

**CONSTITUTION**  
**of**  
**GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**OF HERNANDO, FLORIDA**

Includes updates to the Model Constitution of the ELCA that were approved by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.

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### **\*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**

- Cl.01.** The name of this congregation shall be Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Hernando, Inc.
- Cl.02.** For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws and continuing resolutions, the congregation of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Hernando, Inc. is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."
- Cl.11.** This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Florida.
- Cl.12.** The seal of this congregation presents the name and address of this congregation in a circle with the original year of incorporation. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) emblem shall be placed in the center.

### **Chapter 2.**

#### **CONFESSION OF FAITH**

- \*C2.01.** This congregation confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- \*C2.02.** This congregation confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.
  - a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.
  - b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
  - c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.
- \*C2.03.** This congregation accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.
- \*C2.04.** This congregation accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this congregation.
- \*C2.05.** This congregation accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
- \*C2.06.** This congregation accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.

- \*C2.07.** This congregation confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

### **Chapter 3.**

#### **NATURE OF THE CHURCH**

- \*C3.01.** All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.
- \*C3.02.** This church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world.
- \*C3.03.** 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. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.
- \*C3.04.** This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in The Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God's mission in the world.
- \*C3.05.** The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or "this church") as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three expressions: congregations, synods and the churchwide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.

### **Chapter 4.**

#### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

- \*C4.01.** The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.
- \*C4.02.** To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:
- a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
  - b. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
  - c. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
  - d. Serve in response to God's dignity, justice needs, caring for the sick

and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.

- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
- f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

**\*C4.03.** To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:

- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
- b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
- c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.
- d. Teach the Word of God.
- e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
- f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
- g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for this congregation's ministry and the ministry of the other expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.

**\*C4.04.** This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Congregation 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 Congregation Committees.]

**\*C4.05.** This congregation shall adopt and periodically review a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

**C4.05.01 Mission Statement**

**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church** exists to welcome all people to faith; equip all people with a faith that works in real life; and send us in service into the world in Jesus' name.

**C4.05.02 Vision Statement**

**Good Shepherd Lutheran Congregation** is a visible assembly of ordinary people, called by the living God, for the purpose of communicating the Gospel. In response to God's gift in Jesus Christ, we choose to live by the Gospel, to live by faith, to nurture our own people, and to direct ourselves outward to the human community. Mindful of our God given potential, we will strive to give a greater proportion of ourselves and our resources to the life and work of this ministry and

to Christ's Church. As a community of stewards, we also believe that God has entrusted us to take care of our lives and all that surrounds us.

We are committed to:

- a. Worship as a dynamic experience of the presence of God through Word, Sacrament, Music and Christian community;
- b. Welcome as an invitation to everyone to meet Jesus Christ no matter where they are on the spiritual journey of life;
- c. Empowerment as enabling individuals, couples and families to discover the power of the Holy Spirit through faith active in real life; and
- d. Growth as the opportunity to increase each person's confidence and joy in Jesus Christ through prayer, Bible Study and through active service in our church, community and world.

**\*C4.06.** References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church - congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization – as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God's mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

## **Chapter 5.**

### **POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

**\*C5.01.** The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.

**\*C5.02.** The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregation Meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.

**\*C5.03.** Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregation Council or other organizational units in this congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by this congregation. This congregation is authorized to:

- a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- c. call a minister of Word and Service;
- d. terminate the call of a minister of Word and Service in conformity with the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
- e. adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in Chapter 16, amendments to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 17, and continuing resolutions, as provided in Chapter 18;
- f. approve the annual budget;
- g. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
- h. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
- i. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
- j. elect its Congregation Council and Officers and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution and the bylaws; and
- k. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in

America as provided in Chapter 6.

- \*C5.04.** This congregation or the Congregation Council shall elect from among the voting members of the congregation laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the Florida-Bahamas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- C5.05.** This congregation shall have a mission endowment fund that will operate as specified in this congregation's bylaws. The purpose of the mission endowment fund is to provide for mission work beyond the operational budget of this congregation.

## **Chapter 6.**

### **CHURCH AFFILIATION**

- \*C6.01.** This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the Florida-Bahamas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- \*C6.02.** This congregation accepts the Confession of Faith and agrees to the purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and shall act in accordance with them.
- \*C6.03.** This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which:
  - a. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
  - b. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the bishop of the synod. These special circumstances are limited either to calling a candidate approved for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or to contracting for pastoral services with a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion.
  - d. This congregation agrees to consider ministers of Word and Service for call to other staff positions in this congregation according to the procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - e. This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution with the synod for review to ascertain that all its provisions are in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and with the constitution of the synod.
- \*C6.04.** Affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is

terminated as follows:

- a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.
- b. This congregation ceases to exist.
- c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or in accordance with provision 9.23. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- d. The Florida Bahamas Synod takes charge and control of the property of this congregation to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of the synod pursuant to †S13.24. of the synod constitution. This congregation shall have the right to appeal the decision to the next Synod Assembly.
- e. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in \*C6.05.

**\*C6.05.** This congregation may terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the following procedure:

- a. A resolution indicating the intent to terminate its relationship must be adopted at two legally called and conducted special meetings of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at each meeting. The first such meeting may be held no sooner than 30 days after written notice of the meeting is received by the bishop of the synod, during which time this congregation shall consult with the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any. The times and manner of the consultation shall be determined by the bishop in consultation with the Congregation Council. Unless the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are voting members of this congregation, they shall have voice but not vote at the first meeting.
- b. Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon at the first meeting, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall send copies of the resolution and certification to voting members of this congregation.
- c. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the first meeting, the bishop of the synod and this congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph a. above, during a period of at least 90 days after receipt by the bishop of the attestation and certification as specified in paragraph b. above.
- d. If this congregation, after such consultation, is still considering termination of its relationship with this church, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present. Notice of the second meeting shall be sent to all voting members and to the bishop at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Unless the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are voting members of this congregation, they shall have voice but not vote at the second meeting.
- e. Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the second special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall send copies of the

resolution and certification to the voting members of the congregation. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the second meeting, the relationship between the congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to Synod Council approval as required by paragraphs f. and g. below.

- f. Unless this notification to the bishop also certifies that this congregation has voted to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, this congregation shall be deemed an independent or non-Lutheran church, in which case \*C7.04. shall apply.
- g. This congregation shall abide by these covenants by and among the three expressions of this church:
  - 1) Congregations seeking to terminate their relationship with this church which fail or refuse to comply with each of the foregoing provisions in \*C6.05. shall be required to receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.
  - 2) Congregations which had been members of the Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in \*C6.05., to receive synod approval before terminating their membership in this church.
  - 3) Congregations established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in \*C6.05., to satisfy all financial obligations to this church and receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.
- h. If this congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at this congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above or fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at this congregation's second meeting as specified in paragraph d. above, another attempt to consider termination of the relationship with this church must follow all requirements of \*C6.05. and may begin no sooner than six months after the meeting at which the two-thirds vote was not achieved.

**\*C6.06.** If this congregation considers relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is taken.

**\*C6.07.** If this congregation considers developing an additional site to be used regularly for worship, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action.

## **Chapter 7.**

### **PROPERTY OWNERSHIP**

**\*C7.01.** If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the Florida-Bahamas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**\*C7.02.** If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline or pursuant to 9.23. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

- \*C7.03. If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to relate to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation, provided the process for termination of relationship in \*C6.05. has been followed. Before this congregation takes action to relate to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Florida-Bahamas Synod.
- \*C7.04. If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body and have followed the process for termination of relationship in \*C6.05., title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with this congregation by the process established by the synod, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of this congregation. If the Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to continue as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In neither case does title to this congregation's property transfer to the synod.
- \*C7.05. Notwithstanding the provisions of \*C7.02. and \*C7.03. above, where this congregation has received property from the synod pursuant to a deed or other instrument containing restrictions under provision 9.71.a. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, this congregation accepts such restrictions and:
- a. Shall not transfer, encumber, mortgage, or in any way burden or impair any right, title, or interest in the property without prior approval of the Synod Council.
  - b. Shall, upon written demand by the Synod Council, pursuant to †S13.23. of the constitution of the Florida-Bahamas Synod re-convey and transfer all right, title, and interest in the property to the synod.

## Chapter 8. MEMBERSHIP

- \*C8.01. Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of this of this congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.
- \*C8.02. Members shall be classified as follows:
- a. **Baptized** members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.
  - b. **Confirmed** members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.
  - c. **Voting** members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this

congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of this congregation as well as the other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws. They shall not have voted as a seasonal member of another congregation of this church in the previous two calendar months.

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. These individuals have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights or other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

e. **Seasonal** members are voting members of other congregations of this church who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation, including exercising limited voting rights in this congregation. The Congregation Council may grant seasonal membership to such persons provided that this congregation is a member of a synod where the Synod Council has approved seasonal member voting on its territory. Such seasonal members shall have all the privileges and duties of voting members except that:

- 1) they shall not be eligible for elected office in, or for membership on the Congregation Council or on a call committee of, this congregation;
- 2) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the call or termination of call of any minister of this congregation;
- 3) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the affiliation of this congregation with this church;
- 4) they shall not be eligible to serve as voting members from this congregation of the Synod Assembly or the Churchwide Assembly;
- 5) they shall not, even if otherwise permitted by this congregation, vote by proxy or by absentee ballot; and
- 6) they shall not, within any two calendar month period, exercise voting rights in this congregation and in the congregation where they remain voting members.

**\*C8.03.** All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Congregation Council.

**\*C8.04.** It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregation to:

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

**\*C8.05.** Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:

- a. death;
- b. resignation;
- c. transfer or release;
- d. disciplinary action in accordance with Chapter 20 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or
- e. removal from the roll due to inactivity in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

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

## **Chapter 9.**

### **ROSTERED MINISTER**

- \*C9.01. Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation, by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by the Congregation Council to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- \*C9.02. This congregation may call as a pastor only;
  - a. a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or
  - b. a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop.
- \*C9.03. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
  - a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
    - 1) preach the Word;
    - 2) administer the sacraments;
    - 3) conduct public worship;
    - 4) provide pastoral care;
    - 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
    - 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
    - 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; and
    - 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.
  - b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
    - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
    - 2) relate to all schools and organizations of this congregation;
    - 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council; and

- 4) with the council, administer discipline;-
- 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and of the Florida-Bahamas Synod; and
- 6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

**\*C9.04.** The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.

**\*C9.05.** The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and this congregation shall be as follows:

- a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by the pastor's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of 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, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
  - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions;
  - 4) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the pastor;
  - 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;
  - 6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church;
  - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;
  - 8) dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
  - 9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- b. When allegations of disability or incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
  - 1) the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
  - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the

bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by this congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, this congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

**\*C9.06.** At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor may be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.

**\*C9.07.** During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in this congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any rostered minister providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.

**\*C9.08.** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting.

- \*C9.09.** When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- \*C9.11.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from \*C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of \*C9.05.a.
- \*C9.12.** The pastor of this congregation:
- a. shall keep accurate records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from this congregation;
  - b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod; and
  - c. shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- \*C9.13.** The pastor(s) shall submit a report of ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- \*C9.14.** The records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of this congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in the secretary's hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another call or approval of a request for change in roster status.
- \*C9.15.** Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synod bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between this congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synod bishop and approved by this congregation.
- \*C9.21.** Authority to call a deacon shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by the Congregation Council to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- \*C9.22.** This congregation may call as a deacon only:
- a. a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or
  - b. a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop.
- \*C9.23.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:
- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
  - b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving

- c. particular attention to the suffering places in God's world; Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;
- d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
- e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
- f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
- g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
- h. Share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
- i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

**\*C9.24.** The specific duties of the deacon, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the deacon shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.

**\*C9.25.** The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Service and this congregation shall be as follows:

- a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a deacon, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by the deacon's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:
  - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
  - 2) resignation of the deacon, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
  - 3) inability to conduct the ministry of Word and Service effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions;
  - 4) inability to conduct the office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the deacon;
  - 5) suspension of the deacon through discipline for more than three months;
  - 6) resignation or removal of the deacon from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church;
  - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;
  - 8) dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
  - 9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- b. When allegations of disability or incapacity of the deacon under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the office of minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention

of the bishop of this synod,

- 1) the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
  - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the deacon's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the deacon to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the deacon and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the deacon's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by this congregation and by the deacon, if appropriate. If the deacon and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the deacon's call, this congregation may dismiss the deacon only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

**\*C9.26.** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former deacon before calling a successor. A deacon shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry

setting.

- \*C9.27. When a deacon is called to serve in company with another rostered minister or other rostered ministers, the privileges and responsibilities of each rostered minister shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the rostered ministers, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- \*C9.28. With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from \*C9.25.a. and call a deacon for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the deacon and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of \*C9.25.a.
- \*C9.29. The deacon shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the deacon shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- \*C9.31. The deacon(s) shall submit a report of ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

## **Chapter 10**

### **CONGREGATION MEETING**

- C10.01. This congregation shall have at least one regular meeting per year. The regular meeting(s) of the congregation shall be held at the time(s) specified in the bylaws. Consistent with the laws of the State of Florida, the bylaws shall designate one regular meeting per year as the annual meeting of this congregation.
- C10.01.01 The semi-annual Congregational meeting shall be held to elect Congregation Council members and officers. The January meeting shall review all financial and organizational reports, taking appropriate action.
- C10.02. A special Congregational Meeting may be called by the pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of this congregation upon the written request of thirty three percent of the voting members. The president of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synod bishop. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held, and no other business shall be transacted.
- C10.03. Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or paid, sent to the last known address of such members shall be sufficient. Notice of all meetings\_ may be provided electronically at least 10 days in advance.
- C10.04. Fifteen Percent of voting members shall constitute a quorum
- C10.05. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted
- C10.06. All actions approved by this congregation shall be by majority vote of those

voting members present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution or by state law.

**C10.07.** The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*, Newly Revised shall govern the organization in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution and its Bylaws and any special rules of order the organization may adopt.

**C10.08.** This congregation may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

**C10.09.** “*Ex officio*” as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited.

## **Chapter 11. OFFICERS**

**C11.01.** The officers of this congregation shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.

a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.

b. The officers shall be voting members of this congregation.

c. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council and except for the Treasurer, shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.

### **C11.01.01. PRESIDENT**

a. The President shall preside at all meetings of this congregation and the Congregation Council.

b. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Executive Committee.

c. The President shall be an ex officio member of all standing and special committees.

d. The President shall ensure that all Congregation Council members are notified of all Congregation Council meetings as set forth in C12.11.

e. The President shall ensure that all members of this congregation are notified of all Congregational Meetings as set forth in C10.03

### **C11.01.02. VICE-PRESIDENT**

a. The Vice-president shall assume the duties of the President in the absence of the President.

b. The Vice-president shall serve as a member of the Executive Committee.

c. The Vice-president shall assume such other duties as may be assigned by the President.

### **C11.01.03. SECRETARY**

a. The Secretary shall record the proceedings of all Congregational Meetings, Congregation Council meetings and Executive Committee meetings.

b. The Secretary shall be responsible for the distribution of such records as set forth in the continuing resolutions.

c. The Secretary shall serve as a member of the Executive Committee.

- d. The Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining a record of all official correspondence of this congregation.
- e. The Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining a record of all official documents of this congregation and assure a timely review of the same.

**C11.01.04. TREASURER**

- a. The Treasurer shall maintain the records of financial account of this congregation.
- b. The Treasurer shall disburse congregational funds to pay all standing bills\_ and those disbursements approved by the Congregation Council
- c. The Treasurer shall make written report of all transactions to the Congregation Council monthly, and to this congregation at its annual meeting.
- d. The Treasurer shall serve as a member of the Executive Committee.

**C11.02.** The Congregation shall elect by written ballot the President, Vice President and Secretary. The offices of Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be appointed by the Congregation Council.

**C11.02.01 FINANCIAL SECRETARY**

- a. The Financial Secretary shall maintain the financial records for all incoming monies of this congregation.

**C11.02.02 TERM LIMITS OF OFFICERS**

The term of the President, Vice-President and Secretary shall be for one year. These officers may be reelected, but not to exceed four consecutive terms. The Treasurer and Financial Secretary, as appointed officers shall serve at the pleasure of the Congregation Council.

**C11.02.02B** To become a Council Executive Board member of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Hernando, Florida, a candidate must be a Council member of the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church for at least one year.

**C11.02.03** All terms shall begin January 1 and end December 31.

**C11.03.** No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. No elected officer shall be eligible to serve more than four consecutive years in the same office.

See Bylaws C11.02.02

**C11.03.01** An office shall be declared vacant if the officer:

- a. ceases to be a voting member of this congregation;
- b. resigns from office;
- c. is absent from two successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause; or
- d. fails to fulfill the duties of the office as specified in the Bylaws. All official documents and historical records of the congregation shall remain in the custody of the Congregation Council.

**Chapter 12.**

**CONGREGATION COUNCIL**

**C12.01.** The voting membership of this Congregation Council shall consist of the Pastor(s), the officers of this congregation and not more than nine or fewer than

five general council members. The Treasurer shall have voice but no vote. Any voting member of this 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, this congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.

**C12.02.** The members of the Congregation Council except the Pastor(s) Deacon(s) and Treasurer shall be elected at a legally called meeting of this congregation during the month of October. The Treasurer shall be appointed by majority of the Congregation Council at its January meeting. The general council members' term of office shall be for two years, with the term of office beginning on January 1 and ending December 31. General council members shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms, consecutively. The term of office for the Treasurer shall be for one year, without limits of term. Newly elected Congregation Council members may be installed at a Sunday worship service prior *to* the date they assume office.

**C12.03.** Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next congregation meeting. Individuals who have served less than one-half of a regular term shall be eligible for nomination and possible election to a full two-year term.

**C12.04.** 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 and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church In America. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:

- a. To lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals;
- b. To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service and support;
- c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission;
- d. To maintain supportive relationships with the Pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment;
- e. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons;
- f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding;
- g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the Pastor;
- h. To emphasize support of the synod and churchwide units of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in

America;

- i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
- j. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
- k. To maintain all official documents and historical records of the congregation;
- l. shall seek persons to serve on all standing and special committees.

**C12.04.01** Congregation Council members are expected to attend worship on a regular basis and to attend congregational events.

**C12.05.** The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation, and

- a. shall be the board of directors 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 Florida, except as otherwise provided herein.
- b. 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 Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to 5% of anticipated annual receipts for items not included in the budget.
- d. 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 share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in collaboration with the synod and churchwide organization.
- e. shall ascertain 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 mission support monies to the synod.
- f. shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.

**C12.06.** The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution, its bylaws and the continuing resolutions are carried out.

**C12.07.** The Congregation Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.

**C12.08.** The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the staff of this congregation and independent contractors. Nothing in this provision shall be deemed to affect this congregation's responsibility for the call, terms of call, or termination of call of any employees who are on a roster of this church.

**C12.09.** The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.

**C12.11.** The Congregation 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.

**C12.12.** 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, following consultation with the synod bishop.

**C12.13** The Congregation Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

### **Chapter 13.**

#### **CONGREGATION COMMITTEES**

**C13.01.** The officers of this congregation and the Pastor shall constitute the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall have responsibilities as set forth in the bylaws C13.01.02, 03, 04, 05.

**C13.01.01.** The Executive Committee shall set the agenda for all meetings of this congregation and shall receive and validate written requests for Special Congregation Meetings when called by one-third of the voting membership.

**C13.01.02.** The Executive Committee shall conduct an annual review to ensure that the provisions of the constitution, its bylaws and continuing resolutions are carried out, and shall make recommendations for changes as warranted.

**C13.01.03.** The Executive Committee shall describe and periodically review the duties of all church staff positions and report its findings to the Congregation Council.

**C13.01.04.** The Executive Committee shall have general supervision of the affairs of the Congregation Council between business meetings, will fix the hours and places of meeting and perform other duties as are specified in the Bylaws.

**C13.01.05.** The Executive Committee shall be responsible for developing a quick reaction plan or response to a sudden unexpected emergency.

**C13.02.** A Nominating Committee of six voting members of this congregation representing diversity of the congregation, of whom two, if possible, shall be outgoing members of the Congregation Council, shall be elected at the semi-annual meeting for a term of one year.

**C13.02.01.** The Nominating Committee shall present one or more nominees for each vacancy on the Congregation Council, including President, Vice-president, Secretary and the succeeding nominating committee. Additional nominations can be made from the floor.

- C13.02.01A.** To become a member of the Congregation Council of Good Shepherd Lutheran of Hernando, Florida, a candidate must have been a full member of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church for at least one year.
- C13.03.** An Audit Committee of two voting members shall be appointed by the Congregation Council. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council. (See Bylaws C13.03.01, .02 and .03)
- C13.03.01.** No preparer of congregational financial records or Congregation Council member may be a member of the Audit Committee.
- C13.03.02.** The Audit Committee shall conduct an audit annually during the first quarter of each year and prepare their audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards.
- C13.03.03.** The Audit Committee shall report in writing its findings to the Congregation Council.
- C13.04.** A Mutual Ministry Committee of six members shall be appointed jointly by the President (Vice President) and the Pastor. Term of office shall be two years, with three members to be appointed each successive year. With approval of the Pastor and the President, members may be reappointed for one additional two year term. Committee members will hold no other office in the congregation during their term nor be a member of the Congregation Council or serve as Chairperson of a standing committee during their term. (See Bylaw 13.07.01.e)
- C13.05.** When a vacancy occurs in a position for which this congregation calls a rostered minister, 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 rostered minister. See Bylaws C13.05.01.02.
- C13.05.01** No member of the Congregation Council shall serve on the Call Committee.
- C13.05.02.** The Call Committee shall follow the procedures established by the Florida-Bahamas Synod for the calling of a Pastor.
- C13.06.** Finance Committee: This committee shall consist of five members selected by the Congregation Council. The Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be members ex-officio. (See Bylaw C13.06.01)
- C13.06.01.** The Finance Committee shall:
- a. request all external and internal organizations and standing committees to submit their budget requests by the end of September;
  - b. During the months of October and November, prepare a proposed budget and submit it to Congregation Council by December.
  - c. Assist the Audit Committee by providing them the necessary documents for the audit.
- C13.07.** Other committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council. Duties of committees of this congregation shall be specified in the Bylaws. (See Bylaw C13.08.01)
- C13.07.01.** All standing committees of this Congregation, with the exception of the Mutual Ministry and Call Committees, shall be created by decision of the Congregation

Council. These committees shall fulfill the mission and ministry of this congregation as set forth by the Mission Statement and continuing resolutions as adopted by the Congregation Council.

**a. Christian Education**

The Committee on Christian Education is responsible for offering opportunities to learn the Word of God and for encouraging use of teaching and worship materials approved by the church. The committee should encourage adult bible study, doctrinal education and the growth of children and youth programs within the church, including Sunday School classes, Vacation Bible School and youth activities. In addition, the Good Shepherd Committee on Christian Education is responsible for staffing and operating the church library according to the guidelines approved by the Congregation Council. The Committee on Christian Education should also foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations and the community at large.

**b. Outreach Committee**

The Outreach Committee seeks to bring those who do not know Jesus Christ into a relationship with Him, and into the family of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. In addition, the Outreach Committee will welcome visitors to our worship services and fellowship hour and ensure that such visitors are contacted at a later date, thanked for their visit, and invited to worship with us again. The committee will assist those who choose to become members of Good Shepherd to navigate their transition into membership and help integrate new members into a full and rich participation in the life and witness of the congregation.

**c. Fellowship Committee**

The function of the Fellowship Committee is to promote fellowship between the members of the congregation through, or by means of, the coffee hour after the morning church services; dinners; soup and sandwiches during the Lenten and Advent seasons; and other related functions. It also takes care of keeping the kitchen organized and supplied for special events. There is one subcommittee: Bereavement.

**d. Property Committee**

The Property Committee shall see to the proper maintenance and protection of all property of the congregation, and shall take care that the same is kept in good repair.

**e. Mutual Ministry**

The Mutual Ministry Committee of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church exists to affirm and strengthen the mission of the congregation and the ministry of our pastor. The Committee acts as a listening post for both pastor and members to communicate attitudes, expectations and concerns, and it serves as a group for discussing ideas for possible inclusion in the activities. The Committee also conducts a review and affirmation of the Pastor's work.

**f. Social Ministry**

The purpose of the Social Ministry Committee shall be to extend Christian compassion and helpfulness to persons of all ages in need of aid in body or soul. It shall strive to enlist in these efforts as many as possible of the

individual members and organizations of the congregation. This committee shall further have the duty to study social conditions, primarily in the local community, in order to bring healing light of Christian truth and love to bear upon critical problems through thoughtful Christian discussion of facts and issues. It shall lay before the Congregation Council proposals for action issuing from such study and discussion.

**g. Stewardship**

The Stewardship Committee shall seek to promote the expression of Christian faith in daily living and the growth of each congregation member in the faith practice of generosity in response to God, the ultimate giver of all things. This response includes but is not limited to the return of the time, abilities and material blessings God has given, to further the work of the church and care for the earth and all of its inhabitants. The Stewardship Committee shall also be responsible for coordinating the congregation's annual financial response.

**h. Worship and Music**

The Worship and Music Committee is the umbrella for the following subcommittees: Assisting Ministers, Altar Guild, CD Ministry, Ushers and Choir. This committee will see to it that the church services are in accordance with the worship materials of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and are conducted properly and regularly. The committee may suggest additional or alternate liturgies as well as oversee the selection of music for the choir appropriate to the church year, with the approval of the Pastor.

**i. Technology Committee**

The Technology Committee shall oversee such areas as computing, networking, telephony, and audiovisual support and will oversee the routine operation, maintenance and updating of such equipment. The Chairperson of this committee shall be appointed by the Congregation Council. The term for the Chairperson will be one year with no limit for reappointment. The Chairperson will be responsible for recruiting and training of other members of the committee. The Congregation Council will appoint a member of the Congregation Council as liaison to the committee.

**j. Enduring Gifts**

**A. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Enduring Gifts is to further the work of our Lord, Jesus Christ, by supporting individuals or organization for religious, charitable or educational activities by using income from Enduring Gifts. To this end, Enduring Gifts will receive gifts according to these Bylaws and expend the income exclusively for religious, charitable or educational purposes.-None of the Enduring Gifts funds or income derived from the Enduring Gifts shall be used for the Church activities normally expected to be supported by the regular general operating budget, with the exception of those outlined in section D, below, of this bylaw.-

**B. THE ENDURING GIFTS COMMITTEE**

1. Membership: The Enduring Gifts committee shall consist of voting members of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Hernando,

Florida.

2. Liability: Members of the Enduring Gifts committee shall not be liable for any losses which may be incurred upon the investments of the assets of the Enduring Gifts fund. All members of the Enduring Gifts committee shall refrain from directing the Enduring Gifts funds to personal interests/investments.
3. Committee Operation:
  - a. The Committee shall meet at least quarterly or as needed.
  - b. The Committee shall report to the Congregation Council on all Enduring Gifts meetings via the Council Liaison and supply meeting minutes as per normal.
  - c. The Committee will promote the Enduring Gifts by informing the congregation of the benefits of the Enduring Gifts and the expenditures of the Enduring Gifts funds thus promoting the congregation to participate in the Enduring Gifts.

**C. PRINCIPAL AND INCOME:** The principal shall remain, at a minimum, at \$40,000. If the principal amount falls below the \$40,000 baseline, expenditures will be suspended unless there is a person or organization that would suffer undo hardships as deemed by the Enduring Gifts committee.

**D. DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME:** The distribution shall be made in the fashion:

1. At least ten percent (10%) reinvested in the principal of the Enduring Gifts fund.
2. Up to thirty percent (30%) to enhance the Mission of the ELCA and this Church for leadership, educational ministries and missionary (i.e. Christian Ed.).
3. Up to twenty percent (20%) for outreach into the local community or synod such as, but not limited to, organizations or agencies relevant to this congregation (i.e. Outreach).
4. Up to twenty-five percent (25%) to enhance the worship experience of this Church (i.e. Worship and Music).
5. Up to fifteen percent (15%) for repairs of the Church's physical structure, payment of insurance deductibles or enhancement of the aesthetics of the church (interior or exterior). (i.e. Building and property or Technology).
6. Funds not distributed as outlined above are to be reinvested into the Enduring Gifts fund.

**E. DISTRIBUTION OF PRINCIPAL**

If there comes a time when Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Hernando, Florida is in such dire financial difficulties that the future existence of the congregation is at stake, the Enduring Gifts Committee may, upon simple majority vote, recommend the use of

the fund principal to the congregation. The congregation may use the fund principal only upon a four fifths (4/5) vote at a legally called and announced special meeting called specifically for this purpose

**G. DISPOSITION OR TRANSFER OF THE FUND**

In the event that Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Hernando, Florida, ceases to exist, either through merger or dissolution, the disposition or transfer of the Enduring Gifts\_fund shall be at the discretion of the congregation, or Congregation Council, in accordance with the adopted Constitution and Bylaws, and in consultation with the Bishop of the Synod and the ELCA.

**C13.08.** The [senior] pastor of this congregation shall be ex officio a member of all committees and boards of this congregation. [The president [vice president] of this congregation shall be ex officio member of all committees and boards of this congregation, except the Nominating Committee.]

**Chapter 14.**

**ORGANIZATONS WITHIN THIS CONGREGATION**

**C14.01.** All organizations within this congregation shall exist to aid it in ministering to the members of this congregation and to all persons who can be reached with the Gospel of Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of this congregation's life, the organizations are subject to its oversight and direction. This congregation, at its meeting, shall determine their policies, guide their activities, and receive reports concerning their membership, work and finances.

**C14.02.** Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council.

**Chapter 15**

**DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION.**

\* **C15.01.** Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith, willful or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, continual and intentional interference with the ministry of this congregation, or willful and repeated harassment or defamation of member(s) of this congregation is sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation and repentance will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps, as necessary:

- a). private counsel and admonition by the pastor,
- b). censure and admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, c). written referral of the matter by the Congregation Council to the vice president  
of the synod, who will refer it to a consultation panel drawn from the Consultation Committee of the synod, and
- d). written referral of the matter by the consultation panel to the Committee on Discipline of the synod. If, for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by a. and b. hereof, those steps may be performed by

another pastor chosen by the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council.

- \*C15.02.** The process for discipline of a member of this congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. If the counseling, censure, and admonitions pursuant to \*C15.01. do not result in repentance and amendment of life, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing may be prepared by the Congregation Council, signed, and submitted to the vice president of the synod. The vice president shall select from the synod's Consultation Committee a panel of five members (three laypersons and two rostered ministers). A copy of the written charges shall be provided to the consultation panel and the accused member(s). The consultation panel, after requesting a written reply to the charges from the accused member(s), shall consider the matter and seek a resolution by means of investigation, consultation, mediation, or whatever other means may seem appropriate. The panel's efforts to reach a mutually agreeable resolution shall continue for no more than 45 days after the matter is submitted to it.
- \*C15.03.** If the consultation panel fails to resolve the matter, that panel shall refer the case in writing, including the written charges and the accused member's reply, to the Committee on Discipline of the synod for a hearing. A copy of the panel's written referral shall be delivered to the vice president of the synod, the Congregation Council, and the accused member(s) at the same time it is sent to the Committee on Discipline of the synod. The Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall then select six members from the Committee on Discipline to decide the case and shall appoint a member of the Synod Council to preside as nonvoting chair. Those six members, plus the nonvoting chair, comprise the discipline hearing panel for deciding the case. The Congregation Council and the accused member(s) are the parties to the case.
- \*C15.04.** The discipline hearing panel shall commence and conduct the disciplinary hearing in accordance with the provisions governing discipline of congregation members prescribed in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- \*C15.05.** By the vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the discipline hearing panel who are present and voting, one of the following disciplinary sanctions can be imposed:
- a. suspension from the privileges of congregation membership for a designated period of time;
  - b. suspension from the privileges of congregation membership until the pastor and Congregation Council receive evidence, satisfactory to them, of repentance and amendment of life;
  - c. termination of membership in this congregation; or
  - d. termination of membership in this congregation and exclusion from the church property and from all congregation activities.
- \*C15.06.** The written decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be sent to the vice president of the synod, the accused member(s), and the Congregation Council as required by the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. The decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be implemented by the Congregation Council and recorded in the minutes of the next council meeting.

- \*C15.07. No member of this congregation shall be subject to discipline a second time for offenses that a discipline hearing panel has heard previously and decided pursuant to this chapter.
- \*C15.10. **Adjudication**
- \*C15.11. When there is disagreement between or among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president [vice president] of this congregation of their intent to do so. The synod bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the dispute. If the issue relates directly to the pastor, the bishop may begin the process in \*C9.05.d. In all other matters, if the bishop's consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the Council deems necessary. The Synod Council's decision shall be final.

## **Chapter 16.**

### **AMENDMENTS.**

- \*C16.01. Unless provision \*C16.04. is applicable, those sections of this constitution that are not required, in accord with the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be amended in the following manner. Amendments may be proposed by at least 2 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 this congregation's members of the proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.
- \*C16.02. An amendment to this constitution, proposed under \*C16.01., shall:
  - a. be approved at any legally called meeting of this congregation by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting; and
  - b. be ratified unchanged at the next regular meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.
- \*C16.03. Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in \*C16.01. and \*C16.02. shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The synod shall notify this congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed changes; the changes shall go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them.
- \*C16.04. This constitution may be amended to bring any section into conformity with a section or sections, either required or not required, of the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as most recently amended by the Churchwide Assembly. Such amendments may be approved by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of this congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of this

congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, notice to this congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council's recommendations, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of at least two (2) voting members of this congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following the congregation's vote of approval.

## **Chapter 17.**

### **BYLAWS**

- \*C17.01. This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.
- \*C17.02. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.
- \*C17.03. Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member, provided 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. The Congregation Council shall notify this congregation's members of the proposal with the Council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.
- \*C17.04. Adopted or amended bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

## **Chapter 18.**

### **CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

- \*C18.01. This 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.
- \*C18.02. Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a majority vote of a meeting of this congregation or a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Congregation Council.
- \*C18.03. Adopted or amended continuing resolutions shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

## **Chapter 19.**

### **INDEMNIFICATION**

- \*C19.01. Consistent with the provisions of the laws under which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt provisions providing indemnification for each person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a 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.**

## PARISH AUTHORIZATION

- \*C20.01.** This congregation may unite with one or more other congregations recognized by the synod named in \*C6.01. to form a parish. Except as provided in \*C20.02. and \*C20.03., a written agreement, developed in consultation with the synod and approved by the voting members of each congregation participating in the parish, shall specify the powers and responsibilities that have been delegated to the Parish Council. The Parish Agreement shall identify which congregation of the parish issues calls on behalf of the member congregations or shall establish a process for identifying which congregation issues calls on behalf of the member congregations.
- \*C20.02.** One congregation of a parish shall issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Sacrament or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended by the synod bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a two-thirds vote at a congregation meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.
- \*C20.03.** One congregation of a parish may issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Service or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended by the synod bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a two-thirds vote at a congregation meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.
- \*C20.04.** Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with the pastor as provided in \*C9.05.d. In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.
- \*C20.05.** Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with a minister of Word and Service as provided in \*C9.25. In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.
- \*C20.06.** Whenever a parish agreement is terminated, the call of any rostered minister serving that parish is terminated. Should any congregation that was formerly part of the parish agreement desire to issue a new call to that rostered minister, it may do so in accordance with the call process of this church.