

CONSTITUTION
of
Christ Lutheran Church
Whitefish, MT

(Revised and Approved 8/16/2020)

PREAMBLE

We, the baptized and believing members of Christ’s Body, the Church, responding in faith to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, desire to unite together, to preach the Word, to administer the Sacraments, and to carry out God’s mission. We therefore adopt and pledge to be governed by this Constitution in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 1 NAME AND INCORPORATION

- 1.1 The name of this congregation shall be Christ Lutheran Church, located in Whitefish, MT.
- 1.2 For the purpose of this Constitution and the accompanying Bylaws, Christ Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as “this Congregation.”
- 1.3 For the purpose of this Constitution and the accompanying Bylaws, the Christ Lutheran Church Congregational Council is hereinafter designated as the “Council.”
- 1.4 This Congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Montana.

Chapter 2 CONFESSION OF FAITH

- 2.1 This Congregation confesses God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, the only One Triune God.

Matthew 28:19 “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”

John 14:16-20 “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.”

- 2.2 This Congregation confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.

John 3:16-17 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”

2 Peter 3:18 “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.”

Ephesians 2:8-10 “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

- 2.3 This Congregation confesses that Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and is held together, and through whose life, death and resurrection God fashions his new creation.

John 1:1-3 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”

Philippians 3:10-11 “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

Colossians 1:16-17 “For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”

- 2.4 This Congregation proclaims God’s message to us, His Word, as both Law and Gospel, 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.

2 Corinthians 7:10 “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.’

Lutheran Book of Concord (p. 560). Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration V,12. He states: “Everything that preaches about our sin and the wrath of God, no matter how or when it happens, is the proclamation of the law. On the other hand, the Gospel is a proclamation that shows and gives nothing but grace and forgiveness in Christ. At the same time it is true and right that the apostles and the preachers of the Gospel, just as Christ himself did, confirm the proclamation of the law and begin with the

law in the case of those who as yet neither know their sins nor are terrified by the wrath of God, as he says in John 16:8, 'The Holy Spirit will convince the world of sin because they do not believe in me.'¹⁴ In the same vein, the Smalcald Articles state: "The New Testament retains and performs the office of the law, which reveals sin and God's wrath, but to this office it immediately adds the promise of God's grace through the Gospel."

- 2.5 This Congregation believes, teaches, and accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired, revealed, and inerrant Word of God, and the sole authoritative source and norm of our proclamation, faith, and life.

Matthew 5:17-18 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."

2 Timothy 3:16-17 "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

- 2.6 This Congregation believes that the canonical Scriptures reveal God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ, and the grace of God that creates and sustains the Christian faith and establishes fellowship for the ministry of the Gospel.

John 14:6 "Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Isaiah 40:8 "The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever."

- 2.7 This Congregation believes that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary sexes together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We affirm that God created each person as male at birth or female at birth. We believe and confess the Biblical teaching that the marriage of male and female is an institution created and blessed by God. From marriage, God forms families to serve as the building blocks of all human civilization and community. We teach and practice that sexual activity belongs exclusively within the Biblical boundaries of a faithful marriage between one man and one woman.

Genesis 1:27 "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

Genesis 2:24 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”

Matthew 19:4-6 “Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”

- 2.8 This Congregation accepts the Apostles’, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this Congregation.
- 2.9 This Congregation accepts the unaltered Augsburg Confession and the 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 valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.
- 2.10 This Congregation believes that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Psalm 139).

Chapter 3 NATURE OF THE CHURCH

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints, and in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.
- 3.3 The Church is defined as the priesthood of all believers. Every Christian has gifts for ministry and is encouraged to serve one another. Every Christian shares responsibility for studying the Word of God and assisting one another in applying the Word of God.

Chapter 4 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- 4.1 The Church is the assembly of saints in which the Gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly.

- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 To participate in God's mission, this Congregation as a part of the Church shall:
- a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
 - b. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
 - c. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ, and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
 - d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations by 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.
- 4.4 To fulfill these purposes, this Congregation shall:
- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is purely preached and the sacraments are rightly 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 this Congregation.
 - d. Teach the Word of God.
 - e. Help persons of all ages through its pastoral and educational ministry to identify more deeply with the Christian community and participate more fully in its mission.
 - f. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
 - g. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
 - h. Motivate its members to provide financial support for this Congregation's mission and ministry.
 - i. Foster and participate in relationships with other congregations and organizations consistent with the policies and beliefs of this Congregation.

- 4.5 This Congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions. The Council shall review the descriptions and responsibilities of each ministry team, task force, or other organizational groups and shall review their actions.
- 4.6 This Congregation shall, from time to time, adopt or revise a mission statement which will provide vision and specific direction for its programs.

Chapter 5 POWERS OF THIS CONGREGATION

- 5.1 All power in the Congregation has its source in the Word of God, which is the basis for its faith and life. All individuals and groups within the Congregation shall submit to the authority of the Word, and the life and activity of this Congregation and its organizations shall conform to it.
- 5.2 The powers of this Congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.
- 5.3 The powers of this Congregation are vested in the Congregational Meeting called and conducted as provided in this Constitution and Bylaws.
- 5.4 The Council, other organizational units and individuals acting in the name of the Congregation shall have the authority delegated to them by this Constitution and by any other Bylaws that the Congregation creates under the authority of this Constitution. This Congregation is authorized to:
 - a. Call a pastor or terminate the call of a pastor.
 - b. Approve the annual budget.
 - c. Acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means.
 - d. Hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose.
 - e. Sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means.
 - f. Elect its Council, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the Constitution, Bylaws, and continuing Resolutions.
 - g. Determine denominational affiliation consistent with its statement of faith and purpose.

Chapter 6 CHURCH AFFILIATION

- 6.1 This Congregation shall be an independent, voluntary member of the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC).

- 6.2 This Congregation accepts the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) Statement of Faith and agrees to act in accordance with it.
- 6.3 This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) 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 Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC).
 - c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership whom are eligible to be included in the clergy roster of the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) in accordance with its call procedures and ministry standards.
- 6.4 This Congregation may choose to associate or affiliate with other organizations to promote the Gospel of Jesus Christ in accordance with the confessions and policies of this Congregation.
- 6.5 The procedure for associating or terminating a relationship or membership with a Lutheran denomination or association shall be by a special Congregational meeting called and conducted according to this Constitution to vote on the Resolution. The Resolution shall require a two-thirds majority vote of all ballots cast at the meeting. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.

Chapter 7 PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

- 7.1 Title to this Congregation's property shall continue to reside in this Congregation regardless of church denominational affiliation.
- 7.2 If this Congregation ceases to exist, property shall be disposed of as determined by a final Congregational Meeting. If no such meeting is possible and the property must be disposed of by a third party such as the State of Montana, or otherwise by law, it is the will of the Congregation that the property be given to one or more organizations that will continue to fulfill, as closely as possible, the purpose of this Constitution as given in Chapter 4.
- 7.3 Should this Congregation, by a two-thirds majority vote, choose to become an organization which is not specifically and exclusively Lutheran in nature or join an organization which requires the Congregation to abandon its evangelical faith as described in Chapters 2 & 3 of this Constitution, then title to all land and other assets, both real and personal, shall automatically remain with the largest minority faction wishing to remain an explicitly Lutheran church. However, if the minority faction does not establish itself as a legal entity under the laws of Montana within one year of the vote, then the property shall be disposed of according to Paragraph

7.2, as if the Congregation has ceased to exist without a final Congregational Meeting.

Chapter 8 MEMBERSHIP

- 8.1 Members of this Congregation shall be those baptized members 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.
- 8.2 Becoming a member of this Congregation shall involve, in addition to affirming the Confession of Faith outlined in Chapter 2 herein, the completion of a confirmation or new member class, or a personal interview conducted by the pastoral staff of this Congregation, and shall be approved by the Council.
- 8.3 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 have affirmed previous baptism in the Name of the Triune God.
 - b. CONFIRMED members are baptized persons who have affirmed their faith and commitment in this Congregation by completing a confirmation class, a new member class, or a personal interview conducted by the pastoral staff.
 - c. VOTING members are confirmed members that have remained active by receiving Holy Communion, and by making a financial 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 the eligibility for elected offices.
- 8.4 Members of this Congregation shall have the privilege and duty to:
- a. Participate fully in corporate worship and discipleship opportunities.
 - b. Discover and utilize gifts in ministry.
 - c. Live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of this church.
 - d. Support the work of this Congregation and its missions, through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.
- 8.5 This Congregation will support its membership by:
- a. Providing regular worship services that include praising God, teaching the Word, and administering the Sacraments.
 - b. Providing opportunities for ministries.

- c. Attending the sick and dying, the bereaved, shut-ins, newborn children, and those in transition, with services of healing, encouragement, celebration, and reconciliation.
- d. Being a faithful witness to Christ's saving Gospel towards each other and towards those unchurched in the community.
- e. Calling the once active members towards reactivation of faith and restored participation in the life of this Congregation.

8.6 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 Council.
- e. Removal due to inactivity.
 - (1) When a member elects not to fulfill the provisions of membership described in paragraph 8.4 of this Constitution for a period of one year, then either the Pastor or a representative of the Council shall contact the member to ascertain if it is possible to restore the member to active membership. If the member does not respond, then that member's name shall be removed from the active membership roster.
 - (2) These persons shall remain a continuing pastoral concern for another three years.

8.7 Membership Discipline Process: If a Congregation member denies belief in the Christian faith as described in this Constitution, conducts themselves in a way that is unbecoming of a member of the church, or persistently causes trouble in worship, ministry, relationships or otherwise, the Congregation will encourage the people involved to reconcile according to the guidance of Matthew 18:15-17. To reconcile or discipline the errant member, the Congregation will use these steps:

- a. The pastor or another member shall privately admonish the errant member. If the errant member repents then the matter is resolved and those involved will seek to renew their relationships.
- b. If the errant member does not respond with repentance, then the Pastor shall admonish the errant member in the presence of two or three other members. If the errant member then repents, the matter is resolved and those involved will seek to renew their relationships.
- c. If the errant member still does not repent or if the matter is still unresolved, the Council will summon the errant member in writing to appear before the Council. Notice of this appearance shall be at least ten days before the meeting, and will specify the charges that the council has against the errant member. At the meeting the Council shall examine the charges together, examine all the available evidence, and listen to the arguments and concerns of the errant member and of all others involved that the Council believes may contribute to resolving the matter wisely. The Council will then attempt to

resolve the matter. If the errant member then repents, the matter is resolved and those involved will seek to renew their relationships. If the errant member disregards the notice and makes no effort to comply, the Council may at its discretion proceed with the meeting on the subject, and has the authority to reach a conclusion on the matter in the absence of the member.

- d. If the errant member does not repent and Council sustains one or more of the allegations by a two-thirds vote of those present, then the Council shall impose one of these two disciplinary actions on the errant member in writing:
 - (1) Censure and suspension from membership until the Council receives evidence that the errant member has repented.
 - (2) Exclusion from membership, denial of the Sacraments, and denial of participation in Congregational activities.
- e. The Council may revoke disciplinary actions by a two thirds vote of those present, and must consider this if it receives evidence showing that it has acted unjustly or that the errant member has repented.
- f. Members of the church agree to submit any legal dispute with the church for mediation before a mutually agreed-upon mediator, or if none can be agreed upon, one selected by Peacemaker Ministries. Lawsuits between believers, or threats of lawsuits between believers, are a matter of grave concern for the church, are contrary to biblical and church teaching, and mediation is an effort to resolve disputes in a biblical fashion (1 Cor. 6: 1-7).

Mediation will be governed by the *Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation* of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (ICC Rules), unless modified as stipulated by the parties. In particular, subject to the more detailed provisions of the ICC Rules, mediator(s) will attempt to assist us in reaching a voluntary settlement of any disputes through mediation. The confidentiality of the mediation process will be protected and these matters will not be discussed with people who do not have a necessary interest in them. If settlement can be agreed upon, the conciliators may, at their discretion, issue an advisory opinion. Neither the opinion, nor any communications exchanged in the mediation process, will be admissible for any purpose in any subsequent legal proceeding.

Chapter 9 PASTOR(S)

- 9.1 The authority to call a pastor shall reside in this Congregation.
 - a. A Call Committee of this Congregation shall be designated by the Council to identify and recommend qualified candidates for Pastor. The Committee shall recommend to the Council the best candidate for the position.
 - b. The pastoral call shall be issued for final approval at a properly called special Congregational Meeting.

- c. Approval of the call requires a two-thirds majority of all ballots cast at the meeting.
- 9.2 Any pastor called by this Congregation shall adhere to the confessions of faith defined in this Constitution and accepted by this Congregation, and therefore shall:
- a. Preach and teach the Word of God as revealed in the Old and New Testaments.
 - b. Administer the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion.
 - c. Be an integral part of the public worship and praise.
 - d. Minister to all the members of this congregation according to their needs, and visit those who are unable to attend but need pastoral care.
 - e. Preside at confirmations, marriages, and funeral services.
 - f. Oversee the spiritual direction and vision of this Congregation.
 - g. Lead, inspire, and equip the members in fulfilling their responsibility to witness for Christ according to the mission of this Congregation.
 - h. Provide pastoral leadership for the meetings and activities of this Congregation such as the Council, and any committees or groups that require pastoral leadership.
 - i. Install or anoint and bless those elected members of the Council, and those being sent out on mission projects.
 - j. Serve in harmony with the Word of God and the confessions of this Congregation. Strive in word and deed to be a faithful example in Christian living, avoiding conduct which might endanger the faith of others.
 - k. Provide training and encouragement for other ministerial staff members and lay leaders.
 - l. Continue education to provide opportunity for personal renewal, enrichment of devotional life, and development of pastoral effectiveness.
 - m. Administer discipline together with the Council.
 - n. Strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad.
- 9.3 The job description and specific duties of the Pastor, compensation and other matters pertaining to the service of the Pastor shall be included in a letter of call, and signed by the President of the Council.
- 9.4 The call of the Congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall normally constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which, except in the case of death of the Pastor, shall be terminated by the following:
- a. Mutual agreement to terminate the call, or the completion of a call for a specific term.
 - b. Resignation of the Pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, thirty days after the date on which it was submitted to the Council.
 - c. The physical or mental incapacity of the Pastor.
 - (1) When allegations of physical or mental incapacity of a pastor, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral position, have come to the attention of

the Council and are deemed credible by the Executive Committee of the Council, or when such allegations have been brought to the Council's attention by a petition signed by at least ten percent (10%) of the voting members of this Congregation, the Council shall investigate such conditions personally and apart from the Pastor.

- (2) In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity of the Pastor, the Council shall seek competent medical testimony regarding the incapacity, subject to privacy laws. When such disability is evident, the President with the advice of the Council, shall declare the pastorate vacant. Upon the restoration of a disabled pastor to health, the President shall take steps to determine if it is possible to enable the Pastor to resume the ministry, either in this Congregation or in another field of labor.
 - d. Disqualification of the Pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, continued neglect of duty, or conviction of any illegal act.
 - (1) When allegations of misconduct by the Pastor have come to the attention of the Council and are deemed credible by the Executive Committee of the Council, or when such allegations have been brought to the Council's attention by a petition signed by at least ten percent (10%) of the voting members of this Congregation, the Council shall investigate the matter with a committee that includes the Executive Committee of the Council apart from the Pastor and a pastor from another LCMC Congregation, to decide whether or not to terminate the Pastor from his position.
 - (2) In the case where the Pastor does not assent to the termination, this Congregation may dismiss the Pastor at a legally called special Congregational Meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of the ballots cast at the meeting.
- 9.5 The Congregation shall not amend Chapter 9 of this Constitution without first giving thirty days' notice to all pastors that it has currently called.
- 9.6 At a time of pastoral vacancy, the Council shall have the responsibility to seek and hire an interim pastor.
- 9.7 During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the same rights and duties in this Congregation of a regularly called pastor. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a permanent pastor.
- 9.8 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 Senior Pastor and the Council. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- 9.9 The term of an Associate Pastor shall be coterminous with the Senior Pastor. Timing of this termination shall be negotiated with the Council.

Chapter 10 CHURCH STAFF

- 10.1 Church staff employees may be hired and added to the church staff under the authority of the Senior Pastor, the Business Administrator, and the Personnel Committee with confirmation by the Council. The specific duties, expectations, compensation, and other matters shall be as specified in the Bylaws, and in the position's job description and included in a letter of employment. The terms of employment shall be agreed upon and signed by the person hired.
- 10.2 Volunteer staff positions may also be added to the church under the authority of the Pastor(s) and the Business Administrator. The specific duties and expectations shall be as specified in the position's job description.
- 10.3 Staff positions and responsibilities may change and vary depending upon the required needs and resources available at the time.
- 10.4 Dismissal of a staff member's employment may be terminated by action of the Senior Pastor, the Business Administrator, and the Personnel Committee with confirmation by the Council.

Chapter 11 CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

- 11.1 Regular scheduled semi-annual Congregational Meetings of this Congregation shall be held at a time specified in the Bylaws.
- 11.2 A special Congregational Meeting may be called by the Pastor(s), the Council, the President of this Congregation, or can be called at the written request of ten percent (10%) of the voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.
- 11.3 Notice of all meetings of this Congregation shall be given at the worship services on the preceding two (2) consecutive Sundays, or by mail to all voting members at least ten (10) days in advance of the date of the meeting.
- 11.4 A quorum shall be required to conduct official business at any Congregational Meeting. A minimum of ten percent (10%) of the voting members shall constitute a quorum. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- 11.5 All decisions by this Congregation shall be by majority vote except as otherwise designated in this Constitution or Bylaws.
- 11.6 Robert's Rules of Order, the latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this Congregation.

Chapter 12 OFFICERS

- 12.1 The officers of this Congregation shall be a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, and shall be the officers of the Council serving the same positions. The officers shall be selected and appointed by the Council.
- 12.2 Duties of the officers shall be as specified in the Bylaws.
- 12.3 The officers shall be voting members of this Congregation for the previous two years, and shall serve a one-year term. The officers may continue to serve in their position for up to six consecutive years if so elected by the Council.
- 12.4 The officers shall not serve more than one office at a time.
- 12.5 Officers can be removed from office through the membership discipline process as outlined in Chapter 8 herein.

Chapter 13 COUNCIL

- 13.1 The voting membership of the Council shall consist of the Pastor(s) and 12 voting members elected from the Congregation. These members include the officers. Any voting member of the Congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation and the length of continuous service permitted in that office. The Business Administrator shall be a non-voting member of the Council. The Pastor(s) shall not vote on matters of pastoral duties, compensation, discipline or removal.
 - 13.1.2 The Council will strive for unanimity in all actions. In the event of disagreement, the matter before the Council may be tabled until the next meeting to devote time for prayer. Should disagreement still exist, a majority vote of the Council with a quorum present will decide the matter.
- 13.2 The members of the Council, except the Pastor(s), shall be elected at the first semi-annual Congregational Meeting of each year for a term of office of three (3) years. Four members shall normally be elected each year. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively.
- 13.3 A member's place on the Council shall be declared vacant if the member:
 - a. Ceases to be a voting member of this congregation,
 - b. Is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Council without cause, as determined by a Council majority vote,
 - c. Submits a letter of resignation,
 - d. Is removed through the membership discipline process as outlined in Chapter 8 herein.

- 13.4 Should a member's place on the Council be declared vacant, the Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor to serve until the next Congregational meeting in which Council members are elected.
- 13.5 The Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this Congregation, so that everything will be done in accordance with the Word of God. The duties of the 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 provide oversight and enable the administration of this Congregation to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
 - d. To maintain supportive relationships with the Pastor(s) and Staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling, appointment, or employment.
 - e. Confirm the appointment or termination of non-ordained staff.
 - f. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized and confirmed members.
 - g. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill, and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
 - h. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the Pastor(s).
 - i. To promote cooperation and partnership with other congregations according to the established policies of this Congregation, and to seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.
- 13.6 The Council shall be responsible for the following financial and property matters of this Congregation:
- a. The Council shall be the board of directors of this Congregation, and as such shall be responsible for verifying the proper 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 Montana, except as otherwise provided herein.
 - b. The Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of this Congregation.
 - c. The Council may enter into contracts or purchase of items as specified in the Bylaws.
 - d. The Council shall approve the annual budget for adoption by this Congregation, and shall review the expenditure of funds in accordance with the approved budget.

- e. The Council shall verify that the financial affairs of this Congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies.
- 13.7 The Council may enact continuing Resolutions or Policies that govern specific organizations or operation of this Congregation, so long as they comply with this Constitution. The Business Administrator with the assistance of the Secretary shall keep a record of Resolutions and Policies for the Congregation to review and for a historical record.
- 13.8 The Council shall see that the provisions of this Constitution, its Bylaws, and the continuing Resolutions and Policies are carried out.
- 13.9 The Council shall submit an annual report to the Congregation as specified in the Bylaws.
- 13.10 The Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor or the President, and shall be called by the President 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.
- 13.11 A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Council, including the Pastor(s) 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.
- 13.12 Only one member of a family may serve as a Council member of this Congregation at any one time. Family members include the following: spouse, mother, father, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister, brother, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, and natural, step, and adopted children.
- 13.13 Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this Council.

Chapter 14 CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEES

- 14.1 Congregational committees shall be formed to provide for the ongoing mission and ministries of this Congregation. The number of members, their term of service, and their responsibilities are as specified in the Bylaws. The following committees shall be formed as specified in the Bylaws:
- a. Executive Committee
 - b. Nominating Committee
 - c. Finance Committee
 - d. Personnel Committee

- e. Audit Committee
- f. Call Committee

Chapter 15 ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

- 15.1 All organizations within this Congregation shall exist to aid 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 Council oversight and direction.
- 15.2 Special interest groups who identify with this Congregation may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Council. The use of the buildings and facilities of this Congregation shall be limited to this Congregation's activities and policies, and those of outside groups approved by the Council.

Chapter 16 BYLAWS

- 16.1 The purpose of the Bylaws is to provide meaningful clarity to the provisions of this Constitution by giving definition, explanation, and details for the governing of the affairs of this Congregation.
- 16.2 This Congregation may adopt Bylaws that do not conflict with this Constitution. It may do so by any legally called Congregational meeting with a quorum present and with the approval of a majority vote of all ballots cast at the meeting.
- 16.3 Any voting member may submit proposed changes to the Bylaws to the Council for consideration. If the Council approves the proposal then the Council shall either schedule a special Congregational meeting, or present the proposal at the next scheduled semi-annual Congregational meeting. The Council shall notify the Congregation of the proposal with Council recommendations at least ten (10) days prior to the Congregational meeting.

Chapter 17 AMENDMENTS

- 17.1 Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by at least ten percent (10%) of the voting members, or by the Council. Proposals from members must be filed in writing to the Council within 60 days before formal consideration by this Congregation.
- 17.2 Any proposed amendment to this Constitution must be acted upon at the next scheduled semi-annual Congregational meeting, or at a legally called and conducted special Congregational meeting. A notice of this meeting with recommendations from the Council shall be mailed to all voting members at least 10 days prior to the

meeting. Approval of the proposed amendment requires a two-thirds majority vote of all ballots cast at the meeting.

Chapter 18 CONGREGATIONAL RECORDS

18.1 The records of this Congregation shall be the property of this Congregation and shall not be removed or used for commercial purposes. The records shall be maintained by the Business Administrator and include the following:

- a. The roster of baptized voting members.
- b. The ministerial acts performed by the Pastor(s).
- c. The minutes and reports of the Congregation and Council.
- d. The adopted Resolutions and Policies.
- e. The financial records.
- f. The legal documents including deeds, mortgages, contracts, IRS status, Bylaws, and this Constitution.