

# Constitution and Bylaws Excelsior (Victoria), MN

## PREAMBLE:

Whereas, the Apostle Paul sets forth in I Cor. 14:40 that all things in the church shall be done "in a fitting and orderly way," and

Whereas, the history of the Christian church of all times shows that certain agreements and regulations are helpful to properly fulfill the purpose and attain the objectives of congregations; and

Whereas, it is the desire of Faith congregation to exercise the greatest possible inclusiveness (under the Scriptural principle of headship) in involving the membership of the congregation to the greatest possible degree in its life and work; therefore it is

Resolved, that we, a congregation of Lutherans of Excelsior (Victoria), Minnesota, do herewith, in the name of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, adopt the following Constitution and Bylaws.

## C o n s t i t u t i o n

### **Article I.**

### **Name**

The name of this congregation shall be Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church of Excelsior, Minnesota.

### **Article II.**

### **Articles of Faith**

Sec. 1. This congregation accepts and confesses all the canonical books of the Old and the New Testaments as the verbally inspired Word of God, and submits to this Word as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life (II Tim. 3:15-17).

Sec. 2. This congregation accepts and confesses all the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 as true statements of Scriptural doctrine. They are:

- A. The three Ecumenical Creeds
  1. The Apostles'
  2. The Nicene
  3. The Athanasian
- B. The six Lutheran Confessions
  1. Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism
  2. Dr. Martin Luther's Large Catechism
  3. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession
  4. The Apology to the Augsburg Confession
  5. The Smalcald Articles
  6. The Formula of Concord

Sec. 3. This congregation accepts and confesses these symbolical books without reservation, not insofar as, but because they are the presentation and explanation of the pure doctrine of the Word of God and a summary of the faith held by the Ev. Lutheran Church.

Sec. 4. Therefore, no doctrine shall be taught or tolerated in this congregation which is in any way at variance with these symbolical books and the Bible.

Sec. 5. All controversies which may arise in this congregation shall be decided and adjusted according to this norm of doctrine and practice.

### **Article III. Purpose and Objectives**

Sec. 1. The continuing purpose of this congregation, as a gathering of Christians, is to serve all people in God's world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of the Bible.

Sec. 2. The primary objectives of this congregation shall be to:

- A. Proclaim the Law and the Gospel, to lead sinners to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ for life and salvation. (II Tim. 4:2; Luke 24:26-48)
- B. Strengthen believers in faith and sanctification through the means of grace. (Rom. 10:17)
- C. Equip believers as disciples, stewards, and witnesses for sharing the Gospel of Jesus with others. (Eph. 4:11-12)

### **Article IV. Synodical Affiliation**

This congregation shall affiliate itself only with a synod that holds to all the truths of God's Word in doctrine and practice, and is bound to the confession of faith as set forth in Article II, if, and as long as, such a synod exists. It presently finds these qualities for affiliation in the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod (WELS).

### **Article V. Church Membership**

Sec. 1. Classification

- A. Baptized members - those who have been baptized into the Christian faith in the name of the Triune God.
- B. Communicant members - those baptized souls who confess the chief parts of Christian doctrine as written in Dr. Luther's Catechism, and who have declared their adherence to all the canonical books of the old and the New Testaments, without qualification, as the only rule and norm of faith and life.
- C. Voting members - those male communicant members (Gen. 2:18; I Cor. 11:3, 8-12) who have declared their agreement with this constitution and have been accepted into the congregation.

Sec. 2. Privileges and Responsibilities

"God is love" (I John 4:8), and his love ever moves him to bless the members of his church with innumerable physical and spiritual gifts (James 1:17). In return for all these undeserved blessings, we can do nothing less than to love him with all our heart (I John 4:19), and to show that love with the works we do. The giving of such expressions we acknowledge as both a privilege and a responsibility, as in the following ways:

- A. Our God has given us his Word, the one thing needful (Luke 10:42), which alone can save our souls and tell us how to live a God-pleasing life (II Tim. 3:15-17). Consequently a member of his church will consider it a distinct privilege and responsibility to:
  - 1. Hear and receive the Word of God diligently
  - 2. Provide and promote opportunities for Christian education
  - 3. Bring up children in the "training and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4)
- B. Our God has given us two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which are means that he uses to bring his grace to us. Consequently, a member of his church:
  - 1. Will have his children baptized early in life
  - 2. Partake frequently of the Lord's Supper if he is one who can properly examine himself (I Cor. 11:28). (Only those in the confessional fellowship of faith are permitted to commune at our altar - Rom. 16:17).
- C. Our God has given us the privilege of being stewards over a certain portion of his estate and of receiving the steward's rich reward of grace (Mat. 25:14-30). Consequently, a member of his church will:
  - 1. Continually remember that all his property, time, and talents really belong to God;
  - 2. Conscientiously determine which part of his money, time and talents shall be devoted to that which the congregation has made its concern, not omitting the work of the synod (I Cor. 16:2);

3. If he is a voting member, regularly attend the voters' meeting and lend the congregation his counsel and aid.
- D. Our God has implanted within us who are Christians the New Man, who desires to live righteously. A member of his church will consequently:
1. Not live in manifest works of the flesh, but lead a Christian life (Gal. 5:19-25);
  2. When he has erred, permit himself to be fraternally admonished and corrected (Mat. 18:15);
  3. Refuse to hold membership in any organization whose teachings and practices conflict with the Word of God (lodges, etc. - John 5:23; 8:31-32).

### Sec. 3. Church Discipline and Excommunication

Christian discipline shall be exercised in this congregation in the spirit of Mat. 18:15-20 toward those who err from the faith or who in other ways have given offense. At all times this shall be done in the spirit of the Gospel, namely, to regain the erring as brethren. Those members who finally must be excommunicated and those who have excluded themselves from the congregation by evading Mat. 18:15-20, lose all rights in the congregation and its property. For excommunication, a unanimous vote of the voters is required.

### Sec. 4. Reinstatement

When an excommunicated member by the grace of God repents of his sin, he is to be reinstated with all the former rights and privileges of this congregation (II Cor. 2:6-8).

## **Article VI. Powers and Rights of the Congregation**

Sec. 1. In all matters of Christian faith and life, the Word of God is supreme (Ps. 119:105).

Sec. 2. In all matters not decided by the Word of God, the congregation shall have the right of decision (Rom. 12:10; 14:19; Eph. 5:21).

Sec. 3. The church council, other elected committees or organizations within the congregation, or any of its elected or appointed officers, shall not have any power or authority beyond that conferred upon them by the voting members of the congregation. The church council will generally act in the name and for the welfare of the congregation. Such actions will normally be reported to the congregation in assembly, and where necessary submitted to the voters for approval.

Sec. 4. No group or society may be organized within the congregation without the approval of the council or the voters, which shall be assured that the aims of such a group are in complete harmony with the congregation's aims before it grants approval (I Cor. 1:10).

## **Article VII. The Ministry**

Sec. 1. The congregation has the exclusive right to call pastors, teachers and staff ministers, and to elect its officers.

Sec. 2. The pastorate of this congregation shall be conferred only upon such ministers or ministerial candidates as unqualifiedly and publicly profess their acceptance of and adherence to Article II of this Constitution; and such acceptance and adherence shall be required of them in the call or vocation extended by the congregation (I Tim. 2:11-13; 3:1-7).

Sec. 3. The teachers called by the congregation shall be such as are in accord with the confessional standard of the congregation (Article II), and are qualified for this field of work (Rom. 12:6-8).

Sec. 4. In case of a vacancy in the position of pastor or teacher or staff minister, the council shall notify the president of the local district of the synod that he may assist in temporarily filling the vacancy and in giving his good counsel in regard to the calling of a new pastor or teacher.

## **Article VIII. Officers of the Congregation**

Sec. 1. The first New Testament congregation at Jerusalem chose men "known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom" to aid the apostles in the administration of its temporal affairs. Likewise shall this congregation choose

officers and committee members with like qualifications to aid the pastor in administering its affairs (I Tim. 3:8-13).

Sec. 2. The listing of the officers and their duties is given in the Bylaws. These officers shall be qualified voting members of the congregation.

Sec. 3. These officers shall be given the respect and esteem of the congregation in the performance of their duties, and they shall conduct themselves in a manner befitting their responsible office (I Tim. 3:8-13).

## **Article IX. Removal from Office**

Sec. 1. If anyone who holds an office in the congregation willfully neglects his duty and upon due admonition does not amend, the congregation has the right and eventually the duty to remove him from office and to elect another in his place (I Tim. 3:8-13).

Sec. 2. Sufficient and urgent causes for removing a pastor, a teacher, or a staff minister are persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of duty, or established inability to perform the duties of his office (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9). In such a case the advice and good counsel of the appropriate district officer shall be sought.

## **Article X. Meetings of the Congregation**

Meetings of this congregation shall be held at such times and in such manner as stated in the Bylaws. Advisory meetings (or assemblies) shall be held periodically to give all members of this congregation opportunity to hear reports, discuss issues brought forward, and offer advisory recommendations to the church council for decision and action in matters pertaining to the welfare of this congregation and the church at large. Special meetings of the voters shall be called at such time and manner as spelled out in the Bylaws. The voters shall have final authority in all matters pertaining to the life and operation of the congregation.

## **Article XI. Separation**

If at any time a separation should occur in this congregation - may God graciously prevent it - the property and all equipment of this congregation shall remain with that portion of the membership which adheres to this constitution, regardless of number.

## **Article XII. Repeals and Alterations**

Sec. 1. Articles II, III, IV, V, VI sec. 1-2, VII sec. 1-3, IX, and XII sec. 1 of this constitution shall be and remain unalterable and irrevocable, in as much as they express clear Scriptural principles.

Sec. 2. Proposals to alter or repeal any alterable or repealable article of this constitution, or to add an article, shall be submitted in writing to the church council and shall be publicly announced on two Sundays immediately preceding a scheduled voters' meeting, and posted in the church during that period.

Sec. 3. Such a proposal shall be discussed in the voters' meeting in which it is presented, and voted on in the next scheduled meeting of the voters.

Sec. 4. A majority vote, consisting of not less than two-thirds of the voting members present at such a constitutional meeting, shall be required to alter or repeal any alterable or repealable article of this constitution, or to add an article thereto.

Excelsior, Minnesota

**BYLAWS**

**As approved by the Voters of Faith Lutheran Church on June 28 2009**

**BYLAW 1. - VOTERS AND THEIR ASSEMBLIES**

*Article 1. Scope*

- A. Any and all Bylaws may be repealed or amended by a majority vote of the voting members present, provided that public notice of this proposed action shall have been given the congregation on at least two Sundays prior to the time of the meeting, and provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing to the church council (herein called the council) for its study and recommendation.
- B. Every two years from the time of approval of these bylaws, a committee of at least three members, approved by the council and chaired by the organization and bylaw coordinator (appointed by the president), shall review the constitution and bylaws and recommend any proposed changes to the council.
- C. Any constitution changes recommended by the council will be forwarded to the synod district constitution committee for ratification.

*Article 2. Regular Meetings*

- A. During the course of the calendar year, when deemed appropriate, general informational meetings shall be scheduled for the membership of this congregation, at which time opportunity will be provided to offer advisory recommendations on various issues faced by the congregation.
- B. The council shall set the date, time and place of all meetings (assemblies). Announcement of the meetings shall be given in print and/or orally on two different dates prior to the meeting.
- C. Special meetings of the voters may be called by the council, the pastor, or upon written request of three voting members. Notice of such meetings must be given not less than five (5) and not more than twenty (20) days beforehand with the purpose stated.
- D. An April meeting of the voters shall be designated as the meeting when annual elections take place and the June meeting of the voters shall be designated as the annual meeting where ministry plans and budgets are approved.
- E. The meetings shall be conducted according to good Christian order. Robert's Rules of Order may be followed for parliamentary procedure.
- F. No one shall bring to any meeting a charge or complaint against any member, or against a called worker unless he has first admonished him in a Christian manner according to Matthew 18:15-20.
- G. Voting rights at official voter's meetings shall be restricted to male communicant members who have reached the age of 18.
- H. The pastor is a member of the voters' assembly. The pastor shall act in an advisory capacity to the council. In addition, the pastor and president are also advisory members of all boards, committees and other organizations of the congregation.
- I. The members present at properly announced meetings or the congregation or voters shall constitute a quorum.
- J. Voting members shall sign, thereby indicating their acceptance, the official copy of the Constitution and Bylaws at the meeting of the congregation in which they were received or as soon as possible thereafter.

## BYLAW 2: - ELECTIONS AND OFFICERS

### Article 1. Scope

Elected Officers of the congregation shall include:

- A. President (Chair of Administration Committee)

The president will act as a trusted liaison between elected officers and the entire congregation. He will conduct effective and orderly congregational and council meetings, offer counsel and assistance as ex-officio members of all boards and committees and lead the officers and the congregation toward the implementation of ministry plans as he oversees the ministry area of administration and looks to ensure its defined ministry plan is carried out.
- B. Vice President (if utilized) -

The vice president will conduct effective and orderly council meetings, coordinate the activities of the officers of the congregation in the administration of the congregation's ministry/financial plan and keep the congregation informed on the various programs, businesses and financial standing of the congregation through consistent, accurate and timely reporting.
- C. Recording Secretary  
The secretary will provide for an official written record of all regular and special meetings of the congregation, voters' assembly and council; and prepare and maintain a record of all written correspondence (as required), directed by the congregation.
- D. Treasurer / Financial Secretary (Chairman of Finance)  
The treasurer / financial secretary is responsible to oversee the reception of all deposits for the congregation and that all debts are promptly paid and supporting invoices filed. He is also to provide written reports to the council, the voters and assigned auditors as requested/required and oversee the reconciliation of all bank statements. Finally, he will oversee the reception of all church offerings ensuring proper accounting as well as maintaining an accurate, up to date list of members and the amounts of their offerings. In order to keep a check and balance on all financial matters, he is required to fulfill these functions through a Finance Committee made up of at least two members, one for accounts receivable and one for accounts payable. Said members will be approved by council and under the direction of the Finance Chair will look to fulfill their ministry plan.
- E. Chairman of the Education Committee  
The Education Committee chairman shall be responsible for the Christian education of adults and youth within the congregation as defined in their ministry plan.
- F. Chairman of the Elder Committee  
The elder committee chairman shall be responsible for the spiritual care of all communicant members and youth and is to represent them to the council in congregational matters and serve as further defined in their ministry plan. The chairman of elders also functions as president if for whatever reason there is an unexpected vacancy in the president's role. Only for interim period.
- G. Chairman of the Outreach Committee  
The outreach committee chairman shall be responsible for the coordination of evangelism and outreach related functions within the congregation as defined in their ministry plan
- H. Chairman of the Property Committee  
The property committee chairman shall be responsible for inspection and maintenance of all congregational property, facilities and maintenance equipment and shall make recommendations

for repairs or upgrades as needed while working with said committee to fulfill all which is defined in their ministry plan.

- I. Chairman of the Stewardship Committee  
The stewardship committee chairman shall be responsible for the provision and promotion of God-pleasing, whole life stewardship within the congregation according to their ministry plan.
- J. Chairman of the Fellowship Committee  
The fellowship committee chairman is responsible for assisting to strengthen the fellowship between congregation members spiritually and socially and represent organized groups in council as outlined in their ministry plan.

The voters' assembly may establish other elected officers, boards or standing committees as may be required for the accomplishment of its purpose.

Elected officers may establish committees and sub-committees, as needed within their function, always ensuring conformance with the principles of headship as noted in 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:12. All individuals on committees or subcommittees must be ratified by the council.

#### *Article 2. Recruitment*

The recruitment committee shall be a subcommittee of the stewardship committee and shall consist of the chairman of said committee, the president and/or vice president, and the pastor. One or more additional members are welcome to join said committee by recommendation and approval of the council.

- A. The chairperson of the recruitment committee will be selected by the Stewardship Committee Chairman annually.
- B. The recruitment committee shall select from the voting membership a slate of qualified, willing candidates of legal age for each vacant office and shall publish the names on at least two Sundays prior to the congregational elections.
- C. No person shall be nominated and presented for election without his knowledge and agreement to serve.
- D. The recruitment committee shall remain in service throughout the year and shall assist all boards and committees with recruiting as required.

#### *Article 3. Elections*

The time of election and installation of officers and vacancy of offices shall be handled as follows:

- A. The election of officers shall be held by ballot at the congregational elections and a majority of the votes cast by the voters' assembly for a particular office shall constitute election.
- B. Any qualified member of the voters' assembly may be nominated, on the date of the election, to any office in addition to the slate of candidates selected by the recruitment committee subject to the conditions of Article 2C.
- C. When a vacancy occurs in any elected office, the president, with recommendations from the recruitment committee, shall make an interim appointment to fill the unexpired term. Such appointments shall be ratified at the next congregational meeting and the vacancy shall be filled by the ratified candidate until the next regular election is held. Duties of all unfilled elected positions are to be the responsibility of the council at large until the position is once again filled.

### **BYLAW 3: - DUTIES, TERMS, AND INSTALLATION OF CHURCH OFFICERS**

#### *Article 1. Duties*

- A. The duties of the officers and committee members are those normally incumbent upon such officers and committee members and which are outlined in detail in their ministry plans for each organization, or such additional duties as the congregation may wish to assign. It is encouraged that a detailed job description is to be given to officers and committee members for their review before their term of duty begins.

- B. Under the direction of the president, the vice president / recording secretary, finance chair, and president have the authority to sign legal documents for the congregation to include deeds, mortgages, notes, leases and the like.
- C. The finance chair is authorized to make budgeted expenditures for the congregation. In addition to the finance chair, agreement from at least one additional elected officer will be procured prior to making any single, budgeted, non-reoccurring expenditure in excess of \$500. Non-budgeted expenditures of any type must first be approved by the Council and, if appropriate, the Voters.

*Article 2. Terms*

- A. For this purpose, any time more than half a full term shall be considered a full term.
- B. The term of office for the president, vice-president / recording secretary, treasurer / financial secretary (finance chair) shall be two years, and each may serve two successive terms.
- C. The term of office for the committee chairmen of education, elders, outreach, property, and stewardship, shall also be two years, and each may serve two successive terms.
- D. The term of all "board members" (if boards are utilized) shall be three years, with at least one member being elected each year if possible. Only a person elected or appointed in midterm shall be eligible to succeed himself. Any elected board member may serve as chairman of the board, (selected annually from within each board), for any or all years of his three year term.

*Article 3. Installation*

The term of all offices shall begin in April, immediately following the elections and run through June 30<sup>th</sup> of their final year in office. The office shall operate as a co-chair, as required, until July 1<sup>st</sup> at which time the vacating leader is formally relieved of office. A public installation of all officers shall take place on a regular Sunday in May.

*Article 4. Removal*

If any officer or committee member willfully neglects his duty, and upon due admonition does not amend, the voters have the right, and eventually the duty, to remove him from office and elect another to take his place, according to 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Bylaw 2, Article 3C. Any actions by any individual regarding issues of this magnitude will be dealt with according to Mathew 18:15-16 and then, if required, brought to the attention, first, of the pastor, then the president and then of the council for recommendation to the voters.

**BYLAW 4: - COUNCIL**

*Article 1. Membership*

The council shall consist of the pastor, president, vice-president / recording secretary (chair and co-chair of the administration committee) and the chairmen of the committees of education, elders, finance, fellowship, outreach, property, and stewardship. In accordance with the law of the state of Minnesota, the council shall control the corporate property. The president shall preside over the council unless a vice president is utilized at which time, at the discretion of the president, the vice president will preside over the council.

*Article 2. Duties of the Council*

- A. The members of the council shall adorn their high office with an honest way of life and be good examples to the congregation (I Tim. 3:8-12). They shall aid the pastor in the spiritual affairs of the church. They shall be accountable for good order in the services and care in love for the poor, sick, widows and orphans (Gal. 6:9-10). The members of the council shall consult together concerning the total spiritual and physical well-being of the congregation, giving due attention also to the work of the Lord in the church at large. They shall implement resolutions and carry out such assignments as are directed to them by the voters.
- B. The council shall appoint an audit committee in August to review the previous year's records of the finance committee. A written report shall be prepared for presentation at the next congregational meeting.
- C. The council shall meet regularly. Special meetings may be called by the pastor, president or vice president / recording secretary. The council shall never convene to transact business without the knowledge of the pastor.

- D. The council is responsible for a presentation and explanation to the congregation, of a proposed ministry and financial plan for the forthcoming fiscal year, prior to the designated voters meeting in June when these plans will be finalized and approved by the voters.

## **BYLAW 5: - BOARDS COMMITTEES AND APPOINTED OFFICES**

*Article 1. Boards(if utilized) shall consist of two elected board members whenever possible with as many elected board members as the voters' assembly may, from time to time, find necessary. The board members will select their own chairman after the annual elections. (Traditionally, boards carry more of an authoritative autonomy within certain areas of ministry in a congregation and are utilized typically in larger settings.)*

*No boards are recommended for formation at this time.*

### **Article 2. Committees**

- A. Administration Committee  
The administration committee shall be chaired by the elected president and co-chaired by the elected vice president / recording secretary. It shall consist of as many members as may be required.
- B. Education Committee  
The education committee shall be chaired by an elected chairman. It shall consist of as many members as may be required.
- C. Elders Committee  
The elders committee shall be chaired by an elected chairman. It shall consist of as many members as may be required.
- D. Fellowship Committee  
The fellowship committee shall be chaired by an elected chairman. It shall consist of as many members as may be required.
- E. Finance Committee  
The finance committee will consist of the elected finance chair (treasurer / financial secretary) and at least two other members, one for accounts receivable and the other for accounts payable to be approved by council, and as many additional members as may be required.
- F. Outreach Committee  
The outreach committee shall be chaired by an elected chairman. It shall consist of as many members as may be required.
- G. Property Committee  
The property committee shall be chaired by an elected chairman. It shall consist of at least three members or as many members as may be required.
- H. Stewardship Committee  
The stewardship committee shall be chaired by an elected chairman. It shall consist of as many members as may be required.

### **Article 3. Appointed Offices**

These offices will be appointed by the president and ratified by the council each year for a term of one year. There is no limit to the number of terms for these positions. Each of the individual appointed and ratified will conduct themselves in accordance with headship principles as written in 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:12.

- A. Organization and Bylaw Committee Chairman (in office annually for the period of review only).  
B. Long Range Planning Committee Chairman  
C. Ministry Planning Coordinator (in office annually for the period of plan development only).  
D. Called Worker Care Committee Chairman

### **Article 4. Committee Membership**

- A. The Council shall ratify all members on all committees.  
B. No board or committee shall be formed or operate without first being proposed to the council.  
C. Sub-committees may be formed and approved by the owner of the board or committee.

- D. Each committee or sub-committee must have representation on the council either directly or through an existing elected officer.

**BYLAW 6: - RECEPTION, TRANSFER, RELEASE, REMOVAL, AND SUSPENSION OF MEMBERSHIP**  
**As unanimously approved by the Voters of Faith Lutheran Church on 10/23/05**

*Article 1. Reception into Membership*

- A. Persons who wish to be received into membership in this congregation other than through the Rite of Confirmation or the Sacrament of Holy Baptism shall bring their request to the attention of the pastor or council. The council shall honor the request when accompanied by a letter of transfer or other recommendation from a sister congregation, or when qualified for membership as specified in Article V of the Constitution have been met. Such action of the council shall be reported to the congregation and approved by the voters' assembly.
- B. Since reception into membership signifies acceptance of and submission to the Constitution and these Bylaws, each individual or family shall be offered a copy prior to reception so that they may become familiar with its provisions.
- C. In special circumstances such as a deathbed confession, membership (Art. V Sec. I) may be granted immediately by the pastor (LK 23:32-43). Following the matter, the membership issue is to be brought to the council and the voters' assembly for ratification.

*Article 2. Transfer of Membership*

- A. Communicant members desiring transfer to a sister congregation shall present their request for transfer through a pastor, to whom authorization is granted to issue such transfers.
- B. All transfers of membership shall be recommended by a pastor and the committee of elders and the church council and be approved by the voters' assembly in a subsequent meeting.
- C. Transfer of membership shall apply only to those who desire a membership in a congregation which is in agreement in doctrine and practice as set forth in the constitution of this congregation.

*Article 3. Release from Membership*

Release from membership shall apply to all cases of communicant members joining another church outside our fellowship, moving out of the area in such a way that contact is no longer possible, or requesting a release from membership which is not in keeping with the Scriptures but does not deny the faith. Upon verification of a pastor and the committee of elders and the church council, they shall be considered to have terminated their membership with this congregation and their names shall be stricken from the membership list upon acceptance of said report and vote by the voters' assembly.

*Article 4. Removal from Membership*

Removal from membership shall apply to all communicant members who are plainly impenitent according to Matthew 18 (See Constitution Article V Section 3). Their termination of membership will be recommended to the voters through council via the pastor, but their removal shall not be voted upon in that meeting, unless the person under question has requested removal. If there is a removal by request, a unanimous vote is not required. A recommendation for removal apart from request of the member requires the meeting to reconvene on a later date which is within reason and a unanimous vote of the voters for approval.

*Article 5. Suspension of Membership*

- A. Suspension of membership applies to all cases where offense could be given by a communicant member's exercise of membership privileges – those who would not be in good standing due to apparent public profession of false doctrine or apparent public display of ungodly living. Such members may be suspended from membership and its privileges by the private announcement of the pastor to the individual communicant member under question.
- B. If no attempt on the part of the communicant member is made to reconcile, then the pastor is obligated to announce this to the committee of elders and to council and pursue other steps of church discipline that the communicant member may once again resume good standing before the church and God.

*Article 6. Notice*

In all situations involving the transfer out, release, or removal from membership, written notice to the member(s) shall be given whenever possible. Members transferred, released, removed, or suspended

relinquish all rights in this congregation.

*Article 7. Approval of membership changes*

A. Reception, Transfer, Release, or Suspension

Any suggested changes in membership through Reception, Transfer, Release, or Suspension as defined above, will be brought to the council for their vote in the form of a recommended motion from the pastor and the elders. Then, at the next scheduled meeting of the voters, subject changes in membership that have been approved by the council will be submitted to the voters for final approval.

B. Removal (See Constitution Article V Section 3 of the Constitution)

Any suggested changes in membership involving removal will be brought to the council for review by the pastor and elders and, if confirmed, will then be forwarded to the voters at their next scheduled meeting in the form of a motion for removal. This motion will come from the council at large through the pastor. This motion cannot be voted on within the same meeting it is proposed, unless removal has been requested by the individual. In such a case, unanimous vote isn't necessary. If a removal is not by request of said individual, the voters must reconvene within a reasonable time on a later date.

ii. Only the voters have the capability to vote on a motion for removal of a member.

iii. Motions in favor of removal (Constitution Article V Section 3) must pass unanimously because the Lord calls his Church to be entirely united as she lovingly makes use of the binding key (MT 18). If the motion does not pass unanimously, those who object are asked assist the pastor and elders in pursuing the matter to win their straying brother or sister back. If the person under discussion still does not repent a special voters meeting is to be called in the hopes that a unanimous vote for removal will be cast out of love for the person under discussion and to uphold Jesus' command (MT 18). If the vote is still not unanimous, the cycle must repeat. Those who abstain from voting in this decision can only do so in such a way that they agree to support the outcome of the vote.

*Article 8. Review*

The pastors and elders shall review the membership list at least semi-annually and take any necessary action.