

CONSTITUTION OF GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH WASECA, MINNESOTA

Member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

Adapted from the model constitution for congregations of the ELCA and amending the 1991 Constitution for Grace Lutheran Church adapted from the model constitution for congregations of the American Lutheran Church.

Proposed version submitted for approval at January 1992

Annual Congregational Meeting

Submitted by: Grace Constitution Committee

[Reprinted December 14, 2004, incorporating the changes voted and approved by the congregation and the synod in 2001.]

[This constitutional document also includes all known amendments and changes from January 2001 through October 12, 2014, including bylaw changes enacted on January 20, 2013.]

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.

MISSION STATEMENT

Grace Lutheran is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). As a Christian congregation, the mission of Grace is to be loyal to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as He reveals Himself to us. The Holy Spirit is the one who makes known to us who Jesus Christ is for us today. In conjunction with that revelation, Grace Lutheran will seek to build the Body of Christ on earth here at Grace Lutheran, in the community of Waseca, and throughout the world. Especially important to us is the balanced commitment to mission work at home and abroad. Grace Lutheran will seek the Holy Spirit's guidance to all its' programming, worship, and fellowship. Grace Lutheran is called by God to challenge, comfort and recommend guidance to all those accepted as members in Grace Lutheran. Grace Lutheran looks forward to providing an atmosphere in which the people of God can reflect on and attempt to fulfill God's will for their lives. His will for us will be sought through prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit as perceived through the careful reading of God's word in the Holy Scriptures.

Chapter 1.

NAME AND INCORPORATION

C1.01 The name of this congregation shall be Grace Lutheran Church, Waseca, Minnesota.

C1.02 For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying laws, the Grace Lutheran congregation is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."

C1.03 This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the state of Minnesota.

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 that:

- a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions 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 true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the unaltered Augsburg Confession.
- C2.06 This congregation accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.
- C2.07 This congregation confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy 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. This church, 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.

STATE 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 the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayerful 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 his 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 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 of America.
- h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other Christian congregations, the synod, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with church wide policy.

C4.04 This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in this constitution and 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 this congregation. This congregation is authorized to:
- a. Call a pastor or pastors;
 - b. Terminate the call of a pastor;
 - 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, legal transfer, 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 officers, Congregation Council, boards, and committees, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution and 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 Southeastern Minnesota 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 will act in accordance with them.
- C6.03 This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which:
- a. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
 - b. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances 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 or 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 the 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 the 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 and the secretary of this congregation and published in the periodical of this congregation.
- C6.06 If this congregation is considering relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod 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 Southeastern Minnesota 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 Southeastern Minnesota 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 the 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 the 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 the 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 or Christian 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 and 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 membership 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 congregational and 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, the officers, or a committee elected by this congregation to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- C9.02 Only a member of the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or whom the synodical bishop has recommended for it may be called as a pastor of this congregation.
- C9.03 Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every ordained minister shall preach the Word, administer the sacraments, conduct public worship, provide pastoral care, and shall speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world. Each ordained minister with a congregational call shall, within this congregation, offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead; supervise all schools and organizations of this congregation; shall install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council, and with the council administer discipline. Every pastor shall 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; shall impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through endeavor to increase the support given by this congregation to the work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to the Southeastern Minnesota 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 the letter of call.
- C9.05 a. 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, shall be terminated only following consultation with the synodical bishop and or the following reasons:
1. Mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call or a specific term of years;
 2. Resignation of the pastor;
 3. Inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in this 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; or
 6. The dissolution of this congregation.
- b. In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity of the pastor or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office, it shall be the responsibility of the bishop of the synod, when such difficulties are personally known or have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council, or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of this congregation, to 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, which imperil the effective functioning of the congregation, all concerned persons shall be heard by the Church Council, 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 this 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. The foregoing procedure shall never be invoked when questions of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty are involved, all such cases being treated as disciplinary matters.

f. If in the course of the proceedings, it should become apparent that the pastoral office cannot be conducted effectively in this congregation 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 without prejudice and with pay provided through a joint church wide/synod fund and with housing provided by the congregation.

- C9.06 At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor may be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.
- C9.07 During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties 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 With the approval of the bishop of the synod this congregation may depart from C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term of years. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop, shall meet with the pastor and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of C9.05.a.
- C9.11 The Senior Pastor shall be responsible for keeping 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.
- C9.12 The pastor(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- C9.13 Regarding Grace Lutheran Church's response to the actions of the 2009 ELCA

Churchwide Assembly: Grace Lutheran Church is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Grace Lutheran Church declares that marriages, civil unions, or blessings of persons in same gender relationships will not be performed in this church building or authorized by this congregation. Grace Lutheran Church, as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, understands that it has the right to call, or refuse to call, as a pastor or rostered lay leader any person who is on the roster of ordained ministers or lay rosters or any candidate approved for those rosters. Grace Lutheran Church, in accordance with the 2009 Churchwide Assembly which resolved that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America “make provision in its policies to recognize the conviction of members who believe that this church should not call or roster people in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship,” declares that this congregation will not call a pastor or lay rostered leader who is or intends to be in such a same-gender relationship. (from Annual Meetings in 2010 and 2011)

Chapter 10.

CONGREGATION MEETING

- C10.01 The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.
- 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 ten percent of the 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, address of such members shall be sufficient.
- C10.04 Twenty-five voting members shall constitute a quorum.
- C10.05 Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- C10.06 All actions by this 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, and treasurer.
- a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
 - b. The officers shall be voting members of this congregation.
 - c. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of this Congregation Council and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.
- C11.02 This congregation shall elect its officers and they shall be the officers of the congregation. The officers shall be elected by written ballot and shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

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

Chapter 12.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.01 The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of not more than 6 elected members of this congregation and the four officers of this congregation. Any voting member of this congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member:

- 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. 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.

C12.02 The members of the Congregation Council and four elected officers shall be elected by written ballot to serve for three years or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than TWO full terms consecutively. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

C12.03 Whether serving on the Congregation Council as an officer or as a committee member, no one may serve for more than a combined total of SIX consecutive years.

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 emphasize partnership with the synod and church wide 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.
- h. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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

a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of (trustees/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 Minnesota, except as otherwise provided herein.

b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.

c. The Congregation Council shall as far as possible operate within the limits of the approved budget of the congregation. Any expenditure in excess of the total budget must be approved by the congregation.

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 (and) 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.

C12.11 The Congregation Council shall 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 majority of the members of the Congregation Council.

Chapter 13.

CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEES

C13.01 The officers of this congregation and the pastor(s) shall constitute the Executive Committee.

C13.02 A Nominating Committee of SIX voting members of this congregation, at least two to whom shall be outgoing members of the Congregation Council, shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year. Members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible for consecutive reelection.

- C13.03 An Audit Committee of THREE voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council. Term of office will be three years, with one member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for re-election.
- C13.04 A Mutual Ministry Committee (In the absence of a mutual ministry committee, their duties shall be fulfilled by the Executive Committee.) shall be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor(s). Term of office shall be two years, three members to be appointed each successive year. Committee members will hold no other office in this congregation during their term.
- C13.05 When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of SEVEN voting members shall be appointed by the Congregation Council. Term of office will terminate at installation of the newly called pastor.
- C13.06 Other congregational committees may be formed as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council.
- C13.07 Duties of congregational committees shall be specified in the bylaws and continuing resolutions.

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. This congregation at its meetings shall determine their policies, guide their activities, and receive reports concerning their membership, work and finances.
- C14.02 Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council (and specified in a continuing resolution).

Chapter 15.

DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

- 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 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 Congregation Council, the council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:
- a. Censure before the Congregation 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.

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.

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 to the synod.

Chapter 17.

AMENDMENTS

C17.01 Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least 25 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 their 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 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 Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

C17.04 Regarding Grace Lutheran Church's response to the actions of the 2009 ELCA

Churchwide Assembly: Grace Lutheran Church is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Grace Lutheran Church declares that marriages, civil unions, or blessings of persons in same gender relationships will not be performed in this church building or authorized by this congregation. Grace Lutheran Church, as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, understands that it has the right to call, or refuse to call, as a pastor or rostered lay leader any person who is on the roster of ordained ministers or lay rosters or any candidate approved for those rosters. Grace Lutheran Church, in accordance with the 2009 Churchwide Assembly which resolved that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America "make provision in its policies to recognize the conviction of members who believe that this church should not call or roster people in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship," declares that this congregation will not call a pastor or lay rostered leader who is or intends to be in such a same-gender relationship. (from Annual Meetings in 2010 and 2011)

Chapter 18.

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

C18.01 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.

Grace Lutheran Church, Waseca, MN CONGREGATIONAL BYLAWS

PART I—COMMUNION PARTICIPATION

1. The Eucharist is open to all who confess Jesus as the Christ and seek to follow Christ's way. People are to commune, not because they must, but because they may, not to be fulfilled, but because in their emptiness they need God's mercy and assurance. They are to come not to express an opinion, but to be present with Christ and to receive the Spirit. Registration forms or oral announcements shall be so devised as to make prospective participants aware of these requirements.
2. Record of participation in Holy Communion shall be entered upon the books of the congregation. Communing visitors shall be given a record card for their home church records.

PART II—CONFLICTING LOYALTIES

1. This congregation rejects all fellowship with organizations, secret or open, which are avowedly religious or 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 thus teach salvation by works.
2. Ceremonies of lodges or other such organizations shall not be permitted in the church or on the church premises of this congregation.

PART III—MEMBERSHIP

Admission to Baptized Membership

1. Member or non-member parents or sponsors requesting Baptism for a child shall be asked to fulfill parental or sponsorship responsibilities. After Baptism the child shall be received as a member of this congregation or enrolled as a Baptized member of another Christian congregation by notice of the Baptism sent to that congregation. Exceptions (military, emergencies) can be made when there is reasonable assurance of Christian nurture.
2. Unbaptized adults who have received instruction and have given evidence of having an adequate understanding and acceptance of the teachings of the Word of God as confessed by the Lutheran Church, upon baptism, shall be received as members.

Admission to Confirmed Membership

1. Baptized Adults, not previously members of the congregation, who have received instruction and have given evidence of having adequate understanding and acceptance of the teachings of the Word of God as confessed by the Lutheran church, shall be admitted to confirmed membership.
2. Adults received as baptized members according to the provisions of Section A.2 of this part of the bylaws shall be recognized as confirmed members, whether or not, at the discretion of the pastor, they have participated in the rite of confirmation.

Discontinuance of Membership

1. Members who move away shall be encouraged to transfer their membership. Confirmed members in good standing desiring to change their membership to another Lutheran congregation shall, upon request, receive a Letter of Transfer.
2. An annual audit of the membership book shall be required of the Senior Pastor, in cooperation with the church council prior to the annual meeting. A confirmed member who does not, for the period of one year (within the confines of his ability) partake of Holy Communion, support the church with his offerings of time, talent, or money, and does not appear to desire to participate in the life and worship of the congregation shall be contacted by the Pastor and/or the congregation's officers and encouraged by them to active membership. If there is not change during the second year, the member's name may be removed from the membership roster, but retained on the responsibility list as one who is in special need of prayer and concern. Restoration to membership may be accomplished when the member gives evidence of change.
3. Baptized children who upon reaching confirmation age shall be dropped from the baptized membership roll and placed on the responsibility list if they fail to participate in the Christian education program of the congregation. Restoration to membership may be accomplished when the member gives evidence of change.
4. Members who have been excommunicated or dismissed, or who have resigned; and members who have transferred to other Lutheran congregations; or who are definitely

known to have become members of other congregations without transfer, have thereby terminated their membership in the congregation and have surrendered all membership rights.

PART IV—THE PASTORAL CALL

1. When the congregation has voted to call a pastor, it shall issue a Letter of Call to the pastor-elect, taking into consideration the provisions of Chapters 9.01, 9.04 and 9.09 of this constitution. It shall be signed by the chairman and the secretary of the meeting at which the call was voted, and shall be attested by the signature of the synod bishop.
2. If the pastor receives a call to another congregation, the pastor shall consult with at least the executive committee, before and after making a decision. The pastor should attempt to reach a decision as quickly as possible, normally within three weeks. If the call is accepted, the pastor shall thereupon notify his present congregation and the synod bishop. When a release has been granted and the call accepted, the pastor shall end the present ministry and transfer to the new field of service as quickly as feasible, normally within one month.

PART V— CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

1. The annual meeting shall be held during the third Sunday in January with the time and place to be determined by the church council.
2. The order of business at the annual meeting shall be:
3.
 - a. Opening devotion
 - b. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting
 - c. Reports of Pastor, church council, treasurer, committees, and others
 - d. Elections
 - e. Approval of the Budget
 - f. Unfinished business
 - g. New business
 - h. Closing prayer
4. In the following cases voting shall be written ballot at all congregational meetings:
5.
 - a. To elect the officers and members of the church council;
 - b. To adopt or amend the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution, Bylaws of the Congregation, or Resolutions;
 - c. To call a pastor or to request the pastor's resignation;
 - d. To sever membership in the ELCA;
 - e. To dispose of, encumber, or purchase real property;
 - f. When requested by ten or more voting members present.
6. If more than one ballot is required in an election, a motion shall be in order to limit the balloting after the first ballot to the three candidates receiving the highest number of votes on the first ballot; and after the second ballot to limit the balloting to the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes.

PART VI—THE CHURCH COUNCIL

1. Membership of the Congregation Council (Chapter 12)
 - a. The Church council members shall be elected in such a manner that approximately one-third are elected each year.

2. Duties of the Council Officers (Chapter 11)
 - a. President, shall preside over the meetings of the council and congregation, unless the meeting decides otherwise.
 - b. Vice-president, shall preside over meetings in the absence of the president.
 - c. Secretary, shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the council, congregation, and preserve its archives.
 - d. Treasurer, shall be custodian of all funds of the congregation, shall also disburse all such funds in accordance with the decisions of the congregation or its council, and shall present an audited report to the congregation annually and to the council at such times as it may decide. The treasurer's books shall close as of December 31.

3. Ministry Teams of the Church Council
 - a. Stewardship
 - b. Property
 - c. Management
 - d. Education
 - e. Worship

4. Duties of the Ministry Teams of the Church Council (12.04-12.12)
 - a. The Stewardship Ministry Team under the supervision of the Ministry Team chairperson shall have special responsibility for the congregation's development in accordance with scriptural principles of stewardship (time, talent, funds), and make recommendations thereon to the Church Council.
 - b. The Property Ministry Team under the supervision of the Ministry Team chairperson shall have special responsibility for the care of the property of the congregation and make recommendations thereon, to the Church Council.
 - c. The Management Ministry Team under the supervision of the Ministry Team chairperson shall have special responsibility for the management of funds, for the preparation of the congregational budget, and make recommendations thereon to the Church Council.
 - d. The Education Ministry Team under the supervision of the Ministry Team chairperson shall have special responsibility to operate the Sunday Schools of the congregation, to promote adult education, to develop the youth program in the congregation, and make recommendations thereon to the Church Council.
 - e. The Worship Ministry Team under the supervision of the Ministry Team chairperson shall have special responsibility for matter pertaining to the congregation's worship, for the general spiritual care of the congregation, and for developing and supporting outreach to the community, and make recommendations thereon to the Church Council.

- f. Each committee shall maintain and abide by a checklist of specific duties to be carried out at specific times during the year. A record of such duties shall be maintained within each committee and passed on to each new committee chairperson. Each committee chairperson shall inform and consult with the pastors.
5. Other Responsibilities of the Church Council
 - a. The church council shall be empowered to secure help as is needed to carry on the work of the congregation, such as organist, choir director, pastor's secretary, intern, custodian, financial secretary, etc., and shall fix their salaries.
 - b. Adjustments in the salary of the pastor shall be the responsibility of the Church Council, subject to the congregation's approval of the budget.

PART VII—THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (13.01)

1. The Executive Committee shall be available for consultation during emergencies and have authority to decide on matters when time does not allow for a regular council meeting.
2. The Executive Committee shall arrange for pastoral service in absence of a pastor.

PART VIII—THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE (13.02)

1. The Nominating Committee shall serve for the year following their election. They shall nominate one or more candidates for each office and council committee vacancy to be filled and secure the consent of each candidate to serve if elected.
2. In addition to the candidates submitted by the Nominating Committee, additional nominations may be made from the floor.

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