
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

Ratified February 11, 2018

**GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	
Preamble	1
Chapter 1. Name and Incorporation.....	1
Chapter 2. Confession of Faith.....	1
Chapter 3. Nature of the Church	2
Chapter 4. Statement of Purpose	3
Chapter 5. Powers of the Congregation	5
Chapter 6. Church Affiliation	6
Chapter 7. Property Ownership.....	9
Chapter 8. Membership.....	10
Chapter 9. Rostered Minister	15
Chapter 10. Congregation Meeting	23
Chapter 11. Officers.....	25
Chapter 12. Congregation Council.....	26
Chapter 13. Congregation Committees	30
Chapter 14. Organizations within this Congregation.....	34
Chapter 15. Discipline of Members and Adjudication.....	34
Chapter 16. Amendments.....	37
Chapter 17. Bylaws	38
Chapter 18. Continuing Resolutions	38
Chapter 19. Indemnification	39
Chapter 20. Parish Authorization.....	39

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INTRODUCTION

The primary documents that govern the congregation of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church include the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions, which have been consolidated into this single document for ease of use, revision, and dissemination. This document is designed to be the governing policy and guidance for this congregation to ensure accurate adherence to God's mission through the policies and procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA), the Alaska Synod of the ELCA, and the Gloria Dei Lutheran Church.

This document is divided into chapters. The chapters contain the constitutional provisions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and are numbered as follows:

Constitutional provisions are codified by two sets of numbers: a chapter number followed by a consecutive, two-digit provision number. For example, the second constitutional provision related to "Chapter 8. Membership" is codified **C8.02**.

Bylaws are codified by three sets of numbers (printed in blue and underlined): the chapter number; the related constitutional provision number; and a consecutive, two-digit identifying number. For example, the first bylaw related to "Membership" is codified **C8.02.01**.

Continuing Resolutions are similarly codified by three sets of numbers (printed in green and italicized); however, the third number is preceded by a capital letter. For example, a continuing resolution numbered ***C14.02.A11*** would designate the fourteenth chapter, second provision within that chapter, and the first continuing resolution regarding that provision (indicated by the letter "A") adopted in the year 2011.

Notes: All sections that are required for inclusion in a congregation's constitution by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as stated in the *Guide for Use of the Model Constitution for Congregations* are prefaced by an asterisk.

In some chapters certain constitutional provision numbers are missing from the numbering sequence. These omissions are intentional.

**GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
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***PREAMBLE¹**

We, the baptized members of the Church of Christ, responding 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 Gloria Dei Lutheran Church.
- C1.02.** For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws and continuing resolutions, the congregation of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."
- C1.11.** This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Alaska.

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 the centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus.
 - 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

¹*Required provision

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

- ***C2.03.** This congregation accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.
- ***C2.04.** This congregation accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this congregation.
- ***C2.05.** This congregation accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
- ***C2.06.** This congregation accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord; namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.
- ***C2.07.** This congregation confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

Chapter 3.

NATURE OF THE CHURCH

- ***C3.01.** All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under His rule and authority.
- ***C3.02.** This church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world.
- ***C3.03.** The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian services. 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.

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

- ***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 part of the Church shall:
 - a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
 - b. Proclaim God’s saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ’s sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
 - c. Carry out Christ’s Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
 - d. Serve in response to God’s love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless and committing itself to their needs.
 - e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

- 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 the 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 the congregation's ministry and the ministry of other parts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the 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 groups and shall review their actions.

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

***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 the congregation. The congregation is authorized to:
 - a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
 - b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
 - c. 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 officers and Congregation Council 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.
- C5.03.01.** While the buildings of this congregation shall be open to all people to share in its worship, instruction, pastoral care, and fellowship, this congregation rejects all fellowship with organizations—secret or open—which are avowedly religious or practice forms of religion without confessing faith in the Triune God and in Jesus

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

Christ as the eternal Son of God incarnate to be our only Savior from sin, or which teach salvation by works.

C5.03.02. Ceremonies of such organizations as defined above shall not be permitted in the buildings or premises of this congregation; nor shall its pastor(s) take part in any such ceremonies wherever they are conducted.

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

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

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 the congregation according to the procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - e. This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution with the synod for review to ascertain that all of its provisions are in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and with the constitution of the synod.
- *C6.04.** Affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be terminated as follows:
- a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.
 - b. This congregation ceases to exist.
 - c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - d. This congregation follows 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 a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present. 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 meeting.
 - b. 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 mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of this congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted.

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

- c. The bishop of the synod and congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph a. above, during a period of at least 90 days after receipt by the synod of the notice, as specified in paragraph b. above.
- d. If this congregation, after such consultation, still seeks to terminate its relationship, 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 meeting shall be mailed 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 meeting.
- e. A copy of the resolution, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, shall be sent to the bishop within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted, at which time the relationship between this congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to paragraphs g., h., and i. below. Unless this notification to the bishop also certifies that this congregation has voted by a two-thirds vote to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, the congregation will be conclusively presumed to be an independent or non-Lutheran church.
- f. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the bishop to the secretary of the ELCA, who shall report the termination to the Churchwide Assembly.
- g. This congregations 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 synodical 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.

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

- h. If this congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at the congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above, another special meeting to consider termination of relationship with this church may be called no sooner than six months after that first meeting. If this congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at the 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 that second meeting
- *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 effected.
- *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 Alaska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- *C7.02.** If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.
- *C7.03.** If two-thirds of the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to transfer to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation, provided the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05. has been followed. Before this congregation takes action to transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Alaska Synod.
- *C7.04.** If two-thirds of the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or to

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

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 established synodical process, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of 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.

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 the congregation as well as the other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.
 - d. ***Associate*** members are persons holding membership in other ELCA congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

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 ELCA congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of the 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 the ELCA;
 - 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.

C8.02.01. Admission to baptized membership shall be governed as follows:

- a. Children—one or both of whose parents or guardians are members of this congregation—shall, upon receiving Christian baptism, be thereby received as baptized members of this congregation.
- b. Children—neither of whose parents or guardians are members of this congregation—shall, upon Christian baptism duly recorded as a ministerial act performed under the auspices of this congregation, thereby be received as baptized members of this congregation unless there is understanding that, for good reason, they will be enrolled as baptized members of another congregation, in which case notice of the baptism shall be given to the congregation in which the child is to be enrolled as a baptized member.

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

- c. Children baptized in other congregations and baptized adults mentally incompetent for confirmation shall be received as baptized members of this congregation upon admission of one or both parents or guardians to membership, by consent of one or both parents or guardians, or by action of the Congregation Council.
- d. Unbaptized adults who have received instruction and given evidence of having an adequate understanding and acceptance of the teachings of the Word of God as confessed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall, upon confession of faith and Christian baptism duly recorded as a ministerial act performed under the auspices of this congregation, thereby be received as baptized members of this congregation.

C8.02.02. Admission to confirmed membership shall be governed as follows:

- a. Baptized adults, not previously members of this congregation, who have received instruction and given evidence of having adequate understanding and acceptance of the teachings of the Word of God as confessed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be admitted to confirmed membership through affirmation of baptism (confirmation).
- b. However, adults received as baptized members according to the provisions of C8.02.01.d. of these bylaws shall be recognized as confirmed members whether or not, at the discretion of the pastor, they participate in affirmation of baptism.
- c. Children who are baptized members of the congregation shall be admitted to confirmed membership through preparation for and participation in affirmation of baptism.
- d. Applicants for membership, presenting letters of transfer showing them to be confirmed members in good standing in other Lutheran churches, shall be admitted to confirmed membership upon acceptance of their letters of transfer by the pastor and the Congregation Council and the report of their names to the congregation.
- e. Applicants for membership who present evidence of confirmation in a Lutheran church but who do not have letters of transfer shall be admitted to confirmed membership when the pastor and/or the Congregation Council has determined that they meet the standards of Christian faith and life indicated in the Constitution and these bylaws when they have reaffirmed their faith before the congregation.

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

***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.

C8.04.01. Participation in Holy Communion shall be open to members of this congregation who have been confirmed or who have received pastoral instruction in Holy Communion and to others who desire to commune and who accept teachings in regard to Holy Communion as set forth as follows in C8.04.02.

C8.04.02. Participation by a communicant indicates sincere repentance, faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, and an earnest desire to amend ones sinful life, together with an acceptance of the Scriptural teaching regarding the Real Presence of Christ with His Body and Blood in the Sacrament. Such registration forms or oral announcements may be used that will make prospective participants aware of these requirements.

C8.04.03. Communion participation shall be entered into the records of the congregation; notice regarding members of other congregations shall be sent to the respective congregations of which they are members.

***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 ELCA constitutional provision 20.41. and the accompanying bylaws; 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

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

C8.05.01. Termination of membership shall be governed as follows:

- a. Members who move from the community served by this congregation shall be encouraged to transfer their membership. Any confirmed member in good standing, desiring to change his/her membership to another church, shall, upon request, be entitled to a letter of transfer. Should the member fail to request a transfer, a Lutheran congregation in the community of his/her residence shall be notified.
- b. Any confirmed member who, in the judgment of the Congregation Council, appears to show no interest in attending worship services, taking part in the mission of the church, or contributing to the financial support of the congregation, and who fails to partake of Holy Communion according to the congregation's records for a period of one year shall be visited by the pastor and/or representatives of the congregation and encouraged by them to active membership. If, during the second year, the confirmed member does not actively participate, his/her name shall be removed at the end of that year from the active membership roster of the congregation; the right to vote shall be lost, and he/she shall no longer be counted in the membership statistics of the congregation. The person's name shall, however, be retained on a responsibility list as one who is in special need of the congregation's prayers and concern.
- c. A child, neither of whose parents or guardians is a member of this congregation, may be removed from the roster of baptized members if he/she fails to participate in the life and worship of the congregation. The child's name shall, however, be retained on a responsibility list as one who is in special need of the congregation's prayers and concern.
- d. Members who have transferred to other Lutheran congregations, who are definitely known to have become members of other congregations without transfer, who have resigned, or who have been dismissed shall thereby lose membership in this congregation and all rights appertaining thereto.

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

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 this congregation to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- C9.01.01.** The congregation shall issue a letter of call in a form approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the pastor-elect, which shall bear the signatures of the president and secretary of the congregation and shall be certified by the synod bishop.
- C9.01.02.** Since the pastor ministers to the congregation primarily in the public preaching of the Word and in the administration of the sacraments, and since both pastor and congregation are parties to the call, no pastor shall announce his/her decision on any subsequent call without first having consulted with the congregation or at least with the Congregation Council. Should the pastor thereupon resign to accept another call, his/her resignation shall be presented to the congregation, and a mutually satisfactory arrangement shall be sought for terminating his/her services, normally within 30 days.
- *C9.02.** Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for this congregation by the synodical bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.
- *C9.03.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
- a. Every ordained minister 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 wide ministry through distribution of its communications and publications;

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

- 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, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
- b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within this 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; and
 - 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the ELCA churchwide organization and of the Alaska Synod of the ELCA.

C9.03.01. Clergy who are qualified according to Chapter 9 of this constitution may occasionally perform pastoral functions in this congregation with the approval of the congregation and its pastor or, in the case of a vacancy in the pastorate, with the approval of the congregation and the bishop.

***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 death or, following consultation with the synodical 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 the congregation in view of local conditions;

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

- 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 the congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of the 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 as disabled. 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 which 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 the 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

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the 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, the 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 the 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 shall be appointed by the bishop of the synod with 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 related to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- *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.

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

- *C9.11.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, the congregation may depart from *C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing, setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of *C9.05.a.
- *C9.12.** 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 the 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 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 the 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 field of labor or the granting by the synod of retired status to the pastor.
- C9.15.** Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synodical bishop and 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 the congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synodical bishop and approved by this congregation.
- *C9.21.** Authority to call a minister of Word and Service 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 this congregation to recommend the call shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.22.** Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

Service who has been recommended for this congregation by the synodical bishop may be called as a deacon of this congregation.

- *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 the ELCA 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 congregation shall be as follows:
- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a deacon, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by death or, following consultation with the synodical bishop, for the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;

**GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502**

- 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 as disabled. 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.

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

- d. In 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.** The deacon shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:
- a. installation in another field of labor, or
 - b. the issuance of a certificate of dismissal or transfer.
- *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

**GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502**

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

C.10.01. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.

C.10.01.01. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held in the month of February, the date and time to be selected by the Congregation Council.

C.10.01.02. A separate meeting shall be held in the month of November, the date and time to be selected by the Congregation Council, to elect members of the Congregation Council and officers of the council and this congregation in order to allow time for the newly organized council to prepare the annual budget prior to the annual meeting.

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

C.10.03. Notice of the time and place of all meetings of this congregation shall be announced at two consecutive Sunday worship services preceding said meeting and by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting.

C.10.04. Ten percent of the voting members shall constitute a quorum.

**GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502**

- C.10.04.01.** The current roster of voting, confirmed, and baptized members shall be determined prior to each called meeting.
- C.10.05.** Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- C.10.06.** All actions approved by the congregation shall be by majority vote of those voting members present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution or by state law.
- C.10.06.01.** No one shall be declared elected unless he or she has received a majority of the votes cast.
- C.10.06.02.** In the following cases, voting shall be by written ballot:
- a. to elect the officers of the congregation;
 - b. to elect the Congregation Council;
 - c. to adopt or amend the articles of incorporation, constitution, or bylaws;
 - d. to remove a member from office;
 - e. to sever membership in the ELCA;
 - f. to dispose of, encumber, or purchase real property; and
 - g. when requested by ten or more voting members present.
- C.10.07.** *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.
- C10.07.01.** The order of business at the annual meeting shall be:
- a. opening devotions;
 - b. approval of the minutes of the last annual meeting;
 - c. reports of the pastor, Congregation Council, treasurer, committees, and others;
 - d. unfinished business;
 - e. election of voting members to the Synod Assembly and the nominating committee;
 - f. new business;
 - g. approval of the budget; and
 - h. closing prayer.

**GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502**

Chapter 11.

OFFICERS

C11.01. The officers of this congregation and the Congregation Council shall be a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. The officers shall be voting members of this congregation.

C11.01.01. The president shall preside over meetings of the Congregation Council and of the congregation. The president shall also oversee the workings of the committees of the congregation.

C11.01.02. The vice president shall preside in the absence of the president. The vice president shall assist the president in overseeing the workings of the committees of the congregation. The vice president shall chair the personnel committee.

C11.01.03. The secretary shall be responsible for recording the minutes of the Congregation Council and congregation meetings and shall preserve the records.

C11.01.04. The treasurer shall be bonded and shall be custodian of all funds of this congregation and shall disburse all such funds in accordance with the decisions of this congregation or the Congregation Council. The treasurer shall ensure that an accurate record of receipts is kept and statements of contribution are provided to each contributor on a regular basis. The treasurer shall present a duly audited report to the annual meeting and shall create financial management policies with the finance committee, provide general fiscal oversight, and present reports of income and expenditures each month to the Congregation Council.

C11.02. This congregation shall elect its officers, except the treasurer, from among a slate of nominees presented by the nominating committee at the November congregation meeting. The officers shall serve for one year; their terms shall begin at the close of the meeting at which they are elected.

C11.03. No individual shall hold more than one office at a time; and, with the exception of the treasurer, no officer shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

C11.04. Election procedures are specified in the bylaws.

Chapter 12.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the officers and not more than twelve other elected members serving as liaison to the standing committees. The pastor(s) shall serve as *ex-officio* member(s) of the Congregation Council. Any voting member of the congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member (a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or (b) is absent from three regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause. Any member having two unexcused absences from regular meetings shall be notified thereof by the secretary.

C12.01.01. The Congregation Council shall consist of not more than sixteen members, each elected for a term of two years, but elected in such a manner that after the first election, one-half are elected each year. The above applies to vacancies at the time of election.

The officers of the congregation/Congregation Council, except the treasurer, shall be elected by the congregation from the council membership following its election, with terms provided in the constitution. An employee of this congregation may not serve as an officer of the Congregation Council.

A separate election may be held for the treasurer. Candidates or nominees for the office of treasurer may come from the elected council or from the congregation at large.

C12.01.02. The Congregation Council may appoint two youth (grades nine through twelve) to serve one-year terms as voting members of council from September through August. Such youth will be counted as part of the 16 maximum members allowed in C12.01.01.

C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council, 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 meeting at which they are elected. Newly elected Congregation Council members and officers shall be installed at worship the Sunday following the date they assume office.

C12.02.01. In addition to the requirements of congregation membership stated in Chapter 8 of this constitution, qualifications for membership on the Congregation Council

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

shall include such practical ability as is needful in promoting the various interests of the congregation and the committees they represent, as outlined in the duties of the various committees of the council.

- C12.02.02.** A member of the Congregation Council, with the exception of the treasurer, may succeed himself or herself in office for one term only. The filling of an unexpired term of less than one year shall not be deemed a term of office.
- C12.03.** Should the office of the president be vacated, the vice president shall assume the duties of the president. Should the office of vice president or secretary be vacated, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor from among those council members elected by the congregation. Should a member vacate his or her place on the Congregation Council, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor from a slate of nominees presented by the nominating committee to fill the unexpired term of the vacated position. Should the office of the treasurer be vacated, a slate of nominees from the Congregation Council or from the congregation at large shall be presented by the nominating committee from which the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor to fill the unexpired term of the vacated position.
- C12.04.** The Congregation Council shall have general oversight over the life and activities of this congregation and, in particular, its worship life to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:
- a. to lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals;
 - b. to seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support;
 - c. to oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission;
 - d. to maintain supportive relationships with the rostered minister(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment;
 - e. to be examples, individually and corporately, of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons;

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

- f. to promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding leading to an amicable resolution;
- g. to arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor;
- h. to emphasize partnership with the synod and churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of this synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
- i. to recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and
- j. to seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

C12.04.01. Each member of the Congregation Council, with the exception of the officers, shall be elected with the understanding that they will be liaison to one of the following committees:

- a. Building and Grounds
- b. Finance
- c. Parish Education
- d. Parish Life/Fellowship
- e. Personnel
- f. Social Ministry
- g. Spiritual Life
- h. Worship
- i. Youth Ministry

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

- a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of directors of this congregation and, as such, shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and 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 Alaska, except as otherwise provided herein.

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

- b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.
 - c. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts or other expenditures of up to three percent of the current annual budget for items not included in the budget.
 - d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation and shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption and shall not incur obligations of more than \$2,500 in excess of the estimated costs of a project without approval at a legally called 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 Congregation Council 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 Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.
- C12.06.** The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws are carried out.
- C12.07.** The Congregation Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.
- C12.08.** The Congregation Council shall be responsible for employment and supervision of the staff of this congregation. Nothing in this provision shall be deemed to affect this congregation's responsibility for the call, terms of call, or termination of call of any employees who are on a roster of this church.
- C12.09.** The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.
- C12.11.** The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president, and shall be called by the president at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

C12.11.01. Meetings of the Congregation Council shall normally be held once a month with a minimum of ten meetings a year.

C.12.12. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the pastor or interim pastor, except when the pastor or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting which shall be the only business considered at that meeting. Chronic or repeated absence of the pastor or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Congregation Council, following consultation with the synodical bishop.

C12.12.01. No Congregation Council business shall be transacted unless a majority of the members are present.

C.12.13. The Congregation Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference; and, to the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Chapter 13.

CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

C13.01 An ***Executive Committee*** of this congregation shall be composed of the officers and the pastor(s); authority and duties are specified in the bylaws.

C13.01.01. The executive committee shall execute only that authority delegated or assigned to it by the congregation or Congregation Council. Generally, the executive committee need only act when it is impossible or impractical for decisions to await council deliberations. All actions of the executive committee will be reported to the next regular or special meeting of the council.

C13.02. A ***Nominating Committee*** of three voting members of this congregation—no more than two of whom, if possible, shall be outgoing members of the Congregation Council—shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year. Members of the nominating committee are not eligible for consecutive re-election.

C13.02.01. The nominating committee shall secure candidates for each office and Congregation Council position to be filled and shall secure the consent and commitment of each candidate. The list of nominees shall be announced to the congregation in conjunction with the announcement of the meeting of the

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

congregation at which the elections are to take place. In addition to the candidates submitted by the nominating committee, additional nominations for Congregation Council members or officers may be made from the floor with that person's personal or written consent.

C13.03. An ***Audit Committee*** of three voting members shall be appointed by the congregation president. Audit committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council. Term of office will be three years, with one member appointed each year. Members shall be eligible for reappointment.

C13.03.01. The audit committee shall audit the fiscal records of the congregation and report its findings in writing to the annual congregation meeting. The records shall also be audited any time a new treasurer assumes office.

C13.04. A ***Staff Support Committee*** of four voting members of the congregation shall be appointed jointly by the congregation president and the rostered minister. Term of office shall be two years, with three members to be appointed each successive year. Vacancies shall be filled by joint appointment of the president and the rostered minister.

C13.04.01. The staff support committee shall be responsible for providing support for and feedback to the pastor(s) and other support staff. In the absence of a staff support committee, duties shall be fulfilled by the executive committee.

C13.05. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a ***Call Committee*** of nine voting members, at least one of whom shall be of high-school age, shall be elected by this congregation. Term of office will terminate at installation of the newly called pastor.

C13.06. Duties of standing congregation committees shall be specified in the bylaws which provide committee guidelines.

C13.07. Other congregation committees may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council. The council may elect, by majority vote, a person to fill the newly created council position from a slate of nominees presented by the nominating committee.

C13.07.01. The congregation committees shall consist of building and grounds, finance, parish education, parish life/fellowship, personnel, social ministry, spiritual life, worship, and youth ministry. The Congregation Council shall have authority to appoint or disband such committees as may from time-to-time be necessary or advisable.

C13.07.02. The standing committees shall have the authority to appoint or elect as members of their committees additional congregation members after bringing their

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

recommendations before the Congregation Council. Members of the committees shall serve two-year terms.

C13.07.03. The Congregation Council shall, at least once a year, invite the full membership of the standing committees together with representatives chosen by the organizations of the congregation to review the entire program of the congregation.

C13.07.04. In the event that a member of the committee is absent from four regular meetings of the committee without excuse acceptable to the committee, that person shall forfeit membership on the committee. Any member having three unexcused absences from regular meetings shall be notified thereof by the secretary of the committee.

C13.07.05. The committee on ***building and grounds*** shall be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of all buildings, structures, and grounds in such a manner as to protect the investment of the congregation and to ensure the safety of all occupants. The committee shall ensure that any contracted repairs or maintenance is satisfactorily executed in a professional manner. The committee shall further ensure that all periodic inspections of equipment are carried out in compliance with manufacturers' recommendations or accepted standards.

C13.07.06. The committee on ***finance***, working with the treasurer, shall review/create the internal fiscal policies and procedures of this congregation. In addition, they shall develop the annual budget for presentation to the Congregation Council and the congregation for approval. They shall also review investment policies and line-of-credit policies and procedures.

C13.07.07. The committee on ***parish education*** shall provide a meaningful Christian education for all members of Gloria Dei and to those unchurched just discovering their faith. Effective Christian education programs have a strong tie to a person's growth in faith and loyalty to his or her congregation. Faith is one of God's precious gifts to us all, and the committee shall be devoted to the strengthening of our faith.

C13.07.08. The committee on ***parish life/fellowship*** shall promote an active bond of Christian fellowship for all ages and shall strive to develop closer ties and a deepening commitment toward others within the Gloria Dei community by organizing and implementing social activities throughout the year for all age groups. The committee shall further assist other organizations of the congregation in a mutual ministry to its members.

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

- C.13.07.09.** The committee on ***personnel***, which shall be chaired by the vice president, shall review and create appropriate job descriptions for all staff positions. The committee shall review and develop personnel policies and procedures and identify staffing needs necessary to support the mission of this congregation. The committee may make annual recommendations to the Congregation Council regarding compensation. The committee shall be responsible for annual performance evaluations of staff.
- C13.07.10.** The committee on ***social ministry*** shall promote service to humanity through acts of love and justice. The committee shall maintain an active awareness of and extend Christian compassion and helpfulness to persons in need, especially to the disadvantaged and those suffering from social injustices. It shall be the responsibility of this committee to study social conditions in order to increase in the community of this congregation a greater awareness of the spiritual and physical needs of society. The committee shall strive to enlist the efforts of as many individuals and organizations within the congregation as possible through projects directed toward alleviating these societal needs.
- C13.07.11.** The committee on ***spiritual life*** shall work with the congregation to promote the Christian faith in daily living. The committee shall conduct an annual stewardship education and response program to inspire the Christian use of time, talent, and moneys and shall endeavor to motivate the congregation to become more effective witnesses for Jesus Christ. This witness includes “reaching out” to the community to incorporate them into the Body of Christ and “reaching in” to our own membership to promote a deeper commitment to our Lord.
- C13.07.12.** The committee on ***worship*** shall be concerned primarily with seeing that the services of God’s house are conducted regularly and in accordance with the Lutheran confessions. The committee shall cooperate with the pastor(s) in planning effective means of deepening the faith of worshipers at our church through the use of the full range of liturgical and musical arts and skills available. The committee shall strive to increase lay-member involvement in worship activities.
- C13.07.13.** The committee on ***youth ministry*** shall provide and promote a youth ministry to all of Gloria Dei’s youth, encouraging their participation in spiritual development and social fellowship. The committee shall recruit the young people of the congregation for service in the church and encourage them in bringing other youth to faith in Christ.

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

- C13.07.14.** In addition to the duties and responsibilities provided in the constitution and bylaws, the standing committees of this congregation shall:
- a. conduct regular meetings at such time and place as the committee may determine;
 - b. elect from its membership a chairperson and a secretary who will keep the minutes of all meetings of the committee. The chairperson will serve a two-year term and may serve two consecutive terms; and
 - c. prepare a budget, where applicable, for review by the committee on finance, which shall make a recommendation for submission to the annual meeting of the congregation.
- C.13.08.** The (senior) pastor of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of this congregation. The president of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of the congregation, except the nominating committee.

Chapter 14.

ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THIS CONGREGATION

- C14.01.** All organizations within this congregation shall exist to aid it in ministering to the members of this congregation and to all persons who can be reached with the Gospel of Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of this congregation's life, the organizations are subject to its oversight and direction. This congregation, at its meeting, shall determine their policies, guide their activities, and receive reports concerning their membership, work, and finances.
- C14.02.** Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council.

Chapter 15.

DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

- *C15.01.** Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith, willful or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, continual and intentional interference

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

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 the following 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 reply or replies of the accused member(s) 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 a nonvoting chair. Those six members, plus the nonvoting chair, comprise the discipline hearing panel for deciding

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

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 a 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 among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation shall have access to the synodical bishop for consultation after informing the president of the Congregation Council 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.

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

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 five percent of the 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 its 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 a legally called Congregation Meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting;
 - b. be ratified without change at the next annual meeting 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 the congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, notice to the congregation of such

²Such an effective date must be stated in relation to the requirements of *C16.03. to allow time for synodical review of the amendment.

**GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502**

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

Chapter 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.** Approved changes to the bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

Chapter 18.

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

- ***C18.01.** This congregation, at 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.

Chapter 19.

INDEMNIFICATION

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

Chapter 20.

PARISH AUTHORIZATION

- *C20.01.** This congregation may unite in partnership with one or more other congregations recognized by the synod named in *C6.01. to form a parish. Except as provided in *C20.02. and *C20.03., a written agreement, developed in consultation with the synod and approved by the voting members of each congregation participating in the parish, shall specify the powers and responsibilities that have been delegated to the Parish Council. The Parish Agreement shall identify which congregation of the parish issues calls on behalf of the member congregations or shall establish a process for identifying which congregation issues calls on behalf of the member congregations.
- *C20.02.** One congregation of a parish shall issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Sacrament or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended by the synodical bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a two-thirds vote at a congregational meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.
- *C20.03.** One congregation of a parish may issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Service or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended by the synodical bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a two-thirds vote at a congregational meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (February 2018)
8427 Jewel Lake Road, Anchorage, AK 99502

- *C20.04.** Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with the pastor as provided in †S14.18.d. of the synodical constitution of the synod named in *C6.01. In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.
- *C20.05.** Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with a minister of Word and Service as provided in †S14.43.d. of the synodical constitution of the synod named in *C6.01. In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.
- *C20.06.** Whenever a parish agreement is terminated, the call of any rostered minister serving that parish is terminated. Should any congregation that was formerly part of the parish agreement desire to issue a new call to that rostered minister, it may do so in accordance with the call process of this church.