

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

for

HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH



A Congregation of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in
America

As Approved on Jan 24, 2010

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS FOR THE CONGREGATION OF HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Table of Contents

Structure of the Constitution and the Inclusion of Bylaws

Preamble

Chapter 1 Name and Incorporation

Chapter 2 Confession of Faith

Chapter 3 Nature of the Church

Chapter 4 Statement of Purpose

Chapter 5 Powers of the Congregation

Chapter 6 Church Affiliation

Chapter 7 Property Ownership

Chapter 8 Membership

Chapter 9 The Pastor

Chapter 10 Congregation Meeting

Chapter 11 Officers

Chapter 12 Congregation Council

Chapter 13 Congregation Committees

Chapter 14 Organizations within the Congregation

Chapter 15 Discipline of Members and Adjudication

Chapter 16 Bylaws

Chapter 17 Amendments

Chapter 18 Continuing Resolutions

Change Record of the Congregational Constitution

Structure of the Constitution and the Inclusion of Bylaws

Hope Community Church's constitution follows ELCA model constitution guidelines as follows:

- The constitution is composed of chapters, provisions, by-laws and continuing resolution.
- The constitution is organized by **chapters** (e.g. Chapter 11 Officers).
- Each chapter has separately numbered **provisions** (e.g. "C11.01. The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and financial secretary."). Some numbers for provisions (particularly those numbered .10, .20, etc) are reserved for future use, and therefore do not appear. This results in chapters appearing to have missing provisions (e.g. skipping from 9.09 to 9.11)
- **Bylaws** are not maintained as a separate document, but are included in the body of this constitution document and appear as clauses numbered at the third level, such that a by-law is associated with a provision. (e.g. "C11.01.01. Duties of the Officers of the Congregation "). By-laws may be changed by the congregation as a whole through a simpler process than changing chapters and provisions.
- The Congregation Council may adopt "**continuing resolutions**," which may provide descriptions of operational patterns or of the ongoing responsibilities of committees or other units within the organizational structure of the congregation. Within the governing documents of a congregation, continuing resolutions are the provisions most easily amended. Unlike constitutional provisions and bylaws, continuing resolutions may be updated regularly by the Congregation Council without the necessity of calling a regular or special Congregation Meeting. Continuing resolutions also are codified with three sets of numbers except that the third set is preceded by a capital letter indicating the sequence of continuing resolutions in a chapter. Thus, a continuing resolution might be numbered C13.07.A05, where "C13" designates the chapter; "07" designates the subject matter within the chapter; and "A" indicates that it is the first continuing resolution regarding that subject; and "05" indicates that it was adopted in 2005.
- Because bylaws and continuing resolutions normally are so specifically related to details of each congregation's organization, operation, and life, the ELCA does not publish a model set of bylaws or continuing resolutions.

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS FOR HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH

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

Chapter 1. NAME AND INCORPORATION

C1.01. The name of this congregation shall be Hope Community Church.

C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the Hope Community Church congregation is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."

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

Chapter 2. CONFESSION OF FAITH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 3. NATURE OF THE CHURCH

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

C3.02. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and

the universal Church exists in and through congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

Chapter 4. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

C4.01. The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.

C4.02. To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:

- a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
- b. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
- c. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
- d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs.
- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
- f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

C4.03. To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:

- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
- b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
- c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.
- d. Teach the Word of God.
- e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
- f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
- g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for the congregation's ministry and the ministry of other parts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.

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

C4.05. This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

Chapter 5. POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

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

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

provided in this constitution and bylaws.

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

The congregation is authorized to:

- a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- c. appoint or terminate the appointment of associates in ministry in conformity with the applicable policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
- 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; A, sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
- h. elect its Congregation Council, boards, and committees, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions; and
- i. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6. CHURCH AFFILIATION

C6.01. This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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

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

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

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

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

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

- a. A resolution indicating the desire of this congregation to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present.

- b. The secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the synodical bishop and shall mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of this congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted.
- c. The bishop of the synod shall consult with this congregation during a period of at least 90 days.
- d. If this congregation, after consultation, still desires to terminate its relationship, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present, at which meeting the bishop of the synod or an authorized representative shall be present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.
- e. A certified copy of the resolution to terminate its relationship shall be sent to the synodical bishop, at which time the relationship between this congregation and ELCA shall be terminated.
- f. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the synodical bishop to the secretary of this church and published in the periodical of this church.
- g. If this congregation was established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America it shall be required, in addition to the foregoing provisions in C6.05., to receive synodical approval before terminating its membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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

Chapter 7. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

C7.01. If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the North/West Lower Michigan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

C7.02. If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

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

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

Chapter 8. MEMBERSHIP

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

C8.02. Members shall be classified as follows:

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

- Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.
- c. Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members shall have communed and made a contribution of record during the current or preceding year.
- d. Associate members are persons holding membership in other Lutheran congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Congregation Council of this congregation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 9. THE PASTOR

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

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

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

- a. Every ordained minister shall:
 - 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;
 - 3) conduct public worship;
 - 4) provide pastoral care; and
 - 5) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
- b. Each ordained minister with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
 - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council; and
 - 3) with the council, administer discipline.
- c. Every pastor shall:
 - 1) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel and strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;
 - 2) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications; and

- 3) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to work of the ELCA churchwide organization and of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod of the ELCA.

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

C9.05.

- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which, except in the case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated only following consultation with the synodical bishop and for the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor;
 - 4) the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
 - 5) disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty;
 - 6) the dissolution of the congregation; or
 - 7) suspension of the congregation as a result of discipline proceedings.
- b. When allegations of physical or mental incapacity of the pastor or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office have come to the attention of the bishop of the synod, the bishop in his or her sole discretion may, or when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition investigate such conditions personally in company with a committee of two ordained ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged physical or mental incapacity, competent medical testimony shall be obtained. When such disability is evident, the bishop of the synod with the advice of the committee shall declare the pastorate vacant. Upon the restoration of a disabled pastor to health, the bishop of the synod shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another field of labor.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation, all concerned persons shall be heard, after which the bishop of the synod together with the committee described in C9.05.b. shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor and the congregation. If they agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action shall be taken by the synod. If either party fails to assent, the congregation may dismiss the pastor by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present at a regularly called meeting after consultation with the bishop.
- e. If, in the course of proceedings described in C9.05.d., the committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action to the synodical bishop who may bring charges, in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the constitution of this synod.
- f. If, following the appointment of the committee described in C9.05.b or d., it should become apparent that the pastoral office cannot be conducted effectively in the congregation(s) being served by the ordained minister due to local conditions, the bishop of the synod may temporarily suspend the pastor from service in the congregation(s) without prejudice and with pay provided through a joint churchwide/synod fund and with housing provided by the congregation(s).

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

C9.07. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.

C9.08. This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation.

C9.09. When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

C9.10 (none)

C9.11. With the approval of the bishop of the synod, the congregation may depart from C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of C9.05.a.

C9.12. The pastor shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, and shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod. The pastor shall be a member of the congregation that has extended the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

C9.13. The pastor(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

Chapter 10. CONGREGATION MEETING

C10.01. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified by the Congregation Council as documented in a Continuing Resolution.

C10.01.A2009. An annual meeting of the congregation shall be held in January of each year, at which the congregation shall celebrate the previous year's ministry as well as discuss the future ministry of Hope Community Church.

An annual consecration Sunday or other financial commitment event shall be held in October of each year, at which the congregation shall indicate their financial commitments for the upcoming year, thereby assisting the congregation in creating a financial plan for ministry.

An annual meeting of the congregation shall also be held in November of each year, at which the election of council members and the approval of the financial plan for ministry shall take place as well as other necessary business of the congregation. A proposed financial plan for ministry, including expected financial resources and expenses, shall be developed by the Finance Committee for review and approval by the Congregation Council. The resulting proposed financial plan for ministry shall be distributed to the congregation and a public budget hearing held at least 2 weeks prior to the November congregational meeting.

C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called at the written request of twenty percent (20%) of 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.

C10.03. Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or paid, sent to the last known address of such members shall be sufficient.

C10.04. Twenty percent (20%) of the voting members shall constitute a quorum.

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

C10.06. All actions by the congregation shall be by majority vote except as otherwise provided in this constitution.

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

Chapter 11. OFFICERS

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

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

C11.01.01. Duties of the Officers of the Congregation

(remove section (d. Treasurer) and renumber ("e. Financial Secretary" to be "d. Financial Secretary")

C11.01.01. Duties of the Officers of the Congregation

a. President

1. The president shall be the presiding officer at all meetings of the congregation and the church council.
2. May call special meetings of the congregational council or committees as deemed necessary.
3. Is an Ex-Officio member of all committees.
4. Shall execute legal documents as directed by the constitution, congregation or church council.
5. Co-sign all non-payroll checks over \$500 drawn on church accounts with the Treasurer.
6. Work with the Vice-President to provide pastoral care in the absence or incapacity of the Pastor.
7. Keep the Vice-President and Pastor(s) advised of all pertinent information regarding church functioning and work to facilitate communication among committees, council, staff and the congregation.
8. In the absence of a council member, be responsible to see that said member's duties are fulfilled and executed.
9. Prepare the annual presidents report for presentation to the congregation and inclusion in the annual report.
10. Coordinate the activities of lay personnel employed by the church.
11. Coordinate and supervise activities of church organizations, programs, and groups as necessary.
12. Be responsible for establishing long range planning goals and priorities for the congregation.
13. The President may delegate duties to other council members and committees as necessary.
14. The President may organize committees with approval of Council, to assist with the described duties.

b. Vice-President

1. Shall perform the duties of the President during his absence or incapacity.
2. Perform duties as assigned by the President.
3. Facilitate communication among all committees, staff, the Council and the congregation.
4. Work with the President to provide pastoral care in the absence or incapacity of the Pastor.

c. Secretary

1. Shall maintain and record the minutes of all congregational and council meetings or proceedings.
2. Keep and maintain all legal documents of the church, as required by law, the congregation, and the church council.
3. Shall execute, in conjunction with the President, all legal documents as directed by the constitution, congregation or church council.
4. Shall be responsible for the archives of the church.
5. Assist the Pastor and staff in the maintenance and reporting of church records.
6. Submit a report on church records as needed to the council, synod, and annually to the congregation.
7. Assist in other church duties, as required by the President.

d. Financial Secretary

1. Be responsible for and provide for the receipt and acknowledgment of all offerings, contributions, bequests and gifts made to the congregation.
2. Provide for receipt and deposit of all memorial funds.
3. Be responsible for the handling, counting, recording, and banking of offerings of every worship service.
4. Directly supervise all counters.
5. Be responsible for and provide for maintaining records of all congregational giving. The Financial Secretary shall maintain an account and record for each giving unit and provide a quarterly statement of said account to each unit and a report to the congregational council when required.
6. Provide for and distribute envelopes and other supplies required for giving purposes.
7. Render at each regular congregational council meeting a full, detailed report of receipts for the preceding month and year-to-date.
8. Render at the annual meeting of the congregation, a full, detailed account of receipts for the preceding year.
9. Provide appropriate reports on giving to Treasurer and Finance Committee so that required reports can be provided and budget formulation and assessment can be completed.
10. Be a member of the Finance Committee and Stewardship Committee.

C11.02. The Congregation Council shall elect its officers who will also serve as the officers of the congregation. The officers term shall be one (1) year.

C11.03. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time.

C11.04. The pastor(s) shall not serve as an officer of the council or congregation.

C11.05. The Congregation Council shall identify and appoint a Treasurer, who shall be a member of the Congregation and may be, but is not required to be, an elected member of the Congregation Council. The Treasurer shall report to and be accountable to the Congregation Council. The Treasurer is not restricted to any pre-defined term of service and may continue to serve as Treasurer until either the Treasurer or the Congregation Council chose to terminate that relationship.

C11.05.01 Duties of the Treasurer

1. Shall provide for and be accountable for the management of the monies and accounts of the congregation, its deeds, mortgages, contracts, trust fund, payrolls and all other accounts

- payable.
2. Shall manage and be accountable for investment of funds upon authorization of the church council.
 3. Dispense funds in accordance with the decisions and direction of the congregation and/or church council.
 4. Review all disbursements and pay according to agreed upon terms of sale.
 5. Present regular reports of all expenditures to the congregation and a monthly report of all accounts payable to the church council for approval.
 6. Render at the annual meeting a full detailed report of all disbursements for the preceding year.
 7. Be responsible for filing of all required government tax and reporting forms.
 8. Sign all checks drawn on church accounts. All non payroll checks over \$500 must be co-signed by the President.
 9. Provide all requested records for audit.
 10. Reconcile all bank accounts.
 11. Be a member of the Finance Committee.

Chapter 12. CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s), and nine (9) or seven (7) members of the congregation, as described in the bylaws and as deemed best and appropriate by the congregation. Any voting member of the congregation may be elected, subject to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A full-time (20 hours or more per week) employee or paid staff member other than the pastor shall not be eligible to serve as a council member. No more than one part-time (less than 20 hours per week) employee or staff member other than the pastor may serve on the Congregation Council at any one time. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause.

C12.01.01 The Congregation may choose that the Congregation Council consist of either nine (9) or seven (7) members, whichever best fits the size and needs of the Congregation. The number of Congregation Council members may be changed from nine (9) to seven (7), or from seven (7) to nine (9) at the Congregational Meeting, to be effective for the following and subsequent years.

C12.01.02 If the Congregation Council is composed of seven (7) members, then the seven (7) members shall be elected over a rolling three year cycle as follows: three (3) members elected in year "A"; two (2) in year "B"; two (2) in year "C". After year "C" completes, the cycle begins again with three (3) members to be elected as part of a new year "A"

C12.01.03 If the Congregation Council is composed of nine (9) members, then the nine (9) members shall be elected over a rolling three year cycle as follows: three (3) members elected in year "A"; three (3) in year "B"; three (3) in year "C". After year "C" completes, the cycle begins again with three (3) members to be elected as part of a new year "A"

C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) shall be elected by written ballot to serve for three (3) years or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be elected to serve no more than two full terms consecutively. Their terms shall begin with the January Congregation Council meeting after the annual meeting at which they are elected. There shall be no campaigning for the positions on the congregational council or for officers of the congregation.

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

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

- a. To lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and

- priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
- b. To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
- c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
- d. To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling, appointment, or employment.
- e. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
- f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
- g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
- h. To emphasize partnership with the synod and churchwide units of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- j. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

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

- a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of directors of this congregation, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the management of its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Michigan, except as otherwise provided herein.
- b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.
- c. No funds of the church shall be expended without prior council approval.

C12.05.01. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to five (5) percent of the annual budget for items not included in the budget. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations of more than five (5) percent annually in excess of the anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in partnership with the synod and churchwide organization.

- d. The Congregation Council shall 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 synodical treasurer.
- e. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.

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

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

C12.08. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the appointment and supervision of the salaried lay workers of this congregation.

C12.09. The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.

C12.10 (none)

C12.11. The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president, and shall be called at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

C12.12. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the members of the Congregation Council.

Chapter 13. CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

C13.01. The structure and duties of congregational committees shall be specified in the Bylaws and continuing resolutions of the church council.

13.01.01. Congregation Committees

a. Staff Support Committee: A Staff Support Committee of five (5) members shall be appointed by the council. The members shall include the President of the council, two (2) other council members, and two (2) non-council congregation members. No staff members shall be eligible to be a member of this committee.

The Staff Support Committee shall:

1. Provide pastoral review and support through:
 - Prayer and leadership in ministry.
 - Annual review of church mission and goals with the Pastor(s).
 - Annual evaluation of the ministry.
 - Continual communication with Pastor(s), council and the congregation.
 - Review of pastoral compensation for yearly budget.
 - Exit interview with departing pastor(s).
2. Lead and supervise lay staff personnel of the church in consultation with the pastor(s).
 - Set qualifications and goals for staff members.
 - Provide yearly review of activities and establish compensation package for staff budget.
 - Coordinate scheduling and duties between and among staff members.
 - Establish job descriptions for personnel and keep updated.
 - Recommend to council hiring and termination of personnel and staff.

b. Finance Committee: The Finance Committee shall be the coordinating body for all financial considerations of the congregation and its various organizations.

The Finance Committee shall exercise oversight of all financial affairs of the congregation to insure they are conducted properly and efficiently with particular attention to the timely payment of all financial obligations.

The Finance Committee shall continuously review the budget and financial accounts and provide the council with the monthly status of financial matters and recommendations for necessary actions.

These shall include a monthly report to the council, an annual report to the congregation, and an informational financial report for presentation to the membership with each quarterly statement.

The Finance Committee shall prepare a budget proposal for the succeeding year drafted from a review of budget requirements submitted by various committees and a review of the overall church financial program. The budget shall include the congregations full indicated shape in support of the wider ministry being carried on in its behalf by the synod and the ELCA.

1. The budget proposal shall be submitted to the congregational council for review.
2. The budget proposal shall be submitted to the congregation at large and a hearing held at least two (2) weeks prior to the annual November budget meeting.
3. The congregational council shall approve the final budget proposal before submitting it to the congregation for adoption at the annual November budget meeting.

The Finance Committee membership shall consist of the Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and three (3) members of the congregation appointed by the council. The members shall serve a three (3) year term with staggered start up appointments.

c. Audit Committee: An Audit Committee of three (3) members, who are not from the congregational council shall be appointed by the council to serve for three (3) years, one (1) appointed per year. The Audit Committee shall review and audit all financial records, property and equipment and present a report in writing to the congregation at the annual meeting. The Audit Committee shall examine such things as:

1. Proper authorization and disbursement of church funds.
2. Proper use and maintenance of church accounts.
3. Current up-to-date inventory and insurance of church properties.
4. Accurate reconciliation of church accounts.
5. Full accounting of income and donations.
6. Proper handling of church investments.

Should the committee find it necessary it should, with approval of the church council, obtain the services of an independent accounting firm for a complete, legal audit of all church records.

d. Nominating Committee: A Nominating Committee of six (6) voting members shall be elected by the congregation at the annual meeting. No more than 2 members shall be current council members. The Nominating Committee shall provide a minimum of two (2) candidates for each open position.

e. Call Committee: A Call Committee of six (6) voting members shall be appointed by the council when a pastoral vacancy occurs. The Call Committee term shall terminate upon installation of a new pastor.

The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all committees with voice but not vote in all matters.

C13.02. Congregational committees, in addition to those found in the Bylaws, may be formed as the need arises by resolution of the congregational council.

Chapter 14. ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

C14.01. All organizations within this congregation shall exist to aid it in ministering to the members of this congregation and to all persons who can be reached with the Gospel of Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of this congregation's life, the organizations are subject to its oversight and direction. The congregational council shall determine their policies, guide their activities, and receive reports concerning their membership, work, and finances.

C14.02. Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council.

Chapter 15. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

C15.01. Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps: a) private admonition by the pastor, b) admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, and c) citation to appear before the Congregation Council.

C15.02. A member charged with the offense shall appear before the Congregation Council having received a written notice, specifying the exact charges that have been made against the member, at least 10 days prior to the meeting.

C15.03. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Congregation Council and renewed admonition prove ineffectual, the council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:

- a. censure before the council or congregation;

- b. suspension from membership for a definite period of time; or
- c. exclusion from membership in this congregation.

Disciplinary actions b. and c. shall be delivered to the member in writing.

C15.04. The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Congregation Council shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Synod Council. Such right may not be abridged and the decision of the Synod Council shall be final.

C15.05. Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Congregation Council upon receipt of a) evidence that injustice has been done or b) evidence of repentance and amendment.

C15.06 (none)

C15.07 (none)

C15.08 (none)

C15.09 (none)

C15.10.(none)

C15.11. Adjudication. When there is disagreement among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation shall have access to the synodical bishop for consultation after informing the chair of the Congregation Council of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the Consultation Committee of the synod shall consider the matter. If the Consultation Committee of the synod shall fail to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to the Synod Council, whose decision shall be final.

Chapter 16. BYLAWS

C16.01. This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.

C16.02. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting.

C16.03. Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose and that the Congregation Council notify the members of the proposal with its recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting.

C16.04. Approved changes to the bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

Chapter 17. AMENDMENTS

C17.01. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least twenty percent (20%) of the voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at its regular or special meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the members of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.

C17.02. A proposed amendment to this constitution shall:

- a. be approved at a properly called meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;
- b. be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting; and
- c. have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.

C17.03. Any amendments to this constitution shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the

synod. The amendment shall become effective within 120 days from the date of the receipt of the notice by the synod unless the synod informs this congregation that the amendment is in conflict with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or the constitution of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod.

C17.04. Whenever the Model Constitution for Congregations is amended by the Churchwide Assembly, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a simple majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail notice to the congregation of such an amendment or amendments at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod, consistent with C17.03.

Chapter 18. CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

018.01. The Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions which describe the function of the various committees or organizations of this congregation.

C18.02. Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Congregation Council.

Change Record of the Congregational Constitution

Approved by the Congregation on 1/24/2010

Resolution:

Hope Community Church approve the proposed changes to the Congregational Constitution regarding

- (a) Congregation Council size and eligibility and official status of the Treasurer,
- (b) Dates for Fiscal year, Congregational Meetings, Financial Plan, Consecration Sunday and Elections
- (c) Miscellaneous other items of clarification

as recommended and documented by the Congregation Council.

These changes shall be effective as of Jan 24, 2010 and shall be further ratified at the next annual meeting, and shall be documented and forwarded to the North West Lower Michigan Synod of the ELCA as required.

(The following section is for informational and guidance purposes only, and is not part of the Constitution and Bylaws of Hope Community Church)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEES HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH

The following recommendations are offered by the Constitutional Committee for possible adoption by the church council as continuing resolutions under authority of Section 13.02. of the constitution.

- A. Property Committee
 - Provide for maintenance and protection of all property of the congregation, seeing that it is kept in good repair and adequately insured.
 - Compile and maintain an up-to-date inventory of all property and equipment.
- B. Christian Education Committee
 - Oversee, conduct, and promote Christian education within the congregation.
 - Select and obtain curriculum.
 - Select, assign and train teaching personnel.
 - Evaluate programs and teachers as necessary.
 - Work with pastors and staff to provide needed and desired educational programs.
 - Maintain the church library.
- C. Worship and Music Committee
 - Assist pastor in planning worship service.
 - Provide for an Altar Guild.
 - Provide, maintain needs of altar and related equipment.
 - Provide supplies for Baptism and Communion.
 - Select/construct parchments and banners.
 - Provide for, train, schedule ushers, readers, acolytes, and other servants needed for services.
 - In consultation with the pastor and staff, provide for music programs of the church. -Establish qualifications for positions of musicians and choir directors.
 - Oversee selection of music and other related programs.
 - Advise Staff Support Committee and council on needs for hiring and review of program personnel.
 - Provide bulletins for service.
 - Provide for maintenance and repair of equipment, instruments, robes and other needed worship and music items.
 - Oversee the selection and presentation of other worship programs.
- D. Social Ministry Committee
 - Promote awareness of social issues in the community and provide opportunities to actively express concerns.
 - Be the agent for outreach from the congregation to community organizations and the needy.
 - Act as the liaison from the congregation to ELCA social programs and organizations. -Initiate, plan and sponsor activities for spiritual growth, such as: retreats, group outings, family programs.
 - Organize youth programs with the Youth Director.
 - Oversee social organizations within the congregation.
 - Extend Christian compassion and thoughtfulness to the ill, aged, underprivileged and needy.
- E. Evangelism Committee
 - Provide for the prayer ministry of the church.
 - Conduct inter-congregational fellowship and ministry programs, such as: Home Church, member visitation, hospital and medical visitations.
 - Instruct and train members in evangelism activities.
 - Provide, establish and operate an outreach program to new and potential members.
 - Develop programs and activities to promote and spread the Gospel.
- F. Stewardship Committee
 - Educate the congregation in the true meaning of Christian stewardship as a way of life, and encourage the congregation toward full development and use of their God-given talents, resources, and abilities in the true Christian manner.

All committees should be charged by the council in addition to their designated duties to:

- Present monthly reports to the council and a yearly report to the congregation.
- Report monthly funding requests and expenditures to the council.
- Prepare a yearly proposal of budget needs for operations for inclusions in the Finance Committee yearly budget proposal.
- Hold regularly scheduled meetings as needed.