

CONSTITUTION OF ATONEMENT LUTHERAN CHURCH

S70W16244 Martin Dr., Muskego, WI 53150

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 Atonement Lutheran Church.
- C1.02.** For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the congregation Atonement Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."
- C1.11.** This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Wisconsin.

Chapter 2. CONFESSION OF FAITH

- *C2.01.** This congregation confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- *C2.02.** This congregation confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.
 - a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.
 - b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.
- *C2.03.** This congregation accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.
- *C2.04.** This congregation accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this congregation.
- *C2.05.** This congregation accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
- *C2.06.** This congregation accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as

further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.

- *C2.07. This congregation confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scripture and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

Chapter 3. NATURE OF THE CHURCH

- *C3.01. All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.
- *C3.02. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.
- *C3.03. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or "this church") as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.

Chapter 4. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- *C4.01. The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.
- *C4.02. To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:
 - a. worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service;
 - b. proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations;
 - c. carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all;
 - d. serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs;
 - e. nurture its 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.

- *C4.03. To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:
 - a. provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered;
 - b. provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry;
 - c. challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their 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 the congregation's ministry and the ministry of other parts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
 - h. foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
 - i. foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with church wide policy.
- *C4.04. This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws or continuing resolutions. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions.
- *C4.05. This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.
- *C4.06. References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church- congregations, synods and the churchwide organization – as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God's mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

Chapter 5. POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

- *C5.01. The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.
- *C5.02. The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregation Meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.
- *C5.03. 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 rostered minister of Word and Sacrament as provided in Chapter 9;
 - b. terminate the call of a rostered minister as provided in Chapter 9;
 - c. call or terminate the call of associates in rostered ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers in conformity with the applicable policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
 - d. adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in Chapter 17, and amendments

- to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 16;
 - e. approve the annual budget;
 - f. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
 - g. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
 - h. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
 - i. elect its Congregation Council, and require the members of the council to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws and continuing resolutions; and
 - j. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.
- *C5.04.** This congregation shall choose from among its voting members laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by the congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- C. 5.05.** This congregation shall have a Mission Endowment Fund that will operate as specified in this congregation's bylaws or continuing resolutions.

Chapter 6. CHURCH AFFILIATION

- *C6.01.** This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- *C6.02.** This congregation accepts the Confession of Faith and agrees to the Purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and shall act in accordance with them.
- *C6.03.** This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which:
- a. this congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community;
 - b. this congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
 - c. this congregation agrees to call rostered ministry leadership from the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the bishop of the synod. These special circumstances are limited either to calling a candidate approved for the roster of ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or to contracting for rostered ministry services with a rostered minister of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion;
 - d. this congregation agrees to consider associates of ministers of Word and Sacrament, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers for call to other staff positions in the congregation according to the procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;

- e. this congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution with the synod for review to ascertain that all of its provisions are in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and with the constitution of the synod.

***C6.04.** Affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be terminated as follows:

- a. this congregation takes action to dissolve;
- b. this congregation ceases to exist;
- c. this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and;
- d. this congregation follows the procedures outlined in *C6.05.

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

- a. a resolution indicating the desire of this congregation to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present. Such meeting may be held no sooner than thirty (30) days after written notice of the meeting is received by the bishop of the synod, during which time the congregation shall consult with the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any. The times and manner of the consultation shall be determined by the bishop in consultation with the Congregation Council. Unless he or she is a voting member of the congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designee, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the meeting;
- b. the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the synodical bishop attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote and shall mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of this congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted;
- c. the bishop of the synod and the congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph a. above, during a period of at least ninety (90) days after the receipt by the synod of the notice as specified in b. above;
- d. if this congregation, after consultation, still desires to terminate its relationship, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting. Unless he or she is a voting member of the congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designee, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the meeting;
- e. a certified copy of the resolution attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, shall be sent to the bishop within ten (10) days after the resolution has been adopted, at which time the relationship between the congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to paragraphs g, h, and i. below. Unless this notification to the bishop also certifies

that the congregation has voted by two-thirds vote to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, the congregation will be conclusively presumed to be an independent or non-Lutheran church;

- f. notice of termination shall be forwarded by the bishop by the secretary of this church who shall report the termination to the Churchwide Assembly.
- g. Congregations seeking to terminate their relationship with this church which fail or refuse to comply with each of the foregoing provisions in *C6.05 shall be required to receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.
- h. Congregations which have members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to receive synodical approval before terminating their membership in this church.
- i. Congregations established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to satisfy all financial obligations to this church and receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.
- j. If a congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at the congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a., above, another special meeting to consider termination of relationship with this church may be called no sooner than six months after that first meeting. If a congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at the congregation's second meeting as specified in paragraph d., above, another attempt to consider termination of relationship with this church must follow all requirements of *C6.05, and may begin no sooner than six months after that second meeting.

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

***C6.07** If this congregation considers developing an additional site to be used regularly for worship, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action.

Chapter 7. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

***C7.01.** If this congregation ceases to exist, title to un-disposed property shall pass to the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

***C7.02.** If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

***C7.03.** If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to transfer to another

Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation, provided the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05. has been followed. Before this congregation takes action to transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Greater Milwaukee Synod.

***C7.04.** If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body, and have followed the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05., title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with this congregation by the established synodical process, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of this congregation. If the Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to continue as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

C.7.05. Notwithstanding the provisions of *C7.02. and *C7.03., above, where this congregation has received property from the synod pursuant to a deed or other instrument containing restrictions under provision 9.71. a. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Church in America*, this congregation accepts such restrictions and:

a. Shall not transfer, encumber mortgage, or in any way burden or impair any right, title, or interest in the property without prior approval of the Synod Council.

b. Shall – upon written demand by the Synod Council, pursuant to †§13.23. of the constitution of the Greater Milwaukee Synod – re-convey and transfer all right, title, and interest in the property to the synod.

Chapter 8. MEMBERSHIP

***C8.01.** Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of this congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

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

a. ***Baptized*** members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.

b. ***Confirmed*** members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.

c. ***Voting*** members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of

voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of the congregation.

- 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 retain a relationship with this congregation while being members of other congregations. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Congregation Council of this congregation.
- *C8.03.** All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Congregation Council.
- *C8.04.** It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregation to:
- a. make regular use of the means of grace, both Word and sacraments;
 - b. live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran church; and
 - c. support the work of this congregation, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.
- *C8.05.** Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:
- a. death;
 - b. resignation;
 - c. transfer or release;
 - d. disciplinary action in accordance with ELCA constitutional provision 20.40. and the accompanying bylaws; or
 - e. removal from the roll due to inactivity as defined in the bylaws.
 - f. Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the Church has a continuing pastoral concern.

Chapter 9. THE ROSTERED MINISTER OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

- *C9.01.** Authority to call a rostered minister of Word and Sacrament shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a call committee elected by the congregation to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.02.** Only a member of the rostered ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for rostered ministers who has been recommended for the congregation by the synodical bishop may be called as a rostered minister of this congregation.
- *C9.03.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
- a. Every rostered minister shall:
 - 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;
 - 3) conduct public worship;
 - 4) provide pastoral care; and
 - 5) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for

- justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
- b. Each rostered minister with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
 - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) supervise all schools and organizations of this congregation;
 - 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council; and
 - 4) with the council, administer discipline.
 - c. Every rostered minister shall:
 - 1) strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;
 - 2) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 - 3) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications; and
 - 4) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and of the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the ELCA.

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

***C9.05.** a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a rostered minister, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by death, or, following consultation with the synodical bishop, for the following reasons:

- 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call or the completion of the call for a specific term;
- 2) resignation of the rostered minister, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than thirty (30) days after the date on which it was submitted;
- 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions;
- 4) the physical or mental incapacity of the rostered minister;
- 5) suspension of the rostered minister through discipline for more than three (3) months;
- 6) resignation or removal of the rostered minister from the roster of rostered minister of this church;
- 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
- 8) the dissolution of the congregation; or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
- 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six (6) months.

b. When allegations of physical or mental incapacity of the rostered minister or ineffective conduct of the rostered minister under paragraph a. 4) above, or

ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a. 3). above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod.

- 1) The bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
 - 2) When such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions with a committee of two ordained ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged physical or mental incapacity under paragraph a. 4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of the synod may declare the pastorate vacant and the pastor shall be listed on the clergy roster as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and the restoration of the pastor to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
 - d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a. 3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the rostered minister and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The Committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the rostered minister and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
 - e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendation of the bishop's committee concerning the rostered minister's call, the congregation may dismiss the rostered minister only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a simple majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
 - f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of the church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

***C9.06.** At a time of rostered minister vacancy, an interim rostered minister shall be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.

- *C9.07.** During the period of service, an interim rostered minister shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called rostered minister and may delegate the same in part to a supply rostered minister with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim rostered minister and any rostered minister providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a rostered minister
- Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council, an interim rostered minister is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.
- *C9.08.** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former rostered minister before calling a successor. A rostered minister shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting related to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- *C9.09.** When a rostered minister is called to serve in company with another rostered minister (s), the privileges and responsibilities of each rostered minister shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the rostered minister, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- *C9.11.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, the congregation may depart from *C9.05.a. and call a rostered minister for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the rostered minister and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of C9.05.a.
- *C9.12.** The rostered minister of this congregation:
- a. shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation;
 - b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod; and
 - c. shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the rostered minister shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- *C9.13.** The rostered minister(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- *C9.14.** The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the rostered minister and shall remain the property of the congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his or her hands in good order by a departing rostered minister before the installation of that rostered minister in another field of labor or the granting by the synod of retired

status to the rostered minister.

- C9.21.** Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synodical bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, an rostered minister of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between the congregation and the rostered minister in a form proposed by the synodical bishop and approved by the congregation.

Chapter 10. CONGREGATION MEETING

- C10.01.** The Annual Meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.
- C10.02.** A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the rostered minister, the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of the congregation upon the written request of ten percent (10%) of the voting members. The president of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synodical bishop. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.
- C.10. 03.** Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, to all voting members at least ten (10) days in advance of the date of the meeting.
- C10.04.** Ten percent (10%) of the voting members shall constitute a quorum.
- C10.05.** Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- C10.06.** All actions approved by the congregation shall be by majority vote of those voting members present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution or by state law.
- C10.07.** *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

Chapter 11. OFFICERS

- C11.01.** The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.
- Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
 - The officers shall be voting members of the congregation.
 - Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.
 - If the Congregation Council elects it officers, the president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer shall be selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council
 - The officers of the Congregation Council shall be guided by the Standard Operating Procedures.
- C11.02.** The Congregation Council shall elect its officers and they shall be the officers of the congregation. The officers shall serve for one (1) year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of Congregation Council meeting at which

they are elected.

C11.03. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. No elected officer except the Treasurer and Secretary shall be eligible to serve three (3) terms in the same office.

C11.04 The process for recall or dismissal of an officer shall be described in the bylaws.

Chapter 12. CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the rostered minister (s) and not more than 13 members of the congregation. Any voting member of the congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member:

a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or;

b) is absent without excuse from four (4) regular meetings of the Congregation Council.

c) 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.

C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council except the rostered minister (s) shall be elected at a legally called meeting of the congregation no later than January 31 of each year. Their term of office shall be for 3 years, with the term of office beginning on February 1 and ending on January 31. Congregation Council members shall serve a limit of one (1) term and not succeed themselves. Newly elected Congregation Council members shall be installed at worship the Sunday prior to the date they assume office.

C12.03. Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next annual meeting. Individuals who have served less than one-half of a regular term shall be eligible for nomination and possible election to a full term.

C12.04. The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

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

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

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

d. to maintain supportive relationships with the rostered minister (s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling, appointment or employment;

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

f. to promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill, and, as differences and

- conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding;
 - g. to arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the rostered minister;
 - h. to emphasize partnership with the synod and churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
 - i. to recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
 - j. to seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel and;
 - k. to appoint representatives to the Synodical Assembly when an elected individual is not able to attend.
- C12.05.** The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.
- a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of directors of this congregation, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the management of its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Wisconsin, except as otherwise provided herein.
 - b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.
 - c. During a given year, the Congregation Council may enter into contracts totaling five percent (5%) of the total budgeted expenditures for such year, for items not included in the budget.
 - d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur additional obligations of more than 5% in excess of the anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in partnership with the synod and churchwide organization.
 - e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies to the synodical treasurer.
 - f. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.
- C12.06.** The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions are carried out.
- C12.07.** The Congregation Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.
- C12.08.** The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the staff of this congregation. Nothing in this provision shall be deemed to affect the

congregation's responsibility for the call, terms of the call, or termination of call of any employees who are on a roster of this church.

- C12.09.** The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.
- C12.11.** 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 who are entitled to be present.
- C12.12.** A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the pastor or interim pastor, except when the pastor or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting, which shall be the only business considered at that meeting. Chronic or repeated absence of the pastor or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Congregation Council, following consultation with the synodical bishop.
- C.12.13.** The Congregation Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, and, to the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Chapter 13. CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

- C13.01.** The officers of this congregation and the rostered minister (s) shall constitute the *Executive Committee*.
- C13.02.** A *Nominating Committee* consisting of membership as dictated by the Bylaws. Terms of office are described in the bylaws.
- C13.03.** An *Audit Committee* consisting of three (3) voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council. Term of office shall be three (3) years, with one (1) member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for consecutive re-election.
- C13.04.** A *Call Committee*, consisting of seven (7) voting members, shall be elected by the congregation when a pastoral vacancy occurs. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called Pastor.
- C13.05.** A *Memorial Committee*, shall consist of the Council President, Treasurer and a lay member of the Church elected by the Church Council for a term of three years with no limit of succession.
- C13.06.** Standing committees and Special Committees (Ministry Teams) of this Congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council and specified and adopted in the bylaws.
- C.13.07** Duties of Congregation committees shall be specified in the by-laws, continuing resolutions, or Standard Operating Procedure documents.
- C.13.08** The Congregation Council shall elect from its own membership representatives to the Standing and Special Committees. They shall serve that position for their full term, unless the Congregation Council seeks to change their positions.
- C13.09** The Senior Rostered Minister of this congregation shall be an *ex officio* member of all committees and boards of the congregation with the exception of a Senior rostered

minister call committee.

- C.13.10** Congregation Council Standing Committees and Special Committees (Ministry Teams) are defined in the bylaws, continuing resolutions, or Standard Operating Procedure documents.

Chapter 14. ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

- C14.01.** 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. This congregation at its Annual Meeting shall review their activities and receive reports concerning their membership, work, and finances.
- C14.02.** Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council and specified in the continuing resolutions.

Chapter 15. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

- *C15.01.** Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith, willful or criminal 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) of the congregation is sufficient cause for discipline of member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation and repentance will be attempted following Matthew 18: 15-17, proceeding through these successive steps as necessary
- a) private counsel and admonition by the rostered minister,
 - b) censure and admonition by the rostered minister in the presence of two or three witnesses, and
 - c) written referral of the matter by the Congregation Council to the vice president of the synod, who will refer it to the consultation panel drawn from the Consultation Committee of the synod, and
 - d) written referral of the matter by the consultation panel of the Committee on Discipline of the synod. If for any reason the rostered minister is unable to administer the admonitions required in paragraphs a. and b. hereof, those steps may be performed by another pastor chosen by the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council.
- *C15.02.** The process for discipline of a member of the congregation shall be governed as prescribed as prescriber by the chapter on discipline in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. If counseling, censure and admonitions pursuant to C.15.01 do not result in repentance and amendment of life, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing may be prepared by the Congregation Council, signed and submitted to the vice president of the synod. The vice president of the synod shall select from the synod's Consultation Committee a panel of five members (three lay persons and two rostered ministers). A copy of the written charges shall be provided to the consultation panel and accused member(s). The consultation panel, after requesting a written reply to the charges from the accused member(s), shall consider the matter and seek

resolution by means of investigation, consultation, mediation, or whatever other means may seem appropriate. The panel's efforts to reach a mutual agreeable resolution shall continue for no more than forty-five (45) days after the matter is submitted to it

- ***C15.03** If the consultation panel fails to resolve the matter, that panel shall refer the case in writing, including the written charges and the accused member's reply, to the Committee on Discipline of the synod for a hearing. A copy of the panel's written referral shall be delivered to the vice president of the synod, the Congregation Council, and the accused member(s) at the same time it is sent to the Committee on Discipline of the synod. The Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall select six members from the Committee on Discipline to decide the case, and shall appoint a member of the Synod Council to preside as nonvoting chair. Those six members plus the nonvoting chair compromise the discipline hearing panel for deciding the case. The Congregation Council and the accused member(s) are the parties to the case.

- ***C15.04** The discipline hearing panel shall commence and conduct the disciplinary hearing in accordance with the provisions governing discipline of congregation members prescribed in the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Church in America*.
- ***C15.05** By vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the discipline hearing panel who are present and voting, one of the following disciplinary actions can be imposed:
 - a. suspension from the privileges of the congregation membership for a designated period of time;
 - b. suspension from the privileges of the congregation membership until the rostered minister and Congregation Council receive evidence, satisfactory to them, of repentance and amendment of life;
 - c. termination of membership in the congregation; or
 - d. termination of membership in the congregation and exclusion from the church property and from all congregation activities.

- ***C15.06** The written decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be sent to the vice president of the synod, the accused member(s), and the Congregation Council as required by the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Church in America*. The decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be implemented by the Congregation Council and recorded in the minutes of the next council meeting.

- ***C15.07.** No member of a congregation shall be subject to discipline a second time for offenses that a discipline hearing panel has heard previously and decided pursuant to this chapter.
- ***C15.10.** Adjudication
- ***C15.11.** When there is disagreement among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation shall have access to the synodical bishop for consultation after informing the chair of the Congregation Council of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the Consultation Committee of the synod shall consider the matter. If the Consultation Committee of the synod shall fail to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to

the Synod Council, whose decision shall be final.

Chapter 16. BYLAWS

- *C16.01. This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.
- *C16.02. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting.
- *C16.03. Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by ten (10) voting members provided, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least sixty (60) days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the congregation's members of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least thirty (30) days in advance of the Congregation meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.
- *C16.04. Approved changes to the bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

Chapter 17. AMENDMENTS

- *C17.01. Unless provision *C17.04 is applicable, those sections of this constitution that are not required, in accord with the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be amended in the following manner. Amendments may be proposed by at least ten (10) 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 a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the congregation's members of the proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.
- *C17.02. An amendment to this constitution, proposed under C17.01 shall:
 - a. be approved at a legally called Congregation 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 resolution⁴ and noted in the constitution.
- *C17.03. Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in C17.01 and C17.02 shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The synod shall notify the congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed changes; the changes shall go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them.

***C17.04.** This constitution may be amended to bring any section into conformity with a section or sections, either required or not required, of the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America* as most recently amended by the Churchwide Assembly by a simple majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of the congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, notice to the congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council's recommendations, at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of ten (10) such voting members of the congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following a vote of approval.

Chapter 18. CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

- *C18.01.** The congregation in a legally called meeting or the Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this congregation.
- *C18.02.** Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a majority vote of a meeting of the congregation or a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Congregation Council.

Chapter 19. INDEMNIFICATION

- *C19.01.** 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.

Chapter 20. PARISH AUTHORIZATION

[* Required provisions when congregation is part of a parish]

***C20.01.** This congregation may unite in partnership with one or more other congregations recognized by the Synod named in *C6.01. to form a parish. Except as provided in *C20.02. and *C20.03., a written agreement, developed in consultation with the Synod and approved by the voting members of each congregation participating in the parish, shall specify the powers and responsibilities that have been delegated to a Parish Council.

***C20.02.** Whenever a letter of call is being recommended for extension to rostered minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of ministers who has been recommended to the congregation by the synodical bishop to serve the congregations of a parish, such letter of call shall be first approved by a two-thirds vote at congregational meetings of each of the congregations forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve

extending this call, the other congregation(s) in the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish arrangement.

***C20.03.** Any one of the congregations of a parish may terminate the call of a rostered minister as provided in †S14.13.d. of the synodical constitution of the Synod named in *C6.01. In such case, the other congregation(s) in the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish arrangement.

***C20.04.** Whenever a parish arrangement is terminated, the call of any rostered person serving that parish is terminated. Should any congregation that formerly was part of the parish arrangement desire to issue a new call to that rostered person, it may do so in accordance with the call process of this church.

Continuing Resolution 1:

Atonement's Mission Endowment Fund Plan

Atonement's Legacy Fund...an Endowment for the Future

Named: THE APPLE TREE SOCIETY (ATS)

Whereas, Christian stewardship involves the faithful management of all the gifts God has given to us - the created world, the Gospel, life, time, abilities, money, including accumulated, inherited, and appreciated resources; and,

Whereas, the biblical principle of proportionate giving, to return to the Lord a portion of the gifts God has first given to his beloved children, is both a privilege and an appropriate response in all times and circumstances; and,

Whereas, Christians can give to the work of the church through gifts in and from wills, life insurance policies, charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder and other trusts, and transfers of property such as cash, stocks, bonds and real estate; and,

Whereas, it is the desire of Atonement Lutheran Church (herein referred to as Congregation) to encourage, receive and administer these gifts in a manner consistent with the loyalty and devotion to our Lord in accord with the policies of this congregation, now,

It is Resolved, that this Congregation hereby establishes a new and separate fund to be known as Atonement Lutheran Church Mission Endowment Fund and,

It is Further Resolved, that the purpose of this Fund is to enhance the mission outreach of Atonement Lutheran Church apart from the general operation of the Congregation.

It is Further Resolved, that the Mission Endowment Fund Committee (herein referred to as "Committee") shall be the custodian of the Fund, and,

It is Further Resolved, that the purpose, governance, administration and management of the Fund and Committee are established and defined by the plan of operation as found in the bylaws.