

Approved by WV/WM Synod via Bishop Dunkin – September 21, 2007
Approved by St. Mark Lutheran Church Congregation – November 18, 2007

NOTE: Sections of constitution preceded by an astrik (*) denotes required provisions that may not be changed.

CONSTITUTION FOR ST. MARK EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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.

C1.01. The name of this congregation shall be St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church of Elm Grove, Wheeling, West Virginia.

C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church congregation is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."

C1.03. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of West Virginia.

***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. 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. This church, 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.

*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 love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs.

e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.

f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity that 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 needs, 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 the congregation's ministry and the ministry of other parts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with church wide policy.

*C4.04. This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Church Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational groups and shall review their actions.

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

*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 Church Council or other organizational units in the congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by the congregation. The congregation is authorized to:

- a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- c. appoint or terminate the appointment of associates in ministry in conformity with the applicable policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
- d. approve the annual budget;
- e. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
- f. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
- g. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
- h. elect its Church Council, boards, and committees, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions;
- i. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.

*C5.04. This congregation shall choose from among its voting members 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 by the congregation and other qualifications shall be prescribed in guidelines established by this synod.

*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 West Virginia-Western Maryland 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 clergy roster 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.
- d. This congregation agrees to consider associates in ministry for appointment to other staff positions in the 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 of its provisions are in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or with the constitution of the synod.

*C6.04. Affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be 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.
- d. 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 desire of this congregation to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally-called and conducted special meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present.
- b. The secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the synodical bishop and shall mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of the congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted.
- c. The bishop of the synod shall consult with this congregation during a period of at least 90 days.
- d. If this congregation, after consultation, still desires to terminate its relationship, such action may be taken at a legally-called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present, at which meeting the bishop of the synod or an

authorized representative shall be present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.

e. A certified copy of the resolution to terminate its relationship shall be sent to the synodical bishop, at which time the relationship between this congregation and ELCA shall be terminated.

f. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the synodical bishop to the secretary of this church and published in the periodical of this church.

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

*Chapter 7. **PROPERTY OWNERSHIP**

*C7.01. If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the West Virginia-Western Maryland 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, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

*C7.03. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a regularly-called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to transfer to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation. Before this congregation takes action to transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod.

*C7.04. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a regularly-called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body, 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 the congregation by the established synodical process, 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 the 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 of America.

*Chapter 8. **MEMBERSHIP**

*C8.01. Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of the 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 comuned 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 the congregation.

d. Associate members are persons holding membership in other Lutheran or any other Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. They shall have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Church Council of this congregation

*C8.03. All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Church 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 by the Church Council; or

e. removal from the roll due to inactivity as defined in the bylaws. Such persons who have

been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the church has a continuing pastoral concern.

*Chapter 9. **THE PASTOR**

*C9.01. Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers or council, elected by this congregation to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.

*C9.02. Only a member of the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of ordained ministers who have been recommended for it by the synodical bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.

*C9.03. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Every ordained minister shall preach the Word, administer the sacraments, conduct public worship, provide pastoral care, and shall speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.

b. Each ordained minister with a congregational call shall, within the congregation, offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead; supervise all schools and organizations of the congregation; shall install regularly-elected members of the Church Council, and with the council, administer discipline.

c. Every pastor shall seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel and strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; shall impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications; and shall endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and of the West Virginia-Western Maryland synod of the ELCA.

*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.

a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which, except in the case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated only following consultation with the synodical bishop and for the following reasons:

1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term of years;

2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective unless otherwise agreed, three days after the date on which it was submitted;

3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of

local conditions, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor;

4) the physical, or mental incapacity of the pastor;

5) disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty; or

6) the dissolution of the congregation; or

7) suspension of the congregation as a result of discipline proceedings.

b. In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity of the pastor or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office, it shall be the responsibility of the bishop of the synod, when such difficulties are personally known or have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Church Council, or by a petition signed by at least one third of the voting members of the congregation, to investigate such conditions personally in company with a committee of two ordained ministers and one lay person.

c. In case of alleged physical or mental incapacity competent medical testimony shall be obtained. When such disability is evident, the bishop of the synod with the advice of the committee shall declare the pastorate vacant. Upon the restoration of a disabled pastor to health, the bishop of the synod shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another field of labor.

d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation, all concerned persons shall be heard, after which the bishop of the synod together with the committee described in C9.05.b. shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor and the congregation. If they agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action shall be taken by the synod. If either party fails to assent, the congregation may dismiss the pastor by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop.

e. If in the course of the proceedings described in C9.05.d., the committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action to the synodical bishop who may bring charges, in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the constitution of the this synod.

f. If, following the appointment of the committee described in C9.05.b. or d., it should become apparent that the pastoral office cannot be conducted effectively in the congregation being served by the ordained minister due to local conditions, the bishop of the synod may temporarily suspend the pastor from service in the congregation without prejudice and with pay provided through a joint church-wide/synod fund and with housing provided by the congregation.

*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 Church Council.

*C9.07. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties 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 Church Council. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.

*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.

*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.

*C9.10. With the approval of the bishop of the synod the congregation may depart from C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term of years. 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 the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of C9.05.a.

*C9.11. The pastor(s) 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.

*C9.12. The pastor shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, and shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod.

*C9.13. The pastor(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

*C.9.14. The pastor(s) are expected to attend Synod Assemblies as Clerical Representatives of the Congregation.

*C9.15 Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synodical bishop and the concurrence of the congregation, an ordained minister of a church body with which the ELCA officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily under contract as pastor of this congregation.

*C9:17. Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synodical bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, an ordained minister of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily under contract as pastor of this congregation.

Chapter 10. **CONGREGATION MEETING**

C10.01. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.

C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the pastor, the Church Council, or the president of this congregation, or at the written request of 10% of the voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.

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.

C10.04. 15% of the Voting members shall constitute a quorum.

C10.05. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.

C10.06. All actions by the congregation shall be by majority vote of those present except as otherwise provided in this constitution.

C10:07. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

C10.08. Elect the congregational members necessary to fill the various committee vacancies to a total of twelve (12) deacons, six (6) trustees, six (6) elders and one (1) representative of the women of the church.

Chapter 11. **OFFICERS**

C11.01. The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice-president, recording secretary, financial secretary, and treasurer. Because of the time consuming nature of the recording secreatry, financial secretary, and treasurer positions, these positions may be appointed by the president with the consent of the Church Council.

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

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

c. Appointed Officers of this congregation shall also be voting members of the Church Council.

C11.02. The Church Council shall elect its officers and they shall be the officers of the congregation. The officers shall be elected by written ballot (see C12.02). Their terms shall begin on January 1 and end on 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 two consecutive terms in the same office.

Chapter 12. **CHURCH COUNCIL**

C12.01. The voting membership of the Church Council shall consist of the pastor(s), the deacons (12), elders (6), trustees (6), Women of the Church (1), a confirmed youth member (1), and the three appointed council members (Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, and Treasurer). Any voting member of the congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Church Council shall be declared vacant if the member ceases to be a voting member of this congregation.

C12.02. The non-appointed members of the Church Council (except the pastor(s)) shall be elected at a legally-called meeting of the congregation during the month of October. Their term of office shall be for three (3) years with the term of office beginning on January 1 and ending on December 31. Newly-elected Church Council members shall be installed at worship on the First Sunday in January.

C12.03. Should a member's place on the Church Council be declared vacant, the president shall seek a candidate to fill the unexpired remainder of the vacant position, and the Church Council shall approve or reject, by majority vote, that candidate at its next regular meeting. The newly elected person shall be eligible for two consecutive terms in the same office including the portion of the vacant term.

C12.04. The Church 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 Church 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, appointment, 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 incapacitation of the pastor.
- h. To emphasize partnership with 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.

C12.05. The Church Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of West Virginia, except as otherwise provided herein.

a. The Church Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.

b. The Church Council may enter into contracts of up to \$10,000 for items not included in the budget.

c. The Church Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations more than \$10,000 in excess of the anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in partnership with the synod and church-wide organization.

d. The Church Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations.

e. The Church Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.

C12.06. The Church Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws are carried out.

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

C12.08. The Church Council shall be responsible for the appointment and supervision of the salaried lay workers of this congregation.

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

C12.10. The Church Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president, and shall be called at the request of at least three (3) of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

C12.11. A quorum for the transaction of business at a Church Council meeting shall be at least nine (9) members in attendance, including the pastor(s) or interim pastor, except when such person requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to an agenda of routine matters which shall be the only business of the meeting. 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 Church council, following consultation with the synodical bishop.

Chapter 13 **CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEES**

C13.01. The officers of this congregation and the pastor shall constitute the Executive Committee.

C13.02. A Nominating Committee of up to six (6) voting members of this congregation, two (2) of whom shall be outgoing members of the Church Council, shall be shall be nominated by the Church Council president and elected by the church council for a term of one (1) year. One member shall be the Church Council vice-president who shall serve as committee chair. Members of the Nominating Committee are eligible for consecutive reelection.

C13.03. An Audit Committee of three (3) voting members shall be elected by the Church Council. One (1) Audit Committee member may be a member of Church Council and shall be recommended by the Church Council President. The other two (2) members shall not be members of the Church Council. Term of office will be three (3) years, with one (1) member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for reelection.

C13.04. A Pastor and Secretarial Support Committee shall be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor. Term of office shall be three (3) years, two (2) members to be appointed each successive year.

C13.05. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of eight (8) voting members shall be appointed by the Church Council. Term of office will terminate at installation of the newly-called pastor.

C13.06. Other congregational committees may be formed as the need arises, by decision of the Church Council.

C13.07. Duties of congregational committees shall be specified in the bylaws.

Chapter 14. **ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE 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, must be acceptable and approved by the Church Council. .

*Chapter 15. **DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION**

*C15.01. Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent troublemaking in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps: a) private admonition by the pastor, b) admonition by the pastor in the presence of two (2) or three (3) witnesses, and c) citation to appear before the Church Council. If for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by a. and b. hereof, the president (if not the pastor) or vice president shall administer such admonitions.

*C15.02. The process for discipline of a member of the 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. A member charged with the offense shall appear before the Church Council after having received a written notice, at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting, specifying the exact charges that have been made against the member.

*C15.03. Members of the Congregation Council who participate in the preparation of the written charges or who present evidence or testimony in the hearing before the Congregation Council are disqualified from voting upon the question of the guilt of the accused member. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the Church Council, who are not disqualified but who are present and voting, and renewed admonition prove ineffectual, the council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:

- a. censure before the council or congregation;
- b. suspension from membership for a definite period of time; or
- c. exclusion from membership in this congregation.

Disciplinary actions b. and c. shall be delivered to the member in writing.

*C15.04. The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Church Council shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Synod Council. Such right may not be abridged and the decision of the Synod Council shall be final.

*C15.05. Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Church Council upon receipt of:

- a. evidence that injustice has been done or
- b. evidence of repentance and amendment.

*C15.10 Adjudication

*C15.11 When there is disagreement among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation shall have access to the synodical bishop for consultation after informing the president of the Church Council of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the Consulting Committee of the synod shall

consider the matter. If the Consulting Committee of the synod fails to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to the Synod Council, whose decision shall be final.

*Chapter 16. **BYLAWS**

*C16.01. This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.

*C16.02. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting.

*C16.03. Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Church Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose and that the Church Council notify the members of the proposal with its recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting.

*C16.04. Approved changes to the Bylaws shall be sent to the synod and also to the congregation.

*Chapter 17. **AMENDMENTS**

*C17.01. Unless provision *C17.04. 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 to this constitution may be proposed by at least 20% of the voting members or by the Church Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Church Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at its regular or special meeting called for that purpose. The Church Council shall notify the members of the proposal with their recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.

*C17.02. A proposed amendment to this constitution shall:

- a. be approved at a properly-called meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;
- b. be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds majority vote those present and voting; and
- c. have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.

*C17.03. Any amendments to this constitution shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The amendment shall become effective within 120 days from the date of the receipt of the notice by the synod unless the synod informs this congregation that the amendment is in conflict with the Constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or the constitution of the West Virginia - Western Maryland Synod.

[*C17.04. Whenever the Model Constitution for Congregations is amended by the Church-wide Assembly, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a simple majority

vote at any subsequent meeting of the congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided that the Church Council has submitted by mail notice to the congregation of such an amendment or amendments at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod, consistent with *C17.03.]

*C17.04. 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---by a simple majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of the congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail notice to the 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 ten voting members of the congregation the Congregation Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following a vote of approval.

Chapter 18. **CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

[*C18.01. The Church Council may enact continuing resolutions that describe the function of the various committees or organizations of this congregation.]

*C18.01. The congregation in a legally called meeting or the Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this congregation.

*C18.02. Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a majority vote of a meeting of the congregation or a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Church Council.

*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 Church Council member, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any committee of this congregation, was or is threatened to be made party to any threatened pending or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.

Approved: _____
Secretary: _____

President: _____

revised 11/18/07crb

Approved by WV/WM Synod via Bishop Dunkin – September 21, 2007
Approved by St. Mark Lutheran Church Congregation – November 18, 2007

BY LAWS
ST MARK EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

PART I MEMBERSHIP

(cf. Chapter 8 of the Constitution)

A. Discontinuance of Active Membership

1. Members who move away will be encouraged to transfer their membership. A confirmed member in good standing desiring to change his/her membership to another Church shall, upon request, receive a Letter of Transfer.
2. A Confirmed member who in the judgment of the Church Council shows no interest in attending church service and does not partake of Holy Communion; and who does not contribute to the congregational treasury for a period of one (1) year will be considered inactive and will lose all voting privileges.
3. Those who are considered Inactive shall be encouraged to return to more regular participation in the life of the congregation. If they are attending another Church, they should be encouraged to request a Letter of Transfer. An Inactive Member will be reinstated to Active Membership and Voting Membership (If Applicable) by returning to active participation in the life of the congregation. Minimal Active participation would include the partaking of Holy Communion and making a contribution of record, at least once each calendar year.
4. Members who have been dismissed or have resigned; and members who have transferred to other Lutheran congregations; or are definitely known to have become members of other Congregations without transfer, have thereby terminated their membership in the congregation and have surrendered all membership rights.

Part II MISSION

Having been called by the Holy Spirit to faith in God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we the members of St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church of Elm Grove, Wheeling, West Virginia in communion with the holy catholic church, the body of Jesus Christ on earth, and with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, from this point forward known as the ELCA do enthusiastically and solemnly adopt this Mission Statement.

Our mission: As disciples of Christ, St. Mark ministers that all may know the joy of Christ's love through ministries of welcoming, growing, and caring.

In our reaching out and witnessing mission we need to remember that the Holy Spirit has called us to be an inclusive church and we are to exclude no one on the basis of sex, age, race, economic status, ethnic background or those whose first language is not English. Finally, we must expand our mission beyond our community by cooperating in ecumenical relationships with all who will work for justice and peace in the world.

Part III **ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

(cf. Chapter 10 of the Constitution)

A. The Annual Congregational Meeting shall take place on any Sunday during the month of March. Movement of this date can take place only through the calling of a properly-advertised and administered special Congregational Meeting.

B. The Order of Business at the Annual Congregational Meeting shall be as follows:

1. Devotions
2. Approval of Minutes of the previous meeting.
3. Reports of Pastor, Church Council, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Committees and others
4. Elections (if required)
5. Approval of Budget
6. Unfinished Business
7. New Business
8. Adjournment

C. In the following cases voting shall be by written ballot:

1. To elect the congregational members necessary to fill the various committee vacancies to a total of: twelve (12) deacons, six (6) trustees, six (6) elders and one representative of the women of the church.
2. To adopt or amend the articles of incorporation, constitution or by laws of the Congregation.
3. To call a Pastor or to request his/her resignation.
4. To sever membership in the ELCA.
5. To dispose of, encumber, or purchase real property.
6. When requested by ten or more voting members present.
7. Special monetary concerns are addressed.

D. A special Congregational Meeting will be held in October of each year. The main order of business for this meeting will be to approve the Budget for the coming year and to Elect new members to the Church Council.

Part IV **CHURCH COUNCIL**

(cf. Chapter 12 of the Constitution)

A. Membership and meetings of the Church Council:

1. Eligible to hold office are all voting members who have attained the age of sixteen (16) years and are not under discipline, having been members of the Church for at least two (2) years.

2. As is noted in C12.01. of the Constitution, The voting membership of the Church Council shall consist of the pastor(s), the deacons (12), elders (6), trustees (6), Women of the Church (1), and the four appointed council members: Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, and a confirmed youth member. The Council will include the pastor(s), twenty-six (26) elected members plus up to four (4) appointed members. The Elected Council members will be elected in such a manner that one third will be coming on council each year. The four appointed members will be: Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, and a confirmed youth member.

a. The newly elected church council president may assign attendance requirements for each meeting with two (2) trustees, two (2) elders, three (3) deacons, one (1) women of the church representative and the appointed members present) on a rotating basis throughout the year. All church council members will be encouraged to attend as many council meetings as possible. All council members in attendance shall be eligible to vote.

3. The term of office for all Elected congregational representatives will be three(3) years. A Congregational representative may be re-elected to a second term but after two consecutive terms on a given committee may not be re-elected to that committee; however, may be elected to another committee.

4. Following the October Elections, the New congregational representatives shall elect the Officers of the congregation. The new congregational representatives will be installed on the 1st Sunday of January during the regularly scheduled Worship Service. While the duties of the New congregational representatives will officially begin on January 1st, the month of November Council meeting will be a joint meeting between the old and new congregational representatives to enable a more effective transition. During the November Council meeting, the election of a President and Vice President shall take place. The election of the President and Vice President shall be by separate ballots of the official congregational representatives. The President and Vice President will be elected for a one-year term to begin on January 1 of the coming year. The Newly-elected President and Vice President, in consultation with the Pastor(s) and considering individual desires and talents, shall appoint committee chairpersons prior to the January meeting of the Church Council.

5. A vacancy on any committee shall be filled by action of the Church Council until the next general congregational meeting.

6. The pastor(s) shall be ex officio member(s) of the Church Council with the power to Vote.

7. The Church Council shall not transact any business unless at least nine (9) of its members are present.

8. Meetings of the Church Council shall be held on the second Monday of the month, except as otherwise designated by the Church Council.

9. A special meeting of the Church Council may be called by notice given at a public service or mailed to each member five (5) days in advance. A special meeting may be called by the Pastor or the President or by any three (3) members of the Church Council.

10. To insure compliance with West Virginia State Law, for all legal actions, the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer will also be known as the Trustees of the Congregation.

B. Duties of the Officers of the Church Council

1. The President shall preside over meetings of the Church Council and the Congregation. The President shall also be an ex-officio member of all the committees of the Church.
2. The Vice-President shall preside in the absence of the President and shall serve as the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee.
3. The Recording Secretary shall keep the minutes of the Church Council and of the congregational meetings. The Secretary shall also be responsible for administrative matters, correspondence, and records of the Church Council. The Church Secretary will assist the Church Council Recording Secretary as requested.
4. The Treasurer shall be custodian of funds of the Congregation (local and synodical), shall disburse all such funds in accordance with the decisions of the Congregation or the Church Council, and shall present a duly-audited report in the Annual Report and such other reports to the Church Council as may be required. The Treasurer shall be bonded or bondable. The Treasurer shall also serve on the Stewardship Committee for the purposes of budget preparation.
5. The Financial Secretary shall serve as the collection agent of funds of the Congregation (local and synodical) and shall oversee the deposits of such funds in local bank accounts in accordance with the decisions of the Congregation or Church Council. The Financial Secretary shall make available at least an annual written statement of giving to members by January 31st of each year. The Financial Secretary shall present an audited financial statement in the Annual Report and such other reports to the Church Council as may be required. The Financial Secretary shall serve on the Stewardship Committee for purposes of budget preparation.

C. Committees of the Church Council.

1. The committees of the church council shall be trustees, elders, deacons and women of the church and each committee shall elect from its membership a chairperson and secretary.
2. The individual committees shall have the authority to appoint or elect additional congregational members.
3. The individual committees shall submit to the budget committee and council a budget request for the coming year to include any necessary salaries, equipment and materials necessary to meet the established goals and operational needs of the committee.
4. The Church Council shall at least twice a year invite the full membership of its regular committees together with the representatives chosen by the organizations of the Congregation to review the entire program of the congregation.

D. Duties of the Committees of Church Council

1. Trustees shall:

- _ include the president of the congregation and the pastor as advisory members.
- _ conduct regular meetings at such time and place as determined by the members.
- _ be responsible for the material properties of the congregation.
- _ be duly constituted according to state laws and shall hold property in behalf of the congregation.
- _ report its activities to the annual meeting of the congregation and such other times as the congregation may decide.
- _ shall be responsible for the support and accomplishments of the following:
 - a. The Committee on Stewardship shall have special responsibilities under the guidance of the Pastor(s) and Church Council for the development of good stewardship attitudes in the members of the congregation in regard to time, talent and treasures, to provide for the training and utilization of members of the congregation for the work of Christ's kingdom, and to ensure the financial stability of the congregation and its work through a developed program of dedicated, proportionate, first-fruits giving.
 - b. Specific responsibilities of the Stewardship committee include the following:
 - 1) Educate the congregation on Christian stewardship principles - to include time, talents and treasures;
 - 2) Maintain a program to discover and enlist for Christ's Service, the talents God has given to the members of His Church (old and new, young people and adults);
 - 3) Provide educational opportunities to help members assess their gifts and to help identify opportunities for service;
 - 4) Give every member an opportunity, annually, to make a commitment of his/her treasure for Christ's work through the congregation;
 - 5) Develop and recommend to the Church Council and upon approval to the congregation a budget for the coming year.
 - 6) The Church Treasurer, Endowment Fund Treasurer and the Financial Secretary by nature of their positions will be members of Stewardship Committee for purpose of Budget Preparation.
 - c. Resource management Committee responsibilities shall include the following:
 - 1) Responsibility to monitor all church-owned investments and to reinvest/disburse investment earnings as required.
 - 2) Ensure that all insurance policies of the church are adequate to cover all church properties.
 - 3) Manage all monies received through wills, bequests and other special gifts.
 - 4) Provide a Committee Member to serve on the Church Audit Committee.
 - 5) Provide a monthly report of all investment activities to the Council and a report detailing all investments and investment activities for the year to the congregation in the Annual Report.
 - d. The Church Properties Committee responsibilities shall include the following:

- 1) Overview of the Church facilities and equipment and to make recommendations to the Church Council/Congregation on purchases and repairs to equipment and church property;
- 2) Employ and direct the church custodial staff.
- 3) Schedule the Church-member sponsored activities.
- 4) Custodial support and supervision.

e. Bequest management

f. Investment management

g. The Audit (Financial Review) Committee should meet at least once per year to perform an audit on the Financial Records of the Treasurer and Financial Secretary of the congregation. The audit shall take place following the closing out of the records of the previous year but must be completed prior to the Annual Congregational Meeting in March. The committee shall submit a formal report to the Church Council for consideration at the regularly-scheduled February Church Council meeting. In addition the committee is responsible to oversee the audit of the Special Funds accounts.

2. Elders shall:

- _ be responsible for the appointment of the confirmed youth member to church council. The youth must be confirmed, but less than 21 years of age.
- _ include the president of the congregation and the pastor as advisory members.
- _ conduct regular meetings at such time and place as determined by the members.
- _ see to it that the preaching of the pure word of God is upheld and proclaimed, that due and ample provision is made for the instruction of the youth, that they be concerned for the general spiritual care of the congregation.
- _ shall be responsible for the support and accomplishments of the following:

a. The Committee on Parish Education shall have special responsibilities under the guidance of the Pastor(s) and Church Council to operate the Church Sunday School, other Educational programs of the Congregation, catechism, and the Church Library; and to make recommendations thereon to the Church Council. The Committee on Parish Education shall appoint the Director of Christian Education for a one (1) year renewable term of office, with the approval of the Church Council.

- 1.) The officer responsible for the administration of the Sunday School shall be the Director of Christian Education. He/She shall administer the Sunday School under the direction of the Parish Education Committee and shall be the chairperson of that committee.
- 2.) The Director of Christian Education shall be appointed for a one (1) year renewable term of office by the Elders with the approval of the Church Council.
- 3.) Any committee vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the Elders with the approval of the Congregational Council.
- 4.) In the event that a member of the Congregation can not be found to fill the Director of Christian Education position, a paid staff member may be hired and would be known as the Director of Christian Education. Condition of employment

would be stipulated in a job description that would include qualifications and responsibilities of the position.

b. The Committee on Worship and Music shall have special responsibilities under the guidance of the Pastor(s) and Church Council for all matters pertaining to the Congregation's Worship and music program and shall make recommendations thereon to the Church Council. Specific responsibilities of the Worship and Music Committee would include:

1.) An annual assessment of the worship life of the Congregation to include weaknesses, strengths, and recommendations to the Pastor(s) as to where improvements could be made (e.g. variety of worship experiences, hymnody, changes in settings, guest speakers/artists from outside the church);

2.) Meet at least two (2) times a year with the Director of Music Ministries to assess the needs of the Music Ministry Program of the Congregation (budgetary resources for sheet music, instrumentalists, soloists, etc.);

3.) Meet as requested with the Pastoral Staff to do planning for Special seasons/ services in the life of the Church;

4.) Assure the training and scheduling of Lay Assisting Ministers, Lectors, Acolytes and Altar Guild are completed in a timely manner to the requirements of the Worship Services of the congregation.

c. Pastor and Secretarial Support Committee shall meet at least one (1) time each year with the Pastor(s) and church secretary. The Committee's purpose is to enhance the relationship between the Pastor(s), church secretary, and the congregation. The ELCA provides suggested guidelines for the Staff Support Committee meetings.

d. The Committee on Youth Ministries shall have special responsibilities under the guidance of the Pastoral Staff for the development of sound inspirational programs; of special activities; and of social activities for the youth and young adults of the Congregation.

e. The Elders shall appoint a confirmed youth member to the church council for a period of one year. The Church Council must approve the appointment. That person may be re-appointed. No youth may serve after reaching their twenty-first birthday, unless that birthday occurs during their year of service.

3. Deacons shall:

- include the president of the congregation and the pastor as advisory members.
- conduct regular meetings at such time and place as determined by the members.
- care for the contribution of the members to the necessary support of the church that the needy are provided for and the sick visited.
- shall be responsible for support and accomplishments of the membership ministry
Christian fellowship and evangelism ministry

a. The Parish Fellowship Committee shall have special responsibilities under the guidance of the Pastoral Staff for the development of the family life of the Congregation. A variety of

activities should be planned to help develop the camaraderie of the Church membership.

b. The Lay Ministry Committee shall have special responsibilities under the guidance of the Pastoral Staff to enable the laity to take an active roll in the worship leadership of the congregation. Specific responsibilities would include:

- 1) Organizing and training of ushering teams that would have the responsibility of handing out bulletins, seating of members/guests, collection of offering, and collection of communion cards and the directing of members/guests to the Lord's Table;
- 2) Training and scheduling of Greeters who have the responsibility of welcoming visitors and guests to worship on Sunday Morning and other special services.

c. The Public Relations Committee under the guidance of the Pastoral staff and Church Council shall work to present to the public a Christian image that reflects favorably upon the work of Christ and of the congregation. Specific responsibilities of the Public Relations Committee would include the following:

- 1) Assessment of the Church's image in the community and how to more positively present the Church's ministry to those outside the Church;
- 2) Investigate and recommend to the Church Council means by which St. Mark Church can become more visible (e.g. use of other media - TV, Church Brochures, Road Signs, Newspaper advertising, etc.);
- 3) Assist other committees and organizations within the congregation in advertising programs which may be of interest to those in the community who are not St. Mark Church members.

d. The Committee of Evangelism shall have special responsibilities under the Guidance of the Pastoral staff, and Church Council for the development of a sound program on evangelism, and shall make recommendations to the Church Council.

Responsibilities of the Evangelism committee would include:

- 1) Following up on the visitors to St. Mark Church;
- 2) Monitoring of membership attendance;
- 3) Organizing and carrying out of evangelistic efforts;
- 4) Close monitoring of new members during their first year of membership;
- 5) Yearly submit a budget request for the coming year based on ministries which are being planned for the following year.

4 . Women of the Church

a. Purpose: As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.

b. Mission Areas: Women of the ELCA carries out its purpose statement in three mission

areas. These mission areas are intentionally interdependent and overlapping.

- 1.) Community: To enable each woman to value herself and others as created in God's image and redeemed through Christ; and to build up and celebrate relationships that are global, diverse and interdependent.
- 2.) Growth: To provide a variety of learning experiences that strengthen each woman as a whole person, develop her potential and equip her for ministry.
- 3.) Action: To enable women to articulate and act upon their faith as disciples of Christ in all areas of life.

To accomplish this purpose, Women of St. Mark shall:

- 1.) Establish and support units to carry out God's mission in the church, the society, and the world.
- 2.) Equip participants and encourage all to grow as whole persons, value themselves and others, articulate and act upon their faith, and witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- 3.) Advocate for the oppressed and voiceless and urge change in systems and structures which exclude and alienate, and work for peace and justice as messengers of hope.
- 4.) Relate to other women's organizations ecumenically and globally.
- 5.) Provide for development and distribution of resources and a periodical for its participants.
- 6.) Provide for flexible structures and decision-making processes that foster interdependence and involve people in making decisions that affect them.

d. Functions

- 1.) Elect from its own membership a chairperson and a secretary.
- 2.) Include the president of the congregation and the pastor as advisory members.
- 3.) Provide nutritional and spiritual support for those in need
- 4.) Oversee the operation of the kitchen and coordinate various luncheons, receptions and dinners throughout the year
- 5.) Coordinate church activities such as; All Daughters banquet, Lenten tea, Christmas Party, and mission projects.

Part V. **CHURCH HISTORIAN**

A. The Church Historian(s) shall be appointed by the Church Council Secretary, with the approval of the Church Council, for a one-year renewable term of office.

B. The Church Historian(s) shall be responsible for maintaining archives of all congregational historical records.

Part VI **CONFLICTING LOYALTIES**

A. This Congregation rejects any religious teachings or creeds which do not profess the Triune God and point to God's Grace in Jesus Christ as the source of the world's *salvation*. This congregation rejects all fellowship with organizations with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America rejects fellowship.

B. Ceremonies of sectarian religious groups, lodges, or other such organizations shall not be permitted on the Church premises.

C. The Pastor(s) of the Congregation represents both the congregation and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The pastor(s) is instructed to use good judgement pertaining to his or her participation in inter-denominational or inter-faith events. The pastor(s) is further encouraged to rely upon the guidance of the Synodical Bishop pertaining to the appropriateness of his or her participation in particular inter-denominational or interfaith events or other religious ceremonies.

Part VII **USE OF THE CHURCH**

A. The property of the Congregation shall be for the use of the Congregation in its normal function as a Lutheran Church and shall not be used in any way not in harmony with the purposes of the Congregation.

B. Property of the Congregation shall not be lent or rented to any group or individual not affiliated with the Congregation or with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America unless approved by the Pastor in consultation with the Church Council President for occasional use or by the Church Council in the case of regular use.

Part VIII **REPORTS OF ORGANIZATIONS**

A. All committees and organizations of the church, which handle Congregational funds, shall submit account status reports to the Church Office (with a copy to the Treasurer) at least 15 days prior to the publication of the Annual Report. All Committees and organizations shall also submit report at other times as requested by the Church Council.

Part IX **BYLAWS**

These By Laws may be amended, changed, and/or updated in accordance with the procedure as outlined in the St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church Constitution, Chapter 17: Amendments.

Approved: _____

Secretary: _____

President: _____