

# **CONSTITUTION OF EMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH PATCHOGUE, NEW YORK**

## **PREAMBLE**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

We, members of Emanuel Lutheran Church, desiring to be blessed together with Word and Sacrament and to unite as a congregation in the common confession, defense and propagation of our faith in Jesus Christ our Savior do hereby adopt this Constitution and do solemnly pledge ourselves to be governed by its provisions.

## **ARTICLE I—NAME**

The name of this congregation shall be Evangelical Lutheran Emanuel Church, also known as, Emanuel Lutheran Church.

## **ARTICLE II—PURPOSE**

The purpose of this congregation shall be to seek the honor and glory of God, to carry out His will, to manifest the unity of our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Son, to spread the kingdom of God and to foster Christian fellowship and love by the preaching of the Word of God, by the administration of the Sacraments, and by the religious instruction of all of its youth and adults according to the confessional standards of the Lutheran Church (Article 111).

## **ARTICLE III—CONFESSION—BASIS OF FAITH AND ACTION**

- A. This congregation acknowledges and accepts all canonical books of the Bible (The Old and New testaments) as the inspired Word of God.
- B. And all the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, as contained in the Book of Concord, as a true and sound exposition of the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures.
- C. Any church controversies which might arise shall be decided on the basis of the Holy Scriptures as interpreted above in Part B.

## **ARTICLE IV—MEMBERSHIP**

### **A. Baptized Membership: Baptized members**

1. are baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
2. are under the spiritual care of the pastor and congregation.
3. have not yet been confirmed.

### **B. Communicant Membership: Communicant members**

1. have been baptized in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. willingly submit to the instruction, correction, and guidance of the Holy Scriptures.
3. are thoroughly instructed in basic Christian doctrine and familiar with at least Luther's Small Catechism.
4. faithfully participate in Christian education and worship.
5. receive the Lord's Supper frequently.
6. give of their time and talent and regularly contribute of their resources to the up-building and extension of Christ's Church within the congregation and without.
7. speak and conduct themselves consistent with Christ's example and teaching.

### **C. Voting Membership:**

All communicant members who are 18 years old shall be entitled to vote. Only voting members of twenty-one years or older are eligible for elected offices.

## **ARTICLE V—THE OFFICES OF PASTOR AND TEACHER**

The Pastoral office of this congregation as well as that of called teachers in the parochial school shall be conferred upon such ministers, teachers, and candidates only as profess and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in Article 111 of this

Constitution and are well qualified for their work. Pastors and teachers shall, in the call extended to and excepted by them, be pledged to this confessional standard.

## **ARTICLE VI—THE AUTHORITY OF THE CONGREGATION**

### **A. General:**

The congregation as a body, through the voting members, shall have supreme powers to administer and manage all its external and internal affairs. The establishment and conduct of all institutions and societies within the Congregation, such as the parochial school, Sunday School, youth societies, ladies societies, choir, etc., shall at all times be subject to the approval and supervision of the Congregation. The congregation, however, shall not be empowered to decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church (Article 111) and any such decision shall be null and void.

### **B. Right of Calling:**

The right of calling pastors and teachers shall be vested in the voting members of the congregation and shall never be delegated to a minor body. Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided by the Word of God; other matters shall be decided by the Voters, unless otherwise specified by the Constitution or By-laws.

### **C Property Rights:**

If at any time a separation should take place on account of doctrine, the property of the Congregation and all benefits herewith connected shall remain with those voting members who are in the majority.

### **D. Removal from office:**

Any officer may be removed from office by the voting members of the congregation, by ballot in Christian and lawful order for one of the following causes:

Adherence to doctrine contrary to that set forth in Article 111; conduct which in the opinion of the majority of voting members is seriously unbecoming; and inability to perform his official duties or willful neglect of them.

This action shall be taken only after the church officer has been preadvised by the Church Council of the charges preferred against him and given the opportunity to answer such charges.

### **E. Reasons for dismissing a Pastor or teacher shall be:**

Persistent adherence to doctrine contrary to that set forth in Article 111; conduct which in the opinion of the majority of voting members is seriously unbecoming, unfaithfulness or inability in the performance of duties. This action shall be taken only after the Pastor or teacher has been preadvised by the Church Council of the charges preferred against him and given the opportunity to answer such charges, and after following the established procedure of the District relative to such action.

## **ARTICLE VII—OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

### **A. General:**

The officers, Council and committees of this congregation shall be such officers, Council and committees as the By-laws of this congregation shall authorize and/or prescribe.

### **B Powers of Officers and Committees:**

Congregational officers and committees shall have no authority beyond that set forth in the By-laws of this Constitution.

## **ARTICLE VIII—SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP**

This congregation shall hold membership in the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod providing said synod remains faithful to its confessional standard. It shall participate in District and Synodical programs.

## **ARTICLE IX—CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION**

### **Amendments:**

Amendments of this Constitution may be adopted at a regular voters meeting, provided that:

- A. They do not conflict with the provisions laid down in Article 11, or with any other Article that pertains to a Scriptural doctrine and practice.
- B. The proposed amendment has been submitted in writing to a meeting of the voters prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon, and by mail to the membership.
- C. An affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the voters present be secured.

## **BY LAWS**

### **ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP**

#### **A. Admission into membership**

A person is received into congregational membership in the following ways:

- 1. Into baptized membership—through the reception of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, or by evidence of such by transfer.
- 2. Into communicant membership by—
  - a) confirmation, after sufficient instruction, or
  - b) profession of faith, when he has given satisfactory evidence of qualifications for communicant membership, or
  - c) transfer from another Lutheran congregation with evidence of the reception of Holy Baptism and of membership in good standing.
- 3. In the last three cases, persons are received into membership by the Pastor, acting on behalf of the Council.

#### **B. Termination of Membership**

A person's membership in the congregation may be terminated in the following ways:

- 1. Through transfer, when a communicant member in good standing requests such a transfer of the Pastor, acting on behalf of the Council.
- 2. By joining another church outside of our fellowship.
- 3. By absence, i.e., when a member's whereabouts remain unknown for a year and with whom no contact can be made.
- 4. By self-exclusion, when a member has ceased to perform his Christian duties as a member (Constitution, Article IV, B) and, after he has been reminded of this, does not return to the performance of such duties. Although such a person's name will be removed from the congregational register by action of the Council, every attempt will be made to restore such a person to full Christian fellowship and activity.
- 5. A person's membership may be terminated by the Church Council and Pastor acting on behalf of the congregation.

### **ARTICLE II—CONGREGATIONAL POLICY**

#### **A. Structure**

- 1. Congregational business shall be conducted by the Voters, the Council and any Committee elected by the Voters, or appointed by the Council, and responsible to the Council and Voters.
- 2. The Voters shall consist of all communicant members who meet the requirements of voting membership (Constitution, Article IV, C).
  - a. The Voters shall meet at least two (2) times a year.
  - b. No meeting shall be valid unless it has previously been notified publicly to the membership.
  - c. The agenda of special meetings must be made known in such notification as the reason for the meeting.
  - d. A quorum shall be the Voters present.
  - e. Absentee ballots will be accepted by the church President at congregational meetings from shut-in or hospitalized members under the following conditions:
    - 1) on issues that are clearly presented in writing to the congregation before the meeting.
    - 2) the vote must be received in writing before the meeting begins.
    - 3) votes shall only be approved on the original written motion.

3. The Council shall be the Executive body of the Membership.
  - a. The Council members shall be the President, the Vice President, the Pastor, the Principal of the School, the Secretary and the Chairpersons of the Standing Committees of the Congregation.
  - b. Except for the Pastor and Principal, each Council Member is elected for a two(2) year term. A person may not be elected to the same position for more than two (2) successive terms.
  - c. The voting members of the Council are the Vice President, the Secretary and the elected Chairpersons of the committees. The President shall vote in case of a tie.
  - d. The Council shall meet at least once in a calendar month, excluding July, on a regularly established day.
  - e. Regular meetings of the Council shall be open to voting members of the Congregation. They may not participate in its deliberations except by consent of the majority of the Council. Time will be set aside at such meetings for voters to exercise their right to be heard.
  - f. Special meetings of the Council shall not be official nor its acts valid, unless each member has been notified of the date, time, and place of the meeting, or unless a Council member, not having received notification, concurs. in the acts of such a meeting afterwards and his vote is decisive.
  - g. One Half (1/2) of the Council shall assume office on each July 1<sup>st</sup> and be inducted in public service.
  - h. A quorum of the Council shall consist of more than half of the voting members of the Council.
  - i. The following officers and voting members of Council shall take office in even numbered years: the President and the following committee chairpersons: School, Building and Grounds, Parish Ministry, Technology, Youth and Stewardship. The following officers and voting members of Council shall take office in odd numbered years: the Vice-President, Secretary, and the following committee chairpersons: Business and Finance (treasurer), Christian Education, Worship, Social Ministry and Evangelism.

#### 4. Committees

- a. The Standing Committees of this Congregation shall be:
  - 1) Buildings and Grounds
  - 2) Business and Finance
  - 3) Christian Education
  - 4) Evangelism
  - 5) Parish Ministry
  - 6) School
  - 7) Social Ministry
  - 8) Stewardship
  - 9) Worship
  - 10) Youth
  - 11) Technology
- b. The Standing Committees shall consist of a Chairperson elected by the voting members of the Congregation, and of at least two other members who consent to serve at the request of the chairperson and with the approval of Council.
- c. The Standing Committees shall be so organized that each committee member has responsibility for specific duties or functions. The chairperson will designate these areas of responsibility and will coordinate and oversee their progress.
- d. The chairperson shall notify members of meetings and shall represent the Committee at Council meetings.
- e. Special Committees may be appointed by the Council for specific tasks as deemed necessary by the Council.

#### **B. Duties of the Voters**

1. The Voters have the ultimate responsibility and privilege for the administration of Congregational affairs. This includes, but is not limited to, calling Pastors and Teachers, passing budgets, electing officers and Committee Chairpersons.
2. To be eligible for election to the Council, voting members shall have been such for at least one year prior to assuming office.
3. To become involved in a standing committee whenever possible.

#### **C. Duties of the Council**

1. Under the leadership and direction of the President, the Council shall seek out the best methods with which the Congregation might better serve the church and the community in Christ's name.

2. It shall review the reports of all Committees and act upon all recommendations.
3. It shall keep the congregational membership informed of all problems, opportunities and activities and shall present to the Voters all matters pertaining to congregational action. All motions acted upon in open session by the Council and an accurate count of votes for and against such motions, shall be made public knowledge, and posted in an accessible location within one week following that vote.
4. Upon authorization of the Voters, the Council shall be empowered to sell, mortgage, lease properties, approve contracts, represent the congregation in court, or perform any other official and legal function assigned to it by the Voters.

**D. Duties of Officers**

1. President: The President shall:
  - a. Preside at all meetings of the Voters, Council and Trustees;
  - b. Perform such duties as pertain to this office and be an ex-officio member of all committees;
  - c. Be empowered to enforce the Constitution and By-laws;
  - d. Fill any vacancies by appointment with the approval of the Council. This appointment tenure shall not prevent the individual from serving a maximum of two (2) successive elected terms in that position on Council (article 11,36);
  - e. Insure that all Committees are functioning properly, attending Committee meetings whenever advisable or necessary;
  - f. Prepare an agenda for each Council and Voters meeting;
  - g. Meet at least once a month with the Pastor to analyze past progress and plan future efforts;
  - h. Encourage all officers and committee chairmen to make concise written reports and recommendations to the Council and Voters;
  - i. Seek every opportunity to command "Leadership shown" and "job well done" by members or the parish.
2. Vice President: The Vice President shall:
  - a. Act as President of the Council should that office become vacant;
  - b. chair ad-hoc programs at the direction of the Council.
3. Secretary: The Secretary shall:
  - a. Faithfully keep and sign the minutes of all meetings of the Council and Voters and enter them in a permanent record;
  - b. Conduct all necessary correspondence and issue all official notifications;
  - c. Inform all members of the Council and Voters of all meetings;
  - d. Supply "digests of meetings for the parish papers, church bulletins, etc. as requested;
  - e. Keep a correct copy of the Constitution and By-laws together with all additions and amendments, which may be thereunto, in a book provided for that purpose;
  - f. Serve as Church Archivist and historian.
4. Treasurer: The Treasurer shall:
  - a. Chair the Business and Finance Committees;
  - b. Deposit all bank deposits of the congregation;
  - c. Pay all bills and indebtedness of the congregation when properly authorized;
  - d. Keep a correct account of all financial transactions;
  - e. Render a report of all receipts and disbursements of both Church and School at all regular meetings of the Council;
  - f. Have all fiscal records of the Church and School compiled each year with a report to the congregation. A full audit will be done every five (5) years with a review being done on alternate years.
  - g. The Treasurer and other necessary persons may be bonded;
  - h. Be responsible for collecting all monies from church members and non-church members for the use of church facilities.
5. Trustees shall:

- a. Consist of the President, Vice-President, the Treasurer, School. Committee Chairperson and the Chairperson of the Buildings and Grounds Committee. The Pastor and former presidents may serve as ex-officio trustees;
- b. Be responsible to review the salaries of the Pastor and the Church Secretary(ies);
- c. Upon recommendation of the various committees and with the assistance of the Committee Chairperson concerned, negotiate all contracts that are not covered in "b" above, and submit them to Council for final approval;
- d. Maintain a Safe Deposit Box and list its contents with the Church Council Secretary and Treasurer;
- e. Check adequacy of all insurance and bonding;
- f. Exercise the powers conferred upon them by the laws of the State of New York;
- g. Meet at least once a year, and at the discretion of the President;
- h. The Trustees will inform the Council of current business and actions under consideration by them. This shall be reported by the President to the Council.

**E. Duties of Committees**

**1. Buildings and Grounds shall:**

- a. Make periodic inspections (at least annually) of all Church physical plant facilities, prepare and maintain a listing of all repairs, replacements and modifications required, together with a performance and maintenance timetable for accomplishment;
- b. Prepare and maintain an inventory of all personal property and fixtures together with date of acquisition, if known, and the cost or fair market value of each item;
- c. Conduct an annual fire safety inspection of the physical plant with the assistance, if necessary, of municipal fire prevention authorities;
- d. Program as far as possible, all maintenance, repair, replacement and modification of church property to insure prior planning for fund availability;
- e. Employ custodians and janitors with the Council's approval and to supervise them;
- f. Contract, within its authority, for all services relating to the physical plant, fixtures and equipment;
- g. Develop and promulgate reasonable rules and regulations relating to use of the church property.
- h. Enlist congregational volunteers to perform designated tasks relating to church property.
- i. Be responsible for the maintenance of the office equipment and supplies;
- j. Be responsible for all congregationally owned properties, all buildings, and the proper function, repairs and acquisition of all equipment;
- k. Improve and maintain outside grounds, including snow removal from parking areas and maintenance of lawns.

**2. Business and Finance shall:**

- a. Plan, supervise and evaluate according to sound and approved fiscal methods
  - 1) The collection and banking of all funds;
  - 2) The bookkeeping of all receipts and disbursements;
  - 3) The distribution of confidential yearly statements of personal contributions to every envelope holder;
  - 4) The distribution of quarterly reports to the congregation concerning the current fiscal situation;
  - 5) Presentation of monthly reports to the church Council together with pertinent recommendations
- b. Prepare an annual balanced budget which shall contain detailed projection of income by source and disbursements by purpose and activity; this budget shall be presented to the Council two months prior to the beginning of a new fiscal year;
- c. Plan and periodically update long-range capital improvement budgets (renovations, additions, etc.) for integration into annual budgets;
- d. Supervise all fundraising activities by church or congregational agencies;
- e. Upon approval of the Council enlist or hire and supervise such personnel as needed to carry out these functions.

**3. Christian Education shall:**

- a. Plan, supervise and evaluate Christian Education programs, to include but not limited to, Cradle Roll, Sunday School, Confirmation Class, Adult Education, Bible Studies, V.B.S. and workshops;

- b. Call on and enlist qualified personnel to lead these programs
- c. Offer the Congregation and the community the highest standards of education, the best equipment and materials possible, and most highly trained teachers in every facet of congregational education;
- d. Assist other congregational agencies with their tasks of education, youth, women's and men's groups;
- e. Cooperate and work jointly with the School Committee on common goals and programs.

**4. Evangelism shall:**

- a. Plan, promote and carry out a program of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ within the Congregation and Community;
- b. Teach and train members concerning the need and methods involved with such program;
- c. Supervise the visitation and encouragement of prospective members;
- d. Assist the Parish Ministry Committee integrate new members into the life and work of the church;
- e. Identify the function of this Congregation in the public mind with the person and ministry of Jesus Christ by means of good public relations.

**5. Parish Ministry shall:**

- a. Assist the Pastor in all matters pertaining to the welfare of the Congregation;
- b. Discover needs or problems of persons within the Congregation (sick, poor, etc.) and report the situation to the Pastor and other Committee members;
- c. Seek and implement ways to make "Congregational Fellowship" a reality;
- d. Represent all auxiliary agencies such as Women for Christ, Senior Ladies, etc. on the Church Council;
- e. Be responsible that "new" members are welcomed, oriented and integrated into the mainstream of congregational fellowship and activity;
- f. Encourage active participation among regional members, especially those who have been negligent in the fulfillment of the responsibilities of membership.

**6. School**

Although the majority of committee members must be from the congregation, there may be committee members from sister Lutheran Congregations, however, each committee meeting must have a majority of congregational members present for any decisions to be valid.

The Committee shall:

- a. Promote the Christian Day School in the Congregation and community;
- b. Supervise and evaluate the entire school program including staffing, recruitment, policy making, purchase, etc.;
- c. Together with the Pastor and Principal.
  - 1) Enable the parish and school programs to work harmoniously together; 2) Evaluate and assist the performance of each teacher
  - 2) Review candidates for vacant positions and make recommendations to the Council for action;
- d. Together with the Principal and faculty, study, improve and implement a curriculum which meets highest standards for secular and religious education;
- e. Through the Principal be responsible for all school purchases;
- f. Together with the Committee for Building and Grounds provide facilities which are conducive to education;
- g. In cooperation with the Business and Finance Committee:
  - 1) Prepare a balanced budget which contains projections of income by source and expenditures by purpose and activity. Such budget shall be based on the best available information and shall reflect specified areas which could change depending on actual income;
  - 2) Submit the budget for review by the Church Council before presentation and adoption by the Voters of its Spring meeting. All contracts agreed upon and reflected in the budget shall be tentative and not become valid until the budget is approved by the Voters;
  - 3) Submit any necessary and subsequent changes of the previously approved budget to the Church Council at its September meeting for approval by the Voters.

- h. Encourage and oversee activities and projects of the P.T.F.L. and any other related programs;
- i. Cooperate and work jointly with the Christian Education Committee whenever the goals and programs are similar;
- j. Together with the Principal and Pastor supervise the Called Teachers in their service assignment to the congregation, which will be in addition to Day School teaching duties, and which commence when the Pastor, Principal, Called Teacher, School Committee and Council agree on the service to be assigned;
- k. Together with the Council insure the availability of adequate housing for Called Teachers.

**7. Social Ministry shall:**

- a. Maintain for the benefit of members of this Congregation a file of social services available to them from the community agencies and to cooperate and assist these agencies;
- b. Regularly remind members of the services offered by this committee and the agencies through which it works;
- c. Organize an action team, which, working in cooperation with the Pastor, will assist members of personal distress and catastrophe;
- d. Keep the Congregation and the Council apprised of the needs of the community and church, and recommend and/or implement programs to satisfy or alleviate these needs;
- e. Coordinate assistance programs within the Congregations.

**8. Stewardship shall:**

- a. Educate themselves and the congregational membership
  - 1) Concerning the needs and costs of Christian ministry within the community and the church at large;
  - 2) Concerning the principals of Christian stewardship in accordance with the teachings of the Gospel;
  - 3) Concerning the need of all members to contribute and pledge money to the church in a manner commensurate with their resources and obligations.
- b. Educate themselves to the principles of Christian Stewardship in accordance with the teachings of the Gospel;
- c. Identify congregational members for leadership positions;
- d. Keep an updated file of "time and talent" contributors which may be offered in service to their Lord, and a time and talent index to be available as needed;
- e. Plan, supervise, and evaluate a 12 month program which will emphasize the contributions of time, talent and treasure.

**9. Worship shall:**

- a. Make every effort that all worship services be conducted with the highest reverence and dignity;
- b. Be responsible for the music program as an aid in worship. This committee shall oversee the music program and personnel;
- c. Be responsible for scheduling alter assistants, guest speakers, and in the event of vacancy to arrange for pastoral services;
- d. Be concerned with the material aspects of worship (hymnals, lighting, heat, ventilation, pews, etc.);
- e. Supervise and evaluate the function of the Altar Guild;
- f. Enlist, train and schedule service assistants.

**10. Youth shall:**

- a. Plan, supervise and evaluate a Christian youth program (up through age 18) which will encourage our youth to grow and mature in Christ;
- b. Provide Christian leadership and programming in areas of worship, education, service, fellowship and recreation;
- c. Enlist, train and support youth leaders and counselors;
- d. Involve parents and the Congregation in the Youth program;
- e. Provide ways in which youth can meaningfully participate in the work of the church;
- f. Cooperate with and support Synodical and community youth programs whenever possible.



**11. Technology shall:**

- a. Assist in the maintenance and development of Emanuel’s web site
- b. Work with all committees with needed technologies and assist them in communicating their goals via electronic means. Assist with electronic preparations and presentations at Worship Services
- c. Install and maintain audio, video, computer security systems and all other electronic devices as needed by the Church and School
- d. Develop and assist with the maintenance and training of the Church Community Builder program
- e. Develop technology training courses to educate members and committees

**F. Nomination and Election of Council**

A committee shall:

1. a. Be appointed by the Council in January; b. Present a slate of officers at the April meeting of Council
2. Determine eligible persons and select those whose talents and experience most nearly fit the requirements of each office. The Nomination Committee would not seek out, but would, of course, accept more than one nominee for each position on the Council up for election;
3. Contact perspective nominees, advise them of their selection and the importance and responsibilities of the office for which the committee has judged them qualified and secure their consent to run for office giving them considerable time for reflection and prayer. The committee shall then widely and strongly publicize the opportunity for further nomination by congregational members prior to the election;
4. The congregation shall be informed by a special mailing of the following, at least two weeks prior to the election meeting:
  - a. proposed slate of officers; b. brief biographical sketch of the nominees; c. election meeting date, time and location;
5. At the election meeting, accept nominations from the floor, those persons nominated must consent;
6. Prepare ballots for election, tally, and announce election results.

**G. Elders**

- a. Elders provide spiritual support for the Pastor and laity at Emanuel. Through prayer, Bible study, discussion, and interaction, they provide on-going assessment of moods, concerns and direction of the general membership with a view to keeping close contact between the pastoral office and the laity. They meet with the Pastor on a regular basis and communicate on an ongoing basis with the President of the Congregation.
- b. Selection of elders when needed, because of attrition, resignation or expansion of the group:
  1. Recommendations for elders may be made by members of the congregation, elders in office and Pastor.
  2. The Elders and Pastor, through prayer and deliberation, select the candidates, with approval by Pastor, and inform the Council of their nominees.
  3. The congregation decides if it approves the selected candidates at a congregational meeting.
  4. Elders shall serve for an indefinite period to be reaffirmed by the congregation every five (5) years at a congregational meeting.

**ARTICLE III—PROCEDURE IN THE CALLING OF PASTOR AND TEACHERS**

**A. After consulting with the proper District Authorities, the Church Council shall:**

1. Present a slate of eligible and qualified candidates to the Congregation. (During this period, members of the Congregation are encouraged to suggest names of possible candidates.)
2. At a Congregational meeting, the slate shall be presented.
  - a. Nominees may be accepted from the floor at this time and added to the slate.
  - b. When no further nominees are to be considered the slate should be considered “closed and published throughout the Congregation.

**B. Subsequently a Congregational meeting, expressly called and well publicized for this purpose, shall be held.**

1. No addition names shall be considered for nomination.
2. The balloting shall then take place and continue until an individual is elected by a simple majority (one more than 50% of the total votes cast).

**ARTICLE IV—PROCEDURE FOR REMOVAL FROM OFFICE**

- A. Charges shall be submitted in writing and signed by the plaintiff and given to the President of the Council, who will advise Council of an executive meeting to take place within ten (10) working days.
- B. The President will send copies of the original document to the accused, plaintiff and Circuit Counselor, and advise them of the executive meeting.
- C. The plaintiff must personally appear at this meeting to reaffirm his charges to the Council. If the plaintiff does not appear, the charges will be dismissed. At this meeting, the accused must respond in person or in writing to the charges.
- D. The sole purpose of the executive meeting shall be to decide, with the Circuit Counselor, if the charges should or should not be referred to the congregation for action.
- E. The Congregation shall be informed.
1. The Congregation shall be informed by letter. This will be an exact copy of the charges and rebuttal, and subject to a special congregational meeting to be held within three (3) Sundays;
  2. At this time, presentations from both sides shall be presented to the congregation;
  3. Referral of the charges to the Congregation does not signify the validity of the charges. This is to be decided by the Congregation.
- F. The Congregation shall:
1. Decide by ballot vote and by a 2/3 majority of eligible voters present whether the charges are substantiated;
  2. Decide if disciplinary action is in order.
- G. If the charges are substantiated, disciplinary action may include, but not limited to
1. Reprimand;
  2. Termination;
  3. Filing charges with the District office.

**ARTICLE V—AMENDMENTS**

These By-laws may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the Voters by a majority of all voting members present, provided that at least two weeks prior to the meeting in which the amendment is voted upon:

- A. The proposal to change has been announced at each church service
- B. A written copy of the proposed changes has been mailed to the Voter.

[As amended at the meeting of the Congregation on Sunday, 27JAN2008.]