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**St. John's Lutheran Church
Chicago, Illinois**



Constitution and Bylaws A.D. 2013



St. John's Lutheran Church
Witness. Mercy. Life Together.

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CONSTITUTION OF
ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
CHICAGO (MAYFAIR), ILLINOIS

ORGANIZED - OCTOBER 3, 1875
REVISED: May 20, 2012

PREAMBLE

Whereas the Word of God demands that all things be done decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40), therefore, we, the members of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, establish this document known as **Constitution**, by which the internal and external affairs of our Congregation shall be conducted. Previous documents are void after this adoption.

ARTICLE I ~ NAME

The name of the Congregation shall be St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Chicago (Mayfair), Illinois, hereafter referred to as the Congregation.

ARTICLE II ~ MISSION

The mission of this Congregation shall be to provide pastoral care for its members, to teach the Word of God and administer the Sacraments, to preserve purity of doctrine, to exercise Christian love and fellowship, to provide for the Christian training of the young, and to extend the Kingdom of God.

ARTICLE III ~ CONFESSIONAL STANDARD

This Congregation accepts and acknowledges all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired and infallible Word of God. We also accept all the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, as contained in the Book of Concord, as a true and sound exhibition of Christian

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doctrine because they are taken from and are in full agreement with the Holy Scriptures. In this Congregation, no doctrine or practice shall be taught or tolerated which is at variance with these symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, namely:

1. The three ecumenical creeds: The Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian;
2. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession, A. D. 1530;
3. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession [1531];
4. The Smalcald Articles [1537];
5. Dr. Martin Luther's Large and Small Catechisms;
6. The Formula of Concord.

According to this norm of doctrine, all doctrinal controversies which may arise in our Congregation shall be decided and adjudicated.

ARTICLE IV~ SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church shall hold membership in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) as long as this Synod remains true to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions as specified in Article III of this Constitution. It shall be the duty and privilege of the Congregation and of its individual members to support the purposes and the work of Synod and the Northern Illinois District of the LCMS with our time, talents, and treasures.

ARTICLE V ~ MEMBERSHIP

Only such persons can become or remain members of this Congregation and enjoy and exercise the rights and privileges of members as:

- * Are baptized with water and in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;

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- * Accept the Holy Scriptures [the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible] as the inspired and inerrant Word of God and as the only divine rule and norm of faith and life;
- * Are familiar with Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism and the Six Chief Parts therein;
- * Do not live in the manifest works of the flesh [Galatians 5:19-21], endeavor to live a Christian life in accord with Galatians 5:22-26, and are willing to accept Christian admonition, if necessary, as per Matthew 18:15-18;
- * Participate in the worship of the church and, with a firm commitment and the help of God, endeavor to participate in the administrative life of the church, and who earnestly desire and make use of the Means of Grace– the Word and Sacraments;
- * Are not members of any ungodly, anti-Christian societies;
- * Are willing to support and encourage the Mission of the Church as stated in Article II;
- * Are willing to submit to the rules which have been mutually adopted by this Congregation.

A. Membership in this Congregation shall include:

1. **Baptized Members** - Baptized members are all who have been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and who are under the spiritual care of the pastor of this Congregation, including the children who have not yet been confirmed into communicant membership;
2. **Communicant Members** - Communicant members are those baptized members who have been instructed in and are familiar

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with the contents of *Luther's Small Catechism*, have been confirmed in the Lutheran faith, and accept the confessional standard of Article III of this Constitution;

3. **Voting Members** - Voting members are communicant members of this Congregation who have reached their eighteenth (18th) birthday, are willing to abide by the authority of St. John's Constitution and Bylaws, and have signed their name to an attendance roster of a regular Voters' Assembly meeting and are approved by majority vote of the current Voters' Assembly.

B. Acceptance of members: All applications for communicant membership require the approval of the Pastor(s) who will bring to the Elders a recommendation for membership.

1. Baptized members are received through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism or through the consent of one or both parents in the case of children who have been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in another Christian congregation.

2. Adult members are received through the rite of confirmation and Sacrament of Holy Baptism, as appropriate, through transfer from a sister congregation, or through profession of faith or reaffirmation of faith.

3. Eligible communicant members may be received as voting members upon application for such privilege upon approval of the Voters' Assembly as per Article V.A.3. of this Constitution.

C. Termination of membership: A person whose membership has been terminated forfeits all temporal rights of a member of this Congregation and all claims upon the property of the Congregation as such, or upon

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any part thereof, so long as they are not reinstated into membership. Termination of membership in this Congregation may be effected by the following:

1. **Transfer to other Congregations** - Members desiring to join another congregation in church fellowship shall present their request for transfer to the Pastor(s), to whom authorization is granted to issue such transfers. The Pastor(s) will report to the Elders all transfers granted.
2. **Joining other churches** - In cases where members have joined another congregation outside our own fellowship, they shall, upon recommendation of the Pastor(s) and the Board of Elders, be considered to have terminated their membership, and their names shall be removed from the membership list. The individuals will be informed of their removal from our membership list in writing by the Board of Elders along with the signature(s) of the Pastor(s).
3. **“Whereabouts Unknown.”** - The names of members whose whereabouts cannot be established shall be terminated from membership by recommendation of both the Pastor(s) and the Board of Elders. Such action will be reviewed annually per Board of Elders' or Pastor's instructions at the end of the fiscal year.
4. **Self-Exclusion and Excommunication** - Any members who conduct themselves in a scandalous and unchristian manner (1 Cor. 5), without repentance or remorse, shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20. If they refuse to amend their sinful life after proper admonition, the Pastor(s) and the Board of Elders shall present the case to the Voters' Assembly for the purpose of demonstrating the seriousness of the situation which may conclude

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in excommunication. The members shall have the right to attend the Voters' Assembly to discuss their position. If such members deliberately absent themselves from the meeting at which the case is discussed, or in some manner make it impossible to deal with them, they thereby excommunicate themselves through self-exclusion. A unanimous vote by the Voters' Assembly shall be required for excommunication, excluding the person involved. Such persons who have been excommunicated or self-excluded through Voters' Assembly action shall be moved immediately to a list of prayer and ministry that they may eventually come to see the error of their ways and once again be moved by the Holy Spirit to repentance. Should such persons see their error, and since their sin was public and acted upon by the Voters' Assembly, they must appear again before the Voters' Assembly to ask for forgiveness. Having done so, the Voters' Assembly, by voice vote, shall receive them back into full fellowship and, with rejoicing, thank God in prayer (2 Cor. 2:5-8).

5. By Death

ARTICLE VI ~ Called Church Workers

The offices of Pastor and Called Teacher shall be conferred on pastors, teachers, and church work candidates who have been certified by and are members of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod or a synod in full fellowship with the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, and who profess and adhere to the Confessional Standards in Article III of this Constitution. Furthermore, they must endeavor to lead a Christian life in word and deed. The Call of commissioned

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church workers is the responsibility of the Voters' Assembly and must follow all procedures of the Bylaws of this Constitution.

ARTICLE VII ~ AUTHORITY OF AND WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

The voting members of the Congregation, at any regular or special Voters' Assembly, shall have the supreme power in all legal, secular, and corporate matters relating to the church or church affairs; and every member may appeal to the Voters' Assembly in regard to matters relating to the affairs and government of the Congregation.

No act or commitment by an individual or group within the Congregation shall be considered valid without general or special power conferred by the Congregation at Church Council and/or in Voters' Assembly. Only the Voters' Assembly can extend a Divine Call.

Any act or commitment shall be subject to revision by the Voters' Assembly whose decision shall be final and binding. However, in matters of adiaphora, "Let charity prevail."

Decisions shall always be in accord with the Word of God, the Confessional Standards as established in Article III, and governmental law; otherwise they are null and void.

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ARTICLE VIII ~ MEETINGS AND QUORUM

The business of the Congregation shall be transacted in a regular or a special meeting of the Congregation known as a Voters' Assembly. This meeting must be announced in all worship services at least two Sundays prior to the meeting, and, if possible, likewise publicized in the church bulletins and mailings prior to the meeting.

In addition to principles established in Scripture, all meetings shall be governed by the *Robert's Rules of Order* and shall require a quorum, as defined by the Bylaws, to enact policy or decisions. Voting members must be physically present at the meeting or they forfeit the right to vote at that meeting.

A Special Voters' Assembly may be called by the Pastor(s), President of the Congregation, the Church Council, or members as defined by the Bylaws, and shall be limited to a specific and pre-publicized agenda. The President of the Congregation must notify the Pastor(s) of any special Voters' Assembly meeting.

ARTICLE IX ~ OFFICERS AND BOARDS

A. The Congregation shall elect from its eligible voting membership:

1. Officers of the Congregation

a. President

b. Secretary

B. The President is the official temporal head of the Congregation and serves as the presiding officer of the Voters' Assembly meetings and Church Council. Should the office of President be vacant, or if the President is otherwise unable

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to perform the duties of the office, the Chair of the Board of Elders shall perform the duties..

C. A Church Council (as defined in the Bylaws) shall be established to conduct and discuss all matters pertaining to the general welfare of the Congregation, to review all reports, present recommendations to the Voters' Assembly, and conduct the business of the Congregation. The Church Council shall act in matters committed to it by the Voters' Assembly.

D. The Voters' Assembly shall elect a Board of Elders, a Board of Trustees, a Board of Youth, and a Board of Christian Education. They shall have such duties as the Bylaws may prescribe.

E. The Congregation shall authorize the following as need arises:

1. Special committees as is deemed appropriate and necessary;
2. Candidates for delegates and alternates to synodical and district conventions and meetings of associations of which our Congregation is a member.

F. The manner of election, the number of persons serving on each board or committee, and the terms of office and duties of the various officers, boards, and committees are specified in the Bylaws of this document.

G. A member may not hold two (2) elected positions at the same time.

H. Any pastor, teacher, professional worker, officer, or board member may be removed from office by the Voters' Assembly by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of voters present. Removal must be undertaken in a Christian and lawful order under the direction of Matthew 18:15-20 for one or more of the following reasons: Persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, or willful neglect of duties. The Voters' Assembly, after due consideration, may release or request the resignation of any pastor, teacher, professional worker, or officer based on incompetence, prolonged incapacity, inability to perform the duties of the

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office, or in situations where staffing levels exceed the requirements of the ministry.

ARTICLE X ~ LIMITATIONS ON HOLDING OFFICE

Communicant members of the Congregation who have reached their twenty-first (21st) birthday shall be entitled to hold office. Women who have reached the age of 21 may serve as officers and as members of boards and committees of this congregation which do not call upon them to carry out specific functions of the pastoral office (preaching in or serving as the leader of a public worship service, the public administration of the sacraments, or the public exercise of church discipline). Accordingly, a woman shall not serve as Pastor of this Congregation or as Elder or President.

ARTICLE XI-DIVISION AND DISSOLUTION

If at any time a division should take place on account of doctrine, the property of the Congregation and all benefits and liabilities connected therewith shall remain with those communicant members, regardless of their number, who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Article III of this Constitution.

If a disagreement for any reason other than doctrine threatens to divide the Congregation, the Congregation shall seek to resolve the controversy using all the resources God supplies, including the aid of faithful pastor(s), District, and Synod. The disagreeing parties shall seek a compromise in the spirit of Christian love which is not "self-seeking" or "easily angered" (1 Corinthians 13:15) but which always seeks the interests of others over self, even as Jesus did for us (Philippians 2:4ff.). If such a compromise cannot be reached, the position of the majority shall be accepted.

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Upon the disbanding or dissolution of the Corporation, the assets of the Corporation, including the title to all its property, both real and personal, shall be distributed exclusively to organizations which are then exempt from federal tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and to which contributions are then deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of such Code, and whose doctrine conforms with the Confessional Standard as stated in Article III of this Constitution.

Personal property owned by the Corporation and used in the Divine Service, e.g., Communion ware, shall be distributed in accordance with this paragraph, but in no event shall such personal property be distributed to organizations whose doctrine does not conform with the Confessional Standard as stated in Article III of this Constitution; further, before such items are to be distributed, the organization must agree that all such items to be received shall be used for their intended purposes and not displayed as museum items, nor sold to collectors or persons who may desire to use them for contrary purposes.

ARTICLE XII~ CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this Constitution must be forwarded to the Church Council in writing and approved by the Church Council prior to their being placed on the agenda in a regular Voters' Assembly. The amendments must be presented in written form to all gathered at the Voters' Assembly wherein the amendments shall be addressed.

Adoption of a proposed amendment is contingent upon a favorable two-thirds (2/3) vote of those members present, providing the same amendment was

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presented at the previous meeting of a regular Voters' Assembly meeting for consideration, discussion, and/or revision. Procedures to amend or alter the Constitution are further outlined in the Bylaws.

The following articles or paragraphs of the Constitution must retain their essential meaning if an amendment to them is proposed:

- * Membership (V)
- * Church Discipline (V.C.4.)
- * Called Church Workers (VI)
- * Authority of and Within the Congregation (VII)
- * Division (XI)

If an amendment to any of these listed above is challenged, it must be reviewed and spoken to in writing by the District commission for such matters. No amendment shall be made which would conflict with the Word of God or be contrary to our Confessional Standards as defined in Article III of this Constitution. The amended Constitution shall, as a condition of continued membership in Synod, be submitted to the President of the District for review by the District's Polity Commission and favorable action by the District's Board of Directors before being placed into practice by the Congregation.

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ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH BYLAWS - 2013

Revision History

- Organized October 1875
- Revised & Adopted 1962
- Revised & Adopted 1970
- Revised & Adopted May, 1977 - (*Current Bylaws*)
- Revisions made & Adopted in 1995:
- Revised & Presented to Council 2012/2013

I. DIVINE CALLS

When this congregation calls a minister of religion, ordained or commissioned, the following procedure shall be followed:

- A. When a pastor or commissioned minister is to be called, every member of the congregation shall be provided opportunity to suggest one or more names for consideration.
- B. A call committee shall be appointed to serve as a screening committee and shall submit all suggested names to the district president for information and evaluation. The committee shall then present to the congregation by public announcement its proposed list of candidates and their biographical sketches.
- C. At a voters meeting called for the purpose of calling a new pastor or commissioned minister, the proposed list may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the assembly. When possible, information regarding additional candidates shall be provided by the district president and/or his representative at the meeting.
- D. Ballot voting shall continue until a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the voting members present determines the disposition of the call.

II. REGULAR VOTER'S MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION

A. Voters Meetings

The congregation shall hold regular voters meetings in September, January, and May; the day, the nature and the time to be decided upon by the congregation.

B. Quorum

A quorum shall be constituted by the attendance of a number of voting members not less than ten percent (10%) of the average attendance at weekly worship for the previous fiscal year. This same number of members shall be required to call a special voter's meeting.

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C. Voter's Amendments to the Constitution

Amendments to the Constitution shall be proposed in writing at a regular meeting and may be adopted only at the following regular meeting, by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the voting members present.

III. CHURCH COUNCIL

- A. Church Council shall be composed of the following members:
1. Congregational President
 2. The Pastor(s) of the congregation
 3. The Principal of the parish school
 4. The Chairman of the Board of Elders, who shall serve as Vice President of the Congregation
 5. A representative so chosen by the Board of Christian Education from among its members
 6. A representative so chosen by the Board of Trustees, who shall serve as Treasurer
 7. A representative so chosen by the Board of Youth
 8. Congregation Secretary who shall serve as Church Council secretary.
- B. The Church Council shall be empowered to conduct all normal day-to-day business of St. John's Lutheran Church in accordance with its Constitution and Bylaws. All day-to-day business shall be interpreted to include all items approved by the congregation voters in their annual budget.
- C. The Church Council shall meet monthly.
- D. A quorum of the Church Council shall consist of fifty percent (50%) of its members.
- E. Additional seats may be added to the Church Council by the congregation at a regular voter's meeting.
1. The Voters' Assembly may add a seat to Church Council by a simple majority vote.
 2. Added seats will take effect at the next Church Council meeting after their establishment, and will expire after a single term unless renewed by the congregation.

IV. OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION AND DUTIES

- A. President of the Congregation
- The President shall preside at all meetings of the Church Council and of the congregation, shall attend all Board of Elders meetings, and shall be an ex-officio member of all working committees. In the event of a vacancy (other than the presidency) the President shall appoint a member to fill the unexpired term.

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B. Vice President of the Congregation

- It shall be his duty to represent the interests of each of the auxiliary organizations at the Church Council and congregational meetings.

C. Secretary of the Congregation

- The Secretary shall be responsible for the minutes of the Church Council and congregation's Voter's Meetings and shall perform such other duties as are in keeping with this office.

D. Treasurer of the Congregation

- The Treasurer of the congregation shall administer the temporal affairs of the congregation, and of the money given for synodical and other outside purposes. He shall pay all fixed and regular expenses without special authorization; all other disbursements he shall make on order of the Board of Trustees or upon special resolution of the Church Council. The Treasurer shall pay out only by such policy as set by the Board of Trustees.

E. Usher Staff of the Congregation

- Chief Usher shall be appointed by the Board of Elders and shall be in charge of the usher staff and shall provide ushers for all services. The Chief Usher and his staff shall work under the supervision of and in cooperation with the Board of Elders.

V. THE ELECTED BOARDS OF THE CONGREGATION

- The pastor(s) shall serve as an ex-officio member of all committees and boards of the congregation.
- The principal shall serve as an ex-officio member of all committees and boards of the parish school.
- Only voting members of the congregation may be elected to congregational boards.
- Each board shall create and maintain a policy and procedures manual and any changes shall be reported to the church council.
- Each board shall be responsible for accurate minutes and records and shall present a report at each council meeting.
- Vacancies occurring on any board shall be filled by appointment by the board on which the vacancy occurred and ratified by the Church Council. A board member so appointed shall serve until the next regular congregational election.

A. Board of Elders

1. The Board of Elders shall consist of six to nine (6-9) members, one of whom shall serve as chairman of the Board.

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2. The chairman of the Board of Elders shall in addition to his responsibilities as chairman, serve as Vice President of the Congregation.
3. Duties of the Board of Elders
 - a. The Board of Elders shall assist the pastor(s) in all matters pertaining to the spiritual matters of the congregation, including, but not limited to:
 - b. Admonishing the weak and erring members in brotherly love.
 - c. Supporting the pastor(s) in seeing to it that church services are conducted and the sacraments are administered regularly and in an orderly manner, in accordance with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.
 - d. Supporting the pastor(s) in the visitation of the sick and infirm.
 - e. Supporting and encouraging the musicians, greeters, ushers, and all who serve the congregation in worship.
 - f. Overseeing all existing auxiliary congregational groups and organizations, and the creation of any new such groups and organizations.

B. BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

1. The Board of Christian Education shall consist of six to nine (6-9) members, one of whom shall serve as chairman.
2. Duties of the Board of Christian Education
 - a. The Board of Christian Education shall promote in every way the welfare of the Christian Day School, Sunday School, and any other educational agency which the congregation may organize.
 - b. They shall insist on conscientious instruction of the pupils and on regular attendance at school; see that proper equipment is provided and that all that is necessary be done to further the spiritual and temporal welfare of the school.
 - c. The Sunday School Director shall be appointed by the Board of Christian Education.
 - d. The Board of Christian Education shall govern the parish school.
 - e. The Board of Christian Education shall oversee all existing auxiliary school groups and organizations, and the creation of any new such groups and organizations.

C. BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1. The Board of Trustees shall consist of six to nine (6-9) members of the congregation, one of whom shall serve as chairman of the Board.
2. Duties of the Board of Trustees and its committees

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- a. Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the payment of all bills authorized by the Church Council or congregation.
- b. Board of Trustees shall be responsible for accurate records of all receipts and disbursements in books that shall be audited annually, and a report of such audit in writing shall be submitted to the Church Council. They shall submit a monthly report at each council meeting. Quarterly, they shall present a report showing receipts and disbursements as compared with budgeted amounts.
- c. Board of Trustees shall have access to the financial records of all congregational and parish school boards and committees.
- d. The Board of Trustees shall appoint a working sub-committee, to be called the "Tellers", to receive, record, and deposit in the congregation's designated depository all congregational monies, including offerings, contributions, special collections, loans, subsidies, bequests, etc. A report of all receipts shall be submitted by this sub-committee to the Board of Trustees and treasurer at regular weekly intervals.
- e. All offerings shall be counted in the presence of at least one member of this committee, or its designee.
- f. Board of Trustees shall administer all properties belonging to the congregation, negotiate contracts, accept and receive grants and bequests, sign documents, and appoint representatives to appear in court on behalf of this congregation.
- g. Board of Trustees shall procure insurance to cover property and liability in the amounts designated by the Church Council.
- h. Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the supervision of all buildings and grounds, and make a careful inspection of all buildings and grounds at least twice each year
- i. Board of Trustees shall be responsible to the Church Council for the recruiting and supervision of all custodial workers, and for an annual review of their salary and responsibilities.

D. BOARD OF YOUTH

1. The Board of Youth shall consist of at least three (3) members, one (1) of which shall serve as chairman.
2. One member chosen by the Board of Youth shall serve as a member of the Church Council.
3. The Board of Youth shall, in general, see to it:
 - a. That the Youth are encouraged to attend church regularly, partake of the Lord's Supper frequently, and develop the ability to share their Savior with others.
 - b. That the Youth, their parents, and adults of our church are encouraged to join and become active members of the youth groups of our congregation.

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- c. That a variety of youth activities are provided to foster the spiritual growth of the Youth.

VI. CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEES

The chairmen of boards and congregational committees shall have the authority to form *ad hoc* committees as needed. The functioning of each *ad hoc* committee shall be under the jurisdiction of the respective chairman, who shall select the time of meeting, be responsible for all necessary records, and represent the interest of his committee at the Church Council meetings.

A. Budget Committee

1. The Church Council shall serve as a budget committee. All Boards and agencies shall have prepared in writing their financial needs to be considered for inclusion in the budget for the coming year by this committee. The Board of Trustees shall appoint the chairman of the budget committee. The budget shall be ready for the May meeting.

B. Nominating Committee

1. The Church Council shall appoint the nominating committee.

VII. ELECTION PROCEDURE

A. Re-election of Officers

- All officers may be re-elected upon termination of previous office if so desired.

B. Procedure of Election

- Balloting procedure shall be determined by the Church Council and posted no less than 2 weeks prior to an election.

VIII. CHURCH YEAR

The working church year is a fiscal year, July 1 through June 30.