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CONSTITUTION OF ST. LUKE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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CONSTITUTION OF ST. LUKE LUTHERAN CHURCH  
ATLANTA, FULTON COUNTY, GEORGIA

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 St. Luke Lutheran Church.
- C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the St. Luke congregation is hereinafter designated as "this congregation".
- C1.11. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Georgia.

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 work 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 Testament 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 Testament as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.
- C2.04. This congregation accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this congregation.
- C2.05. This congregation accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
- C2.06. This congregation accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.
- C2.07. This congregation confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy 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 congregation 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 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 suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
- g. Motivate its members to provide financial support to the congregation's ministry and the ministry of other parts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- i. Foster and participate in the ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.

C4.04. This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Church 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 call and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.
- C5.03. Only such authority as is delegated to the Church 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;
- g. 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 South-eastern 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 a member of the Lutheran Church in America it shall be required, in addition to the provisions in C6.05., to receive synodical approval before terminating its membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

## Chapter 7

## PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

- C7.01. If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the Southeastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for fair and adequate value paid by said Synod to those members of the congregation remaining immediately prior to the congregation ceasing to exist.
- 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 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 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 of the Triune of 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 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 and associate 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, 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, or
  - d. 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, the officers, or a committee elected by this congregation or 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 one who has been recommended for it 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, with the congregation:

- (1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
- (2) supervise all schools and organizations of this congregation;
- (3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council; and
- (4) with the council, administer discipline.

c. Every pastor shall:

- (1) 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 the work of the ELCA churchwide organization and of the Southeastern 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 the grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty;
- (6) the dissolution of the congregation, or
- (7) suspension of the congregation as a result of discipline proceedings.

- b. When allegations of physical or mental incapacity of the pastor or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office, have come to the attention of the bishop of the synod, the bishop in his or her sole discretion may, or when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council, or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop shall investigate such conditions personally in company with a committee of two ordained ministers and one layperson.
- c. In 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 the 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 C9.05d, 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 C9.05b. 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 church-wide/synod fund and with housing provided by the congregation(s).

**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.

## Chapter 10.

### CONGREGATION MEETINGS

- C10.01. The annual and semi-annual meetings of this congregation shall be held at times 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 15 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. Announcement of the time and place of the semi-annual meetings of this congregation shall be made at two public services immediately preceding the meeting, said services to be at least one week apart, and in such publications as the congregation or pastor may periodically issue, or by written notice to the voting members mailed at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.
- C10.04. Twenty (20) 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 and treasurer.
- 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. If the Congregation Council elects its officers, the president, vice president, and secretary shall be selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council.

C11.02. The Congregation Council shall elect 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. The term shall begin on July 1 and end on June 30.

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 the pastor(s), the officers of the congregation, and not more than 15 members of the congregation. Any voting member of the congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member (a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or (b) is absent from four successive regular meeting of the Congregation Council without cause.

C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council (except the pastor) shall be elected at the semi-annual meeting. The term of office shall be for two years with the term of office beginning on July 1 and ending on June 30. Newly elected Congregation Council members shall be installed at a worship service prior to the date they assume office.

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 semi-annual meeting.

C12.04.

The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of the 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 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 the congregation.
- a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of trustees of this congregation, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the management of its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Georgia, except as otherwise provided herein.
  - b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.
  - c. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption. As far as possible, the Congregation Council shall operate within the limits of the budget. Any expenditure in excess of the total approved budget must be approved by the congregation. 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.
- C12.06. The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution and its by-laws 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 semi-annual meeting.

C12.10. 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.

C12.11. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Church Council, including the pastor or interim pastor, except when such person requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to an agenda of routine matters which shall be the only business of the meeting.

### Chapter 13.

#### CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

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

C13.02. A Nominating Committee of six voting members of this congregation, two of whom shall be, if possible, outgoing members of the Congregation Council, shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year. Members are not eligible for consecutive re-election. The pastor shall serve as convener and advisory member of the committee.

C13.03. An Audit Committee of two voting members shall be elected by the congregation. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council. Term of office will be two years, with one member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for re-election.

C13.04. A Budget Committee shall be appointed by the Congregation Council. This committee will be responsible for presenting the congregational budget to the Congregation Council prior to presentation to the congregation for adoption. The committee shall be chaired by the treasurer. Other members of the committee shall include, but not be limited to, the pastor, the financial secretary, and the property management chairperson.

- C13.05. A Personnel Committee shall be appointed by the Congregation Council. The committee shall be responsible for evaluating the performance of the congregation's paid staff, including the Pastor(s), and for making recommendations (1) to the Budget Committee regarding all budget matters relating to the staff including salaries and (2) to the Congregation Council regarding all other benefits. The committee shall be chaired by the vice-president. Other members of the committee shall include, but not be limited to, the worship committee chairperson and at least two persons not currently serving on the Congregational Council.
- C13.06. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of six voting members shall be elected by this congregation. Term of office will terminate at installation of the newly-called pastor.
- C13.07. Other congregation committees may be formed as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council. Duties of all congregational committees shall be defined by the Congregation Council in continuing resolutions.

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#### 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 meeting shall determine their policies, guide their activities, and receive reports concerning their membership, work, and finances.
- C14.02. Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council.

**Chapter 15.****DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION**

- C15.01. Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps: (a) private admonition of 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 two-thirds majority vote 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 or
  - b. suspension from membership until evidence of repentance and amendment.
- 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 evidence that injustice has been done.

- C15.06. 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 fails 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 two-thirds 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 Church Council at least 30 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 15 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 5 voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 30 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 15 days in advance of the meeting.

- C17.02. A proposed amendment to this constitution shall be approved at a properly called meeting according to this constitution by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting and shall become effective upon approval by the Synod.
- 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 receipt of the notice by the synod unless the synod informs the congregation that the amendment is in conflict with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or of the constitution of the Southeastern 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

- 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.

6/10/93

BYLAWS OF ST. LUKE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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**BYLAWS OF ST. LUKE LUTHERAN CHURCH  
ATLANTA, FULTON COUNTY, GEORGIA**

**Part 1.**

**COMMUNION PARTICIPATION**

- B1.01.** Participation in the Sacrament of Holy Communion shall be open to those who have studied the meaning of the sacrament and who wish to participate in it. In the case of children not confirmed in the Lutheran faith, participation will occur only after consultation and agreement among the pastor, parent(s), and child.
- B1.02.** Worthy participation requires sincere repentance, faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, and an earnest desire to amend one's sinful life, as well as the scriptural teaching regarding the real presence of Christ with his body and blood in the sacrament.

**Part 2.**

**DISCONTINUANCE OF MEMBERSHIP**

- B2.01.** Members who move away shall be encouraged to transfer their membership. A confirmed member in good standing desiring to change his/her membership to another Lutheran congregation shall, upon request, receive a letter of transfer.
- B2.02.** A confirmed member who, in the judgment of the Congregation Council shows no interest in attending worship services and does not partake in the Sacrament of Holy Communion and who does not contribute to the congregational treasury according to the congregations's records for a period of one year, shall be presumed no longer to desire membership, shall lose the right to vote, and shall not be counted in the membership statistics of this congregation. However, his/her name and record shall be kept counted in the membership statistics of this congregation. However, his/her name and record shall be in the files for a period of three years thereafter. Such persons shall be encouraged to take part in the congregational life or to transfer to another congregation as the situation may indicate to be advisable. If he/she resumes activity within this three-year period, he/she shall be restored to the active membership list. If not, he/she shall be dismissed from the congregation and, if possible, notified of this action.

- B2.03. Children, neither of whose parents or guardians are active members of the congregation, shall be dropped from the baptized membership roll if they fail to participate in the Christian program of the congregation.
- B2.04. Members who have been excluded from membership under the provisions of the Constitution, members who have resigned, or members who have transferred to other Lutheran congregations without a letter of transfer have terminated their membership in the congregation and have surrendered all membership rights.

### Part 3.

#### CONGREGATION MEETINGS

- B3.01. The annual meeting of the congregation shall be held in January.
- B3.02. Business conducted at the annual meeting shall include approval of the congregational budget, the treasurer's report, the financial secretary's report, and the parochial report of the pastor. In addition, the congregation shall elect individuals to serve on the nominating committee.
- B3.03. The semi-annual meeting of the congregation shall be held in May.
- B3.04. Business conducted at the semi-annual meeting shall include approval of the reports of the Congregation Council and pastor as well as the election of individuals to the Congregation Council and to the audit committee.

### Part 4.

#### CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP AND MEETINGS

- B4.01. The Congregation Council shall consist of thirteen members, twelve of whom are elected at the semi-annual meeting so that after the first election approximately one-half are elected each year. The only non-elected member of the Congregation Council shall be the pastor.
- B4.02. In addition to the four officers (president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer), the Congregation Council shall consist of a financial secretary, and a chairperson for the following committees: fellowship, education, worship, stewardship, evangelism, social concerns, youth, and property management.

- B4.03. In addition to the requirements for congregational membership, qualifications for serving on the Congregation Council shall include such practical ability as is needed in carrying out the mission of the church.
- B4.04. No elected member of the Congregation Council shall serve more than two consecutive terms. An unexpired term of less than one year shall not be considered a term of office.
- B4.05. The pastor shall be a voting member of the Congregation Council.
- B4.06. A special meeting of the Congregation Council may be called by the pastor, the president, or any six members of the Congregation Council. Notice must be given in advance.

#### Part 5.

#### DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF CONGREGATION COUNCIL

- B5.01. The President shall convene and preside over meetings of the Congregation Council and the congregation. He/she shall delegate authority and appoint committees and task forces necessary to implement congregational and Congregation Council actions.
- B5.02. The Vice-president shall substitute for the president; serve as parliamentarian; chair the Personnel Committee; and have the responsibility for all of the congregation's long-range planning.
- B5.03. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of all congregation and Congregation Council meetings and shall publish same in a timely manner; provide notice for all congregation and Congregation Council meetings; record Congregation Council absences; maintain membership rosters and directories; and preserve the archives of corporate records (articles of incorporation), tax exempt Internal Revenue Service number, constitution and bylaws, and a written and pictorial history of the congregation.
- B5.04. The Treasurer, who must be bonded, shall authorize expenditures, record income and expenses, provide financial reports and forecasts as required (including an audited report to the congregation at its annual meeting), and chair the budget committee.

- B5.05. The Financial Secretary shall be responsible for counting the offering, auditing the counting process, preparing and depositing the offering, recording giving by individual and preparing reports, reporting to the Congregation Council, and serving on the budget committee.
- B5.06. The Fellowship Chairperson shall be responsible for all of the fellowship activities of the congregation.
- B5.07. The Education Chairperson shall be responsible for the Sunday school, vacation church school, and all other educational programs for children and adults.
- B5.08. The Worship Chairperson shall be responsible for all matters pertaining to the congregation's worship including ushers, altar guild, lay assistants, and acolytes.
- B5.09. The Stewardship Chairperson shall be responsible for encouraging and developing the scriptural principles of stewardship in the congregation's giving of its time, money, and talents.
- B5.10. The Evangelism Chairperson shall be responsible for all areas of evangelism including visitation of members and non-members, greeters at worships, the congregation's newsletter, the entrance sign boards, and media advertisement.
- B5.11. The Social Concerns Chairperson shall be responsible for involving the congregation in a response to the social needs of both the community and the world.
- B5.12. The Youth Chairperson shall be responsible for the developing a youth program which will guide the youth in their ministry within and outside the congregation.
- B5.13. The Property and Management Chairperson shall be responsible for building maintenance, grounds maintenance, and all matters relating to insurance. He/she shall also serve on the budget committee.
- B5.14. The Congregation Council shall be empowered to secure such help as is needed to carry on the work of the congregation such as organist, choir director, parish worker, pastor's secretary, office secretary, intern, and custodian, and shall fix their salaries.
- B5.15. Adjustments to the salary of all staff shall be the responsibility of the Congregation Council subject to congregational approval of the budget.

- B5.16. The Congregation Council is to ensure that the property of the congregation shall be for the use of the congregation in its normal functions as a Lutheran church and not for any use which is not in harmony with the purpose of the congregation. Buildings which are the property of the congregation shall not be let or rented to any group or individual not affiliated with the congregation or with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America unless application for such use has been approved by a two-thirds majority of the Congregation Council.

Part 6.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND ORGANIZATIONS

- B6.01. All committees and organizations of the congregation shall submit a written report of their activities to the congregation at the semi-annual meeting. Those committees and organizations within the congregation which handle funds shall submit accounts to the treasurer for inclusion in his/her report to the congregation at the annual meeting.