



# **CONSTITUTION FOR FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA**

Approved by Congregation: December 5, 2009

Ratified by Congregation: November 14, 2010

Approved by the Metro Washington, DC, Synod: May 2011

## ***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 is Faith Lutheran Church of Arlington, Virginia.

### **C1.02**

For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the above-named congregation is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."

### **C1.03**

This congregation is incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

## ***CHAPTER 2 CONFESSION OF FAITH***

### **C2.01**

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

### **C2.02**

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

- a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.
- b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

- c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

### **C2.03**

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

### **C2.04**

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

### **C2.05**

This congregation accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true 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 Scripture and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

## **CHAPTER 3 NATURE OF THE CHURCH**

### **C3.01**

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

### **C3.02**

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

**CHAPTER 4**  
**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

**C4.01**

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

**C4.02**

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

- a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
- b. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
- c. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all. (Matthew 28:18-20)
- 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. (Matthew 25:31-46)
- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
- f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

**C4.03**

To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:

- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
- b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
- c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.
- d. Teach the Word of God.
- e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
- f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
- g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for this congregation's ministry and the ministry of other parts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the church wide organization of 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 the bylaws. The FLC Church Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions.

**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 FLC 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. call or terminate the call of associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers in conformity with the applicable policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- d. adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in Chapter 17, and amendments to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 16.
- e. approve the annual budget.
- f. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means.
- g. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose.
- h. enter into contracts.
- i. sue and be sued.
- j. elect its Church Council, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution and bylaws, and continuing resolutions.
- k. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.

**C5.04**

This congregation shall choose from among its voting members, laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by this congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**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 metropolitan Washington, D.C., 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, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers for call 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 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 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.

#### **C6.06**

If this congregation considers relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate program unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.

#### **C6.07**

If this congregation considers developing an additional site to be used regularly for worship, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and appropriate program unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action.

### **CHAPTER 7 PROPERTY OWNERSHIP**

#### **C7.01**

If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the metropolitan Washington, D.C., 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 legally 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 metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

#### **C7.04**

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

congregation. If the Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to continue as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

## **CHAPTER 8 MEMBERSHIP**

### **C8.01**

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

### **C8.02**

Members shall be classified as follows:

- a. Baptized members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.
- b. Confirmed members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.
- c. Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation or shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of the congregation
- d. Associate members are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation, or persons who wish to retain a relationship with this congregation while being members of other congregations. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the FLC Church Council of this congregation.

### **C8.03**

All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the FLC Church Council. There shall be no membership restrictions with respect to race, color, national origin, or sex.

### **C8.04**

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

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

### **C8.05**

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

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

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

## **CHAPTER 9 THE PASTOR**

### **C9.01**

Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, a call committee of at least 7 members of this congregation elected by the FLC Church Council to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod. (Titus 1:7-9)

### **C9.02**

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

### **C9.03**

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

- a. Every ordained minister shall:
  - 1) preach the Word;
  - 2) administer the sacraments;
  - 3) conduct public worship;
  - 4) provide pastoral care; and
  - 5) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
- b. Each ordained minister with a congregational call shall, within this congregation:
  - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
  - 2) with the FLC Church Council, supervise all schools and organizations of this congregation;
  - 3) Install regularly elected members of the FLC Church Council; and
  - 4) with the FLC Church Council, administer discipline.
- c. Every pastor shall:
  - 1) strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;
  - 2) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
  - 3) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications; and
  - 4) endeavor to increase the support given by this congregation to the work of the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and of the metropolitan Washington DC 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 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;
  - 6) the dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
  - 7) suspension of this 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 FLC Church Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of this 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 a disabled pastor to health, the bishop of the synod shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in this congregation last served or in another field of labor.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this 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 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, this congregation may dismiss the pastor at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a simple majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- e. If, in the course of proceedings described in C9.05.d., the committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action to the synodical bishop, who may bring charges in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the constitution of this synod.
- f. If, following the appointment of the committee described in C9.05.b. or d., it should become apparent that the pastoral office cannot be conducted effectively in 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 this congregation without prejudice and with pay provided through a joint synodical and churchwide fund and with housing provided by this congregation.

**C9.06**

At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the FLC Church Council.

**C9.07**

During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in this congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or FLC Church 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 FLC Church 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. 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 a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of C9.05.a.

**C9.11**

The pastor(s) of this congregation:

- a. shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from this congregation;
- b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod; and
- c. shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

**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**

The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor(s) and shall remain the property of this congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his or her hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another field of labor or the granting by the synod of retired status to the pastor.

**CHAPTER 10**  
**CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

**C10.01**

The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.

**C10.02**

A special congregational meeting may be called by the pastor, the FLC Church Council, the president of this congregation, or at the written request of 25 voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose of which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted. Notice of such meetings shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by written notice to all voting members sent by first class mail at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting.

**C10.03**

Five percent of the voting members shall constitute a quorum.

**C10.04**

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

**C10.05**

All actions by this congregation shall be by a majority vote of those present at a meeting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution.

**C10.06**

The current rosters of confirmed and voting members shall be available at all congregational meetings.

**C10.07**

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

**CHAPTER 11**  
**OFFICERS**

**C11.01**

The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and others as designated in the bylaws. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws. The officers shall be voting members of this congregation.

**C11.02**

The officers shall be elected by this congregation at the annual meeting by a simple majority vote. The terms of each officer shall be specified in the bylaws. The term shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31.

**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**  
**FLC CHURCH COUNCIL**

**C12.01**

The voting membership of the FLC Church Council shall consist of the pastor(s), the officers of the congregation, and other members of this congregation as designated in the bylaws. The pastor(s) or interim pastor shall be ex officio member(s) of the FLC Church Council. Any voting member of this congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office.

**C12.02**

At its annual meeting, this congregation shall elect the members of the FLC Church Council except the pastor(s), in a manner designated in the bylaws. No council member shall hold more than one office at a time. No elected Council member shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office. The term of each member of the council shall begin on January 1st of the year immediately following his/her election. Newly elected members shall be installed at a worship service prior to the January meeting of the FLC Church Council.

**C12.03**

A member of the FLC Church Council, who is absent from two consecutive regular meetings, shall be consulted by the President of this congregation; if a member is absent from three consecutive regular meetings without valid excuse, the Council may declare the office vacant. Should a member's place on the FLC Church Council become vacant, the FLC Church Council may elect, by majority vote, a successor through December 31st following the next annual meeting.

**C12.04**

The FLC Church 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 of America. The FLC Church Council shall:

- a. Lead this congregation in stating its mission, preparing long-term plans, setting goals and priorities, and evaluating activities of this congregation in light of its mission and goals.
- b. Seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
- c. Oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
- d. Maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them in the fulfillment of their calling, appointment, and employment.

- e. Be examples, individually and collectively, of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
- f. Promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
- g. Arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
- h. 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.
- i. Recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

#### **C12.05**

The FLC Church Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.

- a. The FLC Church Council shall be the elected board 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 Commonwealth of Virginia, except as otherwise provided herein.
- b. The FLC Church Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by the congregation at a duly called meeting.
- c. The FLC Church Council may make expenditures in excess of the total voted budget provided monies are available in Funds established for special purposes.
- d. The FLC Church Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation and shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption. The FLC Church Council, except as provided in C12.05.c. may incur obligations more than 2% in excess of the annual budget, only after approval by this congregation at a duly called meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in partnership with the synod and churchwide organization.
- e. The FLC Church Council shall ensure that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to benevolences in proportion to receipts.
- f. The FLC Church Council shall control all fund raising of this congregation and its organizations not included in the budget.
- g. The FLC Church Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.

#### **C12.06**

The FLC Church Council shall see that the provisions of the constitution and the bylaws are carried out.

#### **C12.07**

The FLC Church Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.

#### **C12.08**

The FLC Church Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the salaried lay workers of this congregation. Salary adjustments may be made within budgetary limitations.

#### **C12.09**

The FLC Church Council shall present to this congregation at its annual meeting reports from all the organizations of this congregation.

**C12.10**

The FLC Church Council normally shall meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor, the president, or at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all members of the FLC Church Council and others known to have an interest in the business to be transacted at the meeting. Only the business for which a special meeting has been called shall be transacted at the meeting.

**C12.11**

A quorum for the transaction of business by the FLC Church Council shall consist of a majority of its members, including the pastor(s) or interim pastor. Means of voting, including electronic voting, by the FLC Church Council shall be specified in the bylaws.

**C12.12**

The duties and responsibilities of the various Council members are specified further in the bylaws.

**C12.13**

The Deacons shall elect from their membership the Vice President of the Church Council. The pastor(s) shall be advisors to the Deacons and Property Trustees. Working together, the pastor(s), the Deacons, and Property Trustees shall provide leadership to this congregation in all matters with which it is concerned, particularly Evangelism, Parish Education, Property, Social Concerns, Stewardship, Worship and Music, and Youth Activities.

**C12.14**

The Legal Trustees shall hold title to the real properties of the Church in trust for this congregation. Said Trustees shall execute on behalf of this congregation:

- a. Any legal document pertaining to such real property when required by law to do so; and
- b. Instruments of conveyance, mortgages, deeds of trust, promissory notes, and other legal documents pertaining to the disposition or acquisition of real estate and permanent improvements thereto, when and as authorized to do so by this congregation or by the FLC Church Council, as provided in this constitution and bylaws.

The signatures of two of the three Legal Trustees shall be a valid execution on behalf of the church of any legal document; however, any legal document relating to actions authorized by this congregation at regular or specially called congregational meetings also must be signed by the President of this congregation and attested to by the Secretary of this congregation.

**CHAPTER 13**  
**CONGREGATION COMMITTEES**

**C13.01**

Committees of this congregation are specified in the bylaws. Other committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the FLC Church Council.

**C13.02**

Duties of committees of this congregation shall be specified in the bylaws or in a continuing resolution.

**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 FLC Church Council.

**CHAPTER 15**  
**DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION**

**C15.01**

Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps:

- a. private admonition by the pastor,
- b. admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, and
- c. citation to appear before the FLC Church Council.

If, for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by a. and b. hereof, the president (if not the pastor) or vice president shall administer such admonitions.

**C15.02**

The process for discipline of a member of this congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. If discipline against a member proceeds beyond counseling and admonition by the pastor, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing shall be prepared by member(s) of this congregation who shall sign the charges as the accuser(s). The written charges shall be filed with the pastor, who shall advise the FLC Church Council of the need to issue a written citation to the accused and the accusers that specifies the time and place of the hearing before the FLC Church Council. The written charges shall accompany the written citation to the accused. The written citation that specifies the time and place of the hearing before the FLC Church Council and requests the presence of a member charged with the offense shall be sent at least ten days prior to the meeting. If the member charged with the offense fails to appear at the scheduled hearing, the FLC Church Council may proceed with the hearing and may pass judgment in the member's absence.

**C15.03**

Members of the FLC Church Council who participate in the preparation of the written charges or who present evidence or testimony in the hearing before the FLC Church Council are disqualified from voting upon the question of the guilt of the accused member. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the FLC Church Council who are not disqualified but who are

present and voting, and renewed admonition prove ineffectual, the council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:

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

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

**C15.04**

The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the FLC Church 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 FLC Church Council upon receipt of

- a. evidence that injustice has been done or
- b. evidence of repentance and amendment.

**C15.06**

For disciplinary actions in this congregation, "due process" shall be observed as specified in 20.41.04 in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**C15.07**

No member of a congregation shall be subject to discipline for offenses that the FLC Church Council has previously heard and decided, unless so ordered by the Synod Council after an appeal.

**C15.08**

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

**CHAPTER 16**  
**BYLAWS**

**C16.01**

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

**C16.02**

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

**C16.03**

Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the FLC Church Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose and that the FLC Church Council notify this

congregation's members by mail of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting.

**C16.04**

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

**CHAPTER 17  
AMENDMENTS**

**C17.01**

Unless provision C17.04. is applicable, those sections of this constitution that are not required, in accord with the Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be amended in the following manner:

Amendments may be proposed by at least 5 voting members or by the FLC Church Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the FLC Church Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at a regular or special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose. The FLC Church Council shall cause the proposed amendment(s) to be read at public services of this congregation and to be mailed to voting members at least 30 days in advance of the meeting at which it is to be considered.

**C17.02**

An amendment to this constitution, proposed under C17.01, shall:

- a. be approved at a legally called Congregational Meeting according to this constitution by at least a two-thirds 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 that result from the processes provided in C17.01 and C17.02 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 this constitution of the metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod of the ELCA.

**C17.04**

This constitution may be amended to bring any section into conformity with a section or sections, either required or not required, of the Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—as most recently amended by the Churchwide Assembly—by a simple majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of this congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of this congregation, provided that the FLC Church Council has submitted by mail notice to the congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council's recommendations, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Upon the written request of 5 voting members of the congregation, the FLC Church Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following a vote of approval.

**CHAPTER 18**  
**CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

**C18.01**

The congregation in a legally called meeting or the FLC Church Council may enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this congregation.

**C18.02**

Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a majority vote of a meeting of the congregation or a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the FLC Church Council.

**CHAPTER 19**  
**INDEMNIFICATION**

**C19.01**

Consistent with the provisions of the laws under which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt provisions providing indemnification for each person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a FLC Church Council, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any committee of this congregation, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.