

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF  
WORD OF GOD LUTHERAN CHURCH  
Georgia**

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### **PREAMBLE**

**We, baptized members of the Church of Christ, responding in faith to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, desiring to unite together to preach the Word, administer the sacraments, and carry out God's mission, do hereby adopt this constitution and solemnly pledge ourselves to be governed by its provisions, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

### **Chapter 1: NAME**

**C1.01. The name of this congregation shall be Word of God Lutheran Church in the state of Georgia.**

**C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and bylaws, the congregation of Word of God Lutheran Church in the state of Georgia is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."**

### **Chapter 2: CONFESSION OF FAITH**

**C2.01. The Lord Jesus Christ – We are people who believe and confess our faith in the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We trust and believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.**

**C2.02. The Gospel of Salvation – We believe and confess that all human beings are sinners and that sinners are redeemed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God alone justifies human beings by faith in Christ – a faith that God creates through the message of the Gospel. As ambassadors for Christ, God uses us to speak his Word and build his kingdom.**

**C2.03. The Authority of Scripture – We accept the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired revealed Word of God, spoken in Law and Gospel, and the final authority for us in all matters of our proclamation, faith, and life without change or reinterpretation by any church authority.**

**C2.04. A Common Confession of Faith – We accept the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasius Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this congregation. We accept 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. We accept 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. We uphold that the Lutheran Confessions reliably guide us as faithful interpretations of Scripture and that we share a unity and fellowship in faith with others among whom the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached and the sacraments are administered in accordance with the Gospel.**

- C2.05. The Priesthood of All Believers – We believe and confess that the Holy Spirit makes all who believe in Jesus Christ to be priests for service to others in Jesus’ name, and that God desires to make use of the spiritual gifts he has given through the priesthood of all believers.**
- C2.06. Marriage and Family – We uphold the Biblical norms for marriage, family, and sexuality as stated in the Common Confession. We believe and confess that the marriage of male and female is an institution created and blessed by God. From marriage, God forms families to serve as the building blocks of all human civilization and community. We teach and practice that sexual activity belongs exclusively within the Biblical boundaries of a faithful marriage between one man and one woman.**
- C2.07. The Mission and Ministry of the Congregation – We believe and confess that the Church is the assembly of believers called and gathered by God around Word and Sacrament, and that the mission and ministry of the Church is carried out within the context of individual congregations, which are able to work together locally and globally.**

### **Chapter 3: NATURE OF THE CHURCH**

- C3.01. All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under His rule and authority.**
- C3.02. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations.**

### **Chapter 4: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

- C4.01. The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.**
- C4.02. To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:**
  - a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, repentance, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service;**
  - b. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith**

alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations;

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

d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their need;

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; and

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 callings in their daily lives and in their congregation;

d. Teach the Word of God;

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

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

g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for the congregation's ministry and the Christian ministry in other parts of this country and the world;

h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations; and

i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with God's Word and Chapter 2.

**C4.04. This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws.**

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

#### **Chapter 5: POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

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

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

**C5.03. Only such authority as is delegated to the Service Committee 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. Approve the annual budget;**

**d. Acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;**

**e. Authorize, by congregational meeting, the Service Committee to sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;**

**g. Elect its Service Committee members and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with this congregation's constitution and bylaws; and**

**h. Terminate its relationship with any affiliated organization as provided in Chapter 6.**

**C5.04. This congregation shall choose from among its voting members laypersons to serve as representatives at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member.**

#### **Chapter 6: CHURCH AFFILIATION**

**C6.01. This congregation may enter into full partnership or membership with Lutheran denominations, associations, or ministries. Full membership in Lutheran denominations, associations, or ministries shall require a two-thirds majority vote of all voting members present and voting at a legally called meeting of the congregation; at least a thirty (30) day notice shall be given for calling such a meeting. Severance of such membership shall require at least a ninety (90) day notice by the Service Committee to the membership of the congregation and to the denomination, association, or ministry of the intent to sever membership, followed by a two-thirds majority vote of all voting members present and**

**voting at a legally called meeting of the congregation.**

B6.01. The congregation is affiliated with the North American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Congregations in Missions for Christ.

## **Chapter 7: PROPERTY OWNERSHIP**

C7.01. Property ownership stays within the congregation.

## **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 (exceptions may be made for missionaries and military personnel) and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation; and

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

e. **Inactive** members are members who are not eligible to vote due to no Confirmation, Communion, or Contribution (CCC) activity in the current or previous calendar year. Inactive members will revert to Associate membership.

C8.03. All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the

approval of the Service Committee.

**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 Chapter 2; and**
- c. Support the work of this congregation through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as Biblical stewards.**

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

- a. Death;**
- b. Resignation;**
- c. Transfer or release;**
- d. Disciplinary action by the Service Committee; or**
- e. Removal from the roll due to inactivity as defined in the bylaws. Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the Church has a continuing pastoral concern.**

B8.05. Inactive members are those who have failed to receive Holy Communion and to make a contribution of record for a period of two (2) consecutive calendar years. Inactive members may be removed from the roll of members by the Service Committee. This procedure will take place after such members have been counseled about the matter, if possible.

**C8.06. Dismissal by Disciplinary Action**

- a. The purpose and goal of all matters of church discipline will be to restore those who have sinned.**
- b. Principles found in Matthew 18:15-17 will be followed with the Service Committee as the Church noted in verse 17.**
- c. If the Service Committee deems it necessary, a member may be removed from this congregation's membership.**
- d. All members of this congregation recognize that they are under the spiritual authority of the congregation and will not have recourse to the decision of the Service Committee.**

## **Chapter 9: THE PASTOR**

- C9.01. Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by the Service Committee to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the leadership of any Christian ministry this congregation has affiliated with in accordance with Chapter 6.**
- C9.02. Only a person with theological training and who adheres to the confession of faith in Chapter 2 may be called as a pastor of this congregation. This congregation will only call pastors or professional lay ministers who are in a heterosexual marriage or, if single, are celibate.**
- C9.03. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Lutheran Confessions as expressed in Chapter 2,**
- a. Every pastor or professional lay minister shall:**
- 1) Preach the Word;**
  - 2) Administer the sacraments;**
  - 3) Conduct public worship;**
  - 4) Provide pastoral care;**
  - 5) Equip members for ministry; and**
  - 6) Speak publicly proclaiming God's love for the world.**
- b. Each pastor or professional lay minister with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:**
- 1) Offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead; however, no one will perform same sex blessings; and**
  - 2) With the Service Committee, administer discipline.**
- c. Every pastor or professional lay minister shall:**
- 1) Seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel and strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; and**
  - 2) Endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to missions and benevolent needs and organizations.**

**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.**

B9.04. The pastor shall have voice and vote on the Service Committee.

**C9.05. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which, except in the case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated only 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, thirty (30) days after the date on which it was submitted;**
- 3) As a result of the disciplinary proceeding stemming from the inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor;**
- 4) The physical and mental incapacity of the pastor;**
- 5) Disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty; or**
- 6) The dissolution of the congregation.**

B9.05. When the congregation has a pastor, but the pastor is unavailable because of sickness or temporary absence from the parish:

- a. The congregation president or vice president shall assume the pastor's responsibility for the administration of the congregation.
- b. In the event of an emergency requiring pastoral services the congregation president or vice president shall be responsible for contacting a neighboring pastor with whom prior arrangements have been made by the congregation's pastor to respond in such emergencies.
- c. If the pastor is unable to lead or to arrange for the leadership of worship services, the congregation president or vice president shall be responsible for seeing that such worship services are held and properly conducted.

**C9.06. An ordained minister shall be subject to discipline for:**

- a. Preaching and teaching in conflict with the faith confessed by the NALC and/or the LCMC.**

**b. Conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office.**

**c. Willfully disregarding or violating the standards established by the NALC and/or the LCMC for the office of Word and Sacrament.**

**C9.07. The disciplinary actions that may be imposed upon an ordained minister are:**

**a. Private censure and admonition by the Bishop.**

**b. Suspension from the office and function of the ordained ministry for a designated period of time and until there is satisfactory evidence of repentance and amendment.**

**c. Removal from the ordained ministry of the NALC and/or the LCMC.**

**C9.08. The Service Committee shall develop and approve a process for discipline and appeal proceedings, including the elaboration of who may bring charges that may lead to discipline. This process shall assure due process and due protection for the accused. Imposition of the disciplinary sanctions provided in these sections shall require a vote of three-fourths of the Service Committee.**

**B9.08. Authority to terminate a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before the meeting to vote on the termination of the pastor is called, the officers, or a committee elected by the Service Committee to recommend the termination, shall seek the advice and help of the leadership of any Christian ministry this congregation has affiliated with in accordance with Chapter 6.**

**C9.09. This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor and a pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation.**

**C9.10. The congregation may depart from C9.05. and call a pastor for a specific term of years. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of C9.05.**

**C9.11. The pastor of this congregation shall:**

**a. Keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation;**

**b. Submit a summary of such statistics annually to the congregation; and**

**c. 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.**

## **Chapter 10: CONGREGATION MEETINGS**

**C10.01. The Annual Congregational Meeting and the Annual Business Meeting of this congregation shall be held at times specified in the bylaws.**

B10.01. The Annual Congregational Meeting shall normally be held the second Sunday of January for the primary purpose of electing members of the Service Committee. The Annual Business Meeting shall normally be held the second Sunday of June for the primary purpose of approving the budget and reviewing annual reports. The fiscal year for Word of God LC will be 1 July to 30 June. This timeline will allow a review of comments from the annual meeting, the Service Committee's budget development process to conclude, and congregational approval of the budget normally on the second Sunday of June.

B10.01.01. The written annual report of the preceding year shall be made available to all members of the congregation at the June meeting. This annual report shall include reports from the pastor, Service Committee, and each ministry team, organization, and auxiliary of this congregation.

**C10.02. A special meeting of the congregation may be called by the pastor, the Service Committee, or the president of this congregation and shall be called by the president of the congregation upon the written request of ten percent (10%) of the voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held, and no other business shall be transacted.**

B10.02. The minutes of all meetings of the congregation will be approved by the Service Committee at its next regular meeting.

**C10.03. Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two (2) consecutive Sundays and by electronic means or if specified by voting member, mail, to all members at least ten (10) days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail and/or email, with the regular postage affixed or paid, sent to the last known address of such members, shall be sufficient.**

**C10.04. In order for a vote to be taken at a called congregational meeting, a quorum of voting members must be present.**

B10.04. A quorum is defined as one third or more of the voting members of the church.

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

**C10.06. 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 and in accordance with state and federal laws.**

B10.06. Voting members shall be eligible to vote in all meetings of the congregation, except that

persons under eighteen (18) years of age shall not be eligible to vote on purchasing, selling, making extensive repairs to, or encumbering real estate; or other matters requiring a legal contract.

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

## **Chapter 11: OFFICERS**

**C11.01. The officers of this congregation shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer (with authority as CFO). No officer shall hold more than one office at a time.**

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

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

**c. At its first meeting of the calendar year, the Service Committee shall elect its officers by written ballot to serve a one-year term or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the Service Committee meeting at which they are elected. The President, Vice President and Secretary shall be elected from the voting members of the Service Committee and shall be eligible to serve no more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office. The Treasurer shall not be a voting member of the Service Committee; but, they are to be accorded the privilege of voice without vote at Service Committee meetings. The treasurer will be appointed by the Service Committee annually to serve at the will of the Service Committee for not more than three consecutive years.**

B11.01. If any officer ceases to be a voting member of the congregation, that office shall at once be declared vacant by the Service Committee. The Service Committee shall elect a service committee member to fill the vacancy until the next Annual Congregational meeting.

B11.01.01. Duties of the officers

a. President:

- 1) To preside at all meetings of this congregation and the Service Committee.
- 2) To carry out the additional duties defined in C9.05.01. when the pastor is unavailable;  
and
- 3) To provide leadership in assisting Service Committee members and chairs to fulfill their duties as provided in this congregation's constitution and bylaws.

b. Vice President:

- 1) To preside at all meetings of the congregation and the Service Committee in the absence

of the president;

- 2) To perform those particular administrative duties recommended by the pastor and the president and which are approved by the Service Committee; and
- 3) To assist the president and the pastor when requested.

c. Secretary:

- 1) To keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation and the Service Committee in a volume provided by the congregation and which shall be preserved permanently in its archives;
- 2) To write or answer official Service Committee correspondence as directed by the Service Committee, the president, the vice president, or the pastor;
- 3) To notify, as directed by the president, the vice president, or the pastor, individuals by telephone or in person as soon as possible of actions of the Service Committee which affect their church duties;
- 4) To schedule meetings and appointments and call or email to remind participants of such meetings as directed by the pastor, the president, the vice president, or the Service Committee; and
- 5) To perform other duties as assigned by the pastor, the president, the vice president, or the Service Committee.

d. Treasurer:

- 1) To keep the records of account of the congregation's general operational budget--both receipts and disbursements--which shall include a General Account, as well as "Designated Funds," and additional separate duties as may be directed by the Service Committee;
- 2) To disburse funds on proper orders;
- 3) To make a written report of all financial transactions to the finance committee as well as the Service Committee monthly and to the congregation, together with a satisfactory audit, review or other financial assessment as directed by the Service Committee annually;
- 4) To attend Service Committee meetings as requested to afford Service Committee advice on questions concerning church finances;
- 5) To keep the pastor periodically apprised of the status of the church accounts.
- 6) The treasurer shall be a member of the finance committee and will work as the liaison of said among the finance committee, the Service Committee and this congregation.

## Chapter 12: SERVICE COMMITTEE

- C12.01.** The voting membership of the Service Committee shall consist of the pastor and 8 elected members of the congregation. 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 Service Committee shall at once be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b) is absent from three (3) successive regular meetings of the Service Committee without cause. Consistent with the laws of the State of Georgia, and this constitution the congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Service Committee in other circumstances.
- C12.02.** The members of the Service Committee except the pastor shall be elected, by majority vote, at a legally called meeting of the congregation during the month of January as specified in bylaw B10.01. Their term of office shall be for three (3) years, with the term of office beginning the day of the called congregational meeting normally the second Sunday in January and ending the day of the called congregational meeting three years later. All elected members of the Service Committee are ineligible for reelection or reappointment to the Service Committee until one (1) year after the expiration date of the term of the class to which they were initially elected, although they may be reappointed or reelected to service on the Service Committee within their original class term. Newly elected Service Committee members shall be installed at the first public worship service following the called congregational meeting
- B12.02. The election of each person shall be to a class on the Service Committee. The term of each class will be three (3) years and the tenure of the classes arranged in a 2,3,3 person rotation each year as each class term expires.
- B12.02.01 The Service Committee will be comprised of 8 members nominated and elected in the following manner: The nominations will be open to all voting members and will be done by writing the name of anyone a voting member wishes to nominate on a sheet of paper and placing it into a ballot box. These names will be tallied and each "nominee" will be contacted and vetted to be sure of their desire to serve in this capacity. All names that have cleared this vetting process will then be placed on a paper ballot. The paper ballot will be voted on by all voting members at a called congregational meeting; proxy and electronic voting will not be allowed. Each voting member will have the ability to vote for the number of positions to be filled.
- C12.03.** Should a member's place on the Service Committee be declared vacant, the Service Committee shall appoint a successor to serve until the next Annual Congregational meeting. At the next Annual Congregational meeting after such appointment, the congregation shall elect, by majority vote, a person to serve the unexpired term of the class to which he/she was elected beginning in January of the next calendar year. Individuals who have served less than one-half of a regular term shall be eligible for nomination and possible election to a full term.

B12.03. In the event of an unexpired term, a single ballot will be used to fill all open terms and the newly elected members will determine who will serve the unexpired term(s).

**C12.04. The Service Committee shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith defined in Chapter 2. The duties of the Service Committee shall include the following:**

**a. Lead this congregation in stating its mission, do long-range planning, set goals and priorities, and evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals;**

**b. Seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support;**

**c. Oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission;**

**d. Maintain supportive relationships with the pastor and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment;**

**e. Be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons;**

**f. Promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, endeavor to foster mutual understanding;**

**g. Arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor; and**

**h. Seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.**

**C12.05. The Service Committee shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.**

**a. The Service Committee shall be the administrative board of this congregation and, as such, shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and for managing 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 Georgia, except as otherwise provided herein.**

**b. The Service Committee 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 Service Committee may enter into contracts that total up to 5% of the current year's annual budget for items not included in the budget.**

**d. The Service Committee shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this**

congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations of more than five percent (5%) of the current year's annual budget for items not included in the budget only after approval by a vote of the congregation.

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

f. The Service Committee shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.

**C12.06.** The Service Committee shall see that the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws are carried out.

**C12.07.** The Service Committee shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.

**C12.08.** The Service Committee shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the salaried lay workers of this congregation.

**C12.09.** The Service Committee shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the Annual Report Congregation Meeting.

**C12.10.** The Service Committee shall normally meet regularly. 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.

**B12.10.** The Service Committee shall meet monthly in one meeting to deal with Service Committee business and one meeting with the disciple ministry leaders. The agenda for the regular meetings of the Service Committee shall include the following as appropriate:

a. Devotions

b. Call to order and roll call, to include acceptance or denial of requests for excused absence in accordance with C12.01.

c. Approval of minutes

d. Review of agenda

e. Report of the treasurer

f. Report of the pastor

g. Reports of the disciple ministry teams

- h. Reports of the special committees, task groups, boards, organizations, and auxiliaries
- i. Old business
- j. New business
- k. Adjournment

B.12.10.01 The Service Committee may use the following policy when an E-Mail vote (e-vote) is necessary.

- a. E-voting may be considered for an issue that requires resolution before the next scheduled Service Committee meeting.
- b. Issues that mandate confidentiality do not qualify for the e-voting procedure as emails cannot be guaranteed to be confidential.
- c. Any Service Committee member may submit an issue and request an e-vote.
- d. The Pastor and president of the congregation will determine the necessity of an e-vote or if the matter is to be held over until the next scheduled meeting.
- e. The e-vote process is initiated when the president sends an E-mail to all member's designated E-mail address (or other specified method of communication) with an explanation of the issue.
- f. A quorum of 5 is required to proceed and is established when the president receives a response from 3 members, in addition to the Pastor and president, who agree to vote on the designated issue via the e-voting procedure.
- g. After a quorum is achieved, all voting members will have 48 hours for discussion prior to the vote. The president may specify a shorter time frame for urgent situations.
- h. All voting members will have 24 hours to vote on a motion. The president may specify a shorter time frame for urgent situations.
- i. A motion that is initiated and voting completed in less than 72 hours will require a second form of communication to each member, specified by the member.
- j. E-votes will be conducted in the public space. This means that ballots will only be recognized if they are sent "Reply to All" so that all members can see how each other has voted.
- k. When the vote is called by the president, voting choices include, Yes, No, or Abstain. Explanation of an individual vote is not allowed.

l. Passage of an e-vote will be based on a simple majority of the responses received by the specified deadline.

**C12.11. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Service Committee. Decisions of the Service Committee shall be by majority vote of members present at a called meeting at which a quorum is attended. Voting by proxy or absentee ballot shall not be permitted.**

### **Chapter 13: CONGREGATION COMMITTEES**

**C13.01. A Personnel Committee shall be appointed by the Service Committee in accordance with the bylaws. This committee shall be responsible for personnel matters relating to the parish staff including all the annual evaluations of all persons on the staff. The chair of the Personnel Committee shall normally be the previous President of the Service Committee.**

B13.01. Each review shall be done annually starting with a self-evaluation by the staff member, a review of the self-evaluation by their supervisor as well as a separate review done by the supervisor. Once both of these reviews are complete, a member of the personnel committee shall review both of these reviews with the staff member, write comments and all reports shall be made part of the permanent employee records.

B13.01.01 In the event the outgoing Service Committee President declines to serve as the Personnel Committee chair, the Service Committee will attempt to appoint the designated chair from the outgoing Service Committee members.

**C13.02. When a Pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee shall be appointed by the Service Committee in accordance with the bylaws.**

B13.02. The Call Committee shall be a sub-committee of the Personnel Committee and shall reflect in a fair way the constituency of the congregation.

**C13.03. An audit committee of three voting members shall be appointed by the Service Committee. Audit committee members shall not be members of the Service Committee, the finance committee or the treasurer. The term of office may be three years, with one member appointed each year.**

B13.03. Annual financial assessments may be either an internal review by the Auditing Committee, an external review by an accredited accountant, or an external audit by an accredited accountant. In the year in where there has been a transition in the office of the treasurer, the financial assessment must be conducted externally.

**C13.04. Other committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Service Committee. These committees shall be formed to address a specific task within a specific period of time. The scope of these ad hoc committees will be determined prior to the formation of said committee.**

#### **Chapter 14: ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION**

**C14.01. All organizations and auxiliaries 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 a dual affiliation with the NALC and the LCMC, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Service Committee and specified in a continuing resolution.**

**C14.03. Disciple Ministry Teams may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Service Committee in accordance with the applicable by laws.**

**B14.03 (updated 1-14-2018) The Chair of each committee shall be chosen from the voting membership of this congregation and shall be responsible for reporting from the committee to the Service Committee. The Chairs of all disciple ministry teams shall be elected from within each group team. In addition, the Chairs of each ministry team should Chair only one ministry team. It is encouraged that each disciple ministry team monitor itself and hold the Chair position term length for their ministry team to no more than three consecutive years. Also, a member of the Service Committee may not serve as a chair of a ministry team.**

#### **Chapter 15: DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION**

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

**C15.02. The process for discipline of a member of the congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of a dual affiliation with the NALC and the LCMC*. If discipline against a**

member proceeds beyond counseling and admonition by the pastor, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing shall be prepared by member(s) of the congregation who shall sign the charges as the accuser(s). The written charges shall be filed with the pastor, who shall advise the Service Committee of the need to issue a written citation to the accused by their accusers that specifies the time and place of the hearing before the Service Committee. The written charges shall accompany the written citation to the accused. A member charged with the offense shall appear before the Service Committee after having received a written citation, at least ten days prior to the meeting. If the member charged with the offense fails to appear at the scheduled hearing, the Service Committee may proceed with the hearing and may pass judgment in the member's absence.

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

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

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

**C15.04. The member against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Service Committee shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Executive Council of a dual affiliation with the NALC and the LCMC. Such right may not be abridged and the decision of the Executive Council shall be final.**

**C15.05. Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Service Committee upon receipt of a) evidence that injustice has been done or b) evidence of repentance and amendment.**

**C15.06. For disciplinary actions in this congregation, "due process" shall be observed as agreed upon by a dual affiliation with the NALC and the LCMC.**

**C15.07. No member of a congregation shall be subject to discipline for offenses that the Service Committee has previously heard and decided, unless so ordered by the Executive Council after an appeal.**

**C15.08. 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 bishop/dean for consultation after informing the president of the Service Committee of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the Consultation Committee of a dual affiliation with the NALC and the LCMC shall consider the matter. If the Consultation Committee of a dual affiliation with the NALC and the LCMC shall fail to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to the Executive Council, whose decision shall be final.

**C15.09. A congregation shall be subject to discipline for:**

- a. Departing from the faith confessed by the NALC and/or the LCMC.**
- b. Willfully disregarding or violating the criteria for recognition as congregations of the NALC and/or the LCMC.**
- c. Willfully disregarding or violating the provisions of the constitution of the NALC and /or the LCMC.**

**C15.10. The disciplinary actions that may be imposed upon a congregation are:**

- a. Censure and admonition by the Bishop.**
- b. Suspension from the NALC and/or the LCMC for a designated period of time.**
- c. Removal from the membership and ministry of the NALC and/or the LCMC.**

## **Chapter 16: BYLAWS**

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

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

**C16.03. Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Service Committee at least sixty (60) days before a regular or special meeting of the congregation called for that purpose and that the Service Committee notify the congregation's members by electronic means or if specified by voting member, mail, of the proposal with the Service Committee's recommendations at least thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting of the congregation.**

## **Chapter 17: AMENDMENTS**

**C17.01. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least thirty-three percent (33%) of the voting members of this congregation or by the Service Committee. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Service Committee at least sixty (60) days before formal consideration by this congregation at a regular or special meeting of the congregation**

called for that purpose. The Service Committee shall notify the congregation's members by electronic means or if specified by voting member, mail, of the proposal together with the Service Committee's recommendations at least thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting.

**C17.02. An amendment to this constitution, proposed under C16.01., shall:**

- a. Be approved at a legally called meeting of the congregation according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;**
- b. Be ratified without change at the next called congregational meeting of the congregation by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting; and**
- c. Have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.**

B17.02. This Constitution and Bylaws of Word of God Lutheran Church, in the state of Georgia was approved at a legally called meeting of the congregation on June 14, 2015 by a majority vote of those present and voting. It was ratified at the specially called meeting of the congregation on August 9, 2015 by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting. The effective date of this constitution is August 9, 2015.

## **Chapter 18: INDEMNIFICATION**

**C18.01. Consistent with the laws of the State of Georgia, this congregation may adopt provisions providing indemnification for each person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a Service Committee 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.**