIL	21
CHAPTER 13. CONGREGATION COMMITTEES.....	25
CHAPTER 14. ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THIS CONGREGATION	29
CHAPTER 15. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION	29
CHAPTER 16. AMENDMENTS	31
CHAPTER 17. BYLAWS	32
CHAPTER 18. CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS	32
CHAPTER 19. INDEMNIFICATION.....	32

* Required provision

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church is a congregation member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The Constitution of Saint Andrew's Evangelical Lutheran Church (Saint Andrew's Constitution) is based on the ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations.

The Model Constitution for Congregations, like the other governing documents of this church, reflects the theology and polity of this church as it organizes itself to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, share the sacraments, reach out to the neighbor with good news, and share the love of God in the world. Each expression of this church—churchwide, synod, and congregation—is held together in a relationship of interdependence that encourages each to respond to its context. These documents also demonstrate our commitment to seeing ourselves with others as part of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. As such, the Model Constitution for Congregations is deeply rooted in Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and the history of this church and its predecessors.

The Model Constitution for Congregations originally was adopted by the Constituting Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and has been amended by subsequent churchwide assemblies. This edition of the Saint Andrew's Constitution includes amendments to the Model Constitution for Congregations approved by the seventeenth Churchwide Assembly in 2025. It is consistent with the requirements of the governing documents of the ELCA's churchwide organization, and it provides organizational flexibility to recognize local context.

REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED PROVISIONS

Sections of this constitution marked by [*] are **required provisions** when a congregation amends its governing documents. These sections must be used without alteration or amendment of the text in any manner (i.e., neither additions nor deletions are permissible). This requirement is based on provision 9.52. in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which requires that when a congregation of this church “wishes to amend any provision of its governing documents, the governing documents of that congregation shall be so amended to conform to 9.25.b.” in the ELCA constitution. Provisions in the Model Constitution for Congregations identified by [*] are those required under ELCA constitutional provision 9.25.b.

The other provisions in the Model Constitution for Congregations (those that are not marked by [*]) are **recommended provisions**. These provisions provide suggested wording that congregations may find useful. They may be included, omitted, or altered at the discretion of the individual congregation.

REVIEW BY SYNOD

Each congregation of this church, including Saint Andrew's, is to provide a copy of its governing documents, and any amendments thereto, to its synod. In accordance with ELCA bylaw 9.53.03. and Chapters 16, 17, and 18 of the Model Constitution for Congregations, certain amendments to a congregation constitution only become effective when approved by the synod, while others need only be reported to the synod. (For a full explanation of the amendment and review process, please see the chapters referenced above in this paragraph.)

For those changes that require synod review, the synod shall notify the congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed changes; the changes go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them. No governing document amendment will be approved by a synod if it conflicts with the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or required provisions of the Model Constitution for Congregations.

Amendments that bring the congregation's constitution into conformity with the Model Constitution for Congregations, whether to match required or recommended provisions, go into effect immediately upon approval at a congregation meeting, and are then reported to the synod.

In order to be sure that amendments meet constitutional requirements and avoid potential problems, congregations are strongly urged to submit all proposed amendments to a congregation's constitutional provisions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions to the synod for review before voting on them.

CODIFICATION EXPLANATION

The Saint Andrew's Constitution, like the Model Constitution for Congregations and the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Constitution for Synods, is organized into chapters by general subject matter and codified as follows:

- a. Constitutional provisions in the Model Constitution for Congregations are codified with two sets of numbers, preceded by a “C”:
 1. **Required constitutional provisions**, as explained above, are preceded by [*]. For example, *C5.02. is a required constitutional provision in Chapter 5, the chapter on Powers of the Congregation.
 2. **Recommended constitutional provisions**, as explained above, are not preceded by [*]. For example, C5.05. is a recommended provision in Chapter 5, the chapter on Powers of the Congregation.
 3. **Other constitutional provisions**, including modified versions of the recommended provisions, may be proposed and

* Required provision

1

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THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

adopted by individual congregations. Such provisions may not conflict with the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and are adopted and become effective in accordance with Chapter 16 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

b. The *Model Constitution for Congregations* contains no required or recommended **bylaws**. If a congregation chooses to adopt bylaws, they should be codified with three sets of numbers, each followed by a period: the chapter number (preceded by a "C"), the related constitutional provision number, and a two-digit bylaw number. For example, a bylaw could be codified as C5.03.01. Within the *Saint Andrew's Constitution*, **bylaws** are further identified by **blue text and single underline** of the number and title.

Bylaws are adopted and amended in accordance with Chapter 17 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

Congregations may adopt bylaws related to each congregation's organization, operation, and life. Bylaws should be incorporated following the constitutional provisions to which they apply. They should not be organized in a separate section or document.

c. The *Model Constitution for Congregations* does not contain any suggested **continuing resolutions**. If congregations adopt continuing resolutions, those also are codified with three sets of numbers, except that the third set is preceded by a capital letter indicating sequence and a two-digit number indicating the year of its adoption. For example, if a congregation adopted one or more continuing resolutions in 2025 related to the Powers of the Congregation, the first continuing resolution adopted could be numbered "C5.03.A25." Within the *Saint Andrew's Constitution*, **continuing resolutions** are further identified by **green text and double underline** of the section number and title.

Continuing resolutions are adopted and amended in accordance with Chapter 18 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*. They are intended to provide more detailed descriptions of operational patterns and practices within the congregation. They should be incorporated following the constitutional provisions and/or bylaws to which they apply. They should not be organized in a separate section or document.

Each congregation has discretion and may develop its own constitutional provisions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions (including bylaws and continuing resolutions related to required constitutional provisions) as long as they do not conflict with the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* or required provisions of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

Note: In some chapters, you will see that certain numbers are missing from the numbering sequence. These omissions are intentional in order to provide options for future additions.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- "Church" with a capital letter is used in references to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. In references to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the words "church" and "this church" in lower case letters are employed.

Proposed Final wording:

As written above. Replaces text from existing Introduction to the Saint Andrew's Constitution (struck through text below.)

Rationale: Brings language of the Introduction to the Saint Andrew's Constitution more into alignment with the Introduction to the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

~~This current edition of the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* contains changes adopted at all Churchwide Assemblies, including the fifteenth Churchwide Assembly in 2019. The model is consistent with the requirements of the constitutional governing documents of the ELCA's churchwide organization and synods.~~

~~**Required provisions:** Sections of this constitution marked by an asterisk [*] are required when a congregation amends its governing documents. These sections must be used without alteration or amendment of the text in any manner (neither additions nor deletions). This is in keeping with provision 9.52. in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. This provision stipulates that when a congregation of this church "wishes to amend any provision of its governing documents, the governing documents of that congregation shall be so amended to conform to 9.25.b." in the churchwide constitution. The provisions herein marked by an asterisk are those that are indicated as required in ELCA constitutional provision 9.25.b.~~

~~**Review by synod:** In keeping with provisions that apply to all congregations of this church, each congregation is to provide a copy of its governing documents to the synod. As specified by ELCA bylaw 9.53.03. (numbering as listed in the 1991 and subsequent editions):~~

~~All proposed changes in the constitution or incorporation documents of a congregation shall be referred to the synod with which the congregation is affiliated. The synod shall approve or disapprove the proposed changes within 120 days of receipt thereof, and shall notify the congregation of its decision; in the absence of a decision, the changes shall go into effect.~~

~~**Codification explanation:** A numerical codification indicates (a) general subject, (b) constitutional provisions, (c) bylaws, and (d) continuing resolutions.~~

* Required provision

2

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THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

- a. Major sectors are designated as chapters. The chapter designation becomes the first number in the codification sequence and is followed by a period. Thus, provisions in "Chapter 8. Membership" are preceded by "8."
- b. Constitutional provisions are codified with two sets of numbers: the chapter number and a two-digit number preceding the second period in the codification. Thus, one constitutional provision related to "Membership" is codified *C8.02.
- c. Bylaw provisions are codified with three sets of numbers: the chapter number, the related constitutional provision number, and a two-digit number. Thus, one bylaw provision related to "Membership" would be codified C8.02.01. Because bylaws and continuing resolutions normally are so specifically related to details of each congregation's organization, operation, and life, no model set of bylaws or continuing resolutions is provided. Each congregation may develop its own bylaws and continuing resolutions, but no such bylaws or continuing resolutions may conflict with this constitution, the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the constitution of the synod, as indicated in *C6.03.e. **Bylaws** are further identified by **blue text and single underline** of the number and title within this Congregation's constitution.
- d. The Congregation Council may adopt "continuing resolutions," which may provide descriptions of operational patterns or of the ongoing responsibilities of committees or other units within the organizational structure of the congregation. Within the governing documents of a congregation, continuing resolutions are the provisions most easily amended. Unlike constitutional provisions and bylaws, continuing resolutions may be updated regularly by the Congregation Council without the necessity of calling a regular or special Congregation Meeting. Continuing resolutions also are codified with three sets of numbers except that the third set is preceded by a capital letter. Thus, a continuing resolution might be numbered C13. to designate the chapter; C13.07. to designate the subject matter within the chapter; and the third set might be numbered A05. in the codification C13.07.A05. to indicate by the "A" that it is the first continuing resolution regarding that subject and to indicate by the "05" that it was adopted in 2005. **Continuing resolutions** are further identified by **green text and double underline** of the section number and title within this Congregation's constitution.

Ease of use: The provisions of your congregation's constitution, the bylaws, and the continuing resolutions that pertain to the same matter should be placed together for clarity and ease in use.

If chapter numbers are considered the major sequence number, constitution numbers as a fraction of the chapter number, and bylaw numbers as a fraction of the constitution number, then the codification can be said to provide a progressive sequence. Thus, *C5.01. will precede C5.03.10., and C9.11.16. will precede *C9.13.

All provisions in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* are prefaced with "C" to distinguish these provisions from comparable ones in the synodical and churchwide constitutions.

Missing numbers: As you work with the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, you may notice that certain numbers seem to be missing from the numbering sequence in some chapters. That is intentional. In the style followed here, the number ".10." and multiples thereof have been reserved for possible use as section headings in future editions. Therefore, in the sequence, for example, of Chapters 1, 9, and 12, these ".10." numbers do not appear.

References to church: In the governing documents, "Church" with a capital letter is used in references to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. In references to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the words "church" and "this church" in lower case letters are employed, although, for clarity in this constitution, the full name or "ELCA" normally is used.

The specific congregation may be identified, as provided in C1.02., as "this congregation."

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

*PREAMBLE

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

Chapter 1. NAME AND INCORPORATION

C1.01. The name of this congregation shall be Saint Andrew's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bellevue, Washington

C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws **and continuing resolutions**, the congregation of Saint Andrew's Evangelical Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."

Proposed Final wording:

C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws and continuing resolutions, the congregation of Saint Andrew's Evangelical Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."

Rationale: Recommended change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2025*. Insertion for comprehensiveness.

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

Chapter 2. CONFESSION OF FAITH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 3. NATURE OF THE CHURCH

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

***C3.02.** This church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world.

***C3.03.** 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. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of

* Required provision

4

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THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

- *C3.04. This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in The Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God's mission in the world.
- *C3.05. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or "this church") as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.

Chapter 4. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- *C4.01. The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.
- *C4.02. To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:
 - a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
 - b. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
 - c. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
 - d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, and justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and powerlessoppressed and committing itself to their needs.

Proposed Final wording:

d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.

Rationale: Required change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2022*.

- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
- f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.
- *C4.03. To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:
 - a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
 - b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
 - c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.
 - d. Teach the Word of God.
 - e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
 - f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
 - g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for this congregation's ministry and the ministry of the other expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

- h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.

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

C4.04.01. Organization Structure

Spiritual The Pastor(s) are responsible for guiding and directing the spiritual life of this congregation and for the activities identified in Section *C9.03. of this Constitution.

Temporal The Congregation Council is responsible for overseeing and directing the temporal affairs of this congregation. These activities shall be managed by the president of the congregation.

Office-Staff The Pastor(s) and Congregation Council will be supported in their respective activities by **an office staff**. The authority to create staff positions, or to leave specific positions vacant rests with the Congregation Council. Management of **office**-staff personnel shall be the responsibility of the Lead Pastor.

Proposed Final wording:

Staff The Pastor(s) and Congregation Council will be supported in their respective activities by staff. The authority to create staff positions, or to leave specific positions vacant rests with the Congregation Council. Management of staff personnel shall be the responsibility of the Lead Pastor.

Rationale: The term "Staff" is more inclusive than "Office Staff".

*C4.05. This congregation shall adopt and periodically review a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

C4.05.B22A22. Mission Statement

Saint Andrew's Mission Statement is "Growing Together in Christ to Love and Serve All People."

Proposed Final wording:

C4.05.A22. Mission Statement

Rationale: Corrects codification error made in 2022.

*C4.06. References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God's mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

Chapter 5. POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

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

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

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

- a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- c. call a minister of Word and Service;
- d. terminate the call of a minister of Word and Service in conformity with the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;

* Required provision

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

- e. adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in Chapter 16, amendments to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 17, and continuing resolutions, as provided in Chapter 18;
- f. approve the annual budget;
- g. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
- h. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
- i. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
- j. elect its Congregation Council, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, ~~and~~ bylaws, and continuing resolutions; and

Proposed Final wording:

j. elect its Congregation Council, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions; and

Rationale: The *Model Constitution for Congregations* has “and continuing resolutions” as optional language. The Saint Andrew’s Constitution contains continuing resolutions so adding the language here is appropriate, and also makes *C5.03.j consistent with the language in C1.02 and C12.06 of the Saint Andrew’s Constitution.

k. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.

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

Proposed Final wording:

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

Rationale: Required change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2025*: This change allows for lay voting members of the Synod Assembly to be elected either by the congregation or by the Congregation Council. Current language requires election by the congregation.

Chapter 6. CHURCH AFFILIATION

- *C6.01. This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the Northwest Washington Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- *C6.02. This congregation accepts the Confession of Faith and agrees to the purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and shall act in accordance with them.
- *C6.03. This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which:
 - a. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
 - b. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the bishop of the synod. These special circumstances are limited either to calling a candidate approved for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or to contracting for pastoral services with a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion.

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

- d. This congregation agrees to consider ministers of Word and Service for call to other staff positions in this congregation according to the procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- e. This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution with the synod for review to ascertain that all of its provisions are in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and with the constitution of the synod.

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

- a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.
- b. This congregation ceases to exist.
- c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or in accordance with provision 9.23. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- d. The Northwest Washington Synod takes charge and control of the property of this congregation to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of the synod pursuant to †S13.24. of the synod constitution. This congregation shall have the right to appeal the decision to the next Synod Assembly.
- e. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in *C6.05.

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

- a. A resolution indicating the 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 bishop of the synod, during which time this congregation shall consult with the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any. The times and manner of the consultation shall be determined by the bishop in consultation with the Congregation Council. Unless ~~he or she is the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are a~~ voting members of this congregation, ~~the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, they~~ shall have voice but not vote at the first meeting.

Proposed Final wording:

- a. Unless the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are voting members of this congregation, they shall have voice but not vote at the first meeting.

Rationale: Required change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2022*: Inclusive language.

- b. Within 10 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 bishop, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall send copies of the resolution and certification 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, the bishop of the synod and this congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph a. above, during a period of at least 90 days after receipt by the bishop of the attestation and certification as specified in paragraph b. above.
- d. If this congregation, after such consultation is still considering termination of its relationship with this church, 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 and to the bishop at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Unless ~~he or she is the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are a~~ voting members of this congregation, ~~the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, they~~ shall have voice but not vote at the second meeting.

Proposed Final wording:

- d. Unless the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are voting members of this congregation, they shall have voice but not vote at the second meeting.

Rationale: Required change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2022*: Inclusive language.

- 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 bishop, attesting 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

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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 the congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to Synod Council approval as required by paragraphs f. and g. below.

- f. Unless this notification to the bishop also certifies that this congregation has voted to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, this congregation shall be deemed an independent or non-Lutheran church, in which case *C7.04. shall apply.
- g. This congregation shall abide by these covenants by and among the three expressions of this church:
 - 1) Congregations seeking to terminate their relationship with this church which fail or refuse to comply with each of the foregoing provisions in *C6.05. shall be required to receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.
 - 2) Congregations which had been members of the Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to receive synod approval before terminating their membership in this church.
 - 3) Congregations established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to satisfy all financial obligations to this church and receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.
- h. If this congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at this congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above or fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at this congregation's second meeting as specified in paragraph d. above, another attempt to consider termination of relationship with this church must follow all requirements of *C6.05. and may begin no sooner than six months after the meeting at which the two-thirds vote was not achieved.

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

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

Chapter 7. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

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

*C7.02. If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline or pursuant to 9.23. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

*C7.03. If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to ~~relate transfer~~ to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation, provided the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05. has been followed. Before this congregation takes action to ~~relate transfer~~ to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Northwest Washington Synod.

Proposed Final wording:

*C7.03. If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to relate to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation, provided the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05. has been followed. Before this congregation takes action to relate to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Northwest Washington Synod.

Rationale: Required change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2025*. Consistency with 9.71.d. of the *ELCA Constitution*.

*C7.04. 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 *C6.05., title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with this

* Required provision

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

congregation by the process established by the synod, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of this congregation. If the Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to continue as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In neither case does title to this congregation's property transfer to the synod.

***C7.05.** Notwithstanding the provisions of *C7.02. and *C7.03. above, where this congregation has received property from the synod pursuant to a deed or other instrument containing restrictions under provision 9.71.a. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, this congregation accepts such restrictions and:

- a. Shall not transfer, encumber, mortgage, or in any way burden or impair any right, title, or interest in the property without prior approval of the Synod Council.
- b. Shall—upon written demand by the Synod Council, pursuant to †S13.23. of the constitution of the Northwest Washington Synod—reconvey and transfer all right, title, and interest in the property to the synod.

Chapter 8. MEMBERSHIP

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

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

- a. **Baptized** members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.
- b. **Confirmed** members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.
- c. **Voting** members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of this congregation as well as the other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws. They shall not have voted as a seasonal member of another congregation of this church in the previous two calendar months.
- 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. These individuals have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights or other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.
- 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 Congregation Council may grant seasonal membership to such persons provided that this congregation is a member of a synod where the Synod Council 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 for elected office in, or for membership on the Congregation Council or on a call committee of, this congregation;
 - 2) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or 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 of the Synod Assembly or the Churchwide Assembly;
 - 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.

* Required provision

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

- *C8.03. All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Congregation Council.
- *C8.04. It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregation to:
- make regular use of the means of grace, both Word and sacraments;
 - live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran church; and
 - support the work of this congregation, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.
- *C8.05. Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:
- death;
 - resignation;
 - transfer or release;
 - disciplinary action in accordance with Chapter 20 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or
 - removal from the roll due to inactivity in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.
- Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the Church has a continuing pastoral concern.

C8.05.01. Removal From Membership.

When a member has failed to receive Holy Communion and to make a contribution of record for a period of two consecutive calendar years, they may be removed from the membership roll of this congregation by action of the Congregation Council. If possible, this procedure will not be implemented until such member has been notified and counseled about their absence and lack of support.

Chapter 9. ROSTERED MINISTER

- *C9.01. Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by this congregation to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.02. **This congregation may call as a pastor only:**
- ~~Only~~ a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or
 - a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop. **may be called as a pastor of this congregation.**

Proposed Final wording:

- *C9.02. This congregation may call as a pastor only:
- a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or
 - a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop.

Rationale: Required change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2025*: Formatting for clarity.

- *C9.03. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
- Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
 - preach the Word;
 - administer the sacraments;
 - conduct public worship;
 - provide pastoral care;
 - seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

- 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
- 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; and
- 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, ~~calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.~~

Proposed Final wording:

8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.

Rationale: Required changes from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2022 and 2025*.

- b. Each pastor 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 Congregation Council;
 - 4) with the council, administer discipline;
 - 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and of the Northwest Washington Synod; and
 - 6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

*C9.04. The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.

*C9.05. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and this congregation shall be as follows:

- a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by the pastor's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for ~~any of~~ the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) ~~inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in view of physical~~ disability or ~~mental~~ incapacity of the pastor;
 - 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- b. When allegations of ~~physical~~ disability or ~~mental~~ incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
 - 1) the bishop, ~~in his or her who has~~ sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

- 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged ~~physical~~ disability or ~~mental~~ incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament with disability status. Upon ~~removal-resumption~~ of the ~~disability and the restoration of the pastor to health, ability to conduct the office effectively,~~ the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

Proposed Final wording:

- Wording changes remove gender specific language and delete terms "physical" and "mental."
- c. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

Rationale: Required change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2022*: These changes parallel changes being made elsewhere in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*. Language related to disability has been changed to reflect current understandings and to clarify that inability and incapacity to conduct the pastoral office effectively are the standard to be considered. In addition, the words "any of" have been inserted for precision, and references to the synod bishop have been made inclusive.

- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by this congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, this congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.
- *C9.06. At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor ~~may shall~~ be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.

Proposed Final wording:

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

Rationale: Required change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2025*: It is not always possible for a synod bishop to appoint an interim pastor for every congregation.

- *C9.07. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in this congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any rostered minister providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

- *C9.08. This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting.
- *C9.09. When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- *C9.11. With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from *C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of *C9.05.a.
- *C9.12. The pastor of this congregation:
- shall keep accurate **parochial** records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from this congregation;
 - shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod; and
 - shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- *C9.13. The pastor(s) shall submit a report of **his or her** ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- *C9.14. The **parochial** records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of this congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in **his or her the secretary's** hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another call or approval of a request for change in roster status.

Proposed Final wording:

*C.9.14. The records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of this congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in the secretary's hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another call or approval of a request for change in roster status.

Rationale: Required change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2022*: The changes in *C9.12., *C9.13, and *C9.14 parallel changes being made elsewhere in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*. The deletion of "parochial" is for consistency of usage. The deletions of "his or her" are for inclusive language.

- *C9.15. **Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synod bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between this congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synod bishop and approved by this congregation.**

Proposed Final wording:

*C.9.15. as written above.

Rationale: Required change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2025*: This provision was previously an optional provision and is being changed to "required." With the increasing use of exchangeability of rostered ministers with full communion partners, it is advisable that all congregations make allowance for that possibility.

- *C9.21. Authority to call a deacon shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by this congregation to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.22. **This congregation may call as a deacon only:**
- a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or
 - a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended for this congregation by

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

the synod bishop. ~~may be called as a deacon of this congregation.~~

Proposed Final wording:

- *C9.22. This congregation may call as a deacon only:
- a. a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
or
 - b. a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop.

Rationale: Required change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2025*: Editorial formatting for clarity.

- *C9.23. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:
- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
 - b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
 - c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world, witnessing to the realm of God in the community, the nation, and abroad proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;

Proposed Final wording:

- c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;

Rationale: Required changes from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2022 and 2025*.

- d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
 - e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
 - f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
 - g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
 - h. Share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
 - i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.
- *C9.24. The specific duties of the deacon, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the deacon shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.25. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Service and this congregation shall be as follows:
- a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a deacon, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by the deacon's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the deacon, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the ministry of Word and Service effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) inability to conduct the office effectively in view of physical-disability or mental-incapacity of the deacon;
 - 5) suspension of the deacon through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the deacon from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church;

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

- 7) termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- b. When allegations of ~~physical~~ disability or ~~mental~~ incapacity of the deacon under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the office of minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
- 1) the bishop, ~~in his or her who has~~ sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged ~~physical~~ disability or ~~mental~~ incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the deacon's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service with disability status. Upon ~~removal-resumption~~ of the ~~disability and the restoration of the deacon to health ability to conduct the office effectively~~, the bishop shall take steps to enable the deacon to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

Proposed Final wording:

- Wording changes remove gender specific language and remove terms "physical" and "mental".
- c. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the deacon to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

Rationale: Required change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2022*: These changes parallel changes being made elsewhere in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*. Language related to disability has been changed to reflect current understandings and to clarify that inability and incapacity to conduct the pastoral office effectively are the standard to be considered. In addition, the words "any of" have been inserted for precision, and references to the synod bishop have been made inclusive.

- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the deacon and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the deacon's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by this congregation and by the deacon, if appropriate. If the deacon and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the deacon's call, this congregation may dismiss the deacon only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.
- *C9.26. This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former deacon before calling a successor. A deacon shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting.
- *C9.27. When a deacon is called to serve in company with another rostered minister or other rostered ministers, the privileges and responsibilities of each rostered minister shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the rostered ministers, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion

* Required provision

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

- *C9.28. With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from *C9.25.a. and call a deacon for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the deacon and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of *C9.25.a.
- *C9.29. The deacon shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the deacon shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- *C9.31. The deacon(s) shall submit a report of **his or her** ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

Rationale: Required change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2022*: Inclusive language.

Chapter 10. CONGREGATION MEETING

C10.01. This congregation shall have at least one regular meeting per year. The regular meeting(s) of the congregation shall be held at the time(s) specified in the bylaws. Consistent with the laws of the State of Washington, the bylaws shall designate one regular meeting per year as the annual meeting of this congregation.

C10.01.01. Meeting Schedule

The annual business meeting of this congregation shall be held during the month of January. The election of council members and the adoption of the annual budget shall take place at this meeting. ~~In addition, the comprehensive annual report specified in section C12.11. of this constitution shall be presented at this meeting.~~ A second regular congregational meeting shall be held during the month of June to review progress toward congregational objectives and to conduct business not specifically designated within this constitution for the January meeting.

If an in-person congregation meeting cannot reasonably be held in January and/or June due to a natural disaster, extreme climate conditions, a public health emergency and/or another type of national/local emergency, the Council shall elect to postpone the meeting to another month, hold the meeting by remote communications as specified in section C10.08, or cancel the meeting as the situation requires. ~~The Synod Bishop or Synod staff should be consulted before proceeding to schedule a remote meeting.~~

Proposed Final wording:

C10.01.01. Meeting Schedule

The annual business meeting of this congregation shall be held during the month of January. The election of council members and the adoption of the annual budget shall take place at this meeting. A second regular congregational meeting shall be held during the month of June to review progress toward congregational objectives and to conduct business not specifically designated within this constitution for the January meeting. If an in-person congregation meeting cannot reasonably be held in January and/or June due to a natural disaster, extreme climate conditions, a public health emergency and/or another type of national/local emergency, the Council shall elect to postpone the meeting to another month, hold the meeting by remote communications as specified in section C10.08, or cancel the meeting as the situation requires.

Rationale:

- Deleting the third sentence (regarding the annual report) recognizes that reporting to the congregation can occur at other times of the year.
- Deleting the last sentence regarding consulting with the synod: During the COVID-19 pandemic, when congregations were beginning to hold remote meetings, the synod asked to be consulted for guidance. This guidance is no longer needed.

C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the lead pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of this congregation upon the written request of **ten percent** ~~one-tenth~~ of the voting members. ~~The president of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synod bishop.~~ The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Proposed Final wording:

C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the lead pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of this congregation upon the written request of ten percent of the voting members. The president of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synod bishop. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.

Rationale: Using the term “percent” is a recommended change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2025*. Adding the sentence “The president of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synod bishop” is consistent with wording in the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

C10.03. Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting.

C10.04. ~~Ten percent~~ One-tenth of the voting members of this congregation shall constitute a quorum.

Proposed Final wording:

C10.04. Ten percent of the voting members of this congregation shall constitute a quorum.

Rationale: Change for consistency with C10.02 and the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

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

C10.06. All actions approved by this congregation shall be by majority vote of those voting members present and voting, with the exception of council member elections and except as otherwise provided in this constitution or by state law.

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

C10.08. This congregation may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Proposed Final wording:

C10.08. This congregation may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Rationale: Recommended change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2022*: This change recognizes that there are other means of providing for simultaneous communication, for those with hearing disabilities, for example.

C10.08.A22A26. Remote Meetings

Compliance with the following remote meeting logistics shall be assured:

- a. All members desiring to participate must be able to connect to the meeting through ~~conference~~ telephone conference or communication equipment that supports two-way simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent (Reference Washington State RCW 24.03.075 laws regarding non-profit corporation membership meetings and voting).

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

- b. There must be an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent during the meeting; that is, every participant must be able to hear and to speak with two way communication possible.

Proposed Final wording:

- a. All members desiring to participate must be able to connect to the meeting through telephone conference or communication equipment that supports simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent (Reference Washington State laws regarding non-profit corporation membership meetings and voting.)

Rationale:

- Wording changes in “a.” and “b.” bring language into alignment with language used in *Model Constitution for Congregations*.
- **C10.08.A26. a.** Specific RCW numbers are subject to change. The revised wording removes the specific RCW number and instead refers to the relevant subject area in the RCWs. This eliminates the need for the Saint Andrew’s constitution to stay current with the specific RCW number.

- c. The same notification required by this constitution and bylaws for an “in-person” meeting is required for remote meetings.
- d. The same quorum requirements necessary for an “in-person” meeting apply to remote meetings.
- e. The same voting requirements defined for an “in-person” meeting (as defined in C10.06) apply to remote meetings.
- f. An accurate record of voting members participating in the meeting is required.
- g. All voting members participating in a meeting must be able to cast a vote, both by written ballot and voice vote.
- 1) For votes requiring written ballots by this constitution, an accurate record of which members cast ballots and results of the balloting is required.
 - 2) For votes not requiring written ballots, an accurate method of determining “yea”, “nay”, and “abstain” votes is required.

C10.09. “Ex officio” as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited.

Proposed Final wording:

C10.09. As written above. This is a new provision.

Rationale: Recommended new provision from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2022*: There is often confusion surrounding the term “*ex officio*.” The intended meaning is that someone who is a voting member *ex officio* has both voice and vote because of the office that person holds. The term is often misunderstood, however, to mean that the person cannot vote.

Chapter 11. OFFICERS

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

- a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
- b. The officers shall be voting members of this congregation.
- c. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council ~~and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.~~

Proposed Final wording:

- c. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council.

Rationale: The definition of officers in C11.01 includes “treasurer.” The treasurer does not need to be a voting member of the Council.

- d. ~~If the Congregation Council elects its officers, the president, vice president, and secretary shall be selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council. If the treasurer is not selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council, the treasurer shall have voice but not vote at the meetings of the Congregation Council.~~

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Proposed Final wording:

Delete Section "d." of the provision.

Rationale: The language in this section is redundant to bylaw C11.02.01.

C11.02. The Congregation Council shall elect its officers at a meeting held within 30 days of adjournment of the Annual Congregational Business Meeting, and they shall be the officers of this congregation. The officers shall be elected 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.

C11.02.01. Officers

The president, vice president, and secretary shall be selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council. The treasurer, if not a member of the Congregation Council, shall be accorded the privilege of voice without vote in its meetings.

C11.02.02. Duties of Officers

- a. The president shall be responsible for conducting all meetings of the Congregation Council, the Executive Committee, and the Congregation. In addition, the president is authorized to sign for the congregation on all matters not specifically prohibited or restricted elsewhere in this constitution.
- b. During the absence of the president, the vice president shall be responsible for and assume the duties of the office of president.
- c. The secretary shall be responsible for the recording and safekeeping of all non-financial records of this congregation and correspondence of an official, legal or contractual nature between this congregation and outside agencies, businesses, and governing bodies. During the absence of the vice president, the secretary shall preside at all meetings normally conducted by that office.
- d. The treasurer shall be responsible for preparing and maintaining the financial records of this congregation. In addition, the treasurer shall ensure that all outgoing checks are signed by persons duly authorized by the Congregation Council.
- e. The officers shall be voting members of this congregation.

C11.02.A07A26. Maintenance of Congregation Records.

Under the direction of the Congregation Council Secretary (C11.02.02.c.) ~~the Office Administrator~~ **staff** shall be responsible for filing and safe keeping of all non-financial records of the Congregation.

Proposed Final wording:

C11.02.A26. Maintenance of Congregation Records.

Under the direction of the Congregation Council Secretary (C11.02.02.c.), **staff** shall be responsible for filing and safe keeping of all non-financial records of the Congregation.

Rationale: "Office Administrator" is no longer a staff position. Using the term "staff" provides flexibility in assigning the responsibility.

C11.03. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. ~~No elected officer shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.~~

C11.03.01. The president, vice president, and secretary shall be eligible to serve up to two consecutive terms in the same office. Under special circumstances and only with unanimous approval of the Congregation Council, one or more of these officers may be declared eligible to serve a third term in the same office.

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

C11.03.02. There is no limit on the number of consecutive terms the treasurer shall be eligible to serve.

Proposed Final wording:

C11.03: delete last sentence. Add two new bylaws **C11.03.01** and **C11.03.02** as written that define term limits for officers.

Rationale for C11.03.01.: In recent history, some officers have served more than two consecutive terms. This happened during COVID because of the challenges of holding an annual meeting and the desire to have some stability during an otherwise turbulent time. It also happened to allow a president to continue driving the formation of the ELCC (Eastside Lutheran Church Community). This change gives future Congregation Councils the latitude to elect an officer to more than two consecutive terms if that would best serve the Congregation. However, this should be the exception to the rule and allowed only by unanimous consent of the Council.

Rationale for C11.03.02.: The treasurer has historically been able to serve as many terms as they are elected.

Chapter 12. CONGREGATION COUNCIL

- C12.01.** The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s), plus ~~twelve~~ adult ~~and youth~~ members of this congregation as specified in the bylaws. ~~and one Youth member.~~ Any voting member of this congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member
- ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or
 - is absent from two successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause.
- Consistent with the laws of the state in which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.

C12.01.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s), plus ~~twelve~~ nine adult members and up to one youth member of this congregation.

Proposed Final wording:

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s), plus adult and youth members of this congregation as specified in the bylaws.(remainder of provision remains unchanged)

New bylaw **C12.01.01.** **The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s), plus nine adult members and up to one youth member of this congregation.**

Rationale: Moving the language that defines the number of Council members to a bylaw fits the intent that bylaws relate to a congregation's organization, operation, and life. It also allows for a more streamlined process to address feedback and make future changes.

Rationale for number of adult members.: The congregation, current Congregation Council, and Council past presidents were given questionnaires regarding the topic of the number of elected adult Council members. Responses were favorable to the change from twelve adult members to nine.

Rationale for number of youth members.: It has become more of a challenge in recent years to find candidates for the youth member position. Adding the language that specifies "...up to one youth member" provides flexibility to the Discipleship Ministries Committee as they seek candidates for the youth member position.

- C12.02.** The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) shall be elected by written ballot. ~~to serve for three years or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected. Newly elected~~ Congregation Council members shall be installed at worship at a time appointed by the Congregation Council.

C12.02.01. The adult members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) shall be elected to serve for three years (a full term) or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively. Serving a partial term does not count toward the limit of two consecutive full terms. If a partial term is served, such members shall be eligible to serve no more than three terms consecutively.

C12.02.02. The youth member of the Congregation Council shall be elected to serve for one year (a full term) or until their successor is elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than three full terms consecutively.

C12.02.03. Council member terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

C12.02.04. Candidates for Congregation Council receiving the most votes for open positions are elected regardless of whether or not they receive a majority vote (an exception to C10.06). If there is a tie vote such that elected

* Required provision

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

candidates cannot be determined for all open positions, a tie-breaking ballot shall be conducted which only includes the tied vote candidates. The candidate(s) with the most votes on the tie-breaking ballot is elected to the remaining open position(s). Open three-year positions shall be filled first by elected candidates receiving the most votes. Once all open three-year positions are filled, any additional open position(s), beginning with the longest-term vacated position, shall be filled by the remaining elected candidates in order of the number of votes received.

Proposed Final wording:

C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) shall be elected by written ballot. Congregation Council members shall be installed at worship at a time appointed by the Congregation Council.

New bylaws **C12.02.01**, **C12.02.02**, and **C12.02.03**, as written above.

Current bylaw **C12.02.01** is renumbered to **C12.02.04**.

Rationale:

- Moving the language that defines the number of terms a Council member can serve to bylaws fits the intent that bylaws relate to a congregation's organization, operation, and life. It also allows for a more streamlined process to address feedback and make future changes.
- C12.02.: Removing the language "Newly elected" from the last sentence more accurately reflects Saint Andrew's practice to install the entire Congregation Council each year, not just newly elected members.
- C12.02.01.: Questionnaire responses were mixed regarding positive and negative impacts of reducing the normal length of an adult Council member to two years. Reasons for keeping the normal term length at three years include the benefit of the level of knowledge and experience that comes with a longer term, and that two-year terms create more Council turnover, creating the need for the Nominating Committee to find more candidates. Added clarification of the maximum number of consecutive terms a Council member can serve.
- C12.02.02.: Defining the youth members term at one year recognizes that youth may not want to commit to serve a multi-year term. However, the language also provides the flexibility and opportunity for a youth to serve multiple years.

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

Proposed Final wording:

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

Rationale: Replacing the term "shall" with "may" provides the Council flexibility.

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

- 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.
- To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
- To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
- To maintain supportive relationships with the **pastor/rostered minister**(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.

Proposed Final wording:

d. To maintain supportive relationships with the rostered minister(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.

Rationale: The *Model Constitution for Congregations* uses the term "rostered minister(s)" instead of "pastor(s)". "Rostered minister" is a more inclusive term because it includes pastors and deacons.

- To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

- f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
- g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
- h. To emphasize support of the synod and churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- j. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

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

- a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of trustees of this congregation, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and ~~managing 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 Washington, except as otherwise provided herein.

Proposed Final wording:

a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of trustees of this congregation, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and managing its business and fiscal affairs. It shall.... (remainder of provision is unchanged.)

Rationale: Change makes the Saint Andrew's Constitution consistent with the wording in the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

- b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of this congregation.
- c. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to 5% in excess of the current Annual Budget for items not included in the budget.
- d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations of more than 5% in excess of the current Annual Budget only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in collaboration with the synod and churchwide organization.
- e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of mission support monies to the synod ~~treasurer~~.

Proposed Final wording:

Deletes the word "treasurer" at the end of the sentence.

Rationale: Recommended change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2022*: Because synods have different systems for receipt of mission support monies from congregations, the elimination of the word "treasurer" allows for greater flexibility.

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

C12.06. The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution, its bylaws, and the continuing resolutions are carried out.

C12.06.A18. Constitution Task Force

A Constitution task force shall be established to review proposed revisions to Non-required Provisions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions and make recommendations for approval. As revisions are enacted, the task force maintains records of revisions and incorporates them in subsequent updates or revisions to the Constitution. This Task Force may also be called upon to provide parliamentary direction to the Council and Congregation.

C12.07. The Congregation Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

C12.08. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the staff of this congregation. Nothing in this provision shall be deemed to affect this congregation's responsibility for the call, terms of call, or termination of call of any employees who are on a roster of this church. ~~Responsibility for supervision and performance reviews of salaried lay workers shall be addressed in the "Personnel Handbook for Non-Rostered Employees."~~

~~C12.09~~ **C12.08.01.** The Congregation Council shall determine whether specific needs of the congregation can most effectively be handled by the call of a rostered individual or employment of a lay person. If the determination indicates the need for a rostered individual, the council shall submit its recommendation to the congregation for appropriate action.

C12.08.02. Responsibility for supervision and performance reviews of salaried lay workers staff in non-rostered positions shall be addressed in the "Personnel Handbook for Non-Rostered Employees."

Proposed Final wording:

- **C12.08.** Delete last sentence (language is moved to new bylaw **C12.08.02.**)
- Change current provision C12.09 into bylaw **C12.08.01.** Wording remains the same.
- **C12.08.02. Responsibility for supervision and performance reviews of staff in non-rostered positions shall be addressed in the "Personnel Handbook for Non-Rostered Employees."**

Rationale:

- Change current provision C12.09 into bylaw C12.08.01: Current C12.09 was at one time a bylaw under C12.08, and its content is related to provision C12.08. A bylaw is more appropriate because this is related to the congregation's organization and operation. Making it a bylaw instead of a provision also allows subsequent provisions to be re-numbered to align with the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.
- The last sentence of provision C12.08 is moved into a new bylaw. A bylaw is more appropriate because this is related to the congregation's organization and operation. Wording changed to reflect all employees who are not serving in rostered positions.

~~C12.1409~~ **C12.1409.** The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation ~~at the annual meeting~~ annually.

Proposed Final wording:

C12.09. The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation annually.

Rationale: "Annually" recognizes that reporting may be done at other times of the year, not just at the annual meeting. It allows for flexibility.

~~C12.1211~~ **C12.1211.** The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the lead pastor or the president, and shall be called by the president at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

~~C12.1312~~ **C12.1312.** A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council. Chronic or repeated absence of a pastor or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Congregation Council, following consultation with the synod bishop.

Proposed Final wording:

Current C12.11 becomes **C12.09.**
Current C12.12 becomes **C12.11.**
Current C12.13 becomes **C12.12.**

Rationale: Re-numbering these provisions brings the numbering in the Saint Andrew's Constitution into alignment with the numbering in the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

~~C12.14.~~ ~~The Congregation Council shall have the authority to establish, oversee, and disband if necessary, all congregation committees.~~

~~C12.14.A07. Task Force~~

~~The Congregation Council may choose to establish a sub-committee or task force, in lieu of a full committee, to study subjects of special or short-term interest. Upon completion of the study, and submittal of a report to the Congregation Council, the sub-committee or task force shall be disbanded or merged into an existing or newly established committee.~~

* Required provision

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

~~C12.14.B07. — Committee Restructuring~~

~~If a committee must be restructured due to changing conditions or an excessive workload, only the Congregation Council has the authority to make the necessary changes.~~

Proposed Final wording:

C12.14 and related continuing resolutions are deleted. Language integrated into new bylaws **C13.06.01.** and **C13.06.02.**

Rationale: Integrating language from C12.14 and related continuing resolutions into new bylaws consolidates all language related to management of committees into one location in the constitution.

- C12.1513** The Congregation Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, **as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent;** ~~and, T~~ to the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Proposed Final wording:

Current C12.15 becomes **C12.13.**

The Congregation Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Rationale: Re-numbering this provision brings the numbering in the Saint Andrew's Constitution into alignment with the numbering in the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

Wording is a recommended change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2022*: This change recognizes that there are other means of providing for simultaneous communication, for those with hearing disabilities, for example.

Chapter 13. CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

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

C13.01.01. Executive Committee Responsibility

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for establishing the agenda for properly called council and congregation meetings, negotiation of contracts authorized by the congregation or council, and arbitration of disputes when deemed necessary or as requested by the parties involved.

- C13.02.** A *Nominating Committee* of **four to** six voting members of this congregation, **one or** two of whom, if possible, shall be outgoing members of the Congregation Council, shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year. Members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible for consecutive re-election.

Proposed Final wording:

C13.02. A *Nominating Committee* of four to six voting members of this congregation, one or two of whom, if possible, shall be outgoing members of the Congregation Council, shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year. Members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible for consecutive re-election.

Rationale: Recognizing that the past few Nominating Committees have encountered challenges in recruiting Nominating Committee Candidates, a range in the number of Nominating Committee members provides flexibility.

C13.02.01. Nominating Committee Responsibility

The Nominating Committee shall select candidates for each Congregation Council adult position which will become vacant at the next annual (January) meeting of the congregation. The number of candidates presented shall equal the number of adult positions to become vacant plus a minimum of two additional candidates.

~~**Selection of candidates for the youth position and treasurer position are not the responsibility of the Nominating Committee. Selection of a candidate for the youth position shall be the responsibility of the Discipleship Ministries Committee of this congregation. Only one candidate is required for the youth position. Selection of a candidate for the position of treasurer shall be the responsibility of the Finance Committee of this congregation. Only one candidate is required for this position.**~~

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Proposed Final wording:

C13.02.01. Nominating Committee Responsibility

The Nominating Committee shall select candidates for each Congregation Council adult position which will become vacant at the next annual (January) meeting of the congregation. The number of candidates presented shall equal the number of adult positions to become vacant plus a minimum of two additional candidates. Selection of candidates for the youth position and treasurer position are not the responsibility of the Nominating Committee.

Rationale: Moves language related to selection of a candidate for the Council youth member position to the description of the Discipleship Ministries Committee, who has responsibility for this function. Removes language related to selection of a candidate for treasurer position. The description of the Finance Committee contains existing language for this responsibility.

- C13.03.** An Audit Committee of three voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council. Term of office shall be three years, with one member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for re-election.

C13.03.A18. Audit Committee Policy

An Internal Audit Committee shall be appointed to perform an annual financial audit of Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church in accordance with paragraph C.13.03 of the Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church constitution.

A. Members – Members of the Internal Audit Committee shall be appointed by the Congregation Council in accordance with C13.03 of the constitution. The committee shall consist of 3 voting members of the congregation who shall not be members of the Congregation Council.

B. Appointment – Internal Audit Committee members will normally be appointed no later than October 1 each year in order to facilitate an audit of the current year financials.

C. Guidelines – The Internal Audit Committee shall audit the church finances in accordance with the ELCA guidelines, the Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church Financial Notebook and/or any Internal Audit Committee Handbook.

- C13.05.** When a vacancy occurs in a position for which this congregation calls a rostered minister, a ***Call Committee*** of six voting members shall be elected by this congregation. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called-rostered minister.

- C13.0706** Other committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council. ~~Sub-committees and Task Forces responsible for significant single function or short term activities may also be created by the Congregation Council as situations warrant.~~

C13.06.01. Sub-committees and Task Forces responsible for significant single function or short-term activities may also be created by the Congregation Council as the need arises.

C13.06.02. The Congregation Council shall have the authority to establish, oversee, restructure, and disband if necessary, all congregation committees, sub-committees, and task forces.

C13.0706, A24A26. Existing Committees:

In addition to the committees identified in Sections C13.01. through C13.0605. of this Constitution, the Congregation Council hereby confirms the establishment of the following committees by prior council action **as listed in C13.07 continuing resolutions: Building and Property, Communications, Discipleship Ministries, Finance, Health and Wholeness Ministry, Human Resources, Outreach and Servant Ministries, Stewardship, and Worship and Music.**

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Proposed Final wording:

Current C13.07 becomes **C13.06**.

C13.06 Other committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council.

C13.06.01, Sub-committees and Task Forces responsible for significant single function or short-term activities may also be created by the Congregation Council as the need arises.

C13.06.02, The Congregation Council shall have the authority to establish, oversee, restructure, and disband if necessary, all congregation committees, sub-committees, and task forces.

C13.06.A26. Existing Committees:

In addition to the committees identified in Sections C13.01. through C13.05. of this Constitution, the Congregation Council hereby confirms the establishment of the following committees by prior council action as listed in C13.07 continuing resolutions.

Rationale:

- Re-numbering this provision and related bylaws and continuing resolutions brings the numbering in the Saint Andrew's Constitution into alignment with the numbering in the *Model Constitution for Congregations*. Language in C13.06 matches the language in the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.
- Language from the second sentence of the provision and language from C12.14, C12.14.A07, C12.14.B07 is integrated into new bylaws **C13.06.01** and **C13.06.02** as written above. This consolidates all language related to management of committees into one location in the constitution.
- Continuing resolution C13.06.A26: The list of committees was redundant since they are listed in continuing resolutions under provision C13.08 (revised to C13.07) below.

C13.0807. Duties of committees of this congregation shall be specified in continuing resolutions.

Proposed Final wording:

Current C13.08 becomes **C13.07** as written. Continuing resolutions related to this provision are re-numbered accordingly. Errors in codification letters of continuing resolutions for Building and Property and Worship and Music are corrected.

Rationale: Re-numbering this provision and related continuing resolutions brings the numbering in the Saint Andrew's Constitution into alignment with the numbering in the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

C13.0807. D24A24. Building and Property

The Building and Property Committee shall be responsible for the planning and implementation of all maintenance and construction activities affecting the facilities and equipment of the congregation except for the Sanctuary. The Sanctuary is a jointly and equally shared responsibility of the Worship and Music Committee and the Building and Property Committee. Any changes in the Sanctuary will be agreed to by both committees. Any conflicts will be resolved by the Executive Committee.

The Building and Property Committee shall support a kitchen "Advisory Group" and will consider/respond to recommendations from the advisory group.

The committee shall administer the Memorial Garden as a final resting place for the remains of members of this congregation. It shall oversee creation and maintenance of this garden.

Committee members shall work closely with the Facilities Manager to ensure completion of projects within budgetary and time schedule requirements.

C13.0807. B18. Communications Committee

The Communications Committee shall be responsible for developing, evaluating, and recommending communication resources and systematic processes. It shall use these resources and processes to foster clear and effective communication within the congregation and as a means of conveying information to the community. The committee shall support the work of the Communications Specialist and shall partner with the Saint Andrew's staff and other congregation committees and groups to promote church activities and to provide information to, and enhance dialogue within, the congregation.

C13.0807. C18C26. Discipleship Ministries Committee

The Discipleship Ministries Committee shall be responsible for partnering with the Director of Discipleship Ministries to provide opportunities that gather, encourage, and equip all people through active learning, how to embody faith in Jesus as they are sent into the world. In addition, this committee shall oversee the conduct of

* Required provision

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Discipleship ministries including, but not limited to: Adult Discipleship; Affirmation of Baptism/Confirmation (ABC); Cradle Roll; Faith Stepping Stones; High School; Sunday Church School; Vacation Bible School; Sheep and Shepherds (families with infants through 5th graders); Fire Force (youth grades 6 - 8) and God Squad (grades 9 - 12) groups as well as the planning and conduct of retreats and service projects. Selection of a candidate for the Congregation Council youth member position, which will become vacant at the next annual (January) meeting of the congregation, shall be the responsibility of the Discipleship Ministries Committee of this congregation. Up to one candidate is required for the youth position.

Proposed Final wording:

C13.07.C26. Discipleship Ministries Committee

Last two sentences are added as written.

Rationale: Moves language related to selection of a Council youth member candidate from C13.02.01 (Nominating Committee) to the description of the Discipleship Ministries Committee, who has responsibility for this function.

C13.0807.D18.Finance

The Finance Committee shall review each month's financial report and the annual budget, monitor the accounting activity and financial condition of the church, and report monthly to the Congregation Council recommending any necessary actions. The Finance Committee will periodically review the financial policies of the Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church financial notebook to ensure that policies are current and complete. Selection of a candidate for the position of treasurer shall be the responsibility of the Finance Committee of this congregation. Only one candidate is required for this position.

The Finance Committee will support the Congregation Council, Committees and Staff when requested, for recommendations regarding proposed expenditures and other fiscal matters of the congregation.

C13.0807.E18.Health and Wholeness Ministry:

The Health and Wholeness Committee shall be a Christ centered partnership of healing professionals and other members of Saint Andrew's committed to promoting spiritual, physical and emotional health and wholeness.

C13.0807.F18.Human Resources:

The Human Resources Committee (HRC) shall be an advisory group to the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council on personnel matters. The HRC makes recommendations to the Executive Committee for both rostered and non-rostered staff on employee benefits, personnel policies, conflict resolution, staffing plans, salaries, staffing budget/needs, training/leadership development and other related personnel/staffing matters.

C13.0807.G18.Outreach and Servant Ministries:

The Outreach and Servant Ministries Committee shall be responsible for identifying and supporting both local and global outreach opportunities within our core values of housing, food security and education. Special emphasis shall be placed on inspiring and supporting members of the congregation to be active participants in the outreach of this congregation. This committee shall serve in collaborative support to those groups involved in hospitality and ministry service to those in need in the community and the world.

C13.0807.H18.Stewardship

The Stewardship Committee shall develop and conduct an annual campaign to acquaint and engage all members of the congregation with the program plan for the coming year and for the financial requirements thereof.

C13.0807.C24I24. Worship and Music:

The Worship and Music Committee shall be responsible for overseeing the conduct of worship services held by this congregation.

Responsibilities shall include but are not limited to:

- 1) Support the Director of Music Ministries and other staff musicians
- 2) Collaboratively with the Director of Music Ministries and Pastor, act as consultation and advisory for
 - a) Selection of music including hymns and liturgy settings
 - b) Worship related considerations such as service times, chancel chats, announcements, etc.

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

- e) **Coordination of worship services and musical performances**
- 3) **Review for potential approval all suggestions/requests/ideas related to worship services or music therein prior to implementation**
- 4) **The sanctuary is a jointly and equally shared responsibility of the Worship and Music Committee and the Building and Property Committee. Any changes in the sanctuary will be agreed to by both committees. Any conflicts will be resolved by the Executive Committee.**
- 5) **In consultation with the Director of Music Ministries**
 - a) **establish guidelines for use of the music room space by outside groups**
 - b) **approve and/or revoke music room use privileges**

This committee shall operate in full partnership with the Altar Guild, the Acolyte Order of St John, the Assisting Minister Coordinator, the Sunday Servers Coordinator and others who serve in worship. This committee shall collaborate with all other committees.

- C13. 0908.** The lead pastor of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of this congregation. The president of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of this congregation, except the Nominating Committee.

Proposed Final wording:

Current C13.09 becomes **C13.08**.

Rationale: Re-numbering this provision brings the numbering in the Saint Andrew's Constitution into alignment with the numbering in the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

Chapter 14. ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THIS CONGREGATION

- C14.01.** All organizations within this congregation shall exist to aid it in ministering to the members of this congregation and to all persons who can be reached with the Gospel of Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of this congregation's life, the organizations are subject to its oversight and direction. This congregation at its meeting shall determine their policies, guide their activities, and receive reports concerning their membership, work, and finances.
- C14.02.** Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council and specified in a continuing resolution.

Chapter 15. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

- *C15.01.** Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith, willful or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, continual and intentional interference with the ministry of this congregation, or willful and repeated harassment or defamation of member(s) of this 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.** ~~a)~~ private counsel and admonition by the pastor,
 - b.** b) censure and admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses,
 - c.** c) written referral of the matter by the Congregation Council to the vice president of the synod, who will refer it to a consultation panel drawn from the Consultation Committee of the synod, and
 - d.** d) written referral of the matter by the consultation panel to the Committee on Discipline of the synod.

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

If, for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by paragraphs a. and b. hereof, those steps may be performed by another pastor chosen by the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council.

Proposed Final wording:

***C15.01.** Persistent and public denial 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 Congregation Council to the vice president of the synod, who will refer it to a consultation panel drawn from the Consultation Committee of the synod, and
- d. written referral of the matter by the consultation panel to the Committee on Discipline of the synod.

If, for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by a. and b. hereof, those steps may be performed by another pastor chosen by the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council

Rationale: Required change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2025*: Formatting correction and consistency of constitutional language.

- *C15.02.** The process for discipline of a member of this congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. If the counseling, censure, and admonitions pursuant to *C15.01 do not result in repentance and amendment of life, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing may be prepared by the Congregation Council, signed, and submitted to the vice president of the synod. The vice president shall select from the synod's Consultation Committee a panel of five members (three laypersons and two **rostered** ministers ~~of Word and Sacrament~~). A copy of the written charges shall be provided to the consultation panel and the accused member(s). The consultation panel, after requesting a written reply to the charges from the accused member(s), shall consider the matter and seek a resolution by means of investigation, consultation, mediation, or whatever other means may seem appropriate. The panel's efforts to reach a mutually agreeable resolution shall continue for no more than 45 days after the matter is submitted to it.

Proposed Final wording:

***C15.02.** The vice president shall select from the synod's Consultation Committee a panel of five members (three laypersons and two rostered ministers).

Rationale: Required change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2022*: Change for inclusion of both rosters (Word and Sacrament and Word and Service; i.e. pastors and deacons.)

- *C15.03.** If the consultation panel fails to resolve the matter, that panel shall refer the case in writing, including the written charges and the accused member's reply, to the Committee on Discipline of the synod for a hearing. A copy of the panel's written referral shall be delivered to the vice president of the synod, the Congregation Council, and the accused member(s) at the same time it is sent to the Committee on Discipline of the synod. The Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall then select six members from the Committee on Discipline to decide the case and shall appoint a member of the Synod Council to preside as nonvoting chair. Those six members, plus the nonvoting chair, comprise the discipline hearing panel for deciding the case. The Congregation Council and the accused member(s) are the parties to the case.
- *C15.04.** The discipline hearing panel shall commence and conduct the disciplinary hearing in accordance with the provisions governing discipline of congregation members prescribed in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- *C15.05.** By the vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the discipline hearing panel who are present and voting, one of the following disciplinary sanctions can be imposed:
- a. suspension from the privileges of congregation membership for a designated period of time;
 - b. suspension from the privileges of congregation membership until the pastor and Congregation Council receive evidence, satisfactory to them, of repentance and amendment of life;
 - c. termination of membership in this congregation; or
 - d. termination of membership in this congregation and exclusion from the church property and from all congregation activities.

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

- *C15.06. The written decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be sent to the vice president of the synod, the accused member(s), and the Congregation Council as required by the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. The decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be implemented by the Congregation Council and recorded in the minutes of the next council meeting.
- *C15.07. No member of this congregation shall be subject to discipline a second time for offenses that a discipline hearing panel has heard previously and decided pursuant to this chapter.
- *C15.10. **Adjudication**
- *C15.11. When there is disagreement between or among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president of this congregation of their intent to do so. The synod bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the dispute. If the issue relates directly to the pastor, the bishop may begin the process in ~~§S14.18.a~~ *C9.05.d. In all other matters, if the bishop's consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the Council deems necessary. The Synod Council's decision shall be final.

Proposed Final wording:

*C15.11. ...the bishop may begin the process in *C9.05.d. In all other matters....

Rationale: Required change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2025*: It is more logical to cross-reference within the Model Constitution, rather than to make reference to the synod constitution.

Chapter 16. AMENDMENTS

- *C16.01. Unless provision *C16.04. is applicable, those sections of this constitution that are not required, in accord with the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be amended in the following manner. Amendments may be proposed by at least 10% of the voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify this congregation's members of the proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.
- *C16.02. An amendment to this constitution, proposed under *C16.01., shall:
- be approved at any legally called meeting of this congregation by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting; ~~and~~
 - be ratified ~~unchanged without change~~ at the next regular meeting of this congregation ~~held pursuant to C10.01~~ by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting; ~~and~~
 - ~~have the effective date included in the resolution² and noted in the constitution;~~

Proposed Final wording:

- b. be ratified unchanged at the next regular meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.
- "c." is deleted. Footnote is also deleted.

Rationale: Required change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2022 and 2025*: "Regular meeting" has already been defined elsewhere in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*. In addition, C10.01 is not a required provision, so it is not advisable to make reference in a required provision to a non-required provision.

- *C16.03. Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in *C16.01. and *C16.02. shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The synod shall notify this congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed changes; the changes shall go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them.

THE CONSTITUTION OF SAINT ANDREW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

- *C16.04. This constitution may be amended to bring any section into conformity with a section or sections, either required or not required, of the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as most recently amended by the Churchwide Assembly. Such amendments may be approved by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of this congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of this congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, notice to this congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council's recommendations, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of at least two (2) voting members of this congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following **the congregation's** a-vote of approval.

Proposed Final wording:

*C16.04. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following the congregation's vote of approval.

Rationale: Required change from *Model Constitution for Congregations 2022*: Change for precision. This has often been incorrectly interpreted to mean that the synod must vote to approve amendments that are designed to bring the congregation's constitution into alignment with the *Model Constitution*. In fact, amendments to bring any section or sections, either required or not required, into conformity with the *Model Constitution* go into effect immediately upon the congregation's vote to amend.

Chapter 17. BYLAWS

- *C17.01. This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.
- *C17.02. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.
- *C17.03. Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member, provided that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify this congregation's members of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.
- *C17.04. Adopted or amended bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

Chapter 18. CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

- *C18.01. This congregation in a legally called meeting or the Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this congregation.
- *C18.02. Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a majority vote of a meeting of this congregation or a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Congregation Council.
- *C18.03. Adopted or amended continuing resolutions shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

Chapter 19. INDEMNIFICATION

- *C19.01. Consistent with the provisions of the laws under which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt provisions providing indemnification for each person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a Congregation Council member, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any committee of this congregation, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.

~~Such an effective date must be stated in relation to the requirements of *C16.03. to allow time for the synod's review of the amendment.~~