

**CONSTITUTION
For
ABIDING WORD LUTHERAN CHURCH
Of BRENHAM**

Preamble

We, the 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 Ghost.

CHAPTER 1

Name and Incorporation

- C1.01. The name of this Congregation shall be Abiding Word Lutheran Church of Brenham.
- C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the Abiding Word Lutheran Church of Brenham is hereinafter designated as "This Congregation."
- C1.03. This Congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas.

CHAPTER 2

Confession of Faith

- C2.01. We believe, teach and confess the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- C2.02. We believe, teach and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe in him.
- A. 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 in the person and work of Jesus Christ through whom God was pleased to reconcile all things to Himself.
- C2.03. We believe, teach and accept the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New

Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the sole authoritative source and norm of our proclamation, faith and life. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

- C2.04. We accept the Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the scriptural faith we believe, teach and confess.
- C2.05. We believe, teach and accept the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism as true witnesses to the Word of God, normative for our teaching and practice.
- C2.06. We believe, teach and confess the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise, the Large Catechism and the Formula of Concord as further valid expositions of the Holy Scriptures.
- C2.07. We believe, teach and confess the gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the priesthood of all believers for God's mission in the world.

CHAPTER 3

Nature of the Church

- C3.01. The Church is the universal assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel. (*Augsburg Confession, Article 7*)
- C3.02. All power in the church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its Head. All actions of This Congregation are to be carried out under His rule and authority.
- C3.03. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church and the universal Church exists in and through congregations.
- C3.04. This Congregation embodies the Church in its community and, for the sake of mission, lives in cooperative partnership with other congregations.

CHAPTER 4

Statement of Purpose

- C4.01. We believe in "the priesthood of all believers." God's people are called to the ministry, and the body of Christ must recognize and affirm that call. God has

gifted every believer through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to serve the cause of Christ Jesus in the world.

- C4.02. We believe that God changes lives and that He alone has the transforming power of the Holy Spirit to create faith and help us live lives that are pleasing to Him. We worship Jesus our Lord, not our tradition, not our history and not ourselves.
- C4.03. Worship establishes and encourages a right relationship between God and His people. Worship is our gift to God. Worship is essential for the believer and central to the life of the Church. In it we cast our eyes to the cross, we come under the instruction of God's Word, we are strengthened by the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper and we are bound together as Christ's body. Worship involves the whole person - body, mind, heart and spirit.
- C4.04. Jesus gave his disciples this command, "Go and make disciples of all nations." We will seek to invite every person to consider a living and personal relationship with Jesus Christ, for he is the only way to salvation and eternal life.
- C4.05. To carry out Gods mission, This Congregation, as a part of the Church, shall:
- A. reach out to all people, near and far, to make disciples in Christ;
 - B. provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered;
 - C. provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry;
 - D. challenge, equip and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their Congregation;
 - E. teach the Word of God;
 - F. serve in response to God's love to meet human needs;
 - G. teach Biblical stewardship; and
 - H. foster and participate in relationships with other congregations.
- C4.06. This Congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the Bylaws.

CHAPTER 5

Powers of This 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 Congregational Meeting called and conducted as provided in this Constitution and Bylaws.
- C5.03. Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregational Council or other organizational units in This Congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by This Congregation. This Congregation is authorized to:
- A. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
 - B. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
 - C. adopt amendments to the Constitution as provided in Chapter 13 and amendments to the Bylaws as specified in Chapter 14;
 - D. approve the annual budget;
 - E. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase or other lawful means;
 - F. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
 - G. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
 - H. elect its Congregational Council and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws; and
 - I. affiliate or terminate its affiliation as provided in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

Church Affiliation

- C6.01. This Congregation may affiliate with other Christian church bodies with which it can accept a common confession of faith.
- C6.02. This Congregation may affiliate with other Christian church bodies as decided by a simple majority of the voting members present and voting at a regular or specially called meeting of This Congregation.
- C6.03. This Congregation may terminate its affiliation with other Christian church bodies as decided by a simple majority of the voting members present and voting at a regular or specially called meeting of This Congregation.

CHAPTER 7

Property Ownership

- C7.01. If This Congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall be disbursed to entities and/or organizations as determined by a simple majority of the remaining voting members present and voting at a regular or specially called meeting of This Congregation.
- C7.02. If This Congregation is removed from membership in an affiliated organization according to its procedure for discipline or any other reason, title to any real property and assets of This Congregation shall remain with This Congregation.
- C7.03. Regardless of affiliation, title to any real property and assets of This Congregation shall remain with This Congregation.

CHAPTER 8

Membership

- C8.01. Membership in This Congregation is a call to discipleship under Jesus Christ. Therefore, members of This Congregation shall be baptized persons on the roll of This Congregation at the time that this Constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and its Bylaws.
- C8.02. For the purposes of determining voting privileges, membership in This Congregation shall be:
- 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 Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
 - 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 baptized and confirmed members who are at least 18 years of age. Such baptized members shall have communed at least two times during the previous twelve months.
 - D. Associate members are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of This Congregation, 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 at Congregational Meetings and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Congregational Council.

- C8.03. All membership information forms shall be submitted to the Membership Committee. Following verification of membership requirements, the Membership Committee shall submit their report to the Congregational Council for approval.
- 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 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 Congregational 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 membership shall remain persons for whom the church has a continuing prayerful concern.

CHAPTER 9

The Pastor

- C9.01. Authority to call a pastor shall be with This Congregation. A two-thirds majority ballot vote shall be required of the members present and voting at a regular or special meeting called for this purpose.
- C9.02. A member of the clergy roster of a Lutheran body recognized by This Congregation should be called as a pastor of This Congregation except in special circumstances. This Congregation may also call a person who has not yet been ordained so long as he or she has the necessary skills and qualifications and is willing to pursue further study.
- C9.03. Any called or contract pastor of This Congregation shall subscribe to This Congregation's Confession of Faith (see Chapter 2 of this Constitution). To help This Congregation fulfill its mission, the pastor(s) shall:

- A. preach the Word;
- B. administer the Sacraments;
- C. conduct public worship;
- D. provide pastoral care; and
- E. proclaim God's love for the world.

C9.04. Pastors with a Congregational Call shall, within This Congregation:

- A. baptize, offer instruction, confirm, visit the sick and distressed and perform weddings and funerals;
- B. provide spiritual guidance to all schools and organizations of This Congregation;
- C. install members of the Congregational Council;
- D. call upon and train members of This Congregation for works of ministry as partners in the Gospel to ensure the care of people and other work of the Kingdom of God; and
- E. with the Congregational Council, administer discipline.

C9.05. 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."

C9.06. The Call of This 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, may be terminated for one or more of the following reasons:

- A. a mutual agreement to terminate the Call or the completion of a Call for a specific term;
- B. the resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
- C. the inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in This Congregation, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor;
- D. the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
- E. the disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality or continued neglect of duty;

F. the commission of a felony or a crime of moral turpitude; or

G. the dissolution of This Congregation.

- C9.07. When allegations of physical or mental incapacity of the pastor or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office have come to the attention of the Congregational Council, the Personnel Committee shall investigate such conditions personally and make a recommendation to the Congregational Council.
- C9.08. In the case of alleged difficulties which imperil the effective functioning of This Congregation, all concerned persons shall be heard, after which the Congregational Council shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor. If the pastor agrees to carry out such recommendations, no further action shall be taken by the Congregational Council. If the pastor fails to agree, This Congregation may dismiss the pastor by a simple majority vote of the voting members present and voting at a legally called Congregational Meeting.
- C9.09. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights, duties and obligations in This Congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the Congregational Council.
- C9.10. When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the Call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors and the Congregational Council. As occasion requires, the Call documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- C9.11. The pastor of This Congregation shall:
- A. see that accurate parochial records are kept of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed or members excluded from This Congregation. All such records shall remain the property of This Congregation;
 - B. see that a summary of such statistics is submitted annually to This Congregation and Congregational Council as part of the pastor's annual report;
 - C. become a voting member of This Congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the Letter of Call;
 - D. seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 - E. encourage This Congregation in extending the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation and abroad through the support of missions;

- F. endeavor to increase This Congregation's involvement in ministries of mutual concern to organizations recognized by This Congregation in the wider church; and
- F. serve as a nonvoting advisory member of The Congregational Council and all boards, committees and organizations of This Congregation, except a special committee to terminate his or her tenure.

CHAPTER 10

Congregational Meeting

- C10.01. This Congregation shall meet twice yearly. The meetings of This Congregation shall be held in October and January.
- C10.02. A special Congregational Meeting may be called by the Congregational Council or the President of This Congregation, and shall be called by the President of This Congregation upon written request of five percent of its Voting Members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted at that meeting.
- C10.03. Notice of Congregational Meetings shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail or other transmission to all voting members at least ten days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice to the last known address of such members shall be sufficient.
- C10.04. A Quorum of voting members at a properly called meeting shall consist of five percent of the voting members of This Congregation with a minimum of twenty-five voting members being present.
- C10.05. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- C10.06. All actions approved by This Congregation shall be by simple majority vote of those voting members present and voting except as otherwise provided in this Constitution or by state law.
- C10.07. *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of This Congregation.

CHAPTER 11

Organizations within the Congregation

- C11.01. All organizations within This Congregation shall exist to support This Congregation in fulfilling its mission. As outgrowths and expressions of This Congregation's life, the organizations are subject to its oversight and direction.

C11.02. Special interest groups other than those of the official organizations of This Congregation may be organized only after authorization has been given by This Congregation or the Congregational Council.

CHAPTER 12

Discipline of Members

C12.01. 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 (or Senior Pastor, if there are multiple pastors),
- B) admonition by said pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, and
- C) notice to appear before the Congregational Council.

If, for any reason, said pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by a) and b) above, the Congregational President or Congregational Vice President shall administer such admonitions.

C12.02. If discipline against a member proceeds beyond counseling and admonition by the pastor (or Senior Pastor, if there are multiple pastors), charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing shall be prepared by member(s) of This Congregation who shall sign the charges as the accuser(s). The written charges shall be filed with said pastor, who shall advise the Congregational Council of the need to issue a written notice to the accused and the accusers that specifies the time and place of the hearing before the Congregational Council. The written charges shall accompany the written notice to the accused. A member charged with the offense shall appear before the Congregational Council after having received a written notice at least ten days prior to the meeting. If the member charged with the offense fails to appear at the scheduled hearing, the Congregational Council may proceed with the hearing and may pass judgment in the member's absence.

C12.03. To assure due process and due protection for the accused, members of the Congregational Council who participate in the preparation of the written charges or who present evidence or testimony in the hearing before the Congregational Council are disqualified from voting upon the question of the guilt of the accused member. In addition, due process requires the following:

- A. The right to be given a specific written statement of the charges;
- B. The right to a hearing by the Congregational Council;

- C. The right of the accused to testify in person or remain silent;
- D. The right to call witnesses;
- E. The right to introduce documentary evidence;
- F. The right to confront and cross-examine witnesses;
- G. The right to a hearing closed to the public unless both the accuser(s) and the accused agree to a public hearing;
- H. The right to a written decision;
- I. The right to be treated with fundamental procedural fairness, which means:
 1. Avoidance by Congregational Council members of written communications to or from either accused or accuser(s) without copy to the other;
 2. Avoidance by Congregational Council members of other communications with either the accused or the accuser(s) outside of the presence of the other;
 3. Maintaining proper decorum during the hearing;
 4. Allowing both the accuser(s) and the accused to present their cases without unnecessary interruptions;
 5. Keeping a verbatim record of the hearing, made either by audio, video with audio, or other means of recording; and
 6. Allowing both the accuser(s) and the accused to be accompanied at the hearing by a representative (who may, but need not, be an attorney) who may also participate in the proceedings.

C12.04. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Congregational Council who are not disqualified but are present and voting, and renewed admonition proves ineffectual, the Congregational Council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:

- A. censure before the Congregational Council or This 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.

C12.05. The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Congregational Council shall have the right to appeal the decision to This Congregation. Notice of a decision to make such appeal shall be made in writing to the Congregational President within fifteen days of Congregational Council's disciplinary decision. Upon receipt of such notice, the Congregational President shall call a special meeting of This Congregation to hear such appeal, to be held no later than sixty days following the date of such notice. Such right may not be abridged and the decision of This Congregation by a simple majority vote of those present and voting shall be final.

C12.06. Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Congregational Council upon receipt of:

- A. evidence that injustice has been done or
- B. evidence of repentance and amendment.

C12.07. 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 meet with the Congregational Council for consultation after informing the Congregational Council President of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to This Congregation whose decision shall be final.

CHAPTER 13

Amendments

C13.01. Amendments to the Constitution may be proposed by the Congregational Council or by written petition signed by at least five percent of its Voting Members. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregational Council before formal consideration by This Congregation at its regular meeting or a special meeting called for that purpose. The Congregational Council shall notify the members of This Congregation of the proposal with their recommendations at least sixty days in advance of the Congregational Meeting.

C13.02. A proposed amendment to this Constitution shall:

- A. be approved, at a properly called meeting with a quorum present according to the Constitution, by a two-thirds vote of those Voting Members present and voting;
- B. be ratified, without change, at the next properly called meeting by a two-thirds vote of those Voting Members present and voting; and
- C. have the effective date included in the amendment and noted in the Constitution.

C13.03. At least thirty days shall pass between a vote to approve and a vote to ratify changes to this Constitution.

CHAPTER 14

Bylaws

C14.01. This Congregation shall adopt Bylaws. No Bylaws may conflict with this Constitution. If a conflict may develop between the Constitution and the Bylaws, the Constitution shall be the ruling document.

C14.02. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any properly called meeting of This Congregation with a quorum present by a simple majority vote of those voting members present and voting.

C14.03. Changes to the Bylaws may be proposed by the Congregational Council or by written petition signed by at least five percent of its Voting Members. Such additions or amendments shall be submitted to the Congregational Council at least sixty days before a regular or special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregational Council shall notify the members of This Congregation in writing by mail or other transmission to all voting members with its recommendations at least thirty days in advance of the Congregational Meeting.

CHAPTER 15

Indemnification

C15.01. 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 Congregational Council member, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any committee of This Congregation, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.

**BYLAWS TO THE CONSTITUTION
for
ABIDING WORD LUTHERAN CHURCH
Of BRENHAM**

CHAPTER 1

Communion Participation

B1.01. Participation in Holy Communion shall be open to all baptized Christians who accept belief in the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament and profess repentance as referenced in The Augsburg Confession, Article X, Book of Concord.

CHAPTER 2

Conflicting Loyalties

B2.01. The programs and services of This Congregation shall be open to all people to share in its worship, instruction, pastoral care and fellowship. This Congregation rejects all fellowship with organizations, secret or open, which practice forms of religion without confessing faith in the Triune God and in Jesus Christ as the Eternal Son of God Incarnate, to be our only Savior from sin, and which thus teach salvation by works.

CHAPTER 3

Pastor Call Process

B3.01. When it becomes necessary to call a pastor, the Congregational Council shall appoint a Call Committee (Refer to B9.12).

B3.02. The Call Committee shall:

- A. Determine the needs of This Congregation and the desired qualifications of the new pastor;
- B. Interview and evaluate such candidates that meet the requirements as defined in Chapter 9 of the Constitution;
- C. Present its recommendations to the Congregational Council at a regular or specially called meeting prior to presentation to This Congregation.
- D. Present its recommendations to This Congregation at a meeting for the purpose of calling a pastor.

B3.03. When This Congregation has voted to call a pastor, it shall issue a Letter of Call to the pastor-elect. This letter shall be signed by the President and the Secretary of the Congregational Council. A call to a clergy-person to be an assistant or co-pastor shall be issued with the concurrence of the pastor of This Congregation and in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph.

CHAPTER 4

Pastoral Care of Membership

B4.01. In the event that a member moves out of the area served by This Congregation, This Congregation shall encourage the member to request a transfer to a Lutheran Congregation in the community of the new residence. After a period of two years, this person shall be placed on the Inactive List of This Congregation. Upon request, a person living outside of the area served by This Congregation may keep their membership in This Congregation provided that they make such a request in writing and show some cause to the satisfaction of the Congregational Council for this action. Any shut-in, any active member of the Armed Forces of the United States or their families and any person pursuing an education who is residing outside of the area served by This Congregation shall not be subject to the provisions of this section of the Bylaws.

B4.02. A member desiring to change his or her membership shall, upon request, receive a Letter of Transfer or release.

B4.03. Ministry to children shall be subject to the following considerations:

- A. A child, none of whose parents or guardians is a member of This Congregation, shall, upon receiving the Sacrament of Baptism, become a baptized member of This Congregation, unless for good reason he or she is to become a baptized member of another congregation, in which case his or her membership shall be transferred to that congregation.
- B. Children who have been baptized in the Name of the Triune God in non-Lutheran Congregations shall be received as baptized members of This Congregation at the time when one or both of their parents/guardian's request

or approve that their children be included in the life and ministry of This Congregation.

- C. Foster children under the care of parents who are members of This Congregation may become baptized members of This Congregation by receiving the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

CHAPTER 5

Meetings of This Congregation

- B5.01. A Congregational Meeting shall be held during the month of October in order to elect members of the Congregational Council, Nominating Committee, and conduct other business as necessary.
- B5.02. A Congregational Meeting shall be held during the month of January for the primary purpose of handling the general business matters of This Congregation, approving the budget for the current year, receiving annual reports from all organizations and committees of This Congregation and conduct other business as necessary. Such reports, including year-end financial statements, shall be submitted to the church office no later than fourteen days prior to the meeting.
- B5.03. Notice of all meetings of This Congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail or other transmission to all voting members at least ten days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice to the last known address of such members shall be sufficient.
- B5.04. The Secretary of the Congregational Council will ensure that current rosters of voting, confirmed, and baptized members are available at each meeting of This Congregation.

CHAPTER 6

Elections

- B6.01. Elections for Congregational Council and Nominating Committee members shall be held at the October meeting of This Congregation from a ballot provided by the Nominating Committee.
- B6.02. In addition to the candidates submitted by the Nominating Committee, additional nominations may be made from the floor for Congregational Council or Nominating Committee positions. These candidates shall be added to the ballot, provided that they are Voting Members of the congregation and are willing to serve in such capacity.
- B6.03. Should there be more candidates than positions to be filled, the candidate(s) receiving the most votes shall be elected to the position(s). Should the final

position to be filled result in a tie, one more vote shall be taken between the individuals that tied for the last position and the one who receives the most votes shall fill that position.

B6.04. Members of the Congregational Council shall be election officials.

B6.05. A vacancy for a position shall be filled in a separate vote prior to any positions that are the results of an expired term.

CHAPTER 7

Officers

B7.01. The officers of the Congregational Council shall be President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. These officers shall serve in the same capacity in the Congregational Council and This Congregation and are also the Executive Committee.

B7.02. The Officers shall be elected by the Congregational Council from members of the Congregational Council by voice or written ballot at the December Congregational Council Meeting. Officers shall serve a one-year term, with terms beginning January 1.

B7.03. No Officer shall hold more than one elected office of the Congregational Council at a time.

B7.04. No Officer shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

B7.05. The duties of the President of This Congregation shall be as follows:

- A. Preside at all meetings of This Congregation, the Congregational Council, and the Executive Committee.
- B. Meet regularly with the Pastor to review day-to-day functioning of This Congregation, to set priorities and to establish agendas for meetings.
- C. Shall appoint the Personnel Committee.
- D. Shall appoint the Pastoral Care Committee.

B7.06. The duties of the Vice President of This Congregation shall be as follows:

- A. Act in place of the Congregational President when the Congregational President is unable to be present.
- B. Serve as parliamentary advisor to the President of the Congregational Council.
- C. Shall oversee the Nominating Committee.

B7.07. The duties of the Secretary of This Congregation shall be as follows:

- A. Record and report the minutes of all meetings of This Congregation, the Congregational Council, and the Executive Committee. A Recording Secretary may be appointed by the Congregational Secretary to fulfill these duties.
- B. Receive, read, record and oversee the response for all official correspondence of This Congregation. A Corresponding Secretary may be appointed by the Congregational Secretary to fulfill these duties.
- C. Oversee the maintenance of an up-to-date list of all statistics pertaining to the membership of This Congregation, especially the Voting Membership. A Membership Secretary may be appointed by the Congregational Secretary to fulfill these duties.

B7.08. The duties of the Treasurer of This Congregation shall be as follows:

- A. Serve on the Finance & Stewardship Committee.
- B. Have primary responsibility for the accounting of all funds of This Congregation. A Financial Secretary may be appointed by the Congregational Treasurer to fulfill these duties.
- C. Oversee the work of the Financial Secretary.
- D. Maintain an adequate financial bond and insurance for This Congregation.

CHAPTER 8

The Congregational Council

- B8.01. The voting membership of the Congregational Council shall consist of 9 members elected by This Congregation. Each Congregational Council member will serve as a representative of a Congregational Council Standing Committee of This Congregation. The Congregational Council member may or may not serve as the committee's chairperson.
- B8.02. The members of the Congregational Council shall be elected at the October Congregational Meeting. One third of the members shall be elected each year. Their term of office shall be for three years with the term beginning on January 1.

Newly elected Congregational Council members shall be installed at a worship service prior to the date they assume office. No member shall be eligible to serve consecutive elected terms.

- B8.03. Any Voting Member of This Congregation may be elected to the Congregational Council, subject to the term limits specified in B8.02. A member's place on the Congregational Council shall be declared vacant if the member ceases to be a voting member of This Congregation or is absent from two successive regular meetings of the Congregational Council without due cause. The pastor shall serve as an advisory, ex-officio member of the Congregational Council, without vote.
- B8.04. Should a member's place on the Congregational Council be declared vacant, the Congregational Council may appoint, by simple majority vote, a successor until the next October Congregational Meeting.
- B8.05. The Congregational Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of This Congregation to the end that everything is done in accordance with the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. The duties of the Congregational Council shall include but not be limited to the following:
- A. To lead This Congregation with the Pastor in stating its mission, to develop long range planning, to set goals and priorities and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals;
 - B. To work with the Pastor in providing for the spiritual and general care of This Congregation;
 - C. To seek to involve all members of This Congregation in worship, learning, witness, service and support;
 - D. To function and perform its mission;
 - E. To establish any organization, team or ministry within This Congregation which it believes is in the best interest of This Congregation;
 - F. To dissolve any organization, team or ministry within This Congregation which it believes is not in the best interest of This Congregation;
 - G. To be examples individually and corporately of the life-style and ministry expected of all baptized persons;
 - H. To promote a Congregational climate of peace and good will and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding;
 - I. To emphasize partnership with its affiliated entities and congregations as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, in the spirit of Biblical principles.

- J. To contact members who have not been active in the congregational life for a period of 12 months without cause. During the following 12-month period, the Pastor and Outreach Committee shall attempt to contact the individual in an attempt to counsel with them and make an effort to bring them back to active membership. A member who has not returned to active participation following these efforts shall be removed from the active membership rolls.

B8.06. The Congregational Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of This Congregation.

- A. The Congregational 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 of and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Texas, except as otherwise provided herein.
- B. The Congregational Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless authorized to do so by a meeting of This Congregation.
- C. The Congregational Council may expend up to \$10,000.00 for items not included in the budget. The Congregational Council may not exceed the total approved budget by more than 5% without Congregational approval. The Council may exceed limits set for items necessary to conduct the business of the Church.
- D. The Congregational Council shall present an annual budget for adoption by This Congregation at the January Congregational Meeting and shall supervise the expenditure of funds.
- E. The Congregational Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of This Congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies to the intended beneficiaries.
- F. The Congregational Council shall be responsible for This Congregation's investments.

B8.07. The Congregational Council shall see that the provisions of this Constitution and its Bylaws are carried out.

B8.08. The Congregational Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.

B8.10. The Congregational Council shall complete and submit a comprehensive report to This Congregation at the January Congregational Meeting

- B8.11. The Congregational Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor or the Congregational President, or can be called at the request of a least one third of its members. Appropriate notice shall be given to all Council members.
- B8.12. A Quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of 66.6% of the members of the Congregational Council.
- B8.13. The Congregational Council shall have authority to choose delegates to any group or meeting in which This Congregation is entitled to representation. Delegates shall be informed representatives of This Congregation, expressing the will of This Congregation.
- B8.14. The Congregational Council shall approve a Sunday School Superintendent as recommended by the Education Committee.

CHAPTER 9

Congregational Committees

- B9.01. Committees are composed of Voting and Associate Members of AWLC and exist to support the Pastor. Council and Congregation in the effective performance of the mission of AWLC. Accordingly, they function under the review of the Congregational Council in its general oversight of the life and activities of the Congregation as defined in B8.05. Committee members are volunteers (taken from the Time & Talent forms or other sources) of those identified by the Congregational Council. All Committee members are encouraged to participate in discussions and vote on issues addressed at committee meetings.
- B9.02. The members of the Standing Committees listed below, with the exception of the Nominating Committee, shall be presented to This Congregation at its January Congregational Meeting. The Nominating Committee will be elected at the October Congregational Meeting. The Standing Committees of This Congregation shall be:
- A. Outreach, Mission & Education
 - B. Fellowship
 - C. Finance & Stewardship
 - D. Membership
 - E. Nominating
 - F. Personnel (appointed by the Exec. Comm. and overseen by the Council Pres.
 - G. Property & Technology

H. Worship & Music

I. Other permanent and Ad Hoc Committee as deemed necessary by the Congregational Council.

- B9.03. It is the responsibility of the Council Representative from the Council to call the first meeting. Standing Committees of this Congregation shall meet on a frequency that allows them to accomplish their purpose. The Chair is responsible for identifying meeting frequency, time and location. However, all Standing Committees will meet a minimum of two times per year.
- B9.04. At their first meeting, all Standing Committees shall designate one of its members as chair and another as vice-chair. The vice-chair will function as chair in the absence of the chair at committee meetings. All Standing Committees shall also select from their membership a secretary who shall keep minutes and distribute minutes and reports for the committee to the Congregational Council. The Council should receive these minutes prior to the next Council Meeting. It is understood the minutes will have been reviewed but not necessarily have been approved by the Committee until their next meeting. These minutes will be reviewed at the Council meeting (under the auspices of B8.05) prior to general communications with the congregation. The Council Representative for the Committee will notify the Committee Chair of any questions identified by the Church Council. The chair shall be responsible for providing committee annual reports to the Congregational Council and January Congregational Meeting.
- B9.05. All Standing Committees may appoint additional members in consultation with the Nominating Committee.
- B9.06. A member's place on a Congregational Committee shall be declared vacant if the member:
- A. Ceases to be a member of This Congregation, or
 - B. Is absent from two successive regular scheduled meetings of the committee without cause.
- B9.07. Should a vacancy occur on any committee resulting in less than the required membership, the Congregational Council may appoint a successor by simple majority vote.
- B9.08. A Pastor shall be advisory staff to all Standing Committees.
- B9.09. It is the responsibility of the Chair to submit budget requests for the coming year to the Finance Committee no less than two months prior to the January Congregational Meeting.

- B9.10. An Audit Committee of three members of This Congregation shall be elected annually by the Congregational Council in consultation with the Finance & Stewardship Committee. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregational Council. Members shall be eligible for re-election. The duties of this committee shall end once the audit is completed. This committee shall:
- A. Conduct an annual reconciliation of This Congregation's financial records for the period of January 1 to December 31.
 - B. Present the results of the audit at the January Congregational Meeting of This Congregation.
 - C. Make recommendations to the Congregational Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Finance & Stewardship Committee and Congregational Council concerning handling of the funds of This Congregation, as needed.
- B9.11. A Call Committee of a minimum of six Members of This Congregation, two of whom shall be members of the Congregational Council, shall be appointed by the Congregational Council when a Pastoral vacancy occurs. The term of office will terminate at the installation of the newly called Pastor.
- B9.12. Additional committees may be formed as needed.

CHAPTER 10

Duties of Standing Congregational Committees

- B10.01. Education Sub-Committee *Note that this function is now a part of Outreach, Mission & Education.
- A. The Education Sub-Committee shall consist of the Sunday School Superintendent (When and where determined needed) and a minimum of two other members.
 - B. The Education Sub-Committee shall be responsible for the entire Christian Education Program of This Congregation which may include but not be limited to:
 1. Sunday School;
 2. Adult Education;
 3. Community Education Events;
 4. Vacation Bible School;
 5. Mothers Day Out Program;

6. Recruiting and supervising students for the various classes in all areas of This Congregation's Christian Education Programs;
7. Recruiting and training of teachers and other volunteers to carry out the Christian Education Programs of This Congregation;
8. Selection of Sunday School Superintendent (When and where determine needed);
9. The Christmas Program in consultation with the Music Director; and
10. Care and promotion of the Congregational library.

B10.02. Fellowship Committee

- A. The Fellowship Committee shall consist of the chair and a minimum of two other members.
- B. The Fellowship Committee shall:
 1. Provide for the Christian Fellowship needs of the members and prospective members of This Congregation.
 2. Plan and supervise social gatherings of This Congregation at various times throughout the year.
 3. Coordinate activities through other committees and organizations that promote community within This Congregation.
 4. For any members or those who worship with us as have need, work to organize visitation, prayer, food delivery, home or yard assistance. They shall encourage members to accompany others as they spend time in hospitals, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers or recover in private residences. They shall organize bereavement meals delivered to homes. They shall prepare and oversee a budget necessary to best accomplish this ministry to members and those who worship with our Congregation.
 5. Have primary responsibility for the church kitchen and its activities and maintain adequate supplies for congregational use of the kitchen facilities.

B10.03. Finance & Stewardship Committee

- A. The Finance & Stewardship Committee shall consist of the chair, the Congregational Treasurer and a minimum of four other members.
- B. The Finance & Stewardship Committee shall:
 1. Prepare a draft budget for the succeeding year, submit such draft budget to the Congregational Council for its action and present the proposed fiscal

budget to This Congregation at the January Congregational Meeting.

2. Exercise oversight of all financial affairs of This Congregation to make sure that they are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations.
3. Subject to actions and decisions of the Congregational Council, be responsible for This Congregation's investments.
4. Review its total insurance program in conjunction with the Property Committee.
5. With the Outreach, Missions & Education Committee, evoke and promote the expression of Christian faith in daily living; teach the Christian use of money; inform This Congregation of This Congregation's local, national and world-wide ministries and lead all its members to higher levels of giving for the Lord's work.
6. Be responsible for all of This Congregations effort which lead to informed and grateful giving.
7. Oversee the work of the Financial Secretary.
8. Oversee the annual reconciliation of all accounts of the Congregational Treasurer and the Financial Secretary as well as other organizations within This Congregation performed by the Audit Committee.
9. Suggest Special Offering designations.
10. Be responsible for administration of Dedicated Accounts, subject to approval of the Congregational Council.
11. Be responsible for the administration of Time & Talent collection and assignments.

B10.04. Membership Committee

1. The Membership Committee shall consist of the chair and a minimum of three other members.
2. The Membership Committee shall:
 1. Be responsible for "attendance cards".
 2. Be responsible for a "member information" form.
 3. Follow up on items checked on cards as needed by correspondence, phone or electronic communication or refer to another committee or Pastor.

4. Maintain the membership & visitor records on the Church automation system.
5. Accept membership information forms, preparing transfer requests and accepting transfers.
6. Assist the Pastor in the contact of members who have not participated in the faith life of This Congregation regularly to determine their needs.

B10.05. Nominating Committee

- A. The Nominating Committee shall consist of the chair and a minimum of five other members elected by This Congregation at its November Congregational Meeting. At least one outgoing Congregational Council member should be elected to serve on this committee each year. The Chair of the Nominating Committee shall be elected by the committee and provide oversight and direction for the committee.
- B. The Nominating Committee shall:
 1. Each year determine the number of Congregational Council and Nominating committee positions requiring nominees for election at the October Congregational Meeting.
 2. Seek candidates who:
 - a. Participate regularly in Holy Communion and worship, and
 - b. Show a willingness to grow spiritually.
 3. Match persons with specific talents and abilities with the positions to be filled.
 4. Continue until nominees are found for all positions available. Only one nominee shall be selected for each of the positions by the Nominating Committee. Each nominee shall be given a copy of the position description and duties prior to accepting the nomination.
 5. Prepare and distribute the list of nominees at least one week prior to the Congregational Meeting. This list shall serve as the official ballot.

B10.06. Outreach, Mission & Education Committee

- A. The Outreach, Mission & Education Committee shall consist of the chair and a minimum of two other members and the three members of the Education Sub-Committee.

- B. The Outreach & Mission Sub-Committee shall be responsible for:
1. Promoting the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all people.
 2. Encouraging and motivating members to actively participate in the life and ministry of This Congregation.
 3. Inspiring This Congregation in the commitment to the call of Jesus Christ to make disciples of all people in accordance with the confessions of This Congregation through personal witness and the support of mission work around the world.
 4. Pursuing programs that present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all persons in our community and area who are not currently involved in a congregation.
 5. Providing public relations for This Congregation including all appropriate public media and public signage both on and off the property, etc.
 6. Communicating ideas and programs with other committees which will help foster an atmosphere of hospitality and welcome to guests and visitors.
 7. For any non-members or others as have need, work to organize visitation, prayer, food delivery, home or yard assistance. They shall encourage members to accompany others as they spend time in hospitals, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers or recover in private residences. They shall organize compassion ministry for college students, and soldiers. They shall prepare and oversee a budget necessary to best accomplish this ministry to those in need that are not members nor regular visitors to our congregation.

B10.07. Personnel Committee

- A. The Personnel Committee shall consist of the chair and a minimum of four other members. The Congregational Council President shall appoint all members of this committee. The Council President shall oversee this committee.
- B. The Personnel Committee shall conduct an annual ministry review of the Senior Pastor.
- C. The Personnel Committee shall develop personnel policies applicable jointly or separately to clergy and lay personnel.
- D. The Personnel Committee shall review annually salaries of all personnel and make recommendations to the Finance and Stewardship Committee.
- E. The Personnel Committee shall submit recommendations concerning personnel issues to the Congregational Council.

- F. The Personnel Committee shall maintain supportive relationships with the Pastor(s) and staff and help them to annually evaluate the fulfillment of their calling, appointment or employment.
- G. The Personnel Committee shall secure the necessary program and office staff based on This Congregation's approved budget, to define duties, to establish and recommend salaries.
- H. All matters which come before this committee shall be treated with utmost confidentiality due to the nature of the subjects with which they are charged.

B10.08. Property & Technology Committee

- A. The Property & Technology Committee shall consist of the chair and a minimum of four other members.
- B. The Property & Technology Committee shall be responsible for:
 1. The overall upkeep of the properties, buildings and grounds of This Congregation.
 2. Involving members in the maintenance and upkeep of the properties, buildings and grounds of This Congregation.
 3. Educating the members on the proper use of the properties, buildings and grounds of This Congregation
 4. In conjunction with the Pastor, supervise the engagement and supervision of personnel employed to maintain the buildings and grounds.
 5. The inspections, code and safety requirements and handicap accessibility of the property.

B10.09. Worship & Music Committee

- A. The Worship & Music Committee shall consist of the chair and a minimum of four other members.
- B. The Worship & Music Committee shall be responsible for:
 1. Assisting the Pastor and Music Director in planning the conduct of worship services.
 2. Scheduling & supervising the work of the altar guild, acolytes, readers, lay ministers and all others engaged to help conduct the worship of This

Congregation. The altar guild, music leaders and organist may serve as advisory members of this committee.

3. Assisting the Music Director in engaging the services of a musician or musicians to accompany the worship of This Congregation.
4. Scheduling & supervising the nursery services provided by This Congregation.
5. Assisting in engaging the services of visiting Pastors or alternate worship leaders as needed.
6. Actively encourage participation in music and worship opportunities of This Congregation.
7. Be responsible for the Welcome Table. This would include but not be limited to recruitment and scheduling.

B10.10 Pastoral Care Committee

- A. This committee shall be appointed by the Council President to assist the Pastor as needed. These members shall serve until replaced or excused from duty. They may be any member of the congregation fit for such duty.