

Richland Lutheran Church  
901 Van Giesen – Richland, WA 99354

# Constitution and Bylaws

C#.# - Constitution/*C#.#.#.# - Bylaw*

## Table of Contents

PREAMBLE ..... 1

Chapter 1: NAME AND INCORPORATION ..... 2

Chapter 2: STATEMENT OF FAITH ..... 2

Chapter 3: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE ..... 3

Chapter 4; POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION ..... 4

Chapter 5: CHURCH AFFILIATION ..... 4

Chapter 6: PROPERTY OWNERSHIP ..... 4

Chapter 7: MEMBERSHIP ..... 5

Chapter 8: THE PASTOR ..... 6

Chapter 9: CONGREGATION MEETING ..... 9

Chapter 10: OFFICERS .....9

Chapter 11: CONGREGATION COUNCIL. .... 10

Chapter 12: CONGREGATION COMMITTEES ..... 12

Chapter 13: ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION ..... 14

Chapter 14: DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION ..... 14

Chapter 15: BYLAWS ..... 15

Chapter 16: AMENDMENTS ..... 15

Chapter 17: CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS ..... 16

Chapter 18: INDEMNIFICATION ..... 16

## 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 congregation shall be Richland Lutheran Church.
- C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the congregation of Richland Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."
- C1.03 This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Washington.

## **Chapter 2: STATEMENT OF FAITH**

- C2.01 We believe, teach, and confess the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 8:6)
- C2.02 We believe, teach, and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe in Him. (Col. 2:9; Romans 1:6)
- 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. (2 Cor. 5:7; John 1:1-14)
  - b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy in the person and work of Jesus Christ through whom God was pleased to reconcile all things to himself. (John 1:17; 2 Cor. 5:18-21)
  - c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the 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. (2 Timothy 3:16)
- C2.03 We believe, teach, and accept the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the sole authoritative source and norm of our proclamation, faith, and life. (2 Timothy 3:16)
- C2.04 We believe, teach, and accept the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the scriptural faith we confess. (2 Peter 2:1-3)
- C2.05 We believe, teach, and accept the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism as true witnesses to the Word of God, normative for our teaching and practice. We acknowledge that we are one in faith and doctrine with all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
- C2.06 We believe, teach, and confess the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid expositions of the Holy Scriptures.
- C2.07 We believe, teach, and confess 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 priesthood of all believers for God's mission in the world.
- C2.08 We believe that God created us male and female and that it is God's will and intention that human sexual expression and fulfillment take place only within the boundaries of marriage between one man and one woman. (Gen. 2:24-25; Matt. 19:4-6; and Mark 10:2-9)

### **Chapter 3: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

- C3.01 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.
- C3.02 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, 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 ministries 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, advocating dignity and justice for all people.
  - 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.
  - 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.
- C3.03 To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:
- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
  - b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
  - c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in 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 ministry in and beyond this congregation.
  - h. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with statements of faith of the denomination with which this congregation is affiliated.
- C3.04 This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

## **Chapter 4: POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

- C4.01 All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under His guidance and authority. (Col. 1:18)
- C4.02 The powers of the congregation are those necessary to fulfill His purpose and vision. His powers are vested in the congregation by called meetings conducted in accordance with this Constitution and Bylaws.
- C4.03 Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregation Council or other organizational units in this congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by the congregation. The congregation is authorized to:
- a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 8;
  - b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 8;
  - c. call or terminate pastoral or rostered staff;
  - d. approve the annual budget;
  - e. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
  - 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 Congregation Council, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions;
  - i. terminate its relationship with the denomination with which this congregation is affiliated as provided in Chapter 5.

## **Chapter 5: CHURCH AFFILIATION**

- C5.01 This congregation may affiliate with one or more denominations and/or affiliations which share its faith and purpose as defined in Chapters 2 and 3 of this constitution.
- C5.02 When this congregation affiliates with a denomination it will:
- a. Agree to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
  - b. Pledge its financial support and participation in the life of the denomination.
  - c. Agree to call pastoral leadership from the rostered clergy of the denomination in accordance with its call procedures.
- C5.03 Affiliation with the denomination may be terminated when:
- a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.
  - b. This congregation ceases to exist.
  - c. This congregation votes at a legally-called congregation meeting to leave the denomination and/or affiliation.

## Chapter 6: PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

C6.01 Title to property shall reside in this congregation.

C6.02 If this congregation ceases to exist without previously deciding on the disposition of its property, the property shall pass to the denomination(s) with which this congregation is affiliated. If the denomination with which it is affiliated is no longer in existence, the assets shall be distributed in compliance with the Articles of Incorporation amended and filed in August 2016.

## Chapter 7: MEMBERSHIP

C7.01 Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of this congregation at the time this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have declared and maintained their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

C7.02 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 transfer from another congregation.

b. Confirmed members are baptized persons who have confirmed their faith in this congregation or those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Christian congregations.

c. Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation within one year preceding the posting of eligible voting members prior to congregational and special meetings.

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 or persons who wish to formalize a relationship with this congregation while being members of other Christian congregations. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices, membership on the Congregation Council or the Nominating Committee

**C7.02.01 1 Baptized Members (C7.02a) who do not become confirmed members (C7.02.b) by the age of 18 will be removed from the list of baptized members.**

**2. A baptized member (C7.02.a) who has been removed from membership (rf. C7.02.01.1) but who later resumes participation in the life of the congregation may confirm their faith to become a confirmed member (C7.02.b). (Public profession of faith in Christ.)**

**C7.02.02 1. Confirmed members who absent themselves from worship for one year will be considered for removal from the list of confirmed members.**

**2. Confirmed members who are unable to attend worship for any length of time due to poor health or infirmity, full-time non-resident students, active military, and other circumstances as approved by Council shall remain confirmed members in good standing.**

- 3. By vote of the Congregation Council, confirmed persons removed from membership who later resume participation in the life of the congregation may be restored as confirmed members with no further effort on their part.**
- C7.02.03** **1. To fairly determine who is eligible to vote according to the requirements of this Constitution (C7.02.c), a confirmed member must have communed and contributed on record within one year. Because Holy Communion is normally practiced, for the sake of good church order, under the care and concern of an ordained pastor, “communed”, as used above (C7.02.c), denotes receiving the Sacrament of Holy Communion in person. Therefore, the in-person worship attendance slips and the member’s offering record are sufficient documentation to determine voter eligibility. In the case of pastoral or ministry staff who do not fill out worship attendance slips, the bulletins recording their involvement in worship are sufficient documentation to record they have communed.**
- 2. Voting eligibility shall be determined two weeks before each congregation meeting. The church secretary shall provide the Congregation Council with a list of eligible voting members and the number required for a quorum. This list shall determine eligibility to vote at the annual meeting.**
- 3. Eligible voters may vote on all matters except as limited by federal and state law.**
- C7.02.04** **Aside from the limitations mentioned in this constitution, associate members and regular attendees may be approved to serve on committees, teach classes, and take on other ministry tasks. Their participation in such roles requires willingness to conform to the teachings, ethical standards, and practices of this congregation.**
- C7.03 The names of all applicants for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Congregation Council. It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregation to:
- a. make regular use of 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;
  - c. support the work of this congregation, through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.
- C7.04 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 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 8: THE PASTOR**

- C8.01 At least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of congregational members present and voting at a meeting legally-called is necessary to call a pastor at this congregation.
- C8.02 Only a member of the clergy certified by or eligible for certification by the denomination with which this congregation is affiliated may be called as a pastor of this congregation.
- C8.03 Consistent with the faith and practice of the denomination with which this congregation is affiliated:
- a. Every ordained minister shall:
    - 1) preach the Word;
    - 2) administer the sacraments;
    - 3) conduct public worship;
    - 4) provide pastoral care
    - 5) strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;
- C8.04 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.
- C8.04.01 ***When issuing a call for a Lead Pastor, three key responsibilities shall be stated in the letter of call:***
- 1) The Lead Pastor shall provide spiritual leadership to the congregation, participating as an integral member of the Congregation Council in formulation of all policies and congregational initiatives, and actively encouraging implementation of the Council's goals and objectives as stated in its annual ministry plan.***
  - 2) The Lead Pastor shall provide spiritual care for this congregation, serving as its primary preacher and theologian, overseeing pastoral care, and recommending policies, programs, plans, and staffing needed to promote the members' spiritual growth and well-being.***
  - 3) The Lead Pastor shall supervise and minister to the pastoral and lay ministry staff, guiding them in carrying out their responsibilities, redirecting them in cases where he or she deems their conduct of ministry to be contrary to congregation policy or well-being, and providing ongoing performance feedback to assist in their professional development.***
- C8.05 a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which, shall be terminated only following consultation with the Congregation Council 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;
  - 3) the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
  - 4) disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty;
  - 5) the dissolution of the congregation; or
- b. In case of alleged physical or mental incapacity, errors in doctrine, immorality, or neglect of duty, the Congregation Council shall investigate the allegations, The investigation shall include competent medical testimony, if applicable.



c. These bylaws and/or policies shall vest final decisions on termination of a pastor called by the congregation with the congregation. If the Congregational Council recommends termination of the call, a simple majority vote of the voting members present is required; if the Congregational Council makes no recommendation but the matter is referred to the congregation, a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present and voting is required.

- C8.06 At a time of lead pastoral vacancy, an interim lead pastor shall be appointed by the Congregation Council.
- C8.07 During the period of service, an interim lead pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called lead pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim lead pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.
- C8.08 The Lead Pastor of this congregation:
- a. shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the Letter of Call.
  - b. shall assure accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation;
  - c. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the denomination with which this congregation is affiliated, if required.

## Chapter 9: CONGREGATION MEETING

- C9.01 The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.
- C9.01.01 ***The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held in October at a date and time selected by the Congregation Council.***
- C9.01.02 ***At the annual meeting, the congregation shall elect officers and Council members, nominating committee members, adopt the budget for the next year, receive ministry reports from the staff and Council, hear the ministry plan for the coming year, and conduct any old or new business.***
- C9.01.03 ***The quorum for a congregation meeting shall be 10% of the eligible voting members.***
- C9.01.04 ***Officers, Council members and nominating committee members who are elected at the annual meeting shall take office on January 1 of the following year.***
- C9.01.05 ***The budget adopted at the annual meeting shall take effect on January 1 of the following year.***
- C9.02 A special congregation meeting may be called by the lead pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of the congregation upon the written request of twenty-five 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.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> RCW 24.03.080

- C9.03 Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given verbally at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by written communication to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting.<sup>2</sup>
- C9.04 Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- C9.05 All actions by the congregation shall be by majority vote except as otherwise provided in this constitution.
- C9.06 Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

## **Chapter 10: OFFICERS**

- C10.01. The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice-president, secretary and finance officer.
- a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
  - b. The officers shall be voting members of the congregation.

### **C10.01.01 President**

- a. The President shall preside at all congregation meetings.*
- b. The President shall be the chairperson of the Congregation Council and shall preside at all its meetings, but shall vote only in the case of a tie.*
- c. The President shall monitor Congregation Council and congregation decisions to insure that they are consistent with the policy established in the congregation's Constitution and Bylaws, as well as the Continuing Resolutions of the Congregation Council.*
- e. The President shall serve as an ex-officio member on a Call Committee.*
- f. The President shall be elected at the annual congregation meeting for a two- year term and may not serve more than two terms consecutively.*
- g. Any voting member who has served previously on the Richland Lutheran Congregation Council and is not affected by term limits shall be eligible for this position.*

### **C10.01.02 Vice President**

- a. The Vice President shall assume the duties of the President in case of his or her absence or inability to serve and shall assist the President in carrying out his or her duties.*
- b. The Vice President shall fulfill the unexpired term of the President should that position become vacant for any reason.*
- c. The Vice President shall serve as Council liaison to the Richland Lutheran Church Foundation.*
- d. The Vice President shall be elected at the annual congregation meeting for a two-year term and may not serve more than two terms consecutively.*
- e. Any voting member who has served previously on the Richland Lutheran Congregation Council and is not affected by term limits shall be eligible for this position.*

---

<sup>2</sup> RCW 24.03.080

**C10.01.03 Secretary**

- a. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the congregation and the Congregation Council, making sure that a file of approved copies is posted on the web site, maintained in the church office and the library.**
- b. The Secretary shall maintain a current set of all Council Continuing Resolutions making sure that a file of approved copies is posted on the web site maintained in the church office and/or the church library.**
- c. Two weeks before each congregation meeting, the Secretary shall obtain a current roster of voting members, as described in C7.02, to determine eligibility to vote and the necessary quorum to conduct business.**
- d. The Secretary shall be elected at the annual congregation meeting for a two- year term and may not serve more than two terms consecutively in this position.**
- e. Any voting member not affected by term limits shall be eligible for this position.**

**C10.01.04 Finance Officer**

- a. The Finance Officer oversees the church's financial practices and manages church investments.**
- b. The Finance Officer chairs the Finance Ministry Team.**
- c. The Finance Officer shall be elected at the annual Congregation meeting for a two year term and may not serve more than two terms consecutively in this position.**
- d. Any voting member not affected by term limits shall be eligible for this position.**

C10.02 The congregation shall elect its officers at a congregation meeting as specified in the bylaws.

C10.03 No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. Eligibility and term of office shall be specified in the bylaws.

C10.04 The membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the number of members called for in the bylaws plus above named officers.

## **Chapter 11: CONGREGATION COUNCIL**

11.01 The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the officers of the congregation and other members of the Congregation elected at-large to the Congregation Council. Any voting member of the Congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause. Consistent with the laws of the state in which this congregation is incorporated, the congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.<sup>3</sup>

**C11.01.01 a. In addition to this congregation's officers, the Congregation Council shall have five at-large members.**

---

<sup>3</sup> RCW 24.03.103

- b. At-large members of the Congregation Council shall be elected at the annual congregation meeting for a two-year term. Three of the at-large members shall be elected in even years and two shall be elected in odd years.*
  - c. At-large members of the Congregation Council may not serve more than two terms consecutively in an at-large position.*
  - d. No person shall serve more than six consecutive years on the Congregation Council in any combination of at-large and officer positions.*
  - e. Any person serving on the Congregation Council should have been an active member for at least one year. An active member is a person who worships regularly and is actively involved in the life and ministry of Richland Lutheran Church.*
- C11.02 Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect a successor by majority vote until the next annual congregation meeting, as specified in the bylaws.
- C11.02.01** *Congregation Council members elected at the congregation meeting to fill a vacant position shall serve the remainder of the unexpired term.*
- C11.02.02** *Congregation Council members may serve two terms consecutively in addition to any partial term of less than one year.*
- C11.03 The Congregation Council shall have watchful and responsible care of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything is done in accordance with the Word of God. (1 Peter 5:1-3 NIV)
- C11.03.01**
- a. All Policies of Richland Lutheran Church not enacted at a congregation meeting shall require the approval of the Congregation Council in the form of a continuing resolution (see Chapter 17).*
  - b. The Congregation Council shall work with the Lead Pastor, ministry staff, and lay leaders to create an annual ministry plan and budget, which shall be presented to the congregation at the annual meeting in October.*
  - c. The Congregation Council shall work with the Lead Pastor, ministry staff, and lay leaders to maintain an on-going process of long-range planning.*
  - d. The Congregation Council shall conduct ongoing feedback of the Lead Pastor.*
  - e. When necessary, the Congregation Council shall initiate the call process to fill any vacant pastoral positions.*
  - f. The Congregation Council shall appoint delegates to represent the congregation at functions of the denomination with which this congregation is affiliated.*
  - g. The Congregation Council in accordance with C12.02 shall recommend members to be elected for the Nominating Committee at the annual meeting.*
  - h. The Congregation Council shall elect the members of the Audit Committee in accordance with the provisions of C12.03 and all pertinent bylaws.*
  - i. The Congregation Council shall approve the agenda for the annual meeting.*
- C11.04 The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.

- C.11.04.01** *The President, or designee, shall have signature authority for real property transactions.*
- C.11.04.02** *The Congregation Council shall establish a gift acceptance policy. Revision of this policy will require legal review by an attorney.*
- C.11.04.03** *The Congregation authorizes the Congregation Council to approve unanticipated but necessary expenses not to exceed 10% of the approved operating budget in any year. The source of funding of the additional funding shall be limited to the operational reserve account.*
- C11.05 The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution, its bylaws, and the continuing resolutions are carried out.
- C.11.05.01** *The Congregation Council shall conduct a review of bylaws before the end of June of even numbered years and a review of continuing resolutions before the end of June of odd numbered years.*
- C11.06 The Congregation Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.
- C11.06.01** *The Congregation Council shall review the membership roster at its December meeting.*
- C11.07 The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the employment of the salaried and hourly lay workers of this congregation.
- C11.07.01** *The responsibility and authority of all salaried and hourly workers is delegated to the Lead Pastor.*
- C11.07.02** *The responsibility for hiring, discipline, and termination of salaried and hourly non-Called staff shall be delegated to the Lead Pastor. He/she shall seek input and majority consent from the Executive Committee in such matters.*
- C11.08 The Congregation Council shall submit an annual report on its activities.
- C11.10 The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president, and shall be called by the president at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all voting and ex-officio members.
- C11.11 A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the voting members of the Congregation Council.
- C11.11.01** *Decisions of the Congregation Council require a simple majority vote except as specified otherwise in the constitution or bylaws.*
- C11.11.02** *Decisions on emerging non-controversial issues may be made by the Congregation Council, without calling a special meeting, by electronic means such as email, so long as no Council member objects. If a member objects to making a decision without debate then the matter must be decided at either a regular or special meeting of the Congregation Council.*

## **Chapter 12: CONGREGATION COMMITTEES**

- C12.01 The officers of this congregation and the Lead Pastor (ex-officio) shall constitute the Executive Committee.
- C12.01.01** *a. The Executive Committee shall meet together regularly to pray for and encourage one another in mission and ministry as well as nurturing and encouraging teamwork amongst the Staff and Council.*

***b. The Executive Committee, with Staff and Council input, will draft the agenda for Congregation Council meetings.***

***c. The Executive Committee shall draft and recommend for the Congregation Council's approval terms of Call, including financial compensation, for Called Staff. The Executive Committee shall also draft and recommend salary actions to the Congregation Council for all other (non-called) church staff.***

***d. The Executive Committee shall review all member as well as staff disciplinary issues. The Executive Committee may approve staff disciplinary leave with pay for up to thirty days and may recommend to the Congregation Council for further approval further staff disciplinary actions up to and including terminations.***

***e. in partnership with the Lead Pastor, the Executive Committee shall provide input for hiring, discipline, and termination decisions regarding salaried and hourly non-called staff, in accordance with C11.07.02.***

***C12.01.02 In the event of conflicts between staff members, the affected members should first seek to resolve their differences between themselves, and if that is unsuccessful, with the assistance of the Lead Pastor. Should resolution not be attained then any staff member may bring the conflict to the attention of the Executive Committee. If the conflict cannot be resolved by the Executive Committee and the affected staff then the conflict is to be forwarded to the Congregation Council for final consideration. Unless the conflict is referred to the Congregation Council, confidentiality will be maintained on the details of the conflict though Council may be informed of the existence of the conflict, the staff involved, and the general nature of the conflict.***

***C12.01.03 The Executive Committee shall be available to the staff for consultation on emerging issues that require consideration before the next scheduled Congregation Council meeting.***

***C12.02 A Nominating Committee of six voting members of this congregation shall be elected by the congregation as specified in the bylaws. Members of the Nominating Committee may serve two consecutive terms.***

***C12.02.01 a. Neither staff members or members of their immediate families, nor current members of the Congregation Council or members of their immediate families are eligible to serve on the Nominating Committee.***

***b. Members of the Nominating Committee shall serve two-year terms, with terms staggered so that three members are elected each year.***

***c. Any voting member of the congregation not affected by term limits shall be eligible to serve on the Nominating Committee.***

***d. The Nominating Committee shall actively solicit input from the congregation as part of the nominating process.***

***e. The Nominating Committee shall recommend voting members of this congregation as candidates for Congregation Council officers and members-at-large for election at the annual congregational meeting.***

***f. In considering members to nominate for Council officers or members-at-large, the Nominating Committee shall give consideration to the scriptural requirements that***

- candidates shall be above reproach, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, gentle, not a new Christian, and having a good reputation with outsiders.*
- g. The Nominating Committee shall not nominate for Council officers or members-at-large a voting member when another member of the same immediate family would be serving on the Council concurrently or is on Richland Lutheran Church's payroll.*
- h. A list of nominees shall be announced three (3) weeks before the annual congregational meeting.*
- C12.03 An Audit Committee of three voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council. Members shall be eligible for reelection.
- C12.03.01** *a. The Audit Committee shall evaluate the financial records of the congregation to ensure financial activity has been properly recorded in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles as well the congregation's policies and procedures.*
- b. The Audit Committee shall provide a written annual report to the Congregation Council by a date specified by the Congregation Council.*
- c. Members of the Audit Committee shall serve three-year terms, with terms staggered so that one new member is elected each successive year.*
- d. In case of a vacancy, the Congregation Council shall appoint a replacement to fulfill the remainder of the term.*
- e. Staff members, members of their immediate families, current members of the Congregation Council and members of their immediate families are not eligible to serve on the Audit Committee.*
- C12.04 When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of six voting members shall be elected by this congregation. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly-called pastor.
- C12.04.01** *If a staff member through education and relevant experience achieves certification by the associated denomination, then upon recommendation of the Congregation Council, the Congregation may vote to extend a Call to the staff member as an Associate pastor. If the duties of the Called position are substantially similar to the duties of the staff member's current position then a Call Committee would not be required as the staff member would not be filling a vacancy.*
- C12.04.02** *In the event of a vacancy in the Lead Pastor's position, then a Call Committee shall be required to seek and recommend the best candidate, even if an Associate Pastor on staff is under consideration for the position.*
- C12.06 This congregation may form other committees, ministry teams, or Task Forces as the need arises, which aid in its mission and help it to implement its Ministry Plan, with concurrence of the Congregation Council.
- C12.07 Duties of ministry and standing committees of this congregation shall be specified in the continuing resolutions. <sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> RCW 24.03.065

## **Chapter 13: ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION**

- C13.01 All organizations within this congregation shall exist to aid it in ministering to the members of this congregation and to all persons who can be reached with the Gospel of Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of this congregation's life, the organizations are subject to its oversight and direction.
- C13.02 Special interest groups may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council and specified in a continuing resolution.

## **Chapter 14: DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION**

- C14.01 Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, continual and intentional interference with the ministry of the congregation or willful and repeated harassment or defamation of member(s) in this congregation are sufficient cause for consideration under this section of the Constitution.
- C14.02 For the sake of congregation health and unity, conflicts and transgressions should be resolved as discreetly as possible. We will follow these successive steps in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17.
1. Should private conflict resolution prove ineffective, the sin be of a serious nature, or the Lead Pastor is party to the issue in 14.01, the issue will be brought before the Executive Committee.
  2. The Executive Committee, after a period of prayer and discernment, will state in writing the issue (14.01) as well as the results of any conflict resolution intervention(s) attempted. The statement will also outline a recommended disciplinary action (14.03). The Executive Committee statement will be delivered to the member(s) involved.
  3. The member(s) charged with the offense (14.01) may respond to the Executive Committee letter in writing or in person.
  4. If the Executive Committee, upon a reply from the recipient(s) to the letter (or 10 days, if no response is forthcoming) will recommend one of the disciplinary actions (C14.03) to the entire Council.
- C14.03 Should the offense be sustained by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Council who vote, the Council shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:
- 1) censure before the Council or the congregation:
  - 2) suspension from membership for a defined period of time; or
  - 3) exclusion from membership in this congregation.
- C14.04 Disciplinary actions C14.03.1 and C14.03.2 shall be delivered to the member in writing.
- C14.05 Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Congregation Council upon receipt of a) evidence that injustice has been done or b) evidence of repentance and amendment.
- C14.06 No member of a congregation shall be subject to discipline for offenses that the Congregation Council has previously heard and decided.

- C14.07 When there is disagreement that cannot be resolved on a substantive issue among factions within this congregation, members of this congregation shall have access to the denomination with which this congregation has affiliated for consultation.

## **Chapter 15: BYLAWS**

- C15.01 This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.
- C15.02 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.
- C15.03 Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose and that the Congregation Council notify the members of the proposal with its recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting.

## **Chapter 16: AMENDMENTS**

- C16.01 Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least 10% of the voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at its regular or special meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the members of the proposal with the Council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.
- C16.02 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 without change at the next annual meeting 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.

## **Chapter 17: CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

- C17.01 The Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this congregation.
- C17.02 Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Congregation Council.

## **Chapter 18: INDEMNIFICATION**

- C18.01 Consistent with the provisions of the laws under which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt provisions providing indemnification for each person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a Congregation Council member, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any committee of this congregation, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.