

(Approved by NT-NL Synod Council : 02-09-2001)

THE CONSTITUTION FOR FINNISH LUTHERAN CHURCH OF NORTH TEXAS

A Synodical Authorized Worshiping Community
Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Introduction

Preamble

- 01 Name and Incorporation
- 02 Confession of Faith
- 03 Nature of the Church
- 04 Statement of Purpose
- 05 Powers of the Chapel
- 06 Church Affiliation
- 07 Property Ownership
- 08 Participation
- 09 the Pastor
- 10 Chapel Meeting
- 11 Officers
- 12 Chapel Council
- 13 Chapel Committees
- 14 Organizations within the Chapel
- 15 Discipline of Participants and Adjudication
- 16 Bylaws
- 17 Amendments
- 18 Continuing Resolutions
- 19 Indemnification

*PREAMBLE

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

Chapter 1

NAME AND INCORPORATION

C1.01. The name of this Synodical Authorized Worshiping Community shall be Finnish Lutheran Church of North Texas.

C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the Finnish Lutheran Church of North Texas is hereinafter designated as "this chapel."

C1.11. This chapel shall be a Synodical Authorized Worshiping Community (SAWC) authorized and under the direction of the Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod that is incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas.

Chapter 2

CONFESSION OF FAITH

***C2.01.** This chapel confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

***C2.02.** This chapel confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.

a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.

b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

***C2.03.** This chapel 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 chapel accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this chapel.

***C2.05.** This chapel 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 chapel 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 chapel 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 chapel 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. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

Chapter 4

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

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

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

***C4.03.** To fulfill these purposes, this chapel 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 participants to share in this ministry.
- c. Challenge, equip, and support all participants in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their chapel.
- 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 participants to provide financial support for the chapel'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 chapel shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Chapel Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other

organizational group and shall review their actions. [Such descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions in the section on the Congregation Council.]

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

Chapter 5

POWERS OF THE CHAPEL

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

***C5.02.** The powers of this chapel are vested in the Chapel Council as provided in this constitution and bylaws.

***C5.03.** Only such authority as is delegated to the Chapel Council or other organizational units in this chapel's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by the chapel. The chapel 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 or terminate the call of associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers in conformity with the applicable policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
- d. approve the annual budget;
- e. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means as provided in Chapter 12;
- f. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
- g. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
- h. elect its [officers[,] [and] Chapel Council, [boards, and committees,] and require [them] [the members of the council] to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution[,], [and] bylaws[,], [and continuing resolutions]; and
- i. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.

***C5.04.** This chapel 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 chapel and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by this synod.

Chapter 6

CHURCH AFFILIATION

***C6.01.** This chapel shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, of the Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. This chapel is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

***C6.02.** This chapel 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 chapel acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which:

- a. This chapel agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
- b. This chapel pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- c. This chapel agrees the pastoral leadership to be called/appointed as provided in Chapter 9.
- d. This chapel agrees to consider associates in ministry for call to other staff positions in the chapel according to the procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- e. This chapel 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 chapel takes action to dissolve.
- b. This chapel ceases to exist.
- c. This chapel 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 chapel follows the procedures outlined in *C6.05.

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

- a. A resolution indicating the desire of this chapel to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this Chapel Council by a two-thirds majority.
- b. The secretary of this chapel shall submit a copy of the resolution to the synodical bishop and shall mail a copy of the resolution to the members of the Chapel Council. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted.
- c. The bishop of the synod shall consult with this chapel during a period of at least 90 days.
- d. If this chapel, after consultation, still desires to terminate its relationship, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds majority of the Chapel Council, at which meeting the bishop of the synod or an authorized representative shall be present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members of the Chapel Council at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.
- e. A certified copy of the resolution to terminate its relationship shall be sent to the synodical bishop, at which time the relationship between this chapel and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be terminated.
- f. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the synodical bishop to the secretary of this church and published in the periodical of this church.
- g. Since this chapel was established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, it shall be required, in addition to the foregoing provisions in *C6.05, to receive synodical approval before terminating its membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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

Chapter 7

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

*C7.01. If this chapel ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

*C7.02. If this chapel 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 chapel.

*C7.03. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this Chapel Council present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this chapel vote to transfer to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this chapel. Before this chapel takes action to transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod.

*C7.04. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this Chapel Council present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this chapel vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body, title to property of this chapel shall continue to reside in this chapel only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with this chapel 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 chapel. If the Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those participants who desire to continue as a chapel of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Chapter 8

PARTICIPATION

*C8.01. This chapel shall maintain records on an annual basis of the regular participants and of all pastoral acts conducted within this chapel; the latter retained on a permanent basis in the parish records of a Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana congregation to be designated by the synod council. Regular participants of this chapel will retain their memberships in their present congregation, either in Finland or in the Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod. Participants who are received by baptism or by affirmation of faith shall be recorded as members of a congregation in Finland or of a local Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod congregation.

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

a. **Occasional** participants are those persons who have participated occasionally but have not communed or made a contribution of record during the current or preceding year.

b. **Regular** participants are those persons who have participated regularly, communed and made a contribution of record during the current or preceding year. Maintenance by the leadership of this chapel of a listing of regular participants shall be filed annually with the Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod.

c. **Voting** participants are the pastor, the members of the Executive Committee and the members of the Chapel Council.

***C8.04.** It shall be the privilege and duty of participants of this chapel 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 Chapel, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.

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

- a. death;
- b. resignation;
- c. transfer or release;
- d. disciplinary action by the Congregation Council; or
- e. removal from the roll due to inactivity as defined in the bylaws.

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

Chapter 9

THE PASTOR

***C9.01.** The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland will call/appoint pastoral leadership to this chapel. The Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod Council upon consultation with the Chapel Council of this chapel will endorse the appointment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland.

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

a. Every ordained minister shall:

- 1) preach the Word;
- 2) administer the sacraments;
- 3) conduct public worship;
- 4) provide pastoral care, and
- 5) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.

b. Each ordained minister with a chapel call shall, within the chapel:

- 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
- 2) supervise all schools and organizations of this chapel;
- 3) install appointed participants to the Chapel Council, and
- 4) with the council, administer discipline.

c. Every pastor shall:

- 1) strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;

- 2) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
- 3) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications; and
- 4) endeavor to increase the support given by the chapel to the work of the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and of the Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod of the ELCA.

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

***C9.05. a.** If a pastor is called by a Chapel Council, the call shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which, except in the case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated only following consultation with the synodical bishop and for the following reasons:

- 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
- 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
- 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the chapel in view of local conditions, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor;
- 4) The physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
- 5) disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty;
- 6) the dissolution of the chapel; or
- 7) suspension of the chapel as a result of discipline proceedings.

b. When allegations of physical or mental incapacity of the pastor or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office have come to the attention of the bishop of the synod, the bishop in his or her sole discretion may, or when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Chapel Council, the bishop shall, investigate such conditions personally in company with a committee of two ordained ministers and one layperson.

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

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

e. If, in the course of proceedings described in *C9.05.d., the committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action to the synodical bishop who may bring

charges, in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the constitution of this synod.

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

***C9.08.** This chapel 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 chapel.

***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 Chapel Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

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

a. shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants and regular participants.

b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod.

***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.

C9.21. Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synodical bishop and the concurrence of this chapel, an ordained minister of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily under contract as pastor of this chapel.

Chapter 11

OFFICERS

C11.01. The officers of this chapel shall be appointed annually by the pastor with the concurrence of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod. The officers shall be president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.

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

b. The officers shall be voting members of the Chapel Council.

Chapter 12

CHAPEL COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Chapel Council shall consist of the pastor(s), the officers of the chapel, and not more than six (6) regular participants of the chapel.

A member's place on the Chapel Council shall be declared vacant if the member:

a) ceases to be a regular participant of this Chapel or;

b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Chapel Council without cause.

Consistent with the laws of the state, in which this chapel is incorporated, the chapel may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Chapel Council in other circumstances.

C12.02. The members of the Chapel Council except the pastor and the officers shall, by majority vote, be appointed by the Executive Committee for one year or until their successors are appointed. Their terms shall normally begin on January 1st following the Executive Committee meeting at which they are appointed, and end on December 31st. Newly appointed Chapel Council members shall be installed at worship.

C12.03. Should a member's place on the Chapel Council be declared vacant, the Executive Committee shall appoint, by majority vote a new member.

C12.04. The Chapel Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this chapel, 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 Chapel Council shall include the following:

- a. To lead this chapel 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 participants of this chapel in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
- c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this chapel to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
- d. To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.
- e. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
- f. To promote within the chapel a climate of peace and goodwill, and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
- g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or 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 the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- j. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

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

- a. The Chapel Council shall be the board of trustees of this chapel, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the management of its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Texas, except as otherwise provided herein.
- b. The Chapel Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by the Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod.

- c. The Chapel Council may enter into contracts of up to \$ 5,000 for items not included in the budget.
- d. The Chapel Council shall prepare and approve an annual budget and shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption. The budget shall include this chapel's full-indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in partnership with the synod and churchwide organization.
- e. The Chapel Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this chapel 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 Chapel Council shall be responsible for this chapel's investments and its total insurance program.

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

C12.07. The Chapel Council shall provide for an annual review of the list of regular participants.

C12.08. The Chapel Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the salaried lay workers of this chapel.

C12.11. The Chapel 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.

C12.12. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Chapel Council, including the pastor, except when the 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 who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Chapel Council, following consultation with the synodical bishop.

Chapter 13

CHAPEL COMMITTEES

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

C13.06. Other committees of this chapel may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Chapel Council.

C13.07. Duties of committees of this chapel shall be specified in the bylaws and/or continuing resolutions.

Chapter 14

ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CHAPEL

C14.01. All organizations within this chapel shall exist to aid it in ministering to the participants of this chapel and to all persons who can be reached with the Gospel of Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of this chapel's life, the organizations are subject to the Chapel Council's oversight and direction.

C14.02. Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after the Chapel Council has given authorization and specified in a continuing resolution.

Chapter 15

DISCIPLINE OF PARTICIPANTS AND ADJUDICATION

***C15.01.** Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a participant of the Church of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in this chapel are sufficient cause for discipline of a participant. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps:

- a) private admonition by the pastor,
- b) admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, and
- c) citation to appear before the Chapel Council. If for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by a. and b. hereof, the president (if not the pastor) or vice president shall administer such admonitions.

***C15.02.** The process for discipline of a participant of the chapel shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. A participant charged with the offense shall appear before the Chapel Council after having received a written notice, at least ten days prior to the meeting, specifying the exact charges that have been made against the participant.

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

- a. censure before the council or chapel;
 - b. suspension from participation for a definite period of time; or
 - c. exclusion from participation in this chapel.
- Disciplinary action b. and c. shall be delivered to the participant in writing.

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

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

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

***C15.11.** When there is disagreement among factions within this chapel on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, participants of this chapel shall have access to the synodical bishop for consultation after informing the chair of the Chapel 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.

Chapter 16

BYLAWS

*C16.01. This chapel 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 Chapel Council with a quorum by a majority vote of those 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 Executive Committee at least 60 days before in advance of the Chapel Council Meeting.

*C16.04. Approved changes to the bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this chapel to the synod.

Chapter 17

AMENDMENTS

*C17.01. The Chapel Council may propose amendments to this constitution. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Chapel Council 60 days before formal consideration by this Chapel Council at its regular or a special meeting called for that purpose.

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

- a. be approved at a legally called meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting;
- b. be ratified by the synod; and
- c. have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.

*C17.03. The secretary of this chapel shall send any amendments to this constitution to the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod. The amendment shall become effective within 120 days from the date of the receipt of the notice by the synod unless the synod informs this chapel that the amendment is in conflict with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or the constitution of the Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod of the ELCA.

*C17.04. Whenever the *Model Constitution for Congregations* is amended by the Churchwide Assembly, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a simple majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the Chapel Council, provided that a notice has submitted to the Chapel Council members of such an amendment or amendments at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the chapel shall submit a copy thereof to the synod, consistent with *C17.03.

Chapter 18

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

*C18.01. The Chapel Council may enact continuing resolutions which describe the function of the various committees or organizations of this chapel.

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

Chapter 19**INDEMNIFICATION**

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

Legal and Constitution Review Committee - Mrs. Gertrude Kousz presented the report of the committee, recommending the approval of the constitutions of: the Finnish Lutheran Church of North Texas; Christ the Servant Lutheran Church, Denton, TX; Rejoice Lutheran Church, Frisco, TX; Our Savior Lutheran Church, Tyler, TX, (with the committee's suggestions for rewording of some sections of the bylaws); and Christ the Servant Lutheran Church, Allen, TX.

VOTED SC.01.02.20 that the constitutions of congregations as presented be approved.

ADOPTED

Old Business

Good Shepherd/Dallas - Lake Property - Judge Owen Lokken reported that the possibilities for disposition of this property are still being explored for possible solutions.

Justice Ministry in the Metroplex - The Rev. Mae Jean Zelle, chair of the Outreach Commission, distributed the proposal by the Rev. Gordon Roesch. It was agreed that further study and clarification will be needed, and no action was taken at this time.

Bishop Election Review Committee - A printed report had been distributed to Synod Council members, but no one from the committee was in attendance to present it.

New Business

Office Space - It was announced that the lease on the present office space expires in November, 2002. Mr. Roger Pederson has been asked to begin conversation with the present landlord, and also to explore other possibilities.

Assisted/Independent Living - It was noted that the synod office has received inquiries concerning the possibility of providing a church-sponsored assisted living facility in the metroplex.

VOTED SC.01.02.21 to contact Lutheran Social Services of the South; Good Samaritan, Denton, TX; and Clifton Lutheran Sunset Home inquiring whether there is interest in providing a nursing home/assisted living facility in the metroplex.

ADOPTED

The meeting was adjourned at 3:53 P.M.

Melvin J. Hammer
Secretary of Synod