

2026 Annual Mission Report



People of Hope, ELCA
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www.peopleofhope.com

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Letter From Pastor Dan

Dear Member Missionaries,

As we look back on this past year, I am filled with deep gratitude—for God’s faithfulness, and for you, the people who make up People of Hope. This annual report tells the story of a year marked by challenge and change, but even more so by resilience, generosity, and hope.

Together, we continued to live into our calling to be a place where God’s love is made real for everyone—without exception. In worship, we gathered to pray, to listen, to sing, and to be reminded that we are not alone. In fellowship, we strengthened relationships and welcomed new faces. In service, we showed up for our neighbors, responding with compassion, courage, and care when it was needed most.

This year has also called us to be honest about the world around us. We witnessed pain, division, and uncertainty—but we also saw countless examples of grace. Again and again, this congregation chose love over fear, community over isolation, and faith over despair. That is no small thing. It is holy and sacred work.

None of what you will read in the pages that follow happens by accident. It happens because of your time, your talents, your prayers, and your financial generosity. Every meeting, every act of service, every gift given in trust contributes to the larger story God is writing through People of Hope.

As we look ahead, I am filled with hope. Not because the road will be easy, but because God continues to be present among us—and because we walk this road together. May we remain rooted in faith, open to the Spirit’s leading, and bold in our love for the world God so deeply loves.

Thank you for being who you are. It is a privilege to serve alongside you.

With gratitude and hope,

Pastor Dan Doering

Statement From MLT Chair

Hello Friends!

What a year 2025 has been! First, I want to thank each member of the MLT: Aaron Steele, Dianna Parks, Don Simmons, Dave Young, Marcia Blackburn, Sam Aardsma, and Wendy Butler, for their time, care and candidness as we met and worked to lead the congregation. Secondly, I want to thank our congregation for continuing to show up, to volunteer your time, and care for our communities. Lastly, but certainly not least, I want to thank Pastor Dan for his leadership and vulnerability throughout the year. Dan has consistently shown up for not only the People of Hope community, but the broader Rochester community. He held his faith and his values out to be an inspiration to others, to give a voice to those who feel they are unrepresented, and to work towards bettering our community. Thank you, Pastor Dan!

I have been deeply blessed to be a part of our community, to lead our MLT over the past year, and take part in some big decisions. We have talked about what a vibrant community looks like. We have talked about some dreams that shoot for the stars. We met more challenges related to selling Lot A in 2025, and we have shifted to look at another option that should remove our property tax liability and is strongly related to our mission. We are working to eliminate Realm and the costs associated with it, moving fully forward with Breeze. We have received very generous gifts from our congregation and worked hard to ensure we are being thoughtful and prioritizing our needs as we allocate resources. In 2025 we voted to become a sanctuary church and stand with our neighbors.

The work that we have been a part of has shown our community who we are, and how committed we are to our mission and our communities. “People of Hope” reminds me to remain hopeful, especially when the world around us is filled with chaos, division and devastation.

Thank you for reminding me that there are good people in this world! I look forward to moving into 2026 with strength and courage to continue fighting the good fight.

Violet Steinkamp

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Agenda For Annual Mission Event

Sunday, January 25, 2026 - 10:15 am

1. Call to Order
2. Opening Prayer and Devotions
3. Appointment of Parliamentarian
4. Appointment of Tellers
5. Voice Vote to approve minutes from Annual Mission Event - January 28, 2024 (p.6)
6. Introduction of Nominees/Nominations from the Floor
 - a. Mission Leadership Team
 - b. Treasurer
 - c. SEMN Synod Assembly Voting Members
 - d. SEMN Synod Assembly Voting Members (Alternates)
 - e. Nominating Team
7. Approval and Presentation of the Ballot
8. Treasurer's Report (p.9)
9. Second Ballot (if needed)
10. Approval of Consent Agenda
 - a. Pastor's Report (p.3)
 - b. MLT Chair Report
 - c. Reports from Ministry Partners (p.13)
11. Proposed Budget for 2026
12. Discussion and vote on the following motion: "The MLT moves to enter into a five-year lease agreement with The Village for Lot A for no charge with the exception of any property taxes assessed."
13. Revised People of Hope Constitution
14. Vote to approve the revised People of Hope Constitution
15. Announcements
16. Closing Prayer
17. Transfer of Chair
18. Adjournment

Annual Meeting 2025

January 26, 2025

Diana Parks called the meeting to order

Pastor Dan Doering offered an opening prayer

Pastor Dan nominated Dan Christiansen to serve as parliamentarian, Rosilyn Steinkamp seconded. Motion passed.

Karen Doring moved that Mat Morrissey and Danielle Reuss serve as tellers, Kat Roeck seconded. Motion passed.

Larry Stacy moved to adopt the minutes of the 2024 Annual Mission Event. Darrel Peterson seconded. Motion passed.

Pastor Dan Doering moved to approve the ballot as listed, Larry Stacy seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- MLT: Sam Aardsma, Marcia Blackburn, Dianna Parks, Aaron Steele
- Nominating committee: Will Shouten, LoRi Morissey, Cooper Morissey
- Synod assembly reps: Dianna Parks, Larry Stacy
- Synod assembly alternates: Jackie Lee, Rosilyn Steinkamp

Dave Young presented the Treasurer's Report. Karen Doering moved to approve the report, Jackie Lee seconded. Motion passed.

- The goal of cleaning up to make the budget more understandable is shared with Ortlly.
- Line items will start to align for easier understanding.

Violet Steinkamp motioned to approve, Matt Morrisey seconded the motion to approve the pastor's report and reports from ministry partners. Motion passed.

Dave Young discussed the Special Appeal report.

- Amounts reported at the time included all giving, not just specialized money. The total amount was not just the extra money.

- Dave recommends paying off our current loan 39,585.55 which will save 6,000 a year. We would still have sufficient funds to be sitting in a good place going into the year.

Dave Young moved to pay off the current loan, Marilyn Hannman seconded the motion. Motion passed

Pastor Dan Doering moved to approve the 2025 Proposed Budget; Mary Hair seconded. Motion passed.

- Payroll 3% cost of living increase
- Maintenance items that we did not do last year we would like to do this year
 - Lighting, painting, and parking lot maintenance

A community discussion was held to discuss Lot A.

Thomas Brown moved that POH become a sanctuary for those seeking asylum., Dave Young seconded the motion. Parliamentarian Dan Christianson said this motion must be referred to the MLT. Thomas removed his motion per this. Second agreed.

Community announcements followed.

- Marilyn Hansmann announced a “plug” for the Bible study on world religion.
- Dave Young reminded everyone that he puts information in the weekly newsletter in the “How are we doing?” section.
- Diana Parks thanked to Cindi Johnson and Mary Hair for their service on the MLT as they are outgoing.

Violet Steinkamp assumed the role of MLT Chair.

Rosilyn Stenkamp offered a closing prayer.

Pastor Dan Doering moved to adjourn, Cindi Johnson seconded. Motion passed.

Sample Ballot

(Page left intentionally blank. Ballot will be provided on or before
January 25, 2026)

Treasurer's Report

Submitted by Dave Young

Dear Fellow Member Missionaries,

We started off 2025 on a strong note thanks to your generous response to the year-end appeal of 2024. We paid off our loan with the bank, upgraded access to the building, did some needed maintenance on the parking lot, purchased an additional lawnmower, and did an upgrade to the lighting in the worship area.

However, our month-to-month operating expenses continue to exceed our scheduled giving, requiring the transfer of \$19,500.00 from our savings and building accounts this summer and fall to meet those operating expenses. But again, we came through with another generous response to an appeal to close out 2025, leaving us with a fairly comfortable cash balance to start 2026.

The MLT's proposed budget for 2026 is similar to the approved budget of 2025. The MLT is recommending a 3% increase in compensation for staff and will be looking at and prioritizing the many maintenance issues that impact our worship home.

Again, THANK YOU ALL!

Dave Young

treasurer@peopleofhope.com

9:29 AM
 01/14/26
 Cash Basis

PEOPLE OF HOPE
Balance Sheet
 As of December 31, 2025

	Dec 31, 25	Dec 31, 24
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings		
1130 - CHECKING GENERAL	9,731.56	48,351.77
1140 - CHECKING BUILDING	2,952.24	7,552.24
1150 - CHECKING 8110	975.13	1,272.43
1200 - SAVINGS		
1201 - SAVINGS - GENERAL	0.00	-1,365.63
1210 - SAVINGS-HOPE FUND	0.00	1,286.41
1233 - SAVINGS-GLOBAL/LOCAL MISSIONS	0.00	2,504.00
1236 - SAVINGS-STEWARDS OF HOPE	0.00	6,252.68
1200 - SAVINGS - Other	2,345.52	0.00
Total 1200 - SAVINGS	2,345.52	8,677.46
1240 - new savings	0.00	50.00
Total Checking/Savings	16,004.45	65,903.90
Other Current Assets		
1010 - MISSION INVESTMENT FUND	0.00	2,086.96
1300 - MUTUAL FUND	12,043.67	7,359.11
Total Other Current Assets	12,043.67	9,446.07
Total Current Assets	28,048.12	75,349.97
Fixed Assets		
1400 - EQUIPMENT MISSION CENTER	14,199.93	6,099.94
1500 - LAND AND BUILDINGS		
1510 - Accumulated Depreciation	-553.33	-553.33
1500 - LAND AND BUILDINGS - Other	2,158,612.00	2,158,612.00
Total 1500 - LAND AND BUILDINGS	2,158,058.67	2,158,058.67
Total Fixed Assets	2,172,258.60	2,164,158.61
TOTAL ASSETS	2,200,306.72	2,239,508.58
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Other Current Liabilities		
2011 - FEDERAL TAXES PAYABLE	546.03	490.13
2013 - STATE TAXES PAYABLE	84.00	60.00
2051 - Payroll Liabilities	6.27	6.27
2055 - ACCRUED PAYROLL TAXES	332.40	236.22
2100 - child support payable	239.38	0.00
22222 - EARNEST MONEY	0.00	10,000.00
Total Other Current Liabilities	1,208.08	10,792.62
Total Current Liabilities	1,208.08	10,792.62
Long Term Liabilities		
2061 - NP 9925	0.00	39,585.55
Total Long Term Liabilities	0.00	39,585.55
Total Liabilities	1,208.08	50,378.17

AM
4/26
1 Basis

PEOPLE OF HOPE
Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 2025

	Dec 31, 25	Dec 31, 24
Equity		
3020 - Temp. Restricted Net Assets		
3027 - GARDEN FUND	0.00	-200.00
3034 - HOPE FUND	0.00	425.50
3046 - STEWARDS OF HOPE FUND	0.00	6,252.68
3048 - GLOBAL/LOCAL MISSIONS FUND	0.00	2,504.00
3049 - SUMMER APPEAL	0.00	2,999.84
3050 - SOUND SYSTEM	0.00	425.00
Total 3020 - Temp. Restricted Net Assets	0.00	12,407.02
32000 - Unrestricted Net Assets	2,201,678.01	2,154,649.45
Net Income	-2,579.37	22,073.94
Total Equity	2,199,098.64	2,189,130.41
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	2,200,306.72	2,239,508.58

Ministry Partner Reports

Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA 2025 Ministry Report



We gathered at **Council as Leaders** to think collaboratively and further equip ourselves for ministry as lay and rostered leaders.



Nuer Community Lutheran Church, a new worshipping community, was established! Rev. Yang Tut was ordained.



We had four new entrants to the **Candidacy** process! 13 were in process as '25 concluded. 19 attended the annual **Candidacy Retreat** at Good Earth Village.



A variety of **Power and Boundaries educational workshops** were offered to equip church council members, faith formation professionals, and rostered ministers for leadership.

“See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God, **and that is what we are.**”
—1 John 3:1 (emphasis added)

Through Christ, we have been made children of God! What good news! It is out of this identity, the truest proclamation of who we are, that we live as followers of Jesus in this world.

As members of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA, we strive to *walk together proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ*. We live in this community of faith, across sixteen counties with 100,000 baptized members as the children of God. Because this is who we are, we celebrate all the ways God is at work in us and through us – not only in our own communities but throughout the synod and church - for the sake of the world.

Join me in celebrating all the ways God has been at work in our midst over the past year, and let's look ahead, together, with joyful anticipation for what God will yet do, in us and through us, for the sake of the good news of Jesus Christ.

In Christ,

Rev. Regina Hassanally
Bishop Regina Hassanally



Rev. Sarah Krolak was called to serve as pastor of **Connections Ministry/Shelter Church**, which is a Synod Authorized Outreach Ministry based in Mankato.



Synod members participated in the **Lutheran Church of Colombia's National Assembly** where Rev. John Rojas was elected as bishop.

We gathered under the theme “Remember what God has done. Prepare for what God will do.” at the **Synod Assembly**. Three resolutions were passed regarding *Support for the Least of These and the Ministries that Serve Them* and *Expanded Preaching and Teaching on the Stories of Women in the Bible and Use of Female Imagery of God and of God's Work in the World*. On the first ballot, Bishop Hassanally was elected to a second six-year term.



About 140 ministry leaders attended the **Fall Theological Retreat**, which includes fellowship, education, and retreat. Rev. Leila Ortiz led the presentations and discussion on pneumatological estuaries, with the theme of Baptism in Muddy Waters.



17 Rostered Ministers joined our synod!



A YEAR OF PATIENCE, RESILIENCE, HOPE, & JOY

When we gather each January before the second semester, we write words on wooden stars during worship. We remember how God guided the magi to the Christ child in the shining of a star and ponder what God might be calling us to in the next year. I encourage the students to place their star where they might see it regularly. Last January, the word “patience” came to my mind, and I immediately wanted to run the other direction like the reluctant prophet, Job. *I don’t want to have to have more patience! I’ve already faced too much uncertainty and upheaval following the fire at the LCC!* A friend and colleague gave another star to me the following week, this one labeled “abundance.” That sounded much better. Suspecting I might need both, though, “patience” and “abundance” have looked up at me from my table for the past year.

To tell you all the times and ways in which we had surprises and setbacks through the rebuilding process would take far too long. Suffice it to say, we have needed patience. The lot where the LCC building once stood still lies empty, waiting until warmer temps for us to break ground and finally, *finally* rebuild.

Dear ones, to tell you all the times we have experienced abundance in the past year would also take a long time. We have more first year students showing up for dinner, worship, Bible study, and other activities than I’ve seen in a while. They are earnest, engaging, full of wonder, joy, and beautiful questions and ideas. Our returning students have done an incredible job of welcoming--welcoming in a way that allows the newcomers to influence and change the community, too. Our student ministers, Elsie and Emma, listen well to their peers, preparing to offer more Bible study (per request!) next semester and nights of service for nursing students and others who want to be involved in community and world.

It continues to be a joy & honor to serve the LCC. God is leading us through the wilderness and teaching us what it means to hold patience, abundance, resilience, hope, and joy together. We trust that God is good, all the time. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your involvement and support in this time and always.

With patience *and* abundant hope, Pastor Corrine



Our new logo is based off the LuMin (ELCA campus ministry network) logo. This helps people recognize ELCA campus ministries nationwide. The rainbow portion represents our theological commitment to welcome & claim belovedness, esp. for our LGBTQIA+ siblings. The other colors represent the higher ed institutions in Winona-- purple for Winona State, green for Southeast Tech, and red for St. Mary's. The cross is our center and reaches out to the wider world.



Good Earth Village gratefully acknowledges the many faithful investments from our congregational members and partners. From your financial contributions to volunteer hours to providing program leadership to hosting our staff to your prayers and other service, **you all make the Village.**

FINANCES

The total budget for Good Earth Village in 2025 was \$1,366,756. Over 59% of annual financial needs are met by donations from individuals, congregations, WELCA groups, conferences, and businesses. Congregational and WELCA giving comprised 10% of our total gifts received for the year.

Good Earth Village gratefully acknowledges congregational financial support that was offered in monthly, annual, and special gifts/grants.

- **71 congregations** made a financial, missional investment in this outdoor ministry through unrestricted donations, event sponsorships, and grants totaling \$75,175. This is a decrease in participation of 7%, and a reduction in funds of 20% from 2024.
- **38 WELCA partners** made combined contributions of \$9,289. This is a 19% decrease in participation and an 25% decrease in funds.
- **29 congregations** held retreats at Good Earth Village. This is an increase of 26%!

PROGRAMMING Highlights

Summer Camp 2025

1. Twenty young adult leaders, including six international staff from Colombia (3), England (1), Ireland (1), Mexico (1).
2. We served 598 campers onsite representing 104 congregations.
3. We provided 7 off-site day camps at congregations.
4. The Good Earth Village endowment covered the cost of four high school students in the staff-in-training program.
5. Provided financial assistance to 80% of campers in campership and discounts.
6. A curriculum committee was assembled with pastors from six congregations.

Lunch and Learn Series

We offered seven programs in 2025 that included themes of nature, mental health, grief, race, and music.

Women's Day

We moved our annual Women's Day program to March from June to coincide with International Women's Month. The topic was "Crafting Wellness" and it was led by Juli Johnson of Iowa City, Iowa. Fifteen congregations were represented by 29 women. The program was a "mini camp experience" with devotions, presentations about different types of wellness, activities, and (naturally) food.

Community Sing Events

1. Coffee & Carols in Austin – December 2025 co-sponsored with St. Olaf Lutheran Church
2. Beer & Carols in Albert Lea – December 2025 co-sponsored with First Lutheran Church, Grace Lutheran Church, and 112 on Broadway
3. Beer & Carols in Rochester – December 2025 co-sponsored with People of Hope ELCA and Little Thistle Brewery

Mission

To EXPLORE God in creation, GROW faith in community, and ENGAGE the world as followers of Jesus.

Purpose

To be a place for Christ-centered retreat and community.

Core Values

Community, Faith, Friendship, Fun, Openness, Peace, Service

Join us for our **Annual Meeting** on March 1, 2026.

25303 Old Town Drive, Spring Valley, MN 55975

Registration will begin at 2:00 and the meeting will begin at 2:30.

Our full annual report will be available at this meeting.

www.goodearthvillage.org for more information

Good Earth Village is committed to being an effective ministry partner and welcomes your ideas. Please look for new and continued ways to lift outdoor ministry to make faith formation stronger together. When we partner, our youth and families benefit by growing stronger in their faith and relationships.

Good Earth Village Staff are available to worship with you and/or present portions of your worship services or adult education hour. Please contact us at 507-346-2494 or info@goodearthvillage.org to schedule.

2025 Annual Report to Congregations p. 2

Proposed Budget

<u>Income</u>	<u>2025 Budget</u>	<u>2025 Actual</u>	<u>2026 Proposed</u>
Mission Giving	\$ 266,400.00		
Building Income/Thrivent	\$ 9,600.00		
	\$ 276,000.00	\$ 223,490.28	\$ 280,300.00
<u>Expense</u>	\$ 276,000.00		
<u>Administration</u>	\$ 24,450.00	\$ 15,854.46	\$ 15,600.00
Bank Fees	\$ 600.00	\$ 617.45	\$ 700.00
Vanco Fees	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,793.28	\$ 1,000.00
ACS Fees	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 2,904.00	\$ 3,000.00
Copier/Printing	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,048.48	\$ 1,500.00
Postage	\$ 100.00	\$ 145.20	\$ 150.00
Office Supplies	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 2,350.85	\$ 2,500.00
Technology	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 720.00	\$ 1,000.00
Licensing	\$ 750.00	\$ 507.00	\$ 750.00
Subscriptions		\$ 88.67	\$ 100.00
Advertising	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 757.48	\$ 1,500.00
Background Checks		\$ -	
Legal Fees	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,397.16	\$ 1,000.00
Accounting	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 2,400.00
Misc. Expense		\$ 1,273.07	
Interest Expense PAID	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 451.82	\$ -
Loan Principal PAID	\$ 3,000.00	\$ -	\$ -
<u>Mission Center</u>	\$ 44,800.00	\$ 55,054.47	\$ 50,000.00
Minnesota Energy Resources	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,840.28	\$ 2,000.00
Rochester Public Utilities	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 6,896.61	\$ 7,000.00
Phone/Internet	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 2,783.44	\$ 3,000.00
Cleaning	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 6,525.57	\$ 6,500.00
Pest Control	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,500.00
Waste Removal	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,478.23	\$ 4,500.00
Security/Fire System	\$ 500.00	\$ 5,643.63	\$ 2,000.00
Fire Protection	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 7,112.60	\$ 500.00
Insurance	\$ 9,400.00	\$ 11,260.11	\$ 12,000.00
HVAC (Tonna Contract)	\$ 2,400.00		\$ 2,000.00
Real Estate Taxes	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,514.00	\$ 9,000.00
<u>Kitchen</u>	\$ 600.00	\$ 1,117.91	\$ 600.00
Supplies	\$ 100.00	\$ 49.70	\$ 100.00
Food	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,068.21	\$ 500.00

Education/Youth	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 1,800.20	\$ 3,000.00
Middle/High School	\$ 500.00	\$ 226.30	\$ 500.00
Adult	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ 500.00
Learning Time	\$ 500.00	\$ 122.50	\$ 500.00
Leadership	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,451.40	\$ 1,500.00
Worship	\$ 3,650.00	\$ 4,134.20	\$ 4,500.00
Music	\$ 400.00	\$ 1,055.97	\$ 1,000.00
Materials	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,970.23	\$ 2,000.00
Communion	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ 500.00
Technology	\$ 750.00	\$ 1,108.00	\$ 1,000.00
Building/Facilities	\$ 40,855.86	\$ 17,086.06	\$ 41,500.00
Maintenance	\$ 33,355.86	\$ 12,079.99	\$ 35,000.00
Landscaping/Lawn	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 956.07	\$ 1,500.00
Snow Removal	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 4,050.00	\$ 5,000.00
Special Events	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -	\$ 1,500.00
Synod Assembly	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00
Befrienders	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ 500.00
Additional Staff	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Payroll	\$ 95,825.00	\$ 86,071.74	\$ 102,200.00
(Cola 3%)	\$ 65,200.00	\$ 63,421.42	\$ 65,500.00
Pastor	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 14,352.44	\$ 18,200.00
Office Coordinator	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 6,577.60	\$ 16,000.00
Employer Taxes	\$ 2,025.00	\$ 1,720.28	\$ 2,000.00
Workman's Comp	\$ 2,100.00	\$ -	\$ 500.00
Pulpit Supply/Temp		\$ 300.00	
Pastor Expenses	\$ 51,319.14	\$ 44,450.61	\$ 52,400.00
Housing Allowance	\$ 27,900.00	\$ 26,955.04	\$ 28,000.00
Insurance/Benefits	\$ 11,163.14	\$ 8,868.20	\$ 11,700.00
SSA	\$ 5,356.00	\$ 5,138.54	\$ 5,300.00
Mileage/Travel	\$ 2,100.00	\$ 1,811.50	\$ 2,100.00
Cell Phone	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,363.90	\$ 1,500.00
Continuing Ed/Books	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 313.43	\$ 2,000.00
Books/Subscriptions		\$ -	\$ 500.00
Conference	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ 500.00
Guest Pastor	\$ 600.00	\$ -	\$ 600.00
Meals	\$ 200.00	\$ -	\$ 200.00
Benevolence (\$0.00 in 2024)	\$ 9,000.00	\$ -	\$ 9,000.00
Synod	\$ 9,000.00	\$ -	\$ 9,000.00
Adjustment			
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$ 276,000.00	\$ 225,569.65	\$ 280,300.00



The Village Agricultural Cooperative

Land Use Proposal: People of Hope ELCA Property

The Village Ag Coop has been building urban and rural farms in and around Rochester since 2019. Amanda Nigon-Crowley grew up on a local dairy/beef/commercial crop farm just west of PoH. After being away for 10 years, Amanda came home to the Rochester farm as a mental health practitioner and advocate for public health. Kim migrated to Rochester at the age of 8 years old from refugee camps outside of Cambodia, and has been a hopeful advocate for Rochester's immigrant population since starting Rochester's first Asian grocery store with his family in the 80's. Together we realized that there are people who want to grow their own food but lack land access, and a partnership was formed.

While land access remains our primary mission, we have since expanded to include providing education and resources to farmers and growing the farmers of tomorrow as a part of our core goals. We now host two weekly seasonal markets in Rochester and managed six farms in 2025, totalling 22 acres. We are phasing out of our Haverhill township farm, as some of our farmers have transitioned fully into the space. We are also phasing out of the History Center to make space for their mission to become a more robust site for visitors. The Village continues to seek more land to meet our community's demands to be self-sustaining and also to feed those in need. We hope to partner with PoH and make use of this conveniently located land.

We became a 501(c)3 nonprofit in 2022 and have built sustaining partnerships with Mayo Clinic, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, the USDA and more. We have been recognized for our environmental impacts, our impacts in food security, community mental health, cancer prevention, economic impact, food sovereignty, and bolstering our local food banks with tens of thousands of pounds of fresh produce. We are partnered with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and several programs statewide that are working together to ensure that farming remains a viable way of making a living, and that we do so without destroying our planet.

At People of Hope, 2.8 acres lies adjacent to all of the amenities that we look for when building a community farm. City water, electricity, busline and parking are all within reach. The proximity is close to several of our farms, and our office is located on site. The land is flat and fertile and receives full sun. We propose utilizing this site to become a community farm for 5 to 10 families so that they can grow food for themselves and our community. Because the land is located in a flood plain, we would hope to work with local water experts to mitigate potential soil loss due to tillage and incorporate pollinator habitat into our plans.

While not completely necessary, a five year lease would provide us with sustainability to build in the amenities that we need to function at our highest level. Because of heavy pest pressure from deer and other wildlife, we would want to fence in the area. Irrigation and accessible tool storage also increase farm efficiency. There are also amenities at the History Center, including a washing/packing station, shed, green house and hoop house, that will be needing new homes as we phase out. A five year lease opens doors to funding and support from the Nature Conservancy and the Natural Resource Conservation Services. Fencing, irrigation, trees and perennial shrubs could all be obtained through these partnerships. It also allows our farmers the peace of mind to invest in soil health and know that it will be there for at least a few years to come.



The Village Agricultural Cooperative

Land Use Proposal: People of Hope ELCA Property

We have a small but mighty team that have demonstrated success in winning grants which enable us to build these farms and sustain our operations. We are resourceful, connected, and able to build farms without putting extra financial stress on the land owners. We have a dedicated farming network of more than 200 families that are farming with us, and we are seeing our mission actualized as we open food businesses, small farms, and markets that feed our city. We are also well-connected with several local food banks and are actively grant writing so that we can supply fresh produce for years to come to those who are food insecure. We hope you will consider partnering with us on our mission to increase food security for our region.

For more information, visit our website at RochVillage.org.

Tour one of our community farms or get in touch with our hosts at Rochester Covenant Church, Community Presbyterian Church, History Center of Olmsted County, or Jubilo farm. References are available upon request.

For more information, feel free to contact me at amandanc@rochvillage.org, or 507-271-7069.

Sincerely,

Amanda Nigon-Crowley
Executive Director
11/12/25

People of Hope Constitution 2025 Revision

[Note: In this document, all provisions marked with an asterisk (*) are provisions required by the churchwide assembly of all congregations in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. These provisions, from the 2019 Model Constitution for Congregations, define how congregations work together as one Church and can only be amended by the Churchwide Assembly. When congregations wish to update their governing documents, congregations include required provisions from the most recent edition of the Model Constitution for Congregations. In this document, constitutional provisions begin with a “C”, bylaws begin with a “B”, and continuing resolutions begin with an “R”.]

***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 *People of Hope*.

C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws and continuing resolutions, the congregation of *People of Hope* is hereinafter designated as “this congregation.”

C1.11. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

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 Scripture and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God’s mission in the world.

Chapter 3.

NATURE OF THE CHURCH

***C3.01.** All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.

***C3.02.** This church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world.

***C3.03.** The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

***C3.04.** This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in The Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God’s mission in the world.

***C3.05.** The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or “this church”) as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.

Chapter 4.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

***C4.01.** The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God’s creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.

***C4.02.** To participate in God’s mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:

a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.

b. Proclaim God’s saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ’s sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.

c. Carry out Christ’s Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.

d. Serve in response to God’s 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, 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 which the Spirit gives.

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

a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.

b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.

c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.

d. Teach the Word of God.

e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.

f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.

g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for this congregation's ministry and the ministry of the other expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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

i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.

***C4.04.** This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions. Such descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions in the section on the Congregation Committees.

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

B4.05.1. The mission statement of People of Hope shall be: *God's love, made real for all, without exception.*

B4.05.2. The welcoming statement of People of Hope shall be:

As a church of the welcoming God, our congregation, centered on the teachings and example of Jesus Christ, is committed to removing all barriers which might prevent us from fulfilling our mission as a loving community. To that end, we continually weigh ourselves against God's welcoming standards and strive to welcome all – including, but not limited to – people of every race, nationality, the BIPOC community, age, LGBTQIA+ identity, political affiliation, marital status, gender identity, gender expression, economic or social status, sexual orientation, mental and physical abilities.

B4.05.3. People of Hope is a Reconciling in Christ congregation, which means this congregation proudly belongs to a network of Lutheran communities that support the acceptance and full participation of people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. This congregation will assume a leadership role in the community of Rochester in terms of ministry with the LGBTQIA+ community and marriage equality.

***C4.06.** References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church – congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization – as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God's mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter,

and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

Chapter 5.

POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

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

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

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

- a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
- c. call a minister of Word and Service;
- d. terminate the call of a minister of Word and Service in conformity with the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
- e. adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in Chapter 16, amendments to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 17, and continuing resolutions, as provided in Chapter 18;
- f. approve the annual budget;
- g. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
- h. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
- i. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
- j. elect its Congregation Council, boards, and committees, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions; and
- k. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.

***C5.04.** This congregation or the Congregation Council shall elect from among voting members of the congregation laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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 Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

***C6.02.** This congregation accepts the Confession of Faith and agrees to the purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and shall act in accordance with them.

***C6.03.** This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which:

- a. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
- b. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the bishop of the synod. These special circumstances are limited either to calling a candidate approved for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or to contracting for pastoral services with a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion.

d. This congregation agrees to consider ministers of Word and Service for call to other staff positions in this congregation according to the procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

e. This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution with the synod for review to ascertain that all of its provisions are in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and with the constitution of the synod.

***C6.04.** Affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is terminated as follows:

a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.

b. This congregation ceases to exist.

c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or in accordance with provision 9.23. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

d. The Southeastern Minnesota Synod takes charge and control of the property of this congregation to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of the synod pursuant to †S13.24. of the synod constitution. This congregation shall have the right to appeal the decision to the next Synod Assembly.

e. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in *C6.05.

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

a. A resolution indicating the intent to terminate its relationship must be adopted at two legally called and conducted special meetings of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at each meeting. The first such meeting may be held no sooner than 30 days after written notice of the meeting is received by the bishop of the synod, during which time this congregation shall consult with the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any. The times and manner of the consultation shall be determined by the bishop in consultation with the Congregation Council. Unless he or she is a voting member of this congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the first meeting.

b. Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon at the first meeting, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall send copies of the resolution and certification to voting members of this congregation.

c. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the first meeting, the bishop of the synod and this congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph a. above, during a period of at least 90 days after receipt by the bishop of the attestation and certification as specified in paragraph b. above.

d. If this congregation, after such consultation, is still considering termination of its relationship with this church, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special

meeting by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present. Notice of the second meeting shall be sent to all voting members and to the bishop at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Unless he or she is a voting member of this congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the second meeting.

e. Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the second special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall send copies of the resolution and certification to the voting members of the congregation. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the second meeting, the relationship between the congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to Synod Council approval as required by paragraphs f. and g. below.

f. Unless this notification to the bishop also certifies that this congregation has voted to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, this congregation shall be deemed an independent or non-Lutheran church, in which case *C7.04. shall apply.

g. This congregation shall abide by these covenants by and among the three expressions of this church:

1) Congregations seeking to terminate their relationship with this church which fail or refuse to comply with each of the foregoing provisions in *C6.05. shall be required to receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.

2) Congregations which had been members of the Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to receive synod approval before terminating their membership in this church.

3) Congregations established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to satisfy all financial obligations to this church and receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.

h. If this congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at this congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above or fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at this congregation's second meeting as specified in paragraph d. above, another attempt to consider termination of relationship with this church must follow all requirements of *C6.05. and may begin no sooner than six months after the meeting at which the two-thirds vote was not achieved.

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

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

Chapter 7.

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

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

***C7.02.** If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline or pursuant to 9.23. of the

constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

***C7.03.** If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to relate to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation, provided the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05. has been followed. Before this congregation takes action to relate to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

***C7.04.** If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body and have followed the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05., title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with this congregation by the process established by the synod, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of this congregation. If the Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to continue as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In neither case does title to this congregation's property transfer to the synod

***C7.05.** Notwithstanding the provisions of *C7.02. and *C7.03. above, where this congregation has received property from the synod pursuant to a deed or other instrument containing restrictions under provision 9.71.a. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, this congregation accepts such restrictions and:

- a. Shall not transfer, encumber, mortgage, or in any way burden or impair any right, title, or interest in the property without prior approval of the Synod Council.
- b. Shall — upon written demand by the Synod Council, pursuant to †S13.23. of the constitution of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod — reconvey and transfer all right, title, and interest in the property to the synod.

Chapter 8.

MEMBERSHIP

***C8.01.** Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of this congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

***C8.02.** Members shall be classified as follows:

a. ***Baptized*** members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.

b. ***Confirmed*** members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.

c. ***Voting*** members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and

special meeting of this congregation as well as the other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws. They shall not have voted as a seasonal member of another congregation of this church in the previous two calendar months.

d. **Associate** members are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. These individuals have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights or other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 9.

ROSTERED MINISTER

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

***C9.02.** This congregation may call as a pastor only:

a. a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

b. a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop

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

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

- 1) preach the Word;
- 2) administer the sacraments;
- 3) conduct public worship;
- 4) provide pastoral care;
- 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
- 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
- 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; and
- 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.

b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:

- 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
- 2) relate to all schools and organizations of this congregation;
- 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
- 4) with the council, administer discipline;
- 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod; and
- 6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

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

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

a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by the pastor's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for the following reasons:

- 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
- 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;

- 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions;
- 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor;
- 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;
- 6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church;
- 7) termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;
- 8) dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
- 9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months.

b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,

- 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or

- 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.

c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament with disability status. Upon removal of the disability and the restoration of the pastor to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by this congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.

e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, this congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

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

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

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

***C9.09.** When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

***C9.11.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from *C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of *C9.05.a.

***C9.12.** The pastor of this congregation:

- a. shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from this congregation;
- b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod; and
- c. shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

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

***C9.14.** The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of this congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his or her hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another call or approval of a request for change in roster status.

***C9.15.** Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synod bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between this congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synod bishop and approved by this congregation

***C9.21.** Authority to call a deacon shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by the Congregation Council (Mission Leadership Team) to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.

***C9.22.** This congregation may call as a deacon only:

- a. a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or
- b. a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop

***C9.23.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
- b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
- c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world, witnessing to the realm of God in the community, the nation, and abroad;
- d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
- e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
- f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
- g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
- h. Share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
- i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

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

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

a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a deacon, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by the deacon's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for the following reasons:

- 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
- 2) resignation of the deacon, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
- 3) inability to conduct the ministry of Word and Service effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions;
- 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon;
- 5) suspension of the deacon through discipline for more than three months;
- 6) resignation or removal of the deacon from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church;
- 7) termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;
- 8) dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
- 9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months.

b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the office of minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,

- 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
- 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official

recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.

c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the deacon's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service with disability status. Upon removal of the disability and the restoration of the deacon to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the deacon to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the deacon and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the deacon's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by this congregation and by the deacon, if appropriate. If the deacon and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.

e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the deacon's call, this congregation may dismiss the deacon only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

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

***C9.27.** When a deacon is called to serve in company with another rostered minister or other rostered ministers, the privileges and responsibilities of each rostered minister shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the rostered ministers, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

***C9.28.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from *C9.25.a. and call a deacon for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the deacon and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of *C9.25.a.

***C9.29.** The deacon shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the deacon shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

***C9.31.** The deacon(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

Chapter 10.

CONGREGATION MEETING

C10.01. 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 a pastor, the Mission Leadership Team (aka, MLT or Congregation Council), or the Chair of this congregation, and shall be called by the Chair of the congregation upon the written request of 25% of the voting member/missionaries. 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 to all members electronically or, if electronic communication is not possible, mailed at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting.”

C10.04. The numbers of voting member/missionaries to constitute a quorum shall be specified in the by-laws.

B10.04.1. A quorum shall consist of 20 voting members present at a congregational meeting.

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 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.

B10.08.1. This congregation may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is opportunity for simultaneous aural communication. To the extent permitted by state law, a notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Chapter 11.

OFFICERS

C11.01. The officers of this congregation shall be a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.

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

b. The officers shall be voting member/missionaries of the congregation.

c. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Mission Leadership Team and shall be voting members of the Mission Leadership Team.

d. The Mission Leadership Team is to elect the officers; the Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary shall be selected from the elected membership of the Mission Leadership Team by a majority vote. The Vice Chair shall assume the duties of the Chair in the following year.

e. The Treasurer shall be elected by the congregation.

B11.01.1. Duties of the Chair – The Chair of this congregation shall

a. preside over congregation meetings and the Congregation Council (Mission Leadership Team) meetings;

b. sign all forms, documents and official papers requiring signature by the congregation;

c. be available for consultation with staff and member/missionaries;

d. work closely with the pastoral staff; and

e. ensure that each member of the Mission Leadership Team and various other teams are aware of their duties and responsibilities.

B11.01.2. Duties of the Vice Chair – The Vice Chair shall

- a. perform all duties of the Chair in the Chair's absence and;
- b. in case of extended disability or expulsion of the Chair, succeed the Chair in office as Chair for the remainder of the term;
- c. be available for consultation with all teams, organizations and individuals; and
- d. sign all forms, documents and official papers requiring signature by the Vice Chair.

B11.01.2. Duties of the Secretary – The Secretary shall

- a. ensure the keeping of accurate minutes of each meeting of the congregation, and the Mission Leadership Team (Congregation Council);
- b. see that the minutes are preserved permanently in the church archives;
- c. copies of the minutes of the Mission Leadership Team to each member of the team as well as to the staff and any congregation member/missionary who requests a copy;
- d. call the attention of the Chair to any business of a previous meeting that has been tabled for later action; and
- e. sign all forms, documents and official papers requiring signature by the Secretary.

B11.01.3. Duties of the Treasurer – The Treasurer shall

- a. ensure the keeping of accurate financial records;
- b. provide the financial reports to the Mission Leadership Team (Congregation Council) necessary to fulfill their responsibilities;
- c. sign all forms, documents, and official papers requiring signature by the Congregation Treasurer.

C11.02. The Mission Leadership Team shall elect its officers (except for the Treasurer, see C11.01.e above) and they shall be the officers of the congregation. The officers shall be elected by written ballot and shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the Congregation Council (Mission Leadership Team) meeting at which they are elected.

C11.03. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time.

- a. The Chair serves for one year.
- b. The Vice Chair serves as Vice Chair for one year and will serve as Chair for the following year.
- c. The Secretary shall be elected for one year, and can serve for as many as 2 consecutive terms as Secretary.

Chapter 12.

MISSION LEADERSHIP TEAM (MLT) (also known as the Congregation Council)

C12.01. The voting membership of the Mission Leadership Team shall consist of the pastor(s), the officers of the congregation, and not more than 6 member/missionaries. Any voting member/missionary 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 Mission Leadership Team shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member/missionary of this congregation or b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Mission Leadership Team without cause.

C12.02. The members of the Mission Leadership Team except the pastor(s) shall be elected by written ballot to serve for two years or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

C12.03. Should a member's place on the Mission Leadership Team be declared vacant, the Mission Leadership Team shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next annual meeting.

C12.04. The Mission Leadership Team 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 Mission Leadership Team 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 goal.
- b. To seek to involve all member/missionaries of this congregation in mission, worship, learning, and service.
- c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
- d. To oversee, authorize, and/or appoint action teams necessary to carry out the mission of People of Hope.
- e. To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.
- f. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
- g. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill, and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
- h. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
- i. To facilitate 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.

C12.05. The Mission Leadership Team shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.

- a. The Mission Leadership Team shall be the board of directors of this congregation, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the management of its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Minnesota, except as otherwise provided herein.
- b. The Mission Leadership Team shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.
- d. The Mission Leadership Team shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith and may incur obligations of more than 10% in excess of the anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in partnership with the synod and churchwide organization.
- e. The Mission Leadership Team shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies to the synodical Treasurer.
- f. The Mission Leadership Team shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.

C12.06. The Mission Leadership Team shall see that the provisions of this constitution, and its bylaws, and the continuing resolutions are carried out.

C12.07. The Mission Leadership Team shall provide for an annual review of the roster of member/missionaries.

C12.08. The Mission Leadership Team shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the salaried lay workers of this congregation.

C12.09. The Mission Leadership Team shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.

C12.10. The Mission Leadership Team shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the Chair, and shall be called by the Chair at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

C12.11. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a two thirds majority of the members of the Mission Leadership Team, including the pastor or interim pastor, except when the pastor or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting, which shall be the only business considered at that meeting. Chronic or repeated absence of the pastor or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Mission Leadership Team, following consultation with the synodical bishop.

Chapter 13.

OTHER CONGREGATION TEAMS

C13.01. A Nominating Team of four voting member/missionaries of this congregation, two of whom, if possible, shall be outgoing members of the Mission Leadership Team, shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year. Members of the Nominating Team are not eligible for consecutive re-election.

C13.02. An Audit Team of two voting member/missionaries shall be elected by the Mission Leadership Team. Audit Team members shall not be members of the Mission Leadership Team. Term of office shall be two years, with one member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for reelection.

C13.03. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Pastoral Search Team of six voting member/missionaries shall be elected by the Congregation Council (Mission Leadership Team). Term of office will terminate upon installation of the new pastor(s).

C13.04. Other congregation teams may be formed, as the need arises.

Chapter 14.

ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

C14.01 All organizations within this congregation shall exist to aid the mission of People of Hope as stated in the current Mission Statement.

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

Chapter 15.

DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

***C15.01.** Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith, willful or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, continual and intentional interference with the ministry of this congregation, or willful and repeated harassment or defamation of

member(s) of this congregation is sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation and repentance will be attempted following Matthew 18:15–17, proceeding through these successive steps, as necessary: a) private counsel and admonition by the pastor, b) censure and admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, c) written referral of the matter by the Congregation Council to the vice president of the synod, who will refer it to a consultation panel drawn from the Consultation Committee of the synod, and d) written referral of the matter by the consultation panel to the Committee on Discipline of the synod. If, for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by paragraphs a. and b. hereof, those steps may be performed by another pastor chosen by the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council.

***C15.02.** The process for discipline of a member of this congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. If the counseling, censure, and admonitions pursuant to *C15.01. do not result in repentance and amendment of life, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing may be prepared by the Congregation Council, signed, and submitted to the vice president of the synod. The vice president shall select from the synod's Consultation Committee a panel of five members (three laypersons and two ministers of Word and Sacrament). A copy of the written charges shall be provided to the consultation panel and the accused member(s). The consultation panel, after requesting a written reply to the charges from the accused member(s), shall consider the matter and seek a resolution by means of investigation, consultation, mediation, or whatever other means may seem appropriate. The panel's efforts to reach a mutually agreeable resolution shall continue for no more than 45 days after the matter is submitted to it.

***C15.03.** If the consultation panel fails to resolve the matter, that panel shall refer the case in writing, including the written charges and the accused member's reply, to the Committee on Discipline of the synod for a hearing. A copy of the panel's written referral shall be delivered to the vice president of the synod, the Congregation Council, and the accused member(s) at the same time it is sent to the Committee on Discipline of the synod. The Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall then select six members from the Committee on Discipline to decide the case and shall appoint a member of the Synod Council to preside as nonvoting chair. Those six members, plus the nonvoting chair, comprise the discipline hearing panel for deciding the case. The Congregation Council and the accused member(s) are the parties to the case.

***C15.04.** The discipline hearing panel shall commence and conduct the disciplinary hearing in accordance with the provisions governing discipline of congregation members prescribed in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

***C15.05.** By the vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the discipline hearing panel who are present and voting, one of the following disciplinary sanctions can be imposed:

- a. suspension from the privileges of congregation membership for a designated period of time;
- b. suspension from the privileges of congregation membership until the pastor and Congregation Council receive evidence, satisfactory to them, of repentance and amendment of life;
- c. termination of membership in this congregation; or
- d. termination of membership in this congregation and exclusion from the church property and from all congregation activities.

***C15.06.** The written decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be sent to the vice president of the synod, the accused member(s), and the Congregation Council as required by the

Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be implemented by the Congregation Council and recorded in the minutes of the next council meeting.

***C15.07.** No member of this congregation shall be subject to discipline a second time for offenses that a discipline hearing panel has heard previously and decided pursuant to this chapter.

***C15.10. Adjudication**

***C15.11.** When there is disagreement between or among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president of this congregation of their intent to do so. The synod bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the dispute. If the issue relates directly to the pastor, the bishop may begin the process in †S14.18.d. In all other matters, if the bishop's consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the Council deems necessary. The Synod Council's decision shall be final.

Chapter 16.

AMENDMENTS

***C16.01.** Unless provision *C16.04. is applicable, those sections of this constitution that are not required, in accord with the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be amended in the following manner. Amendments may be proposed by at least 40 voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify this congregation's members of the proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

***C16.02.** An amendment to this constitution, proposed under *C16.01., shall:

- a. be approved at any legally called meeting of this congregation by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting;
- b. be ratified unchanged at the next regular meeting of this congregation held pursuant to C10.01 by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting; and
- c. have the effective date included in the resolution² and noted in the constitution.

***C16.03.** Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in *C16.01. and *C16.02. shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The synod shall notify this congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed changes; the changes shall go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them.

***C16.04.** This constitution may be amended to bring any section into conformity with a section or sections, either required or not required, of the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as most recently amended by the Churchwide Assembly. Such amendments may be approved by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of this congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of this congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, notice to this congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council's recommendations, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of at least two (2) voting members of this congregation, the

Congregation Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following a vote of approval.

Chapter 17.

BYLAWS

***C17.01.** This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.

***C17.02.** Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.

***C17.03.** Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member, provided that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify this congregation's members of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

***C17.04.** Adopted or amended bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

Chapter 18.

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

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

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

***C18.03.** Adopted or amended continuing resolutions shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

Chapter 19.

INDEMNIFICATION

***C19.01.** Consistent with the provisions of the laws under which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt provisions providing indemnification for each person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a Congregation Council member, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any committee of this congregation, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.