



**CONSTITUTION**

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**CONSTITUTION  
OF  
APOSTLES EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**PREAMBLE**

WHEREAS, the Word of God (1 Corinthians 14:40, Colossians 2:5) admonishes every Christian congregation that everything is to be done in a fitting and orderly way;

1 Corinthians 14:40

Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

Colossians 2:5

For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

And

WHEREAS, the history of the Christian Church of all times shows that certain agreements and regulations are helpful to properly fulfill the purpose and attain the objectives of congregations; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that we, a congregation of Evangelical Lutheran Christians living in and around Billings, Montana, do herewith, in the name of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and by subscribing our names hereto, adopt the following CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS.

**CONSTITUTION  
ARTICLE I  
NAME**

The name of this congregation shall be  
APOSTLES EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
of BILLINGS, MONTANA

**ARTICLE II  
ARTICLES OF FAITH**

Section 1.

This congregation accepts and confesses all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the verbally inspired and inerrant Word of God and submits to this Word as the only infallible authority on all matters of faith and life (2 Timothy 3:15-17)

2 Timothy 3:15-17

And how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Section 2.

This congregation accepts and confesses all the symbolical books of the Evangelical

Lutheran Church contained in The Book Of Concord of 1580 as true statements of Scriptural doctrine.

They are:

- A. The three Ecumenical Creeds
  - 1) The Apostles'
  - 2) The Nicene
  - 3) The Athanasian
- B.
  - 1) Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism
  - 2) Dr. Martin Luther's Large Catechism
  - 3) The Unaltered Augsburg Confession
  - 4) The Apology of the Augsburg Confession
  - 5) The Smalcald Articles
  - 6) The Formula of Concord

Section 3.

This congregation accepts and confesses these symbolical books without reservation, not insofar as, but because they are the presentation and explanation of the pure doctrine of the Word of God and a summary of the faith held by the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Section 4.

Hence, no doctrine shall be taught or tolerated in this congregation that is in any way at variance with these symbolical books and the Holy Scriptures.

Section 5.

Likewise, all controversies that may arise in this congregation shall be decided and adjusted according to this norm of doctrine and practice.

### **ARTICLE III PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

Section 1.

The continuing purpose of this congregation, as a gathering of Christians, is to serve all people in God's world with the gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of Holy Scriptures (Matthew 28:18-20).

Matthew 28:18-20

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Section 2.

The primary objectives of this congregation shall be:

A. To proclaim the law and gospel, to lead sinners to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ for life and salvation (2 Timothy 4:2).

2 Timothy 4:2

Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and

encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

B. To strengthen believers in faith and sanctification through the means of grace (Romans 10:17).

Romans 10:17

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ.

C. To equip believers as disciples, stewards and witnesses for sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with our fellow men (Ephesians 4:11,12).

Ephesians 4:11,12

It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

#### **ARTICLE IV SYNODICAL AFFILIATION**

This congregation shall affiliate itself only with a church body that holds to all the truths of God's Word in doctrine and practice and is bound to the confession of faith as set forth in Article II, if, and as long as, such a church body exists.

#### **ARTICLE V CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1.

A. Baptized members of the congregation are those who have been baptized into the Christian faith in the name of the Triune God.

B. Communicant members are those baptized souls who confess the chief parts of Christian doctrine as written in Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism and who have declared their adherence to all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, without qualification, as the only rule and norm of faith and life.

C. Voting members are those male communicant members (1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:12) who have declared their agreement with this Constitution by their signatures and who have been accepted by the voters' assembly of the congregation.

1 Corinthians 14:34

Women shall remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says.

1 Timothy 2:12

I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.

#### **PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Section 2.

"God is Love" (1 John 4:8), and his love ever moves him to bless the members of his Church with innumerable physical and spiritual gifts (1 John 3:1; James 1:17). In return for all of these undeserved blessings, we ought to do nothing less than to love him with all our heart (1 John 4:19), and to show that love with the works that we do. The exercise of such love we acknowledge as both a privilege and a responsibility.

1 John 4:8

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

1 John 3:1

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

James 1:17

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

1 John 4:19

We love because He first loved us.

Some of the privileges and responsibilities to be noted are the following:

A. Our God has given us his word, the only thing needful (Luke 10:42), which alone can save our souls by telling us of Jesus Christ, his Son, our Savior, and which also tells us how to live a God-pleasing life (2 Timothy 3:15-17). Consequently, members of his Church will consider it a distinct privilege and a responsibility to:

1. Hear and receive the Word of God diligently and frequently.
2. Provide and promote opportunities for Christian education.
3. Bring up their children in the training and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4) by sending their unconfirmed children of Sunday School age to the Apostles Lutheran School, Sunday School and/or such other agencies of instruction as may be provided by the congregation, and to provide the opportunity for catechetical instruction and confirmation.

Luke 10:42

*“But one thing is needful. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”*

2 Timothy 3:15-17

(See Article II)

Ephesians 6:4

“Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord”.

B. Our God has given us two Sacraments: Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, which are means that our Lord uses to bring his grace to us. Consequently, members of his Church will,

1. Have their children baptized as early as possible in life, for “baptism now saves you also” (1 Peter 3:21).
2. Frequently partake of Holy Communion (1 Corinthians 11:23-26), if they are recognized as such who can properly examine themselves (1 Corinthians 11:28). Only those in the confessional fellowship of faith may commune at our altar (Close Communion—2 Corinthians 6:14-15).

1 Peter 3:21

And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the

night He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, *“This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.”* In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, *“This cup is the new covenant in my blood: do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”* For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.

1 Corinthians 11:28

A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.

2 Corinthians 6:14-15

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

C. Our God has given us the privilege and responsibility of being managers over a certain portion of his estate and assures us He will graciously bless such faithful management (2 Corinthians 9:6). Therefore members of his Church will under grace:

1. Continually remember that all their possessions, time and abilities are really a trust from God.

2. Conscientiously determine which part of their money, time and talents shall be devoted to that which the congregation has made its concern, not omitting the work of Synod, (2 Corinthians 9:6; Mark 16:15; 1 Corinthians 9:14; 16:2; 1 Peter 4:10).

3. If eligible, become voting members and regularly attend the voters’ meetings and lend the congregation their counsel and aid.

2 Corinthians 9:6

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

Mark 16:15

He said to them, *“Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.”*

1 Corinthians 9:14

In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel shall receive their living from the gospel.

1 Corinthians 16:2a

On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income.

1 Peter 4:10

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.

D. Our god implanted within us who are Christians a new man, who desires to live righteously (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24) Consequently, members of his Church will

1. Not live in obvious acts of sinful nature (Galatians 5:19-21), but lead a Christian life (Galatians 5:22-25).

2. When they have erred, permit themselves to be fraternally admonished and corrected according to Matthew 18:15-18.

3. Refuse to hold membership in any organization whose teachings and practices conflict with the Word of God (e.g. lodges, scouts), (John 5:23; 8:31; 2 Corinthians 6:14-19).

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Ephesians 4:24

And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Galatians 5:19-21

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the Kingdom of heaven.

Galatians 5:22-25

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Matthew 18:15-18

*If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*

John 5:23

*That all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.*

John 8:31,32

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, *"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said, "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

### **CHURCH DISCIPLINE AND EXCOMMUNICATION**

#### Section 3.

Christian discipline shall be exercised in this congregation according to Matthew 18:15-20 toward those who err from the faith or who in other ways have given offense. At all times this shall be done in the spirit of the gospel, namely, to regain the erring as brothers. Those members who become evident as impenitent sinners and finally must be excommunicated, and those who have excluded themselves from the congregation by evading Matthew 18:15-18 lose all their rights in the congregation and in its property. For excommunication a unanimous vote of the voters' assembly is required.

Matthew 18:15-18

(Article V, Section 2 D., 2).

Matthew 18:19-20

*“Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”*

### **REINSTATEMENT**

#### Section 4.

When an excommunicated member by the grace of God repents of his sin, he is to be reinstated with all former rights and privileges of this congregation (2 Corinthians 2:6-8).

2 Corinthians 2:6-8

The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.

### **TERMINATION OF FELLOWSHIP**

#### Section 5.

Members who persist in an error that in itself does not make the presence of saving faith impossible shall be excluded from the fellowship of the congregation (Romans 16:17-18) and lose all rights in the congregation and in its property.

Romans 16:17-18

I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people.

### **ARTICLE VI POWERS AND RIGHTS OF THE CONGREGATION**

#### Section 1.

In all matters of Christian faith and life the Word of God is supreme (Psalm 119:105).

Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

#### Section 2.

In all matters not decided by the Word of God the congregation, represented by the voters' assembly, shall have the right of decision (Romans 12:10; 14:19; Ephesians 5:21).  
Romans 12:10

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Romans 14:19

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and mutual edification.

Ephesians 5:21

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

### Section 3.

The church council, any other elected committee or organization within the congregation, and any of its elected or appointed officers shall have no power or authority beyond that conferred upon them by the congregation. However, in an emergency the church council may act in the name and for the welfare of the congregation. Such action must be submitted for approval at the next voters' meeting.

### Section 4.

No group or society may be organized within the congregation without the approval of the congregation. The congregation shall be assured that the objectives of such a group are in complete harmony with the congregation's objectives before it grants its approval (1 Corinthians 1:10, 12:25).

1 Corinthians 1:10

I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

1 Corinthians 12:25

So that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

## **ARTICLE VII THE MINISTRY**

### Section 1.

The congregation has the exclusive right to call pastors and teachers.

### Section 2.

The pastorate of this congregation shall be conferred only upon such men (1 Corinthians 14:40; 1 Timothy 2:12) who are qualified for this ministry and publicly and without reservation profess their acceptance of and adherence to Article II of this Constitution, and such acceptance and adherence shall be required of them in the call of vocation extended by the congregation (Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; Colossians 4:5-6).

1 Corinthians 14:40

(See Article V, section 1.,C.)

1 Timothy 2:12

(See Article V, section 1.,C.)

Ephesians 4:11-16

It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

1 Timothy 3:1-7

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on becoming an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to much wine, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

Titus 1:6-9

An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to much wine, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

Colossians 4:5-6

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Section 3.

The teachers called by the congregation shall be such as are in accord with the confessional standard of the congregation (Article II) and are qualified for this field of work (Ephesians 4:11-16; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 14:40)

Ephesians 4:11-16

(See Article VII, Section 2).

Romans 12:6-8

We have different gifts, according to the same grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve;

if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

1 Corinthians 14:40

But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

Section 4.

In the case of a vacancy in the office of pastor or teacher the congregation shall in good order notify the president of the district that he may assist in temporarily filling the vacancy and in giving his good counsel in regard to the calling of a new pastor or teacher.

**ARTICLE VIII  
OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

Section 1.

The first New Testament congregation at Jerusalem chose men “full of the Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:1-6) to aid the apostles in the administration of its affairs. This congregation shall choose officers and committee members with like qualifications to aid the pastor in administering its affairs (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

Acts 6:1-6

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against those of the Aramaic-speaking community because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the Word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.” This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

1 Timothy 3:8-13

Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

Section 2.

The listing of the officers and their duties is given in the Bylaws.

Section 3.

The respect and esteem of the congregation are due these officers in the performance of

their duties, and they shall be given its cooperation. They shall conduct themselves in a manner befitting their responsible office (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

1 Timothy 3:8-13

(See Article VIII, Section 1).

## **ARTICLE IX REMOVAL FROM OFFICE**

### Section 1.

If anyone who holds an office in the congregation willfully neglects his duty and upon due admonition does not amend, the congregation has the right and eventually the duty to remove him from office and elect another in his place (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

1 Timothy 3:8-13

(See Article VIII, Section 1).

### Section 2.

Sufficient and urgent causes from removing a pastor or a teacher are persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of duty or established inability to perform the duties of his office (1 Timothy 3:1-7); (Titus 1:6-9). In such a case in keeping with good order the advice and good counsel of the appropriate circuit pastor shall be sought.

1 Timothy 3:1-7

(See Article VII, Section 2).

Titus 1:6-8

(See Article VII, Section 2).

## **ARTICLE X MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION**

Meetings of this congregation shall be held at such times and in such manner as stated in the Bylaws. The meetings shall give the voters of this congregation the opportunity to hear, discuss and take necessary action in matters pertaining to the welfare of this congregation and of the church-at-large.

## **ARTICLE XI SEPARATION OR DISSOLUTION**

### Section 1.

If at any time a separation should occur in this congregation— may God graciously prevent it— the property and all equipment of this congregation shall remain with that portion of the membership that adheres to this Constitution, regardless of number.

### Section 2.

In the event of termination or dissolution of the congregation, the church council shall, after paying or making provisions for the payment of all the liabilities of the congregation, dispose of its remaining assets, if any, exclusively for the purposes of the congregation, (See Article III), by distributing, at the direction of the voters' assembly, the remaining assets to (and only to) one or more organizations with which the congregation is in fellowship, which shall at the time qualify as exempt organization(s) (under Section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code

or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Code).

**ARTICLE XII  
REPEALS AND ALTERATIONS**

Section 1.

Articles II, III, IV, V, Section 1 and 2 of Article VI, Sections 1-3 of Article VII, IX and Section 1 of Article XII of this Constitution shall be and remain unalterable and irrevocable, inasmuch as they express clear, Scriptural teachings.

Section 2.

Proposals to alter or repeal any other article of this Constitution or to add an article to this Constitution shall be submitted in writing to the church council, and shall be publicly announced on two Sundays immediately preceding a regular business meeting of the voters' assembly and posted in the church during that period.

Section 3.

Such a proposal shall be discussed in the meeting in which it is presented and voted on in the next regular meeting of the voters' assembly.

Section 4.

A two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present shall be required to alter or repeal any other article of this Constitution or to add an article hereto.

Section 5.

Any and all Bylaws may be repealed or amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present at any quarterly meeting, provided that public notice of this proposed action shall have been given the congregation on at least two Sundays prior to the time of the meeting, and provided that the substance of the proposed amendment has been submitted to the church council for its study and recommendation.

**BYLAWS  
ARTICLE I  
MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION'S VOTERS**

Section 1.

A regular meeting of the congregation's voters shall be held quarterly in the months of January, April, July and October.

Section 2.

The church council shall set the exact date and time of the regular meetings. They will be publicly announced in at least two Sunday services and/or bulletins.

Section 3.

Special meetings of the congregation's voters may be called by the church council, or the pastor, or upon the written request of three voting members. Such meetings must be announced in at least one Sunday service and/or bulletin previous to the day of the meeting with the purpose for such meeting being clearly stated.

Section 4.

The regular July meeting shall be designated as the annual meeting.

Section 5.

The order of business for the regular meetings shall be as follows:

- A. Opening with a devotion.
- B. Roll Call.
- C. Reading and approval of minutes of the previous regular meeting and intervening special meetings.
- D. Reception of new members; transfer, release or removal from membership.
- E. Unfinished business.
- F. Reports of officers and committees.
- G. Recommendations of the church council and new business.
- H. Elections
- I. Adjournment with prayer.

Section 6.

The meetings shall be conducted according to good, Christian order. Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed for parliamentary procedure.

Section 7.

No one shall bring to any meeting a charge or complaint against any member, pastor or teacher unless he has first admonished him in a Christian manner according to Matthew 18:15-18.

Matthew 18:15-18

(See Article V, Section 2 D., 2 of Constitution).

Section 8.

Only voting members present at the meeting shall have the right to vote.

Section 9.

Voting membership shall be restricted to male communicant members who have reached the age of 18, but they cannot be elected to an office until they have reached the age of 21.

Section 10.

Voting members shall sign, thereby indicating their acceptance, the official copy of the Constitution and Bylaws at the meeting of the congregation in which they were received or as soon thereafter as possible.

Section 11.

A copy of this Constitution and Bylaws shall be present at all meetings of the congregation and church council.

**ARTICLE II  
QUORUM**

The voting members present at a properly announced meeting of the congregation's voters shall constitute a quorum of the voters' assembly.

**ARTICLE III  
THE CHURCH COUNCIL**

Section 1.

The church council shall consist of the congregation's president, secretary, financial officer, three elders, three trustees, and as many additional men as may be needed to carry on the congregation's business. The pastor is an ex officio member of the church council. The principal of the school shall be an advisory member.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

Section 2.

2.1 The members of the church council shall adorn their high office with an honest way of life and be good examples to the congregation (1 Timothy 3:8-12). They shall aid the pastor in the spiritual affairs of the church. They shall be accountable for good order in the services. They shall particularly care in love for their fellow members who have special needs (Galatians 6:9-10). The members of the church council shall consult together concerning the total spiritual and physical well-being of the congregation giving due attention also to the work of the Lord in the church-at-large. The church council shall implement resolutions of the voters' assembly and carry out such assignments as are directed to them by the voters' assembly. It shall recommend to the voters' assembly the annual budget of the congregation.

1 Timothy 3:8-12

(See Article VII, Section I of the Constitution)

Galatians 6:9-10

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

2.2 The church council, serving as the corporate trustees, shall control the corporate property of the congregation according to the direction given to it by the voters' assembly. The church council is hereby empowered to borrow money, pledge the assets of the congregation, sell, lease or otherwise dispose of the real and personal property of the congregation at the direction of the voters' assembly. It shall also have the right to acquire property through purchase, trade, gift or devise as directed by the voters' assembly. The president and secretary of the congregation are hereby designated as the persons who shall sign all documents of the congregation.

### **TERMS OF OFFICE**

#### Section 3.

3.1 The term of office for the congregational president, secretary, and financial officer shall be two years. The term of the office for the elders and trustees shall be three years. No council member shall serve more than two consecutive terms with the exception of the congregational financial officer. All others shall be eligible for election to the council one year after the expiration of their second term of office.

3.2 The terms of office for the council members shall be staggered so that only about one third of their terms expire each year. One year, the terms of office of the president, the financial officer, one elder and one trustee shall expire. The next year the secretary, one elder and one trustee's term shall expire. The third year the president and the financial officer's term of office will expire as well as the term of office for the third elder and the third trustee. Those terms that expire each year shall be filled by election at the October meeting of the voters' assembly with the candidates taking office when they are installed.

### **INSTALLATION**

#### Section 4.

The installation into office of the newly elected and re-elected members of the church council shall take place in the first Sunday worship service in January.

### **MEETINGS**

#### Section 5.

5.1 The church council shall meet regularly once each month. The pastor or the president of the congregation may call special meetings. The council shall not convene to transact business without the knowledge of the pastor.

5.2 The congregation's president shall serve as chairman of the church council.

### **VACANCIES**

#### Section 6.

In the event of a vacancy on the church council, the vacancy shall be filled by ballot at the next meeting of the voters' assembly from a list of candidates prepared by the last acting nominating committee.

## **ARTICLE IV COMMITTEES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL**

### **COMMITTEE OF ELDERS**

#### Section 1.

1.1 The committee of elders shall consist of the three elected elders of the congregation with the elder with the most seniority in his current term serving as the chairman.

1.2 The committee of elders shall meet regularly once each month.

1.3 In general this committee shall concern itself with the total spiritual life of the congregation. It shall also visit, counsel and encourage members who have manifested a lack of concern for the hearing of God's Word and the reception of the Lord's Supper and who have shown a general disregard for the work of the church.

### **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

#### Section 2.

2.1 The Christian education committee shall consist of at least three members including the chairman who shall be one of the elders of the congregation appointed by the committee of elders. The council shall appoint the remaining members, who need not be members of the church council, for one-year terms. The pastor and principal shall be advisory members of this committee.

2.2 The Christian education committee shall meet regularly once each quarter.

2.3 The Christian education committee shall formulate all policies to be followed in the educational phases of the congregation's work. It shall concern itself with all matters related to Christian education and to promote any and all educational agencies from the cradle to the grave that the congregation may maintain.

### **EVANGELISM COMMITTEE**

#### Section 3.

3.1 The evangelism committee shall consist of at least three members including the chairman who shall be one of the elders of the congregation appointed by the committee of elders. The council shall appoint the remaining members, who need not be members of the church council, for one-year terms.

3.2 The evangelism committee shall meet regularly once each quarter.

3.3 The evangelism committee shall aid the congregation in developing and maintaining Christian consciousness among the congregation of mission and soul winning needs, both in the local community and elsewhere.

### **WORSHIP COMMITTEE**

#### Section 4.

4.1 The worship committee shall consist of at least three members including the chairman who shall be one of the elders of the congregation appointed by the committee of elders. The council shall appoint the remaining members, who need not be members of the church council, for one-year terms.

4.2 The worship committee shall meet regularly once each quarter.

4.3 The worship committee shall handle certain details concerned with the worship service such as preparations for baptism and communion, as well as keeping the necessary attendance records.

### **MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE**

#### Section 5.

5.1 The maintenance committee shall consist of the three elected trustees of the congregation and as many other members as the congregation deems necessary. The council shall appoint the remaining members, who need not be members of the church council, for one-year terms.

5.2 The maintenance committee shall meet regularly once each quarter.

5.3 The maintenance committee shall supervise the repair and upkeep of the congregation's property. It shall report to the church council and carry out such work as is assigned to it by the council or voters' assembly.

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

#### Section 6.

6.1 The finance committee shall consist of at least three members including the chairman who shall be the financial officer of the congregation. The council shall appoint the remaining members, who need not be members of the church council, for one-year terms.

6.2 The finance committee shall count, record, and deposit the weekly offering in a prompt manner. The finance committee shall do all counting with two members present. If a member of the finance committee is unavailable, another individual can be appointed to substitute for a specified week.

6.3 The financial officer with the finance committee will see to it that all members receive a report of their offerings annually or upon request.

### **BUDGET COMMITTEE**

#### Section 7.

7.1 At the April meeting of the church council, the president shall appoint a budget committee. The budget committee shall consist of at least three members including the chairman who shall be the financial officer of the congregation. The council shall appoint the remaining members, who need not be members of the church council, for one-year terms.

7.2 The committee shall be responsible for preparing the congregation's budget for the next fiscal year and recommending it through the church council to the voters with the budget being adopted in the July meeting of the congregation. In the preparation of the budget it shall consider the salaries of the called workers together with the salaries of other paid workers the congregation may have.

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

#### Section 8.

8.1 The church council shall present six candidates to the July meeting of the voters' assembly, from which the voters shall elect three to serve as the nominating committee.

8.2 The nominating committee shall select from the voting membership a slate of candidates consisting of at least two candidates for each vacancy on the church council and shall publish the names on at least two consecutive Sundays prior to the October meeting.

### **VACANCIES**

#### Section 9.

Vacancies occurring on any of these committees shall be filled through appointment by

the church council.

### **MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES**

Section 10.

The number of members on the committees may be increased by resolution of the congregation. Temporary offices and committees, in addition to those heretofore mentioned, may be established or dismissed by the congregation as need may warrant.

### **EX OFFICIO MEMBERSHIP**

Section 11.

The pastor and the president of the congregation by virtue of their office are members of all committees and are to be informed of all meetings of all committees so that they may attend if they desire.

### **MODE OF PROCEDURE OF COMMITTEES**

Section 12.

Each committee shall develop its purpose and objectives in the light of the congregation's objectives (See Constitution, Article III). The first statement of purpose and objectives shall be approved by the church council-and reviewed annually thereafter by the committee. If the annual review results in changes to the committee's purpose or objectives, these changes must be submitted to the church council for approval. Each committee shall report annually on the previous year's goals.

## **ARTICLE V DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

### **PRESIDENT**

Section 1.

The president shall preside as chairman of all business sessions of the congregation and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him. He shall have general supervision of the affairs of the congregation subject to the regulations of the church council, sign all deeds, mortgages, notes, leases and/or all legal documents directed to be executed by the congregation and conduct all its business affairs according to established good order. In the absence of the president, the congregation shall elect a temporary chairman. The president is an ex officio member of all boards and committees.

### **SECRETARY**

Section 2.

The secretary shall record accurately the proceedings of all meetings of the congregation and the church council. He shall be responsible for the legal records of the congregation. He shall have the authority to countersign all deeds, mortgages, notes, leases and/or legal documents executed by the congregation and assist in the orderly conduct of its business affairs according to established good order. He shall also perform other such duties as may be assigned to him by the congregation.

## **FINANCIAL OFFICER**

### Section 3.

3.1 The financial officer shall receive a report of all deposits from the finance committee and credit the same to the proper accounts. He shall make disbursements according to instruction from the church council. He shall make a quarterly report to the voters' assembly and also monthly reports to the church council. He shall submit his records to the congregation for audit annually or at any time the congregation so desires. In the absence of the secretary he shall have the authority to countersign documents on behalf of the congregation.

3.2 In the event the financial officer is temporarily unable to carry out his duties, the president or secretary has the authority to carry out his duties.

## **ARTICLE VI ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL**

The voters' assembly at its October meeting shall hear the recommendations of the nominating committee, add to the list if it so desires and proceed to elect by ballot. A simple majority of votes cast shall be necessary for election. In the event that all of the candidates for a council position receive an equal number of votes the tie shall be resolved by prayer and the casting of lots (Acts 1:24-26).

## **ARTICLE VII RECEPTION INTO MEMBERSHIP**

### Section 1.

1.1 Persons who wish to be received into membership in this congregation other than through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism or the rite of confirmation shall bring their request to the attention of the pastor or the church council. The council shall honor the request when accompanied by a letter or other recommendation from a sister congregation or when qualifications for membership, as specified in Article V of this Constitution, have been met. Such action of the council shall be ratified by the regular meeting of the voters' assembly and notice of such receptions reported to the congregation.

1.2 Since the reception into membership signifies acceptance of and submission to this Constitution and Bylaws, each family shall be given a copy of the same prior to their reception so that they may become familiar with its provisions.

## **ARTICLE VIII TRANSFER OR RELEASE FROM MEMBERSHIP**

### Section 1.

Those desiring a transfer or release from membership shall bring their request to the attention of the pastor or the church council for action to be ratified at the next meeting of the voters' assembly.

### Section 2.

Transfer of membership shall apply only to those who desire membership in a congregation that is in agreement with this one in doctrine and practice. Release from membership shall apply when affiliation is sought with those denominations not in agreement with our congregation in doctrine and practice.

Section 3.

Members transferred or released relinquish all rights in this congregation.

**ARTICLE IX  
REPEALS AND AMENDMENTS OF THE BYLAWS**

Any and all Bylaws may be repealed or amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present at any quarterly meeting, provided that public notice of this proposed action shall have been given the congregation on at least two Sundays prior to the time of the meeting and provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing to the church council for its study and recommendation.