

# Constitution of St. John's Lutheran Church

## COVER LETTER

Sunday, July 3, 2022

To members of St. John's Lutheran Church:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

### **Preamble**

We, members of the Church of Jesus Christ, responding in faith to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ to unite together around the Gospel preached in its purity and the Sacraments administered in accordance with God's Word, and to carry out the Savior's commission to make disciples in every nation, do hereby adopt this Constitution and solemnly pledge ourselves to be governed by its provisions. Upon adoption, this Constitution dated July 31, 2022, shall supersede and replace all prior Constitutions of St. John's Lutheran Church.

As you read the proposed Constitution, the Committee directs your attention to how this Constitution differs from the current Constitution.

#### **1. Affiliation**

- a. Constitution explicitly defines our affiliation with the Lutheran Church in Mission for Christ (LCMC).

#### **2. Meetings**

- a. No quarterly meetings. Annual meeting only, however, additional meetings can be called according to the bylaws in the proposed Constitution.

#### **3. Duties and composition of Board on Ministry**

- a. Roles and duties defined by the proposed Constitution, including having the board elect its chairperson and secretary.

#### **4. Duties and composition of Board of Trustees**

- a. Roles and duties defined by the proposed Constitution, including having the board elect its chairperson and secretary.

#### **5. Quorum**

- a. Differs depending on meeting's subject.

#### **6. Specific duties**

- a. Constitution explicitly states what duties will be required, the duties recommended, and the duties that may be required depending on the circumstances.

#### **7. Management and Organization of the Congregation**

- a. Management of the Congregation entrusted to the elected officers: President, Vice President, Congregational Secretary, Treasurer, and all Board members.
- b. Congregation through the annual meetings and other called meetings will retain ultimate control and approval of any activities.
- c. Church Council, which includes all sixteen elected officers assumes responsibility for operating the Congregation in a healthy and sound manner.
  - i. They shall submit annual budget.
  - ii. Oversight of legal matters and contracts.
  - iii. Responsible for wages and benefits of all staff including the Pastor.

Respectfully submitted by the Constitution Committee,

Fred Kellinger, Chairman

Gary Augustine

Rick Mercadante

Jason Coley, Pastor (non-voting)

# **Constitution of St. John's Lutheran Church**

## **Constitution**

of

## **St. John's Lutheran Church**

1320 Church Street, Ambridge, PA 15003

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

### **Preamble**

We, members of the Church of Jesus Christ, responding in faith to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ to unite together around the Gospel preached in its purity and the Sacraments administered in accordance with God's Word, and to carry out the Savior's commission to make disciples in every nation, do hereby adopt this Constitution and solemnly pledge ourselves to be governed by its provisions. Upon adoption, this Constitution dated July 31, 2022 shall supersede and replace all prior Constitutions of St. John's Lutheran Church.

### **1.0 Name and Incorporation**

1.1 The name of this Congregation shall be St. John's Lutheran Church of Ambridge. Its domicile in the Borough of Ambridge, County of Beaver, Pennsylvania.

1.2 For the purpose of this Constitution and the accompanying By-Laws, St. John's Lutheran Church of Ambridge is hereinafter designated as "this Congregation."

1.3 This Congregation is incorporated in its own name, as a corporation not for profit, under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

### **2.0 Purpose**

2.1 The purpose of this Congregation shall be to: extend the kingdom of God by preaching and teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, administer the Sacraments according to the doctrinal standard of the Lutheran Church, make and train disciples in Christian faith and practice, and foster Christian fellowship and love of neighbor.

2.2 This 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. To this end this Congregation shall:

- a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word, administration of the Sacraments, and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
- b. Provide pastoral care and encourage all members to participate in this ministry.
- c. Teach biblical principles of stewardship including use of time, talent and treasures.
- d. Encourage members to pray for our ministry, each other and for the world.

# Constitution of St. John's Lutheran Church

2.3 All meetings of the Congregation, the Council, and any boards should begin with prayer to seek God's guidance and blessing.

## **3.0 Doctrinal Standard**

3.1 The following is a summary of what the Congregation and its members profess, teach, and proclaim.

a. The Bible, contained in the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is the divinely inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God, the only rule and norm of Christian faith and practice, and sufficient for God's revelation of Himself and His plan of redemption.

b. There is one God, the Triune God, eternally existing in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

c. Man was originally created in the image and likeness of God to live in fellowship with his creator, yet willfully sinned by yielding to the temptation of Satan, and thereby lost fellowship with God. Therefore, all people, as Adam's descendants, are sinners by nature and under God's just wrath and condemnation.

d. Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son, to accomplish redemption of fallen humanity, became man being conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary and is fully God and fully man. He purchased our redemption through His perfect obedience, substitutionary death on the cross, physical resurrection from the dead, and ascension into heaven. He now intercedes as our Great High Priest and will visibly return to eternally gather all believers to Himself in the new heavens and new earth and to eternally condemn all unbelievers to Hell, that is eternal separation from God.

e. The knowledge and benefit of Christ's redeeming work is applied to the believer by God's Holy Spirit through the means of grace, namely the Word and the Sacraments. Through these means of grace, the Holy Spirit creates saving faith in the hearts of believers, spurs them to repentance, and produces fruit leading to sanctification.

3.2 We accept the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds, and the Lutheran confessional writings contained in the 1580 Book of Concord as true declarations of the scriptural faith we believe, teach, and confess.

3.3 We believe, teach, and accept the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism as true witnesses to the Word of God and acknowledge that we are one in faith and doctrine with all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

3.4 No doctrine shall be taught or considered acceptable in this Congregation which is in any way at variance with the Holy Scripture, the Creeds, and the 1580 Book of Concord. Likewise, all controversies, which may arise in this Congregation, shall be decided and adjudicated according to this norm of doctrine and practice.

## **4.0 Membership**

4.1 Membership Defined

# Constitution of St. John's Lutheran Church

The membership of this Congregation shall consist of the following:

4.1.1 **Baptized members** are all members who have been baptized with water in the Name of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, including children on the membership register who have not yet been confirmed.

4.1.2 **Communicant members** are those baptized members of the Congregation who have received formal instruction in the fundamental doctrines of the Lutheran Church; have publicly declared their acceptance of the doctrinal standard of Article 3.0 of this Constitution; and hold no membership in any organization having religious doctrines or ceremonies which are contrary to the Word of God.

4.1.3 **Voting members** are communicant members of the Congregation who have reached the age of 18 years, or adults who have been received as members through baptism or transfer of membership at a regular Sunday church service, and who have not otherwise been restricted from voting by this Constitution.

## 4.2 Reception into Membership

4.2.1 **Baptized members** are received into membership by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this Congregation, or, having been previously baptized by other Christian Congregations, or, in the case of baptized minor children, by the affirmation of faith of a parent or guardian.

4.2.2 **Communicant members** are received into membership by the rite of confirmation by this Congregation. Adults, not previously baptized, are received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this Congregation and upon satisfactory review of the fundamental doctrines of the Lutheran Church and of the doctrinal standard of this Congregation (Article 3.0), the Pastor shall submit their requests for membership to the Congregation. Upon affirmation from the Congregation, they shall formally be received into membership during a Sunday service of the Congregation by their public profession of faith. Persons not affiliated with a Christian Congregation shall be received in the same manner.

4.2.3 **Voting members** are communicant members who have reached the age of eighteen, or adults who have been baptized and have completed counseling in the doctrinal standards of Article 3.0 of this Constitution. With the pastor's approval, they have agreed with the duties of membership, have formally requested to become voting members, and have received the affirmation from the Congregation at a regular Congregational meeting. Non-confirmed baptized members may request to become voting members in accordance with Article 4.1.3.

## 4.3 Duties of Membership

4.3.1 The Marks of Discipleship include: Having received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, being baptized in the name of the Triune God, and being in agreement with this Congregation's statements of faith and policies; members of this Congregation shall commit themselves to the following:

- a. To faithfully attend the worship services of this Congregation and faithfully partake of the Lord's Supper.
- b. To make prayer and Biblical study part of their daily life.

## **Constitution of St. John's Lutheran Church**

- c. To bring their children to Sunday school and catechetical instruction.
- d. To give their first fruits to God and strive toward tithing.
- e. To contribute material goods and personal service towards the ministry of this Congregation and the Church at large.
- f. To commit to sharing faith with others in word and in deed and the Church at large as God has enabled and blessed them.
- g. To protect the unity of our Church by acting in love toward other members, refusing to gossip, supporting our leaders, resolving conflicts according to Matthew 5:23-24 and 18:15-17, and striving to live a godly life.

4.3.2 Every member should endeavor to attend all Congregational meetings, and if desired, and led by the Holy Spirit, to accept nomination for office, committee appointments, other appointments, and to participate in Congregational activities.

### **4.4 Termination of Membership**

4.4.1 Baptized members who have not been confirmed before they have reached the age of 18 years should be removed from the membership of this Congregation. However, they may request to become voting members in accordance with Article 4.2.3.

4.4.2 Members shall be removed from the membership of this Congregation by death, by transfer to a sister Congregation; by joining a Congregation outside the fellowship of this Congregation, by excommunication; or by self-exclusion. In cases of excommunication or self-exclusion, each case shall be presented individually to the Congregation at its regular meeting for a decision.

4.4.3 Members who advocate beliefs contrary to the doctrinal standard of this Congregation (Article 3.0) or conduct themselves in an unchristian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20. If they remain impenitent after such admonition, they shall be considered excommunicated. Self-excluded or excommunicated persons who truly repent and ask forgiveness of the Congregation shall be reinstated into membership if they desire.

4.4.4 A voting member who is absent from Congregational meetings for a full year without a valid reason, such as military service, shut in, or unable to travel, may have their name removed from the roster of the voting members. These removals, after investigation by the Pastor, may be approved by the Congregation at a regular meeting. However, upon making a request to the Congregation, they may be reinstated. A voting member placed under Church discipline shall have their name removed from the roster of voting members until they again are received into full fellowship by the Congregation.

### **5.0 Office of Pastor**

5.1 The office of the Pastor shall be bestowed only upon such men who have subscribed to the LCMC Statement of Faith and Pastoral Admonition and who agree with the doctrinal standard of this Congregation (Article 3.0). This shall be expressly stated in the call given him by the Congregation, and expressly stated in his letter of acceptance to the Congregation. The Pastor shall remain a rostered member of the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.

## **Constitution of St. John's Lutheran Church**

5.2 The duty of the Pastor is the public proclamation of the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ to this Congregation. In carrying out this duty, the Pastor shall see that only such hymns, prayers and liturgies shall be used in the public services of the Congregation and in all ministerial acts as conform to the doctrinal standard of Article 3.0. The Pastor called by this Congregation, being the shepherd of the Congregation and adhering to the confessions of faith defined and accepted by this Congregation, therefore shall:

- a. Preach and teach the Word of God as revealed in the Old and New Testaments.
- b. Administer the Holy Sacraments.
- c. Bring to the sick, the infirm, and the sorrowing the consolation of the Gospel.
- d. Aid parents in the instruction of the young in true Lutheran doctrine.
- e. Lead, inspire, and equip the saints for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12).
- f. Perform such duties as stated in the letter of call and as agreed upon with the Council.
- g. Admonish the erring, recall the straying, and restore the fallen by the power of the Gospel.
- h. As the spiritual leader of the Congregation, serve as non-voting member of the Council and an ex-officio member of all standing boards.
- i. Diligently keep all the ministerial records of the Congregation.
- j. Provide a written report to the Congregation quarterly and at all annual meetings. Quarterly reports will be provided with the Congregational Secretary's report distributed in accordance with Article 15.2.3.
- k. Visit each Congregational family annually.
- l. Be a member of this Congregation.

5.3 The Pastor shall be removed from office for any of the following reasons by the Congregation, in Christian and lawful order, at a duly called Congregational meeting conducted in accordance with Article 12.0:

- 5.3.1 Persistent adherence to false doctrine
- 5.3.2 Scandalous life
- 5.3.3 Willful neglect of duties

5.4 The Congregation may request the resignation of the Pastor from his position in the case of general incompetence at a duly called Congregational meeting conducted in accordance with Article 12.0.

5.5 In case of his prolonged incapacity, the Congregation may declare the position of the Pastor vacant. The resignation request shall be presented to the Congregation at a duly called Congregational meeting conducted in accordance with Article 12.0.

### **6.0 Authority of the Congregation**

## **Constitution of St. John's Lutheran Church**

6.1 This Congregation shall have the power to administer and manage all its external and internal affairs. The establishment and conduct of all institutions and societies within the Congregation, such as adult and youth ministries, men's and ladies' organizations, choir, etc., shall at all times be subject to the approval and supervision of the Congregation. The Congregation, however, shall not be empowered to decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the doctrinal standard of Article 3.0, and any such decisions shall be null and void.

6.2 The right to call, choose, and accept a Pastor shall be, and remain, the sole right of the Congregation as a whole, and shall never be transferred to an individual or a smaller body within the Congregation. However, the Congregation should establish a Call Committee to provide pastoral candidates to the Congregation for a vote. The vote to call a Pastor shall be made at a duly called Congregational meeting conducted in accordance with Article 12.0.

6.3 The Word of God and the doctrinal standard of Article 3.0 shall decide all matters of doctrine. Other matters shall be decided by the Congregation by majority vote of at least fifteen voting members present at a duly called meeting, unless otherwise specified by the Constitution or By-Laws of this Congregation.

6.4 The Congregation should remove any officer, teacher, or layperson from office by ballot, in Christian lawful order, for persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, or inability to perform or willful neglect of their official duties. Such matters shall be brought to the attention of the Church Council. When necessary, the Church Council shall make a recommendation to the Congregation for removal from their position. A two-thirds (2/3) majority ballot vote is required for removal.

### **7.0 Power of Officers**

7.1 The officers' responsibilities shall be such as the By-Laws of this Constitution may prescribe.

7.2 Congregational officers and boards, whether elected or appointed, shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them, and whatever authority may have been delegated to them may at any time be altered by amendment to the By-Laws of this Constitution following a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Congregation.

### **8.0 Fellowship with the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ**

8.1 This Congregation shall be an independent, voluntary member of the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (hereafter "LCMC"). Further, this Congregation accepts the Statement of Faith and agrees to the Purposes of the LCMC and shall act in accordance with them.

8.2 This Congregation may terminate its membership with an association as follows:

- a. This Congregation takes action to dissolve.
- b. This Congregation ceases to exist.
- c. This Congregation adopts a resolution to terminate its relationship or affiliation with any association.

8.3 Severance with the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) shall require a vote at a duly called Congregational meeting where 25%, or more, of the voting members shall be present. A

# **Constitution of St. John's Lutheran Church**

two-thirds (2/3) majority ballot vote of those voting members is required for passage. Such a decision shall not be effective, however, until at least ninety (90) days after the initial action has been ratified at a duly called Congregational meeting where 25% of the voting members shall be present. A two-thirds (2/3) majority ballot vote of those voting members is required for passage.

## **9.0 Property Rights**

9.1 The real property and contents therein of this Congregation cannot be disposed of, or encumbered by, liens, easements, leases, mortgages, or other restrictive covenants, except as defined in the By-Laws of this Congregation.

9.2 If a division should take place in this Congregation on account of doctrine, the property of the Congregation and all benefits therewith connected shall remain with those members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Article 3.0 of this Constitution.

9.3 Should this Congregation decide to be dissolved, all property and funds remaining after the payment of the debts of the Congregation shall be distributed as determined at a duly called Congregational meeting where 25% of the voting members shall be present. A two-thirds (2/3) majority ballot vote of those voting members is required for passage. All distributions shall comply with applicable Commonwealth of Pennsylvania law.

## **10.0 Changing the Constitution and/or By-Laws**

### 10.1 Unalterable Articles

The following articles of this Constitution or sections thereof; shall be unalterable and irrevocable: Article 3.0.

### 10.2 Amendments

Amendments to the Constitution and/or By-Laws shall be adopted at regular meetings of the Congregation provided the following requirements are met.

10.2.1 The proposed amendment shall not conflict with the Word of God or the doctrinal standard of this Congregation as enumerated in Article 3.0.

10.2.2 A quorum per Article 12.2 shall be present to vote on the amendment.

10.2.3 All proposed amendments to the Constitution and/or By-Laws shall be published in the Congregation's worship bulletins on the two (2) consecutive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting in which the amendment is to be proposed.

10.2.4 All proposed amendments to the Constitution and/or By-Laws shall receive an affirmative two thirds (2/3) majority ballot vote for passage. Voting shall be conducted only when there is a sufficient quorum as defined in Article 12.0.

# **Constitution of St. John's Lutheran Church**

## **By-Laws**

of

## **St. John's Lutheran Church**

1320 Church Street, Ambridge, PA 15003

### **11.0 Meetings**

11.1 The Congregation shall hold an Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting should be held on the last Sunday in January.

11.2 Special meetings of the Congregation may be called by the Pastor, the Church Council, or any duly established Boards, or ten voting members of the Congregation. The purpose of such special meetings shall be published in the Congregation's worship bulletins on each of the two (2) consecutive Sundays immediately preceding such meetings.

11.3 No Annual or Special meetings of the Congregation shall be held in the absence of the Pastor, unless absolutely necessary.

11.4 All exceptional matters enumerated in Articles 12.1.1 through 12.1.5 below shall be published in the Congregation's worship bulletins each of the two (2) consecutive Sundays immediately preceding any meeting during which a vote on such matters shall be taken.

11.5 Emergency meetings of the Congregation may be called by the Pastor, the Church Council, any duly established Board, or ten voting members of the Congregation. Emergencies are defined as, but not limited to: threats to the health or safety of the members of the Congregation, threats to the physical property or finances of the Congregation, or issues related to legal compliance. The purpose, date, time, and location of such emergency meetings shall be communicated to the members in the Congregation's worship bulletin, by telephone, by email, via the Internet, or by any other expeditious means, or combination of means.

### **12.0 Quorum**

12.1 Fifteen voting members present at a properly called Congregational meeting shall constitute a quorum to transact all business of the Congregation except for the following matters (12.1.1 through 12.1.5):

12.1.1 To change affiliation

12.1.2 Purchase, encumbrance, or sale of buildings or land, or contents therein having a greater value than \$4,000

12.1.3 Calling a Pastor, the removal of a called Pastor from office, or declaring the pulpit vacant as defined in Article 5.5

12.1.4 Constitutional Amendments

12.1.5 Changing rules for a quorum as defined in Article 12.0

# **Constitution of St. John's Lutheran Church**

12.2 In these enumerated cases (12.1.1 through 12.1.5 above), these requests shall be presented to the Congregation at a duly called Congregational meeting where 25% of the voting members shall be present for a quorum. A two-thirds (2/3) majority ballot vote of those voting members present is required for passage. In the absence of a quorum, the voters present shall fix the date for an adjourned meeting for which a written notice shall be published in the Congregation's worship bulletins on each of the two (2) Sundays immediately preceding the adjourned meeting.

## **13.0 Election of Officers**

13.1 Officers of the Congregation shall be elected by ballot at the Annual meeting of this Congregation. The officers-elect shall assume their respective duties immediately following their installation at a Sunday service the week following their election.

13.2 Officers shall be elected by majority vote of the Congregation, using a written ballot or oral vote, to serve for two years (one term), or until their successors are elected. Officers shall be limited to three consecutive terms unless waived by the Congregation, by majority vote, at a duly called meeting.

13.3 A slate of candidates shall be drawn up by a Nominating Committee of at least three (3) voting members selected at a meeting of the Congregation. The slate shall consist of at least two names, if possible, for each office. Additional nominations may be made from the floor with the consent of the nominee, who shall be present.

13.4 All elected officers, as defined in 14.1, shall hold office until the next election of officers as specified by 13.1.

13.5 Vacancies, which occur, should be filled for the remaining time of the officer's term by election at a meeting of the Congregation.

## **14.0 Officers**

14.1 The elected officers of this Congregation shall be:

- 14.1.1 President
- 14.1.2 Vice President
- 14.1.3 Congregational Secretary
- 14.1.4 Treasurer

14.2 All elected officers, board members, and appointed positions shall be voting members, as defined in Article 4.1.3, of this Congregation as required by the Constitution.

14.3 This Congregation shall select Financial and Recording Secretaries at the Annual meeting of the Congregation. The Congregation may also appoint by majority vote at a duly called Congregational meeting: a Sunday School Superintendent, Youth Counselor, etc., as it deems helpful. All appointees shall be voting members of this Congregation as required by the Constitution, unless the Congregation at a duly called meeting votes otherwise.

14.4 The elected officers and elected Board members of the Congregation shall constitute the Church Council, along with the Pastor serving as a non-voting, ex-officio member. The Council shall meet monthly. The President of the Congregation shall preside over the Church Council meetings.

# Constitution of St. John's Lutheran Church

## 15.0 Terms and Duties

### 15.1 President and Vice-President

15.1.1 The President shall preside over all meetings of the Congregation ensuring they are conducted in an orderly and Christian manner, using as a guide for parliamentary procedure Robert's Rules of Order. The President shall perform such other duties as are assigned to him by the Constitution and the By-Laws of the Congregation, as well as those assigned to him by the Congregation.

15.1.2 The Vice President shall perform the duties of the President whenever the President is absent or unable to perform the duties of his office. The Vice President shall convene and preside over the Nominating Committee. The Vice President shall perform such other duties as are assigned to him by the Constitution and the By-Laws of the Congregation, as well as those assigned to him by the Congregation.

### 15.2 Congregational Secretary

15.2.1 The Congregational Secretary shall keep an up to date roster of the voting members of the Congregation. The Congregational Secretary may request the assistance of other members in maintaining this roster.

15.2.2 The Congregational Secretary shall keep accurate minutes of the Congregational and Council meetings for the permanent records of the Congregation. The Secretary shall record actions only, not opinions and discussions. Written committee and board reports shall become part of the permanent records of the Congregation. Permanent records of the Congregation shall remain the property of this Congregation and shall be kept on file in the Church Office.

15.2.3 The Congregational Secretary shall prepare, and distribute to the Congregation, quarterly reports of the status and activities of the Congregation.

### 15.3 Treasurer

15.3.1 Duties of the Treasurer shall include the following:

- a. Pay all approved bills and invoices
- b. Establish payment schedule and pay all Church employees
- c. Maintain all records required by the IRS and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- d. Prepare and file all documents required by the IRS and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- e. Maintain a record of all financial transactions and accounts

15.3.2 The Treasurer shall keep accurate records of the receipts and disbursements of the Congregation in books, which shall be and remain the property of the Congregation.

## **Constitution of St. John's Lutheran Church**

15.3.3 The Treasurer shall submit a financial report at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation. The Treasurer shall submit monthly financial reports to the Church Council. The Treasurer's Report for the Annual Congregational Meeting shall be an annual report for the preceding year.

15.3.4 An internal Audit Committee or Auditor elected by majority vote at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation shall audit the Treasurer's books during the month of January, and present their report at the Congregation's Annual Meeting. The Treasurer's records shall also be audited in event of transfer from one Treasurer to another, if other than at the end of the year. Elected auditors shall not be the Treasurer, Financial Secretary, or Recording Secretary.

15.3.5 A Budget Committee consisting of the Pastor, President, Vice President, Treasurer, one member of the Board of Ministry, and one member of the Board of Trustees shall prepare a proposed Congregational budget for the coming year. The Treasurer shall present the budget at the regular December meeting of the Church Council for discussion, and at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation. At the Annual Meeting, the Congregation shall adopt a budget for the fiscal year by majority vote.

### **15.4 Financial Secretary**

15.4.1 The Financial Secretary shall be appointed by the Congregation at the Annual meeting for a term of two (2) years. The Financial Secretary will be limited to three consecutive terms unless waived by the Congregation, by majority vote, at a duly called meeting.

15.4.2 The Financial Secretary shall be responsible for the proper deposit in the bank of all money received by the Congregation. With Congregational approval, the Financial Secretary may select assistants, such as counters, to assist in managing collections. Counters must be voting members.

### **15.5 Recording Secretary**

15.5.1 The Recording Secretary shall be appointed by the Congregation at the Annual meeting for a term of two (2) years. The Recording Secretary will be limited to three consecutive terms unless waived by the Congregation, by majority vote, at a duly called meeting.

15.5.2 The Recording Secretary shall keep an accurate record of the contributions of each communicant member of the Congregation. The Recording Secretary shall furnish all voting and communicant members with envelopes. The Recording Secretary shall provide an annual statement of their contributions. The Recording Secretary shall also provide statements for all contributions by members or nonmembers, as required by law.

### **15.6 Church Council shall:**

15.6.1 Lead the Congregation, in collaboration with the Pastor, in stating its mission, to do long range planning, set goals and priorities, to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals, and to report to the Congregation on its progress toward stated goals.

15.6.2 Oversee and provide for the administration of the Congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.

## **Constitution of St. John's Lutheran Church**

15.6.3 Ensure that the provisions of the Constitution and its By-Laws are carried out.

15.6.4 Draft and submit to the Congregation Constitutional Amendments or Changes to the By-Laws at a duly called Congregational meeting.

15.6.5 Submit an annual budget to the Congregation.

15.6.6 Make recommendations for the creation of new boards or positions for approval by the Congregation at a duly called Congregational meeting.

15.6.7 Oversee the Congregation's approved budget and have the authority to approve, if necessary for Church operations, expenditures not included or in excess by \$2,000 of the total amount budgeted for expenses.

15.6.8 Be responsible for operating the Congregation in a fiscally healthy and sound manner.

15.6.9 Arrange, if deemed necessary, for an external audit of the financial records of the Congregation.

15.6.10 Change wages and benefits of Church employees if appropriate after the budget is approved. The Congregation will be informed of such changes.

15.6.11 Recommend changes to the Pastor's salary and benefits. Approval will be required by majority vote at a duly called Congregational meeting.

15.6.12 Act as the legal representatives, with the support of legal advisors as necessary, of the Congregation in all matters pertaining to civil government, legal contracts (including the Pastor's personal service contract), wills and bequests, documents, etc.

15.6.13 In consultation and cooperation with the Pastor, hire and dismiss the office secretary, organist-choir director, custodian, and other paid or contracted employees, with the Congregation's approval. However, the Pastor shall directly supervise the work of the office secretary and make recommendations as necessary to the Church Council.

### **15.7 Board of Ministry**

15.7.1 The Board of Ministry shall consist of at least four (4) but no more than six (6) voting members, who shall be elected by the Congregation for a term of two (2) years. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the Board of Ministry. Dates and times of the meetings shall be set by the board. A chairperson and secretary shall be selected by the Board. The secretary shall provide a written report at the regular meetings of the Congregation and Church Council.

15.7.2 The Board's primary concern shall be the spiritual welfare of the Congregation. It shall organize and be responsible for teaching and training opportunities (Bible studies, Sunday School, instruction, VBS, evangelism and stewardship training, etc.) within the Congregation. The Board and the Council shall annually conduct a review of the Pastor's ministry activities and make recommendations regarding the vision, mission, and ministry of/to the Congregation.

15.7.3 Any children or youth activities approved by the Board shall be conducted in accordance with the St. John's Child Protection Policy as currently approved by the Congregation, or as modified or amended by the Congregation in the future.

## **Constitution of St. John's Lutheran Church**

15.7.4 The Board should assist the Pastor in visiting members of the Congregation, especially the sick, those with special needs, those who have been negligent in their attendance at worship or the Lord's Supper, and those whose conduct is not fitting for those who profess Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

15.7.5 Being ever mindful that every believer has an important function in the Body of Christ, the Board of Ministry shall strive to prepare God's people for works of service, so the entire Congregation may be built up (Romans 12:1-8; I Corinthians 12).

15.7.6 The Board should spend monies allocated by the budget, Church Council, or the Congregation to accomplish their duties.

15.7.7 Whenever appropriate, the Board should enlist non-board members to help with the work and ministry entrusted to the board. Elected Officers, with the exception of the President, may serve on Boards.

### **15.8 Board of Trustees**

15.8.1 The Board of Trustees shall consist of at least four (4) but no more than six (6) voting members, who shall be elected by the Congregation for a term of two (2) years. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees. Dates and times of the meetings shall be set by the Board. A chairperson and secretary shall be selected by the Board. The secretary shall provide a written report at the regular meetings of the Congregation and Church Council.

15.8.2 Following the example of Acts 6:1-7, the Board shall administer the mundane matters of the Congregation, always conscious of the Congregation's spiritual nature and purpose. The duties of the Board of Trustees shall include the following:

- a. Oversee the property and material blessings entrusted to the Congregation in accordance with the Church Facility Use Policy Statement currently adopted by the Congregation, or as modified or amended by the Congregation in the future.
- b. Oversee all facilities use agreements and act as the Congregations liaison for all tenant related matters.
- c. Annually review all matters pertaining to insurance held by the Congregation and make certain that the Congregation is adequately protected against loss, damage of property, or lawsuit.
- d. Provide for the care and repair of all Church property. Expenditures in the pursuit of the Board's duties are to be included in the budget of the Congregation and approved at the January meeting of the Congregation. However, the Board may spend up to \$1,500.00 per month for necessary repairs, improvements and purchases without prior approval of the Congregation. In the case of an emergency when repairs of an essential nature are required, the Board may spend in excess of \$1,500.00 to make such repairs. All such emergency expenditures shall be reported at the next meeting of the Congregation. If the Board's non-emergency expenditures exceeds their total budgeted amount, the Board shall ask the Congregation, in accordance with Article 11.3, for authority to expend additional monies.

15.8.3 The Board shall prepare an annual budget for presentation to the Budget Committee.

# Constitution of St. John's Lutheran Church

15.8.4 Whenever appropriate, the Board should enlist non-board members to help with the work and ministry entrusted to the Board. Elected Officers, with the exception of the President, may serve on Boards.

## **16.0 Order of Business**

16.1 The Order of Business for Congregational meetings shall be as follows:

Opening prayer

Call to Order

Affirmation of Quorum per Articles 12.1 or 12.2

Reception of new voting members

Vote to accept minutes of previous meeting

Reports including, but not limited to, the pastor, secretary, treasurer, and all boards

Elections

Unfinished or Old business

New business

Adjournment

Closing Prayer

16.2 This order of business can be modified when necessary by the President if no objection is made by a voting member. If there are objections, then a vote must be taken to approve by majority vote the modified order.

16.3 All reports presented at the Congregational meeting shall be voted on by the Congregation.

Signed on June 29, 2022, and subject to approval by the Congregation of St. John's Lutheran Church of Ambridge, on July 31, 2022, by the following members of the Constitution Committee: