

CONSTITUTION Of Grace Lutheran Church

Proposed: February 3, 2002

Adopted: _____

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

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 Grace Lutheran Church of Luverne, Minnesota.
- C1.02.** For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the Grace Lutheran Congregation is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."
- C1.03.** This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Minnesota Statutes Chapter 317.A.

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 Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

CHAPTER 3

NATURE OF THE CHURCH

- C3.01.** All powers in the Church belong 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.

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

CHAPTER 5

POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

- C5.01.** The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.
- C5.02.** Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregation ministries, parish planning 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 9;
 - b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
 - c. appoint or terminate the appointment of associates in ministry in conformity with the applicable policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
 - d. approve the annual budget;
 - e. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
 - 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 Congregational Ministries, officers and committees requiring them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions;
 - i. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.

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 Southwestern Minnesota 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 pastoral leadership from the clergy roster 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.
 - d. This congregation agrees to consider associates in ministry for appointment 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.
- 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.
- b. The secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of this resolution to the synodical bishop and shall mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of this congregation. This notice shall be submitted within ten (10) days after the resolution has been adopted.
- c. The bishop of the synod shall consult with this congregation within a period of at least ninety (90) days.
- 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, at which meeting the bishop of the synod or an authorized representative shall be present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting.
- e. A certified copy of the resolution to terminate its relationship shall be sent to the synodical bishop, at which time the relationship between this congregation and ELCA shall be terminated.
- f. Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the synodical bishop to the secretary of this church and published in the periodical of this church.

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

CHAPTER 7

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

C7.01. If this congregation ceases to exist, title to indisposed property shall pass to the Southwest Minnesota 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 procedures 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 regularly 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. Before this congregation takes action to transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the Southwest Minnesota Synod.
- C7.04.** If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a regularly called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body, 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.

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 by-laws.
- 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 shall have communed and/or made a contribution of record during the current or preceding year.
 - d. **Associate** members are persons holding membership in other Lutheran or Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices.
- C8.03.** All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Evangelism ministry.

- 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, synod and the church-wide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through contributions of their time, abilities and financial supports 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 by the Congregation.
- C8.06.** Members removed from the roll due to inactivity as defined in the bylaws shall remain persons for whom the church has a continuing pastoral concern.

CHAPTER 9

THE PASTOR

- C9.01.** Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting regularly called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the call committee elected by this congregation, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- C9.02.** Only a member of the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of ordained ministers who has been recommended for the congregation by the synodical bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.
- C9.03.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
- a. Every ordained minister shall:
 - (1) preach the Word;
 - (2) administer the sacraments;
 - (3) conduct public worship
 - (4) provide pastoral care;
 - (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. The ordained minister (s) with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
 - (1) visit members, offer instruction, confirm, marry, and bury the dead;
 - (2) supervise all organizations of this congregation;
 - (3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Ministries; and officers;
 - (4) with the congregation, administer discipline.

- c. Every pastor shall:
 - (1) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel and strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation and abroad;
 - (2) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications;
 - (3) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to work of the ELCA church-wide organization and of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA.

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

- C9.05.** a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which, except in the case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated only following consultation with the synodical bishop and for the following reasons:
- (1) mutual agreement to terminate the call, the completion of a call for a specific term, or according to specific provisions as stated in the letter of call;
 - (2) resignation of a pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, 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, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor,
 - (4) the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
 - (5) disqualification of a pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality or continued neglect of duty;
 - (6) the dissolution of the congregation; or
 - (7) suspension of the congregation as a result of discipline proceedings.
- b. When allegations of physical or mental incapacity of a pastor or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office have come to the attention of the bishop of the synod, the bishop in his or her sole discretion may, or when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Parish Planning Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop shall, investigate such conditions personally in company with a committee of two ordained ministers and one lay-person.
- c. In case of alleged physical or mental incapacity, competent medical testimony shall be obtained. When such disability is evident, the bishop of the synod with the advice of the committee shall declare the pastorate vacant. Upon the restoration of a disabled pastor to health, the bishop of the synod shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another field of labor.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation, all concerned persons shall be heard, after which the bishop of the synod together with the committee described in C9.05.b. shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor of the congregation. If they agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action shall be taken by the synod. If either party fails to assent, the congregation may dismiss the pastor by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present at a regularly called meeting after consultation with the bishop.
- e. If, in the course of proceedings described in C9.05.d., the committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action to the synodical bishop who may bring charges, in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and the constitution of this synod.

- f. If, following the appointment of the committee described in C9.05.b. or d., it should become apparent that the pastoral office cannot be conducted effectively in the congregation being served by the ordained minister due to local conditions, the bishop of the synod may temporarily suspend the pastor from service in the congregation without prejudice and with pay provided through a joint church-wide/synod fund and with housing provided by the congregation.
- C9.06.** At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor may be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of the Parish Planning Council.
- C9.07.** During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.
- C9.08.** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. The pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation.
- C9.09.** When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges, responsibilities, and specific ministry description of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the Parish Planning Council, the call committee, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- C9.10.** In consultation with the bishop of the synod, the congregation may depart from C9.05.a. and call a pastor 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 pastor and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of C9.05.a.
- C9.11.** The pastor shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, and shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod.
- C9.12.** The pastor(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least ninety (90) days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- C9.13.** The pastor(s) shall be a member of this congregation.

CHAPTER 10

CONGREGATION MEETINGS

- C10.01.** Semiannual meetings of this congregation shall be held at times specified in the bylaws.

- C10.02.** A special meeting of the congregation may be called by the pastor, the Parish Planning Council, or the president of this congregation. In addition, a special congregation meeting shall be called at the written request of 100 voting members and shall be presented to the officers of the Congregation for proper announcement as specified in C10.03.
- C10.03.** A quorum shall be those voting members present.
- C10.04.** Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- C10.05.** All actions by the congregation shall be by majority vote except as otherwise provided in this constitution.
- C10.06.** Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

CHAPTER 11

EXECUTIVE MINISTRY

- C11.01.** The executive ministry of this congregation shall be the president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and the pastor (s).
- a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
 - b. The officers shall be voting members of the congregation.
 - c. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Parish Planning Council and shall be voting members of said council.
- C11.02.** The congregation shall elect its officers at the spring meeting. The officers shall be elected by written ballot and shall serve for one (1) year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the meeting at which they are elected.
- C11.03.** No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. No elected officer shall be eligible to serve more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office, except the secretary and treasurer.
- C11.04.** Should a vacancy occur in the Executive Committee, except for the pastor(s), a successor shall be appointed by the Parish Planning Council to fill out the unexpired term.

CHAPTER 12

CONGREGATION MINISTRIES

- C12.01.** The congregation's mission shall be carried out primarily through standing committees, called MINISTRIES, as determined in the bylaws. Each of these ministries shall be identified by their main focus of responsibility.
- C12.02.** The purpose of these ministries is to lead, maintain, and enhance the congregation's whole mission. These ministries shall utilize, develop, and coordinate the various gifts and talents among the congregation's members. This shall be done in the spirit of St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians: "...to equip the saints for the work of ministry," and "for building up the body of Christ."
- C12.03.** Five (5) voting members of the congregation shall be elected to each ministry. Spring Meeting elections shall be held as follows: Evangelism, Finance, Learning and Parish Care Ministry – two (2) members in odd number years and three (3) members in even numbered years; Property, Stewardship, Worship and Music and Young People's – three (3) members in odd numbered years and two (2) members in even numbered years. Additional members may be elected by the congregation.
- C12.04.** Each ministry shall elect its own chairperson. The chairpersons shall preside over the meetings of their ministries and serve on the Parish Planning Council. A vice-chairperson would also be chosen by each ministry who would preside at meetings and/or serve on the Parish Planning Council in the chairperson's absence.
- C12.05.** The term for elected members to each ministry shall be for two years. Limitation of terms for the same office shall be no more than three consecutive terms. Their terms shall begin at the close of the meeting at which they are elected.
- C12.06.** Should a vacancy occur a successor shall be appointed by the Parish Planning Council. The successor shall serve until that term of office is completed. If there is less than one year remaining in that term, it shall not prevent the successor being elected for three consecutive terms upon the completion of the unexpired term.
- C12.07.** To see that various tasks are done for the congregation's mission, each ministry may appoint ministry teams or persons for that purpose.

CHAPTER 13

PARISH PLANNING COUNCIL

- C13.01.** This Council shall consist of the eight (8) ministry chairpersons and the entire Executive Ministry. The ministries of the congregation shall coordinate their work through the Parish Planning Council. Its primary purpose is to set general goals and plans for the congregation's mission. It shall be a support system rather than a legislative body, serving as a center of communication among the ministries and with the congregation.
- C13.02.** Each member of the Parish Planning Council shall have both voice and vote on the council.

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 meetings shall determine their policies, guide 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 Parish Planning Council.

CHAPTER 15

DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

- C15.01.** Denial of the Christian faith as described in this constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent trouble-making in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps: (a) private admonition by the pastor, (b) admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses, and (c) citation to appear before the Congregation.

- C15.02.** A member charged with the offense shall appear before the congregation having received a written notice, specifying the exact charges that have been made against the member, at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting.
- C15.03.** Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the congregation present and voting and renewed admonition prove ineffectual, the congregation shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:
- a. censure before the congregation;
 - b. suspension from membership for a definite period of time; or
 - c. exclusion from membership in this congregation
- Disciplinary actions b. and c. shall be delivered to the member in writing.
- C15.04.** Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the congregation upon receipt of (a) evidence that injustice has been done, or (b) evidence of repentance and amendment.
- C15.05.** 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 president of the congregation of their intent.

CHAPTER 16

BY-LAWS

- C16.01.** The congregation shall adopt such bylaws as may be found necessary. 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 fifty-five percent majority vote of those voting members present and voting.
- C16.03.** Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided, however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Executive Ministry at least sixty (60) days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose and that the Executive Ministry notify the members of the proposal with its recommendations at least thirty (30) days in advance of the Congregation Meeting.
- C16.04.** Approved changes to the bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

CHAPTER 17

AMENDMENTS

- C17.01.** Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least a minimum of twenty (20) voting members or by the Parish Planning Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Parish Planning Council sixty (60) days before formal consideration by this congregation at regular or a special meeting called for that purpose. The Parish Planning Council shall notify the members of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting.
- C17.02.** A proposed amendment to this constitution shall:
- a. be approved at a properly 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.
- C17.03.** Any amendments to this constitution shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The amendment shall become effective within 120 days from the date of the receipt of the notice by the synod unless the synod informs this congregation that the amendment is in conflict with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or the constitution of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod.
- C17.04.** Whenever the Model Constitution for Congregations is amended by the Church-wide Assembly, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a simple majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided that the Parish Planning Council has submitted by mail notice to the congregation of such an amendment or amendments at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod, consistent with C17.03.

CHAPTER 18

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

- C18.01.** The Parish Planning Council may enact continuing resolutions which describe the function of the various committees or organizations of this congregation.
- C18.02.** Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Parish Planning Council.

SUNSET CLAUSE

Transition between Present and Proposed Structures for Grace Lutheran Church Annual Meeting 2002

Upon ratification of the Proposed Constitution at the 2002 Annual Meeting, the word PRESENT shall be replaced with FORMER and PROPOSED with NEW.

Nomination Committee:

The 2001 Nomination Committee shall operate under the PRESENT system with the PROPOSED structure in mind. Those who are nominated for various offices or committees shall be informed of the changes in the PROPOSED structure, as it will affect them in their duties if elected. All who are elected to a three-year term shall have their term reduced to two years upon ratification of the PROPOSED structure. All who continue in service will fill out their term of either the two years or the one-year that remains. Those who have completed their terms and are not reelected will not continue in service during the transition time. This Nomination Committee will continue in service after the 2002 Annual Meeting to secure candidates to complete the needs of the Ministries in the PROPOSED structure.

Church Council and Parish Planning Council:

Upon ratification of the PROPOSED structure, the Church Council will continue to function until the adjournment of the Spring Congregational Meeting. The Parish Planning Council will be activated upon the adjournment of the Spring Meeting.

Standing Committees, Board of Deacons and Ministries:

Upon the ratification of the proposed structure, the standing committees and Board of Deacons will continue until the Spring Congregational Meeting. In February of 2002, those committees that will be divided and the Board of Deacons will negotiate among themselves in their respective groups as to where each will service in the PROPOSED structure. As it becomes known who will be serving on which of the various ministries, selection of representatives can and should be made for the Parish Planning Council BEFORE the Spring Congregational Meeting. The eight Ministries will be activated upon the adjournment of the Spring Meeting.

Budgets for 2002 and 2003:

The 2002 Budget will be expended by the direction of the Church Council until the Spring Congregational Meeting. The Parish Planning Council will oversee the expenditures of the 2002 Budget when it begins its service upon the adjournment of the Spring Meeting. The Ministries shall give input to the Finance Ministry to put together a proposed 2003 Budget that will be presented to the congregation at the 2002 Fall Meeting. Beginning in 2003 the budget shall be expended as prescribed in the PROPOSED structure.

This Sunset Clause shall end upon completion of the transition on January 1, 2003.

**Grace Lutheran Church
Luverne, Minnesota
Constitution, Bylaws and Bylaws Addendum**

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