

**Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions  
Of Holy Communion Lutheran Church  
Fallston, MD**

**\*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 Holy Communion Lutheran Church.
- C1.02.** For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the congregation of Holy Communion Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."
- C1.11.** This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Maryland.

**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 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 of God's mission in the world.

**Chapter 3.**

**NATURE OF CHURCH**

- \*C3.01.** All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.
- \*C3.02.** The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it

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

#### **Chapter 4.**

##### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

- \*C4.01.** The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.
- \*C4.02.** To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:
- a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
  - b. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
  - c. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
  - d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs.
  - e. Nurture its members in the Word of God as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
  - f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.
- \*C4.03.** To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:
- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
  - b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
  - c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.
  - d. Teach the Word of God.
  - e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
  - f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
  - g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for the congregation's ministry and the ministry of other parts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.
- \*C4.04.** This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in Chapter 13. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other congregational group and shall review their actions. Such descriptions shall be contained in Chapter 13, or as amended from time to time by amendment or continuing resolution.
- \*C4.05.** This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

#### **Chapter 5.**

##### **POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

- \*C5.01.** The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.
- \*C5.02.** The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregation Meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.
- \*C5.03.** Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregation Council or other organizational units in this congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by the congregation. The congregation is authorized to:
- a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;

- b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- c. call or terminate the call of associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers in conformity with the applicable policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
- d. adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in Chapter 17, and amendments to the bylaws, as provided in Chapter 16;
- e. approve the annual budget;
- f. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
- g. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
- h. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
- i. elect its Congregation Council, and require the members of the council to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions; and
- j. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.

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

## **Chapter 6.**

### **CHURCH AFFILIATION**

**\*C6.01.** This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the Delaware-Maryland Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**\*C6.02.** This congregation accepts the Confession of Faith and agrees to the Purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and shall act in accordance with them.

**\*C6.03.** This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which:

- a. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
- b. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the bishop of the synod.
- d. This congregation agrees to consider associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers for call to other staff positions in the congregation according to the procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- e. This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution with the synod for review to ascertain that all of its provisions are in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and with the constitution of the synod.

**\*C6.04.** Affiliation with Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be terminated as follows:

- a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.
- b. This congregation ceases to exist.
- c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- d. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in **\*C6.05**.

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

- a. A resolution indicating the desire of this congregation to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of its congregation by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present.
- b. The secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the synodical bishop and shall mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of this congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted.
- c. The bishop of the synod shall consult with this congregation during a period of at least 90 days.

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

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

\*C6.07. If this congregation considers developing an additional site to be used regularly for worship, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located 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 Delaware-Maryland 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, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

\*C7.03. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to transfer to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation. Before this congregation takes action to transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Delaware-Maryland Synod.

\*C7.04. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body, title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with this congregation by established synodical process, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of this congregation. If this Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to continue as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

## Chapter 8.

### MEMBERSHIP

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

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

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

- d. **Associate** members are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation, or persons who wish to retain a relationship with this congregation while being members of other congregations. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected officers or membership on the Congregation Council of this congregation.

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

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

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

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

- a. death;
- b. resignation;
- c. transfer or release;
- d. disciplinary action by the Congregation Council; or
- e. removal from the roll due to inactivity as defined in the bylaws.

Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the Church has a continuing pastoral concern.

**C8.05.A02.** In order to insure the practice of “continuing pastoral concern” (**C8.05**) for persons removed from the rolls due to inactivity in the life of this congregation, the names of such persons shall be retained in a list entitled “Inactive Members of Holy Communion Lutheran Church.” Persons on said list shall be contacted by the pastor and lay leaders of the congregation responsible for outreach at least once each year, for a period of 2 years, with the intent of inviting them to recommit themselves to activity in this, or some other congregation. Should this process be successful, or should said persons indicate that they no longer wish to be contacted by Holy Communion Lutheran Church, they would then be removed from the list of Inactive Members. While on the Inactive Members list, these persons shall continue to receive all mailings, and other materials relating to the life and ministry of Holy Communion Lutheran Church. Since they do not fulfill qualifications for voting members, they shall not have the privileges of voting or holding office in this congregation (cf. **\*C.02.c**).

## **Chapter 9.**

### **THE PASTOR**

**\*C9.01.** Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by the Congregation Council to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.

**\*C9.02.** Only members of the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of ordained ministers who has been recommended for the congregation by the synodical bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.

**\*C9.03.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

- a. Every ordained minister shall:
  - 1) preach the Word;
  - 2) administer the sacraments;
  - 3) conduct public worship;
  - 4) provide pastoral care; and
  - 5) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God’s love for the world.
- b. Each ordained minister with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
  - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
  - 2) supervise all schools and organizations of this congregation;
  - 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council; and
  - 4) with the council, administer discipline.

- c. Every pastor shall:
- 1) strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;
  - 2) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospels;
  - 3) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications; and
  - 4) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Delaware-Maryland Synod of the ELCA.

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

**\*C9.05.** a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which, except in the case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated only following consultation with the synodical bishop and for the following reasons:

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

b. When allegations of physical or mental incapacity of the pastor or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office have come to the attention of the bishop of the synod, the bishop in his or her sole discretion may, or when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop shall, investigate such conditions personally in company with a committee of two ordained ministers and one layperson.

c. In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity, competent medical testimony shall be obtained. When such disability is evident, the bishop of the synod with the advice of the committee shall declare the pastorate vacant. Upon the restoration of a disabled pastor to health, the bishop of the synod shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another field of labor.

d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation, all concerned persons shall be heard, after which the bishop of the synod together with the committee described in **\*C9.05.b.** shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor and the congregation. If they agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action shall be taken by the synod. If either party fails to assent, the congregation may dismiss the pastor at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a simple majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

e. If, in the course of the proceedings described in **\*C9.05.d.**, the committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action to the synodical bishop who may bring charges, in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and bylaws of the constitution of this synod.

f. If, following the appointment of the committee described in **\*C9.05.b. or d.**, it should become apparent that the pastoral office cannot be conducted effectively in the congregation(s) being served by the ordained minister due to local conditions, the bishop of the synod may temporarily suspend the pastor from service in the congregation(s) without prejudice and with pay provided through joint synodical and churchwide fund and with housing provided by the congregation(s).

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

- \*C9.07. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the 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 ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.
- \*C9.08. This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting related to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- \*C9.09. When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- \*C9.11. With the approval of the bishop of the synod, the congregation may depart from \*C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of \*C9.05.a.
- \*C9.12. The pastor of this congregation:
  - a. shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded for the congregation;
  - b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod; and
  - c. shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- \*C9.13. The pastor(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- \*C9.14. The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of the congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of the synod that such records have been placed in his or her hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another field of labor or the granting by the synod of retired status to the pastor.
- C9.20. Ecumenical pastoral ministry**
- C9.21. Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synodical bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, an ordained minister of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between the congregation and the ordained minister in a form proposed by the synodical bishop and approved by the congregation.

## **Chapter 10.**

### **CONGREGATION MEETING**

- C10.01. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.
- C10.01.01. The annual business meeting of the congregation shall be held on the third Sunday in January at a time to be designated by the Congregation Council.
- C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of this congregation upon written request of 10 percent (but not fewer than 25) of the voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it to be held and no other business shall be transacted.
- C10.03. Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and/or by mail to all members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the newsletter, with the regular postage affixed or paid, sent to the last known address of such members shall be sufficient.
- C10.04. Twenty-five voting members shall constitute a quorum.
- C10.05. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- C10.06. All actions by the congregation shall be by majority vote except as otherwise provided by the constitution.
- C10.07. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

## **Chapter 11.**

### **OFFICERS**

- C11.01.** The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and financial secretary.
- a.** Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
  - b.** The officers shall be voting members of the congregation.
  - c.** Officers of the Congregation Council shall serve similar offices of the congregation.
  - d.** The Congregation Council shall elect its officers. The president, vice president, and secretary shall be selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council.
  - e.** The Treasurer and Financial Secretary may or may not be members of the Congregation Council. They are appointed by the president and approved by the Council for terms of one year.
- C11.01.01.** The duties of the officers are:
- The president shall preside at meetings of the congregation and of the Congregation Council and shall be an ex officio member of all standing committees.
- The vice president, in absence of the president, shall perform all the duties of the president.
- The secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation and of the Congregation Council in a volume provided by the congregation, which shall be preserved permanently in the archives.
- The treasurer shall keep the books of account of the congregation, and shall disburse funds in proper order and make monthly remittance of benevolence receipts to the treasurer of the synod. The treasurer shall make written reports of all financial transactions to the Congregation Council monthly and to the congregation, together with the report of the Audit Committee, at its annual meeting.
- The financial secretary shall receive and keep record of all income for contributing members.
- C11.02.** The Congregation Council shall elect its officers and they shall be the officers of the congregation. The officers shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall coincide with the annual meeting in January.
- C11.02.A03.** The term of any officer whose Council term expires on December 31 will be extended until the conclusion of the next annual meeting of the congregation, or the January meeting of the Congregation Council, whichever comes last.
- C11.03.** No officer shall hold more than one office at the same time. The president and vice-president shall not be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

## **Chapter 12.**

### **CONGREGATION COUNCIL**

- C12.01.** The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s), the officers of the congregation, and not more than 12 elected members of the congregation. Any voting member of the congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause or submits a letter of resignation. Consistent with the laws of the state in which this congregation is incorporated, the congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.
- C12.02.** The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) shall be elected at a legally called meeting of the congregation during the month of January. The term of office shall be for three years, with the term of office beginning on January 1 and ending on December 31. Newly elected Congregation Council members shall be installed at worship the Sunday prior to the date they assume office. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two terms consecutively.
- C12.03.** Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council may elect, by majority vote, a successor to fill the remainder of the vacancy. Individuals who have served less than one-half of a regular term shall be eligible for nomination and possible election to a full term.
- C12.04.** The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:



- a. To lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
- b. To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
- c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
- d. To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.
- e. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
- f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill, and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
- g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
- h. To emphasize partnership with the synod and churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced and 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 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 Maryland, except as otherwise provided herein.
  - 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 the congregation.
  - c. 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 two and one half percent of the annual current expense portion of the adopted 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 partnership with the Synod and churchwide organization.
  - d. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.
- C12.05.A04.** Fund raising events shall have the approval of the Congregation Council, and will normally be for the benefit of the Current Operating Fund of the congregation, unless there is a compelling reason for the money to be used in some other way.
- C12.06.** The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution, its bylaws, and the continuing resolutions are carried out.
- C12.07.** The Congregation Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.
- C12.08.** The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the salaried lay workers of this congregation.
- C12.09.** The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.
- C12.11.** The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president, and shall be called by the president at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.
- C12.12.** A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the pastor or interim pastor, except when the pastor or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting, which shall be the only business considered at that meeting. Chronic or repeated absence of the pastor or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Congregation Council, following consultation with the synodical bishop.

- C13.01.** The officers of this congregation and the pastor shall constitute the **Executive Committee**.
- C13.02.** A **Nominating Committee** shall be appointed as provided in the bylaws.
- C13.02.01.** The Nominating Committee shall consist of from three (3) to five (5) members elected by the Congregation Council at the June meeting.
- C13.02.02.** The duties of the Nominating Committee shall be to select a list of candidates to be presented to the congregation in the September newsletter.
- C13.03.** An **Audit Committee** of at least two voting members who are not involved in the daily financial matters of the congregation shall be elected by the Congregation Council with responsibility to perform the annual audit of all congregational accounts.
- C13.04.** The **Staff Support Committee** shall be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor.
- C13.05.** When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a **Call Committee** of six voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Term of office shall terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor.
- C13.06.** Other committees/organizations of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council. These committees/organizations are to be organized in three ministry areas, as follows:
- C13.06.01. Ministry Areas**
- Growth in Relationship to God:** To ensure that there are facilities, means, and opportunities for members and friends of Holy Communion Lutheran Church to grow in their faith and discipleship to Almighty God.
- Family and Youth Ministries
  - Building/Property
  - Learning
  - Praise Team
  - Stewardship
  - Worship and Music
  - Finance
- Growth in Relationship to Others:** To create possibilities for members and friends of Holy Communion Lutheran Church to grow in terms of their relationship to self and others
- Fellowship
  - Small Groups
  - Witness (Welcoming)
  - Healing and Health
- Growth in Reaching Out to the Community:** To help members and friends of Holy Communion Lutheran Church to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with the larger community, and to engage in acts of charity and service.
- Reaching Out
  - Publicity
- C13.07.** Duties of committees and organizations of this congregation shall be specified in the bylaws.
- C13.07.01.** The three ministry areas (or representatives of each component of the ministry areas) are responsible for meeting quarterly, to insure that they are working cooperatively, and that their respective functions are being done.
- C13.07.02.** Duties of the components of the ministry areas are as follows:
- a. Fellowship** – This group provides various activities which help members grow in their love and devotion to one another.
  - b. Learning** – This committee shall be responsible for Sunday Church School, Vacation Bible School, and learning for all ages through various small group activities.
  - c. Family and Youth Ministries** -- The responsibility of this group is to ensure that an active ministry among our Youth and Families is undertaken. It shall involve study, service, and fellowship.
  - d. Praise Team** – The Praise Team shall be responsible for planning and carrying out services of a contemporary nature, in accordance with ELCA faith and practices.
  - e. Property** – A well-kept building being essential to the carrying out of a congregation's mission, the Property Committee shall keep the building and grounds in good repair, and shall advise the Congregation Council of major areas of work needing professional attention.
  - f. Publicity** – Holy Communion Church shall communicate the activities of the congregation to the people in the community and invite them to join with us.

- g. Reaching Out** – This committee aids Holy Communion Lutheran Church to reach out in love and service to the community in which she lives, and throughout the whole world.
- h. Stewardship** – It shall be the duty of this committee to help members to grow in Christian stewardship in all of its dimensions.
- i. Witness** – The Witness Committee reaches out to new members and visitors by assuring that they are welcomed at Holy Communion, and that they are properly assimilated into the ongoing life of the congregation, inviting people to join our fellowship in the Gospel.
- j. Worship and Music** – The Worship and Music Committee shall be responsible for the planning and carrying out of all services of a traditional nature in accordance with ELCA faith and practices.
- k. Finance Committee** – The Finance Committee should make the most effective use of the church's resources to accomplish our mission of Reaching Out to Share Christ's Love, while keeping the church financially secure.

## **Chapter 14.**

### **ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION**

- C14.01.** All organizations within this congregation shall exist to aid in the 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.

## **Chapter 15.**

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

- \*C15.01.** Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps: a) private admonition by the pastor, b) admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, and c) citation to appear before the Congregation Council. If for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by a. and b. hereof, the president (if not the pastor) or vice president shall administer such admonitions.
- \*C15.02.** The process for discipline of a member of the congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. If discipline against a member proceeds beyond an admonition by the pastor, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing shall be prepared by member(s) of the congregation who shall sign the charges as the accuser(s). The written charges shall be filed with the pastor, who shall advise the Congregation Council of the need to issue written citation to the accused and the accusers that specifies the time and place of the hearing before the Congregation Council. The written charges shall accompany the written citation to the accused. A member charged with the offense shall appear before the Congregation Council after having received a written citation, at least ten days prior to the meeting. If the member charged with the offense fails to appear at the scheduled hearing, the Congregation Council may proceed with the hearing and may pass judgment in the member's absence.
- \*C15.03.** Members of the Congregation Council who participate in the preparation of the written charges or who present evidence or testimony in the hearing before the Congregation Council are disqualified from voting upon the question of the guilt of the accused member. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Congregation Council who are not disqualified but who are present and voting, and renewed admonition prove ineffectual, the council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:
  - a. censure before the council or congregation;
  - b. suspension from membership for a definite period of time; or
  - c. exclusion from membership in this congregation.
 Disciplinary actions b. and c. shall be delivered to the member in writing.

- \*C15.04. The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Congregation Council shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Synod Council. Such right may not be abridged and the decision of the Synod Council shall be final.
- \*C15.05. Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Congregation Council upon receipt of a) evidence that injustice has been done or b) evidence of repentance and amendment.
- \*C15.06. For disciplinary actions in this congregation, "due process shall be observed as specified in 20.14.04. in the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- \*C15.07. No member of a congregation shall be subject to discipline for offenses that the Congregation Council has previously heard and decided, unless so ordered by the Synod Council after an appeal.
- \*C15.10. **Adjudication**
- \*C15.11. When there is disagreement among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation shall have access to the synodical bishop for consultation after informing the chair of the Congregation Council of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the Consultation Committee of the synod shall consider the matter. If the Consultation Committee of the synod shall fail to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to the Synod Council, whose decision shall be final.

## Chapter 16.

### BYLAWS

- \*C16.01. This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.
- \*C16.02. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting.
- \*C16.03. Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose and that the Congregation Council notify the congregation's members by mail of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting.
- \*C16.04. Approved changes to the bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

## Chapter 17.

### AMENDMENTS

- \*C17.01. 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 to this constitution may be proposed by at least five (5) voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at a regular or special Congregation meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the congregation's members by mail of the proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.
- \*C17.02. An amendment to this constitution, proposed under \*C17.01., shall:
  - a. be approved at a legally called Congregation Meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;
  - b. be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting; and
  - c. have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.
- \*C17.03. Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in \*C17.01. and \*C17.02. shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The amendment shall become effective within 120 days from the date of the receipt of the notice by the synod unless the synod informs this congregation that the amendment is in conflict with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or the constitution of the Delaware-Maryland Synod of the ELCA.
- \*C17.04. Whenever the *Model Constitution for Congregations* is amended by the Churchwide Assembly, this constitution may be amended to incorporate any such amendment by a simple majority vote of those members present and voting at any subsequent meeting of the congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided the Congregation Council has submitted by mail notice to the congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the Council's recommendations, at least

30 days prior to the meeting. Following adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following a vote of approval.

#### **Chapter 18.**

##### **CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

- \*C18.01. The Congregation 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 two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Congregation Council.

#### **Chapter 19.**

##### **INDEMNIFICATION**

- \*C19.01. Consistent with the provisions of the laws under which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt provisions providing indemnification for each person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a Congregation Council member, officer, employee, agent, or other members 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.

## **BY LAWS**

### **HOLY COMMUNION LUTHERAN CHURCH**

#### **ARTICLE I**

##### **BUSINESS MEETINGS**

- C10.01.** A congregational meeting for the election of the Congregation Council will be held on a Sunday in October at a time to be designated by the Congregational council.
- a. Time and place of all congregational Congregation Council meetings shall be announced on the two Sundays immediately preceding the meetings and at all worship services.
  - b. The annual business meeting of the congregation shall be held on the third Sunday in January at a time to be designated by the Congregation Council.
  - c. Procedure at all meetings shall be in accordance with Robert's Rule of Order, latest edition.

#### **ARTICLE II**

##### **CONGREGATIONAL FUNCTION**

- C13.07.01** In order to fulfill the mission and ministry of this congregation five (5) standing committees shall be established and responsible to the Congregation Council. These committees are:
- a. **Worship** – This congregation, remembering God's mighty acts in the past, celebrating His abiding presence, and moving toward His promised fulfillment, shall listen to the Word of God in Scripture and preaching, receive the sacraments, and respond with liturgical acts of confession, prayer, praise, thanksgiving, and with tithes and offerings. In order to assist their relationship with God in public and private, the congregation shall gather for worship regularly, and in accordance with the traditions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, recruit, equip and support members for leadership in worship, use appropriate worship materials and make certain that worship has a place in other functions of the congregation.
  - b. **Learning** – This congregation shall develop an educational ministry to assist persons to perceive and respond to God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ, and, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to participate in God's continuing activity and revelations as they develop as individuals, related to other individuals, groups, institutions, culture, and the physical environment. To clarify its mission the congregation shall study itself in relations to its community and to the church around the world. It shall provide schools and other learning activities, recruit, equip, and support members for educational leadership, use appropriate educational materials, and make certain that adequate study under girds the other functions of the congregation.
  - c. **Witness** – This congregation, relying on the Holy Spirit, shall proclaim the Gospel by example and by programs to invite all people to repent and share the Lord's kingdom. The congregation shall motivate its members to witness to their faith at every opportunity in daily life. It shall try to restore those who have lapsed from active membership, bring new members into the fellowship of the church, recruit, equip, and support members of the congregation for these activities. It shall provide communication of the Gospel through fellowship in the wider Christian community. It shall make certain that other functions witness to the faith of the Church.
  - d. **Service** – This congregation shall live by faith active in love. It shall motivate, equip, and support its members to visit the sick, the infirm, and the imprisoned, and to minister to the poor and distressed; to serve as Christians in all the institutions and structures of society of which they are a part; and individually and corporately to foster justice, overcome oppression, alleviate suffering and care for the earth. In these efforts

the congregation shall cooperate with the synod and the churchwide agencies of the evangelical Lutheran Church in America, other Christian churches and other groups in society. It shall make certain that its other functions strengthen the motivation and ability for service.

- e. Support – This congregation in faithfulness to God shall provide leadership, organized structures, facilities and funds to enable fulfillment of the functions to their maximum potential. The congregation shall maintain effective communication among its members and with its community, inculcate the motives and practices of stewardship in all members of the congregation encourage generous giving to the work of the church at home and elsewhere, evaluate regularly the total life and ministry of the congregation, and recruit, equip, and support members of the congregation to provide for these activities.

C13.07.02. Chairpersons of these committees shall be appointed by the President of the Congregation Council for a term to be determined by the Council.

C11.01.02. Membership on these committees shall be filled by the respective chairperson and approved by the Congregation Council.

### **ARTICLE III**

#### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

C11.01.01. The Nominating Committee shall consist of from three (3) to five (5) members appointed and announced by the president at the June Congregation Council meeting.

C11.01.02. The duties of the Nominating Committee shall be to select a list of candidates to be presented at the September Congregation Council meeting and to the congregation at its meeting in October.

### **ARTICLE IV**

#### **OFFICERS**

C11.01.03. All officers shall be voting members of the congregation. If any of them cease to be such, that office shall at once be declared vacant by the council, which shall fill the vacancy for the expired term.

- a. The president shall preside at meetings of the congregation and the congregation council and shall be an exofficio member of all standing committees.
- b. The vice president, in the absence of the president, shall perform all the duties of the president.
- c. The secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation and of the congregation council in a volume provided by the congregation, which shall be preserved permanently in the archives.
- d. The treasurer shall keep the books of account of the congregation, and shall disburse funds on proper order and make monthly remittance of benevolence receipts to the treasurer of the synod. The treasurer shall make written reports of all financial transactions to the congregation council monthly and to the congregation, together with the report of the audit committee, at its annual meeting.
- e. The financial secretary shall receive and keep a record of all income from contributing members and from other sources and deposit them in the appropriate congregation accounts.

C11.01.04. The financial officers shall be bonded in amounts determined by the congregation council, for which the premium shall be paid by the congregation. Fidelity coverage provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be deemed a fulfillment of this requirement.