

# **Constitution of Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church Toledo, Ohio**

**Approved by the Congregation on March 2, 2008**

## **PREAMBLE**

We, the members of this congregation, being cognizant of our unity in Christ and our common practice of the Christian faith, our fellowship in worship and work, our spiritual needs, and our Christian duties and privileges, adopt the following Constitution.

## **ARTICLE I – IDENTIFICATION**

The name of this congregation shall be Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church of Toledo, Ohio (“Hope”). This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the state of Ohio.

## **ARTICLE II - DOCTRINAL BASIS**

1. This congregation confesses the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
2. This congregation confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe and that:
  - 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.
3. 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.

4. This congregation accepts the Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this congregation.
5. This congregation accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with its faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
6. This congregation accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalclad 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.
7. This congregation confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

### **ARTICLE III - MISSION, VISION, VALUES AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

1. The mission of Hope is to be a living example of the love of Jesus Christ.
2. Hope's vision is transforming lives by inviting people to connect with God, encouraging people to connect with each other, and equipping people to live the God life, so that the world will be changed.
3. Hope subscribes to the following values: Forgiveness, Reconciliation, Love, Hospitality and Generosity.
4. To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:
  - a. worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness and service;
  - b. proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations;
  - c. carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier of all;
  - d. serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for

peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs; and,

- 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.

#### **ARTICLE IV - POWERS OF THIS CONGREGATION**

1. This congregation shall be guided by the Word of God, which shall prevail in all matters of Christian faith and life.
2. The powers of this congregation shall be those necessary to fulfill its purposes as set forth in this Constitution and By-Laws, if any. This Constitution and By-Laws, if any, are hereinafter referred to as “this Constitution.”
3. The will of this congregation shall be determined by vote conducted at congregational meetings in the manner prescribed in this Constitution. The power of this congregation shall be exercised either directly by vote of this congregation or by any officer, team or individual to whom this congregation delegates authority in this Constitution.
4. All schools/societies and organizations which operate under the auspices of this congregation shall conform to this Constitution and the policies of this congregation.
5. In the fulfillment of its purpose, this congregation is empowered to:
  - a. elect the treasurer, elect representatives of the Vision Team, affirm the appointment of members of the Management Team and require them to conduct all of their affairs in accordance with the Constitution and the formally approved policies and resolutions of this congregation;
  - b. enter into contracts;
  - c. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
  - d. acquire real and personal property by gift, bequest, purchase or other lawful means;
  - e. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
  - f. take legal action; and,
  - g. approve the budget of the church.

6. Authority to call a pastor shall rest with this congregation. The authority to call shall be exercised by not less than a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote at a congregational meeting.
7. Before a call is issued, the officers or a search committee authorized by this congregation shall seek the advice and assistance of the Bishop of the Synod.
8. If, in the judgment of this congregation, the pastor is no longer able to serve satisfactorily, he/she may be requested to resign.

#### **ARTICLE V - RELATIONSHIP TO THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

1. In order to attain its objectives and purposes, this congregation shall hold membership in the Northwestern Ohio Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and shall be subject to its policies and discipline.
2. As an affiliate of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, this congregation shall accept the services of representatives of the church in the various capacities for which they have been called, appointed or elected.
3. This congregation claims for itself the rights and privileges and accepts the duties and obligations connected with its membership and covenants to support the work of the church with prayer, personal service and offerings.
4. Affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be terminated by the following events:
  - a. a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of a legally called congregational meeting for this express purpose;
  - b. if this congregation ceases to exist;
  - c. if this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedures for discipline.

#### **ARTICLE VI - MEMBERSHIP IN THIS CONGREGATION**

1. Members of this congregation shall be those persons who are designated as such at the time that this Constitution is adopted, those who are admitted thereafter, and who maintain membership in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.
2. Members shall be classified as (a) Baptized; (b) Confirmed; (c) Voting; and (d) Associate Member.
3. Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:

- a. death;
- b. resignation;
- c. transfer or release;
- d. disciplinary action by this congregation; or,
- e. removal from the rolls because of membership inactivity.

#### 4. Membership Categories

- a. Baptized Members-A baptized member is anyone who receives baptism by this congregation or has had his/her baptized membership transferred to this congregation, but has not yet been confirmed.
- b. Confirmed members-A confirmed member is any baptized member who receives instruction and undergoes the Rite of Confirmation by this congregation, or who has had his/her confirmed membership transferred to this congregation.
- c. Voting Members-Voting members of this congregation shall be confirmed members, and meet membership requirements listed in “5” below.
- d. Associate Members-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. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Vision Team of this congregation.

#### 5. **Membership Requirements**

Members shall retain their membership as long as they:

- a. partake of Holy Communion at least once a year after they have been instructed in the Rite of Holy Communion; and,
- b. participate in the life and mission of this congregation each year via financial support and gifts of time and talent to the ministries of this congregation. Members who are unable to participate due to health reasons are exempted from the requirement to participate in the life and mission of this congregation until such time as his/her health allows it.

6. **Membership Inactivity**

A confirmed member who does not maintain the requirements of membership is automatically dropped from the roles upon recommendation of the Vision Team. If a member has been dropped from the roles and wishes to become a member again, the dropped member must formally seek reinstatement and demonstrate renewed commitment to the life and mission of this congregation.

7. **Membership Roster**

The roster of voting members of this congregation for any congregational meeting is determined in accordance with the provisions of this Article. The list of members of this congregation shall be updated at least once a year to insure that all members comply with the requirements of membership.

**ARTICLE VII - DISCIPLINE AND ADJUDICATION**

1. A member who advocates doctrines which are contrary to Holy Scriptures and the Confessions of the Church, or who is guilty of conduct that is unbecoming a member of the Body of Christ, shall be subject to discipline.
2. Discipline shall be administered by the Vision Team on behalf of this congregation. The accused shall have the right of appeal to the Synod Council.
3. Matters of discipline involving a pastor, including alleged defection in doctrine or for alleged conduct unbecoming a pastor, shall be referred by the Vision Team to the Bishop of the Synod for action according to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
4. When there is disagreement among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation shall have access to the Synodical Bishop for consultation after informing the president of this congregation of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the Consultation Committee of the Synod shall consider the matter. If the Consultation Committee of the Synod shall fail to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to the Synod Council, whose decision shall be final.
5. In exercising discipline as provided in this Constitution, the following procedures shall be invoked:
  - a. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following the precepts stated in Matthew 18:15-18, and proceeding through the following steps:
    - (i) private admonition by the pastor;

- (ii) admonition by the pastor in the presence of two (2) or more witnesses; and,
  - (iii) citation to appear before the Vision Team.
- b. A person who is requested to appear before the Vision Team for possible discipline shall be so advised in writing no less than ten (10) calendar days prior to the hearing. The written notice shall include the time and place of the hearing and shall specify the exact reason for possible disciplinary action.
- c. If a person is found guilty of conduct not in keeping with the professions of this Constitution and unbecoming a member of the Body of Christ, the Vision Team, by a two-thirds (2/3) majority ballot vote, shall impose one of the following:
  - (i) censure;
  - (ii) suspension from membership for a definite period of time;  
or,
  - (iii) termination of membership.
- d. If (c) above is imposed, the action of the Vision Team shall be communicated to the individual in writing within ten (10) calendar days from the date of the ballot vote.
- e. The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Vision Team shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Synod Council. Such right may not be abridged, and the decision of the Synod Council shall be final.
- f. Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Vision Team upon receipt of:
  - (i) evidence that an injustice has been done; or,
  - (ii) evidence of repentance and amendment.

#### **ARTICLE VIII - THE PASTORS**

1. A Pastor of this congregation shall be a person who has been properly ordained and who accepts and adheres to the Confessions of Faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and of this congregation.

2. 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.
3. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which, except in the case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated only following consultation with the Bishop of the Synod, and for the following reasons:
  - a. mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
  - b. resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, thirty (30) days after the date on which it is submitted;
  - c. inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor;
  - d. the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
  - e. disqualification of the pastor through discipline or on grounds of doctrine, morality or continued neglect of duty;
  - f. the dissolution of this congregation; or,
  - g. suspension of this congregation by the synod as a result of disciplinary proceedings.
4. In the event of a vacancy in the pastoral office, the Vision Team, in consultation with the Bishop of the Synod, shall provide for interim pastoral service.
5. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote at a congregational meeting shall be necessary to call a pastor. When a pastor has been approved for call, this congregation shall issue a letter of call to the pastor-elect in a form approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The letter of call shall be signed by the president of this congregation and shall be approved by the Bishop of the Synod.
6. The following provisions shall be applicable to physical or mental incapacity or other difficulties with the pastor:
  - a. When allegations of physical or mental incapacity of the pastor or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office have come to the attention of the Bishop of the Synod, the Bishop in his/her sole discretion may investigate directly. These matters may also be brought to the attention of the Bishop by an official recital of allegations by the Vision Team or by a petition signed by at least one-third (1/3)

of the voting members of this congregation. The Bishop shall investigate such conditions personally together with two (2) ordained ministers and one (1) lay person.

- b. In case of alleged physical or mental incapacity, competent medical testimony shall be obtained. When such disability is evident, the Bishop of the Synod, with the advice of the committee, shall declare the pastorate vacant. Upon the restoration of a disabled pastor to health, the Bishop of the Synod shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in this congregation last served or in another field of labor.
  - c. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation, all concerned persons shall be heard, after which the Bishop of the Synod, together with the Vision Team shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor and this congregation. If they agree to carry out such recommendation, no further action shall be taken by the Synod. If either party fails to assent, this congregation may dismiss the pastor at a legally called meeting after consultation with the Bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds (2/3) majority 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 simple majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the Bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
  - d. If, in the course of proceedings described herein, the Vision Team concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the Vision Team shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action to the Bishop of the Synod, who may bring charges in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Constitution of the Northwestern Ohio Synod.
  - e. If it should become apparent that the pastoral office cannot be conducted effectively for this congregation being served by the ordained minister, the Bishop of the Synod may temporarily suspend the pastor from service in this congregation without prejudice and with pay provided through a joint Synodical and church-wide fund and with housing provided by this congregation.
7. A job description will be maintained by the Vision Team for each pastor. Each pastor's job description will be agreed to by the pastor and approved by the Vision Team, including the title of the Senior Pastor.
8. An annual job performance review will be conducted by the Vision Team for each pastor. Performance will be judged relative to the job description, the specifications of behavior contained in this Constitution, and the rules of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.

## ARTICLE IX - PASTORAL DUTIES

1. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every pastor of this congregation with a congregational call shall:
  - a. preach the Word;
  - b. administer the sacraments;
  - c. conduct public worship;
  - d. provide pastoral care;
  - e. speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world;
  - f. strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation and abroad;
  - g. seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
  - h. impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its publications and other media; and,
  - i. endeavor to increase the support given by this congregation to the work of the church-wide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and of the Northwestern Ohio Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  
2. Every pastor of this congregation with a congregational call shall, also:
  - a. offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed and bury the dead;
  - b. insure that all schools and organizations of this congregation are run in manner consistent with the faith;
  - c. install regularly elected leaders of this congregation;
  - d. administer discipline with the Vision Team;
  - e. keep and maintain accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed or members excluded from this congregation;

- f. submit a summary of such statistics annually to the Synod; and,
- g. become a member of this congregation upon the receipt and acceptance of a letter of call.

## **ARTICLE X - CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

1. There shall be an annual congregational meeting to be held on or before the first day of June or as otherwise directed by the Vision Team to elect the representatives to fill vacancies on the Vision Team, to elect the treasurer and to affirm the pastor's nominees for the Management Team. Other congregational meetings may be called to consider specific, publicized initiatives. No initiative at a congregational meeting may be considered without the prescribed publicity and notification of this congregation about the issue.
2. Special congregational meetings may be called by the pastor, the Vision Team or at the written request of five percent (5%) of the voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held or the initiative to be considered, and no other business shall be transacted.
3. Notice and the agenda of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding three (3) consecutive Sundays and by mail, or other type of electronic transmission requested, to all voting members at least ten (10) days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or paid, sent to the last known address of such members or by electronic transmission shall be sufficient.
4. Eight percent (8%) of the voting members shall constitute a quorum at any meeting of this congregation.
5. Absentee ballots must be requested at least one (1) week prior to the meeting and must be received at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting and will be valid only for the first vote on any issue.
6. No voting by proxy shall be permitted.
7. All actions by this congregation shall be by majority vote, except as otherwise provided in the Constitution.
8. Except as may be modified in this Constitution, Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

## **ARTICLE XI - CHURCH ORGANIZATION**

1. The administration, governance and ministry of this congregation shall be as follows:

- a. There shall be a Vision Team who shall ensure all missions and ministries are conducted consistent with the Constitution and the mission, vision and values of Hope. They shall also be responsible for the long range planning of Hope. The Senior Pastor shall also be a member of the Vision Team.
  - b. There shall be a Staff Team, which is responsible for the worship, spiritual growth and formation, mission outreach and education of the congregation.
  - c. There shall be a Management Team, which is responsible for the office administration, finances, human resources, communications, hospitality and property of the congregation. The Management Team shall be responsible for the hiring and termination of all non-pastoral staff.
  - d. Ministry Teams may be formed by individual members of the congregation to carry out a specific ministry of Hope, subject only to affirmation by either the Vision Team, Staff Team or Management Team.
2. This congregation shall elect at the annual meeting of the congregation, or special meeting called for such purpose, the Vision Team, which shall consist of nine (9) members in addition to the Senior Pastor and whose tenure shall be arranged so that one-third (1/3) of the terms expire annually. The initial term shall be determined by the Vision Team members. Except as modified herein, the term of the Vision Team members shall be three (3) years and each member shall be eligible to serve no more than two (2) full terms consecutively. Should a member's place on the Vision Team be declared vacant, the remaining Vision Team members shall elect a successor to serve the remainder of the unexpired term. A member serving a partial term shall be eligible to be nominated to two (2) full terms.
  3. Following the annual meeting, the Vision Team shall elect a president, vice-president and secretary from within the Vision Team. These officers will serve one-year terms with a three (3) consecutive term limit.
  4. The Vision Team shall be the board of trustees of this congregation. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Ohio, except as otherwise noted herein.
  5. The congregation shall also elect at the annual meeting or special meeting called for such purpose, a treasurer whose term shall be for one (1) year with no term limits.
  6. The treasurer serves on the Management Team and also serves as a consultant to the Vision Team.
  7. The Senior Pastor shall annually appoint the members of the Management Team and each nominee must be affirmed by the congregation at the annual meeting of the congregation

or other special meeting called for such purpose. The Management Team shall elect a chairperson. The Management Team shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting church property and the management of church business and fiscal affairs. The Senior Pastor shall also fill all vacancies on the Management Team during the year without affirmation by this congregation.

8. The Staff Team shall consist of all paid staff members and other non-paid volunteers performing various ministerial duties designated by the Senior Pastor.
9. Meetings of all Teams will be open to the congregation, except when it is deemed by a team that a private session is necessary, or matters concerning personnel or discipline are to be considered.
10. All meetings of the Vision, Management and Staff Teams shall be documented by the keeping of minutes by the Secretary or other designated individual. A copy of these minutes will be delivered to the church office and made available to the members of the respective teams upon request. These minutes shall contain at a minimum:
  - a. the date of the meeting;
  - b. who attended;
  - c. what action items were approved;
  - d. who is responsible for seeing that the action items are executed; and,
  - e. when it is expected that the action item will be completed.
11. The officers of this congregation shall have the following responsibilities:
  - a. The president shall prepare agendas for and preside over all meetings of the congregation and the Vision Team. The president must be at least eighteen (18) years of age. The president of the congregation and the chairperson of the Management Team must sign all contracts made on behalf of this congregation.
  - b. The vice-president shall assist in the exercise of the president's duties and shall preside in the absence of the president.
  - c. The treasurer shall be bonded and shall be responsible for maintaining the financial records of the congregation. The treasurer shall regularly report the financial condition of the congregation to the Management Team and the Vision Team and annually to the congregation. The treasurer shall supervise the recording, deposit and expenditure of all congregational monies, and shall perform such other finance-related duties as Vision

Team, president and Management Team may direct. The congregational financial records shall be audited biannually.

- d. The secretary shall ensure that all meetings of the Vision Team, Management Team and Staff Team are documented.
12. The Vision Team and the Management Team shall meet on a regular basis in order to fulfill their obligations as set forth in this constitution. The Vision Team and Management Team shall have regular communication with each other, with the Senior Pastor, the Staff Team and the congregation in order to carry out the mission of the church.
13. The Vision Team and the Management Team shall make no additional cumulative expenditures and/or incur any additional expenses in an operating nature in excess of five percent (5%) of the approved annual budget without congregational approval.
14. All checks of this congregation shall be signed by any officer or the chairman of the Management Committee. A check in the amount of Five Thousand (\$5,000.00) Dollars shall require two (2) signatures.

## **ARTICLE XII - NOMINATIONS, ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS**

1. All confirmed members of this congregation, except the pastors and paid staff, shall be eligible to hold elective office.
2. Nominations
  - a. The Vision Team, Management Team and Staff Team shall mutually appoint a Leadership Development Team whose purpose is to invite people to identify their respective spiritual gifts, and to be engaged in a significant ministry that lifts up those gifts. Members of the Leadership Development Team shall serve a term of one (1) year and may be appointed to unlimited additional terms. The Leadership Development Team is required to solicit nominees from this congregation and to identify members of this congregation who will be candidates for election to the Vision Team, and for treasurer, as well as serve on other ministry teams.
  - b. A member of this congregation may also be a candidate to be elected to the Vision Team by submitting their name to the president of this congregation in writing, at least three (3) weeks prior to the election with the signatures of at least five (5) voting members of this congregation.
  - c. A slate of candidates for election to the Vision Team and for treasurer shall be presented in writing to this congregation two (2) weeks prior to

the annual meeting or special meeting called for such purpose. Each nominee must be a voting member of this congregation.

3. Election Procedures

- a. The election of the Vision Team and treasurer shall be conducted at the annual congregational meeting or special meeting called for such purpose.
- b. A majority of votes cast shall be necessary to elect a candidate to any office. If there are more candidates running than are to be elected, the vote shall be by written ballot to be counted by at least three (3) members of the congregation appointed by the president.
- c. The president of this congregation shall determine the outcome of the vote.

**ARTICLE XIII - OWNERSHIP OF CHURCH PROPERTY**

1. Title to all real or personal property acquired by this congregation, its organizations, or individuals for use by this congregation and its organizations, shall be held as a non-profit corporation.
2. Real property shall not be purchased, disposed of or encumbered in any manner except by two-thirds (2/3) majority approval of a vote conducted at a congregational meeting.
3. If this congregation ceases to exist, for whatever reason, title to all property and funds shall pass to the Northwestern Ohio Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America after the payment of all debts of this congregation.
4. If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline, title to the property shall continue to reside in this congregation.
5. In the event of a separation within this congregation, the property and all other estates, real and personal, shall belong to that party which adheres faithfully to this Constitution and binds its pastors to it. If, after six (6) months, this congregation is unable to agree as to rightful ownership, the counsel of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be sought. The decision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be final.

**ARTICLE XIV - MAINTENANCE OF "POLICIES AND PRACTICES"**

All formal policies, practices and procedures necessary to conduct business for this congregation shall be established and documented within the "Policies and Practices Manual of Hope Lutheran Church." The contents of this document are the formal responsibility of the Management Team, which must approve all additions, deletions and changes. It is expected that the Management Team will review this document regularly. New policies may be recommended

by staff, members of this congregation or ministry teams. It is the responsibility of all people operating on behalf of this congregation to be aware of the current policies, practices and procedures, and to adhere to them to the best of their abilities.

#### **ARTICLE XV - INDEMNIFICATION OF OFFICERS AND VOLUNTEERS IN MINISTRY**

Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church shall indemnify each person who is or was an officer, employee or member of any Team of this congregation, for any good faith act or failure to act on behalf of Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church, to any threatened civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration or investigative proceeding.

#### **ARTICLE XVI - BYLAWS**

1. This congregation may adopt By-Laws. No By-Law may conflict with this constitution. By-Laws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting.
2. Changes to the By-Laws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Vision Team at least sixty (60) days before a regular or special congregation meeting called for that purpose and that the Vision Team notify this congregation's members by mail of the proposal with its recommendations at least thirty (30) days in advance of this congregation meeting.
3. Approved changes to the By-Laws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

#### **ARTICLE XVII - AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION**

1. The doctrinal basis and the confessional subscription contained in Article II and this paragraph of Article XVII shall be unalterable. No amendment to this Constitution may conflict therewith.
2. Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by at least ten (10) voting members of this congregation or by the Vision Team. Proposals must be submitted to the Vision Team in writing sixty (60) days before formal consideration by this congregation at a regular or special congregational meeting called for that purpose. The Vision Team shall notify this congregation's members by mail of the proposal together with the Vision Team's recommendation at least thirty (30) days before the meeting.
3. An amendment to this Constitution shall:
  - a. be approved at a legally called congregational meeting according to this Constitution by a majority of those present and voting;

- b. be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those present and voting; and,
  - c. have the effective date included in the resolution (at least one hundred twenty (120) days from passing to allow synodical review) and noted in the Constitution.
4. Any amendments that result from this process shall be sent to the Synod for review. The amendment shall become effective within one hundred twenty (120) days from the receipt of the notice by the synod unless the synod informs this congregation that the amendment is in conflict with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or the Constitution of the Northwest Ohio Synod of the ELCA.
5. Whenever the Model Constitution for Congregations is amended by the Church-wide Assembly, this Constitution may be amended to incorporate any amendment by a simple majority vote at any subsequent meeting of this congregation without presentation at the previous meeting provided the Vision Team has submitted notice to this congregation by mail of such an amendment together with the Vision Team recommendations at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting. Following the adoption of an amendment, a copy shall be submitted to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following a vote of approval.

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