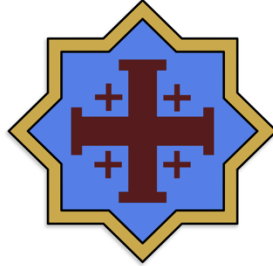


CONSTITUTION
FOR



SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH
ELIZABETHVILLE, PA

A Congregation of the



NORTH AMERICAN
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

2023

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CONSTITUTION
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SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH
Elizabethville

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

- 1.01. The name of this congregation shall be Salem Lutheran Church of Elizabethville, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, 17023.
- 1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the congregation of Salem Lutheran Church, Elizabethville is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."
- 1.03. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Pennsylvania.

Chapter 2.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

- 2.01. This congregation confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.¹
- 2.02. 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.
- 2.03. 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, "according to which all doctrines should and must be judged." (Formula of Concord, Epitome, Part I)
- 2.04. This congregation accepts and adheres to the Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds, and in addition thereto, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. All preaching and teaching in the congregation shall conform therewith.
- 2.05. In this congregation's acceptance of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, we acknowledge with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
- 2.06. 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.
- 2.07. 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.

¹The NALC does not require congregations to adopt a particular constitution. However, it does require a subscription to the NALC Constitution and to the NALC Confession of Faith. By adopting Chapter 2, Section 6.02, and Section 6.03(c)-(d) from this model, all shown in bold, a congregation complies with these requirements.

Chapter 3.

NATURE OF THE CHURCH

- 3.01. The Church is the universal assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel. (Augsburg Confession VII)

- 3.02. 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.
- 3.03. 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.
- 3.04. This congregation exercises ministry within the mission of the NALC. This congregation embodies the Church in its community and, for the sake of mission, lives in cooperative partnership with other congregations and within the other structures of the NALC. This congregation shall share responsibility for the decision-making processes of the NALC.

Chapter 4.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- 4.01. The hearers of the Gospel are a people, called and sent by God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to be a community of faith, hope and love, who witness to Christ and His coming Kingdom before all the world.
- 4.02. To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:
 - a. Give honor and glory to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, worshipping Him in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, obedience and service.
 - b. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by proclaiming to all the world the Gospel of justification by grace through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in Holy Scripture and in accordance with the Lutheran Confessions,
 - c. Preserve and transmit the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
 - d. Foster Christian fellowship and love, and extend a helping hand to humans in need.
 - e. Manifest the unity of our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior, and join with other Christians in prayer and action.
 - f. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, and to develop a sense of Christian vocation in daily life.
- 4.03. To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:
 - a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is rightly 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 their congregation.
 - d. Teach the Word of God.
 - e. 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. Encourage its members to provide appropriate financial support for the congregation's ministry and the ministry of other parts of the NALC.
 - i. Foster and participate in relationships with other congregations and structures of the NALC.
 - j. Foster and participate in ecumenical relations consistent with NALC policy.
- 4.04. 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 group and shall review their actions. [Such descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions in the section on the Church Council.]
- 4.05. 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

- 5.01. The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.
- 5.02. The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregational Meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.
- 5.03. 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 service of commissioned lay leaders.
 - 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 Church Council, boards, and committees, and require the members of the council, boards, and committees to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.
 - i. adopt amendments to this constitution as provided in Chapter 17, and amendments to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 16.
 - j. establish or terminate a relationship with a church body.
- 5.04.** This congregation may select voting members of this congregation to serve as lay delegates and alternates to represent it at meetings of any conferences, convocations, and other meetings where this congregation is entitled to such representation.

Chapter 6.

CHURCH AFFILIATION

- 6.01.** This congregation is a member of the NALC or any successor and is subject to the procedures of the NALC.
- 6.02.** This congregation subscribes to the constitution of the NALC and will act in accordance with it.
- 6.03.** This congregation will conduct its ministry in a manner consistent with its membership in the NALC:
- a. This congregation is responsible for its life as a Christian community.
 - b. This congregation pledges its participation in the life and mission of the NALC, including the prayerful consideration of appropriate financial support.
 - c. This congregation shall call only pastors who are members of the NALC or otherwise are authorized by the NALC to serve.
 - d. This congregation shall appoint only commissioned lay leaders who are members of the NALC or otherwise are authorized by the NALC to serve.
- 6.04.** Affiliation with the NALC may be terminated as follows:
- a. This congregation dissolves.
 - b. This congregation ceases to exist.
 - c. This congregation is removed from membership in the NALC according to the procedures for discipline of the NALC.
 - d. This congregation, at a legally called and conducted special meeting, approves by at least an [85%] majority of those present and voting a resolution directing that this congregation withdraw from the NALC. If this congregation adopts a resolution withdrawing from the NALC, all provisions of this constitution binding this congregation to the NALC shall be immediately ineffective. The congregation shall promptly deliver a copy of the withdrawal resolution to the NALC General Secretary.

Chapter 7.

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

- 7.01.** This congregation is an independent legal entity with rights to purchase, hold, and convey real and personal property in accord with applicable law. The NALC shall have no right to or interest in the property of this congregation unless this congregation expressly conveys such a right or interest to the NALC. If this congregation dissolves, its property shall be distributed in accord with applicable law and with the congregation's governing documents, including as otherwise provided herein.
- 7.02.** If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the appointed property trustees as designated by the congregational meeting at which the decision to dissolve was made.
- 7.03.** A unanimous vote of the congregation must be recorded in order to divest any real estate owned by the congregation.

Chapter 8.

MEMBERSHIP

- 8.01. Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons (a) who are on the roll of this congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted or who are admitted thereafter, and (b) who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.
- 8.02. 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 who have communed and made a contribution of record during the [current or preceding] calendar year. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meetings 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. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Church Council of this congregation.
- 8.03. All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Church Council.
- 8.04. 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 NALC, and their ministries and structures [through contributions of time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards].
- 8.05. 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 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

- 9.01. Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a [two-thirds] majority vote of members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose.
- 9.02. Consistent with the faith and practice of the NALC,
- a. Every ordained minister shall:
 - 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;
 - 3) conduct public worship;
 - 4) provide pastoral care;
 - 5) serve as the chief evangelist in his or her ministry, and
 - 6) proclaim God's love to the world.
 - b. Each ordained minister with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
 - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) supervise all schools and organizations of this congregation;
 - 3) install regularly elected members of the Church Council; and
 - 4) with the 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; and
 - 3) impart knowledge of the NALC and its wider ministry through public provision of information, distribution of publications and other appropriate means.

- 9.03. 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.
- 9.04. 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 for the following reasons:
- 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor;
 - 4) the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
 - 5) disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty; or
 - 6) the dissolution of the congregation.
- b. If the Church Council determines that it may be appropriate to end a call for one of the reasons set out in subsection (a), the Council shall consult with the pastor regarding the matter in accord with Biblical principles. If the Church Council and pastor do not reach agreement, the Church Council shall inform the Bishop of the NALC, who shall consult with the Church Council and the pastor and shall attempt to reach an agreed resolution. If the Bishop fails to facilitate an agreed resolution, the Church Council or the pastor may call a special Congregational Meeting to consider the matter. At such a meeting, the pastor and the Church Council leadership shall have a full and fair opportunity to present their positions on all matters relevant for consideration. Thereafter, the congregation by a two-thirds vote may terminate the pastor's call. In all events, the Church Council by majority vote may suspend a pastor with pay if the Church Council determines that such suspension is necessary to protect the congregation and all whom it serves. No such suspension may last more than 90 days unless the pastor agrees otherwise.
- 9.05. At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor may be appointed by the Church Council.
- 9.06. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the Church Council. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.
- 9.07. 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.
- 9.08. 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 and the Church Council. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through the same consultation process.
- 9.09. The congregation may depart from the requirements in section 9.04 (a) by calling a pastor for a term of years. Details of such a call shall be in a writing that sets forth the purpose and conditions involved. Such call may be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions in section 9.04 (a) and 9.04 (b).
- 9.10. The pastor of this congregation:
- a. shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation;
 - b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the Church Council; 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.
- 9.11. The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of the congregation.

Chapter 10.

CONGREGATION MEETING

- 10.01. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.
- 10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of the congregation upon the written request of ten percent of the voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.
- 10.03. Notice of all special meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail or email to all voting members at least ten (10) days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular church postage affixed or paid, sent to the last known address or email address of such members shall be sufficient.

- 10.04.** Ten percent of the voting members shall constitute a quorum for the annual meeting. Ten percent of the voting members shall constitute a quorum for special meetings of this congregation.
- 10.05.** Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- 10.06.** All actions approved by the congregation shall be by majority vote of those voting members present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution or by state law.
- 10.07.** *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

Chapter 11.

OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION

- 11.01.** The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and assistant treasurer.
- Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
 - The officers shall be voting members of the congregation.
 - Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.
- If the Congregation Council elects its officers, the president and vice president shall be selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council. If the treasurer or secretary is not selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council, the Congregation Council may appoint the position, and the treasurer or secretary shall have voice but not vote at the meetings of the Congregation Council. The treasurer and assistant treasurer shall serve no more than two consecutive three (3) year terms. In the absence of the treasurer, the assistant treasurer shall have voice but not vote at the meetings of the Congregation Council.
- 11.02.** The Congregation Council shall elect its officers, and they shall be the officers of the congregation. The officers shall be elected by written ballot and shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin on January 1 and end December 31.
- 11.03.** 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

- 12.01.** The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s), the president, vice president and secretary of the congregation and 5 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 meetings of the Congregation Council without cause. Consistent with the laws of the state in which this congregation is incorporated, the congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.
- 12.02.** The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) shall be elected at a legally called meeting of the congregation during the month of November. Their term of office shall be for three years, with the term of office beginning on January 1 and ending on December 31. Newly elected Congregation Council members shall be installed at worship the Sunday prior to the date they assume office.
- 12.03.** Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next annual meeting. Individuals who have served less than one-half of a regular term shall be eligible for nomination and possible election to a full term.
- 12.04.** The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:
- 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.
 - To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
 - To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
 - To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.
 - To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
 - To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill, and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
 - To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.

- h. To emphasize partnership with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the congregation.
 - i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the congregation.
 - j. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.
- 12.05.** The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.
- a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of trustees 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 Pennsylvania, 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 may enter into contracts of up to \$25,000 per year for items not included in the budget.
 - d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations of more than 10% in excess of the anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry.
 - e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations.
 - f. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.
- 12.06.** The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution, and its bylaws, and the continuing resolutions are carried out.
- 12.07.** The Congregation Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster by appointed committee.
- 12.08.** The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the salaried lay workers of this congregation.
- 12.09.** The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.
- 12.11.** The Congregation Council may normally meet once a month but shall meet at least bi-monthly (once every two (2) months) on a date and time agreeable to the minister(s) and elected council members. Each regular meeting will be advertised to the members of the congregation by email and/or Sunday worship bulletin.
- 12.12.** A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the pastor or interim pastor, except when the pastor or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting, which shall be the only business considered at that meeting. Chronic or repeated absence of the pastor or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Congregation Council.
- 12.13** 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 by announcement prior to the regular worship service, email and/or Sunday worship bulletin.

Chapter 13.

CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

- 13.01.** The officers of this congregation and the pastor shall constitute the *Executive Committee*.
- 13.02.** A *Nominating Committee* of four voting members of this congregation, two of whom, if possible, shall be outgoing members of the Congregation Council, shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year. Members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible for consecutive reelection.
- 13.03.** An *Audit Committee* of three voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council. Term of office shall be three years, with one member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for reelection.
- 13.04.** A *Mutual Ministry Committee* shall be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor. Term of office shall be two years, with three members to be appointed each successive year.
- 13.05.** When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a *Call Committee* of six voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor.
- 13.06.** Other committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council.
- 13.07.** Duties of committees of this congregation shall be specified in the bylaws.
- 13.08.** The pastor of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of the congregation.

Chapter 14.

ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

- 14.01.** 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.
- 14.02.** Special interest groups may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council.

Chapter 15.

DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

- 15.01.** Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution or the constitution of the NALC, 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 18:15-17², proceeding through these successive steps: a) private admonition by the pastor, b) admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, and c) citation to appear before the Congregation Council. 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.
- 15.02.** 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 the congregation who shall sign the charges as the accuser(s). The written charges, seeking that the admonition and conviction of the Word of God bring one to confession and repentance, shall be filed with the pastor, who shall advise the Congregation 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 Congregation Council. The written charges shall accompany the written citation to the accused. A member charged with the offense shall appear before the Congregation Council after having received a written citation, at least ten days prior to the meeting. If the member charged with the offense fails to appear at the scheduled hearing, the Congregation Council may proceed with the hearing and may pass judgment in the member's absence.
- 15.03.** Members of the Congregation Council who participate in the preparation of the written charges or who present evidence or testimony in the hearing before the Congregation 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 Congregation 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:
- censure before the council or congregation;
 - suspension from membership for a definite period of time; or
 - exclusion from membership in this congregation.
- Disciplinary actions b. and c. shall be delivered to the member in writing.
- 15.04.** The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Congregation Council shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Congregation. Such right may not be abridged, and the decision of the Congregation shall be final.
- 15.05.** Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Congregation Council upon receipt of a) evidence that injustice has been done or b) evidence of repentance and amendment.

²15If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. 16But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax-collector.

Chapter 16.

BYLAWS

- 16.01.** This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.
- 16.02.** 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.
- 16.03.** Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose and that the Congregation Council notify the congregation's members by mail of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting.

Chapter 17.

AMENDMENTS

- 17.01.** Amendments may be proposed by at least 10% voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the congregation's members by mail of the proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.
- 17.02.** An amendment to this constitution, proposed under 17.01 shall:
- a. be approved at a legally called Congregation Meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;
 - b. be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting; and
 - c. have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.

Chapter 18.

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

- 18.01.** The congregation in a legally called meeting or the Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this congregation.
- 18.02.** 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 Congregation Council.

Chapter 19.

INDEMNIFICATION

- 19.01.** 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 Congregation Council member, 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.

Chapter 20

ORGANIZATION AND DISSOLUTION

- 20.01.** The purpose for which this congregation is formed, and the business and objectives to be carried on and promoted by it are to operate a religious organization exempt from income taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or corresponding section of any future federal tax code and as the same may be amended at any time and from time to time. This congregation is organized exclusively for charitable, religious and educational purposes, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or any corresponding section of any future federal tax code.
- 20.02.** Upon the dissolution of this congregation, the assets of this congregation shall be distributed for one (1) or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code and as the same may be amended at any time and from time to time[, or in the absence of such designation, to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose].

By-Laws of Salem Lutheran Church

Statement of Mission

B1.01 Salem Lutheran Church of Elizabethville is a family of believers called the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to preach Christ Crucified through liturgy, life, and faithfulness; and to care for our neighbors through the joyful spreading of the Gospel.

Meeting Dates

B2.01 The annual meeting of the congregation shall be held on the third Sunday in November provided that date falls after the council meeting of that month.

Officers

B3.01 The officers of this congregation and congregation council shall be a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. The officers shall be voting members of the congregation. A minimum of one officer must be present at congregation council meetings. In the absence of the president at a regularly scheduled council meeting, the chain of command will be vice president, secretary, only by special appointment by the president for the conduct of essential business only.

B3.02 The president will lead the congregation council in fulfilling its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals, and to provide general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation. When needed the president has the authority to speak for the congregation in accordance with the decisions made by the congregation, council, and under the direction of the constitution. The president may call special meetings of the congregation and the council. In the absence of an assistant treasurer, the president shall be authorized to sign checks.

B3.03 The vice president supports the president in carrying out assigned duties and assumes the role of the president in his/her absence.

B3.04 The secretary will record the minutes of regular and special council meetings, maintain the permanent records of all such meetings and provide minutes to council for review and approval. He/she will properly store reports and minutes in church archives and provide such copies to the parish secretary for publication needs.

B3.05 The treasurer shall be responsible for maintaining the financial records and paying all bills. The treasurer shall receive from the financial secretary all funds and disburse them on proper orders and make regular remittance of benevolence receipts to the appropriate authorities of the NALC. The treasurer shall submit written monthly reports to the Congregation Council and a written annual report to the congregation of all financial transactions. The treasurer shall furnish to the appropriate authority of the NALC a Certificate of Audit by March 31 each year for the year ending the previous December 31. Other duties are described within the job description of the treasurer as this may be a paid staff position within the congregation.

B3.06 The assistant treasurer, if such a position is authorized and filled by action of the Congregation Council, shall provide assistance to the treasurer as the Council directs.

B3.07 The parish secretary, serving as a paid staff position within the congregation, will provide bulletins and appropriate inserts as needed on a weekly basis, the handling of all mailed correspondence, phone messages, and non-profit mailings of the congregation. Other duties, hours, and compensation can be found in the job description of the parish secretary.

B3.08 The financial secretary, serving as a paid staff position with the congregation, will carefully record weekly giving across all accounts of the church, and with the assistance of a council appointed member make appropriate deposits. Other duties include: the preparation of offering envelopes, statements, and sponsorships of the operation of the congregation.

Standing Committees

B4.01 All committees and groups of Salem Lutheran Church, being dedicated to the mission and life of the congregation will begin and end each regular or special meetings with prayer. Knowing that our Lord Jesus Christ instructed us to regularly call upon him in times of joy and distress to receive great comfort and love all groups of this congregation will endeavor to support and enliven the prayer lives of all our members and friends through this commitment. It will become the responsibility of the chairperson of each committee or the leader of each group to arrange or provide for this prayer time and encourage the active participation of all members.

B4.02 At its first meeting in each congregational year, the congregation council will appoint as many committees as the local and wider concerns of the congregation shall require. Each committee shall be composed of at least one member of the council, who will serve as the liaison to the council, along with voting members of the congregation to whatever number serves the needs of the committee. Although appointed by and responsible to the church council, these committees shall be recognized as representatives in the interest of and performing essential services for the congregation. The pastor shall have a voice and vote in all committees.

- B4.03 Church council will ensure an annual review of the membership roster is completed in accordance with the constitution.
- B4.04 Except as stipulated in the following paragraphs, the duties of all committees shall be assigned by the council, along with such instructions as in its judgment are in the best interests of the congregation. All actions of committees shall be subject to review by the congregational council, however all committees when remaining within the bounds of the financial concerns and budgets can work freely toward the mission of the church and report regularly to the council.
- B4.05 There shall be a Committee on Christian Education. This committee, in association with the pastor, shall oversee the conduct and promotion of the schools, and activities of all organizations within the congregation. It shall encourage the use of teaching and worship materials approved by this congregation council, and seek to introduce the church's periodicals and books of family devotion into the homes of the congregation. One of the primary aims of the Committee on Christian Education shall be to bring the call to ministry of the Gospel and other church vocations to the attention of qualified youth of the community. The chair of this committee will also serve as the Superintendent of the Sunday School and should be present at all times when the school is in session. In the case of an absence a representative should be appointed therein.
- B4.06 There shall be a committee on Church Property. This committee shall see to the proper maintenance, protection, and improvement of all property of the congregation, and shall take care that the same is kept in good repair.
- B4.07 There shall be a committee on Evangelism. This committee shall stimulate and lead all members of the congregation in continuous and concerted efforts to reach others with the Gospel and bring them to Christ's church. This committee shall also extend Christian compassion and helpfulness to persons in need of aid in body or soul and respond to the needs in our community and the world. The committee shall strive to enlist the help of members of the congregation in these efforts.
- B4.08 There shall be a Committee on Stewardship and Finance, of which the treasurer shall be a member ex officio. It shall be the function of this committee to teach the Christian use of money; to diffuse knowledge of the congregation's local, church, and world-wide ministries; and to lead all its member to higher levels of proportionate giving for the Lord's work. This committee shall also be responsible for annual stewardship events and other congregational efforts which lead to informed and grateful giving.
- B4.09 There shall be a committee on Worship and Music. It shall assist the congregation council in seeing that the services of God's house are conducted regularly, including supervision over the scheduling of ushers, acolytes, communion assistants, lectors, altar guild and other worship participants, and that the hymnals and other devotional materials are provided and properly cared for. This committee shall supervise and strive to advance the welfare and effective service of, the choirs of the congregation. It shall arrange for the care of paraments, vestments, and musical instruments, and in consultation with the pastor, the music director and the organist it shall furnish music supplies appropriate for use in worship of this congregation. The committee will also supervise and serve as a liaison for the music director, organist, and all choir directors and pianists of this congregation.
- B4.10 There shall be a Committee on Mutual Ministry to be appointed on a yearly basis, jointly by the president and the pastor. This committee shall serve as a communicative and evaluative liaison between the pastor and the congregation as well as congregational members, staff and any combination of those listed above. The committee will strive to maintain supportive relationships with the pastor, staff, and members and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.
- B4.11 There shall be a Committee on Parish Life. It shall be the function of this committee to foster good Christian Fellowship within the community and the congregation. They shall plan such fellowship events deemed appropriate and those requested and/or approved by the council, pastor, or congregation. The committee will maintain its own account for the funding and receipt of funds related to fellowship events planned by the committee. There shall be a treasurer of the committee who will give account of funds to the council and congregation when needed or annually.
- B4.12 There shall be a fellowship committee, here at Salem Lutheran Church, namely the Women of the NALC (WNALC) and the Salem Outdoor Fellowship Association (SOFA). Officers of these groups will be elected from within the active members. The group will maintain its own account for the funding and receipt of funds related to its mission. There shall be a treasurer of the group who will give account of funds to the council and congregation when needed or annually, and this treasurer will be a council member already having signatory responsibility within the congregation. Each group will provide fellowship events for the congregation, which include an eye for evangelism.

Staff of the Congregation

B5.01 This congregation employs the following staff professionals apart from the called pastor. These positions are paid, and responsibilities are negotiated by the council, records of which are maintained by the council president and reviewed annually by the council or its designated committee:

- a. Organist
- b. Music Director
- c. Deacon
- d. Parish Secretary

B5.02 Salem Lutheran church recognizes the three-fold expression of the ministry including the Bishop, the Priest (Pastor), and the Deacon: At a lower level of the hierarchy is the deacon, upon whom hands are imposed "not unto the priesthood, but unto a ministry of service." For strengthened by sacramental grace, in communion with his bishop (in accord with Article 8 of the NALC constitution), and his pastor, he serves in the diaconate of the liturgy, of the word, and of charity to the people of God.

It is the duty of the deacon, according as it shall have been assigned to him by competent authority, to administer baptism solemnly, to be custodian and dispenser of the Eucharist, to assist at and bless marriages in the name of the Church, to bring Viaticum to the dying, to read the Sacred Scripture to the faithful, to instruct and exhort the people, to preside over the worship and prayer of the faithful, to administer sacramentals, and to officiate at funeral and burial services; all at the direction and under the oversight of the pastor whom he serves, and within the congregation which confirms and supports his ordination, and issues to him a call.

NOTES:

At Salem Lutheran Church the Deacon shall serve the congregation in its various needs as assigned by the pastor. His service as director of music will continue to be a primary responsibility, along with teen and adult education. The Deacon will serve as the secretary of the Pastor/Staff and will regularly convene and record staff meetings, guide and direct staff development programs, and regularly work with the congregation in effective communication between the congregation and the church staff and council. The deacon will serve as an ex-officio member of the congregational council with full participation and no vote.

Financial Management of the Congregation

B6.01 In the absence of a treasurer and/or assistant treasurer, the church council will contract with a local certified public accountant or accounting firm to oversee the financial records, payment of bills and managing all aspects of the payroll of all staff employed by the congregation.

B6.02 The council president and/or vice president shall serve as the liaison between the accountant or accounting firm and the congregation when no treasurer and/or assistant treasurer are present.

B6.03 When a treasurer and/or assistant treasurer are appointed by the congregation council, they will serve as the liaison between the accountant or accounting firm and the congregation.

B6.04 All financial responsibilities assigned to the accountant or accounting firm shall be approved by the Congregation Council.